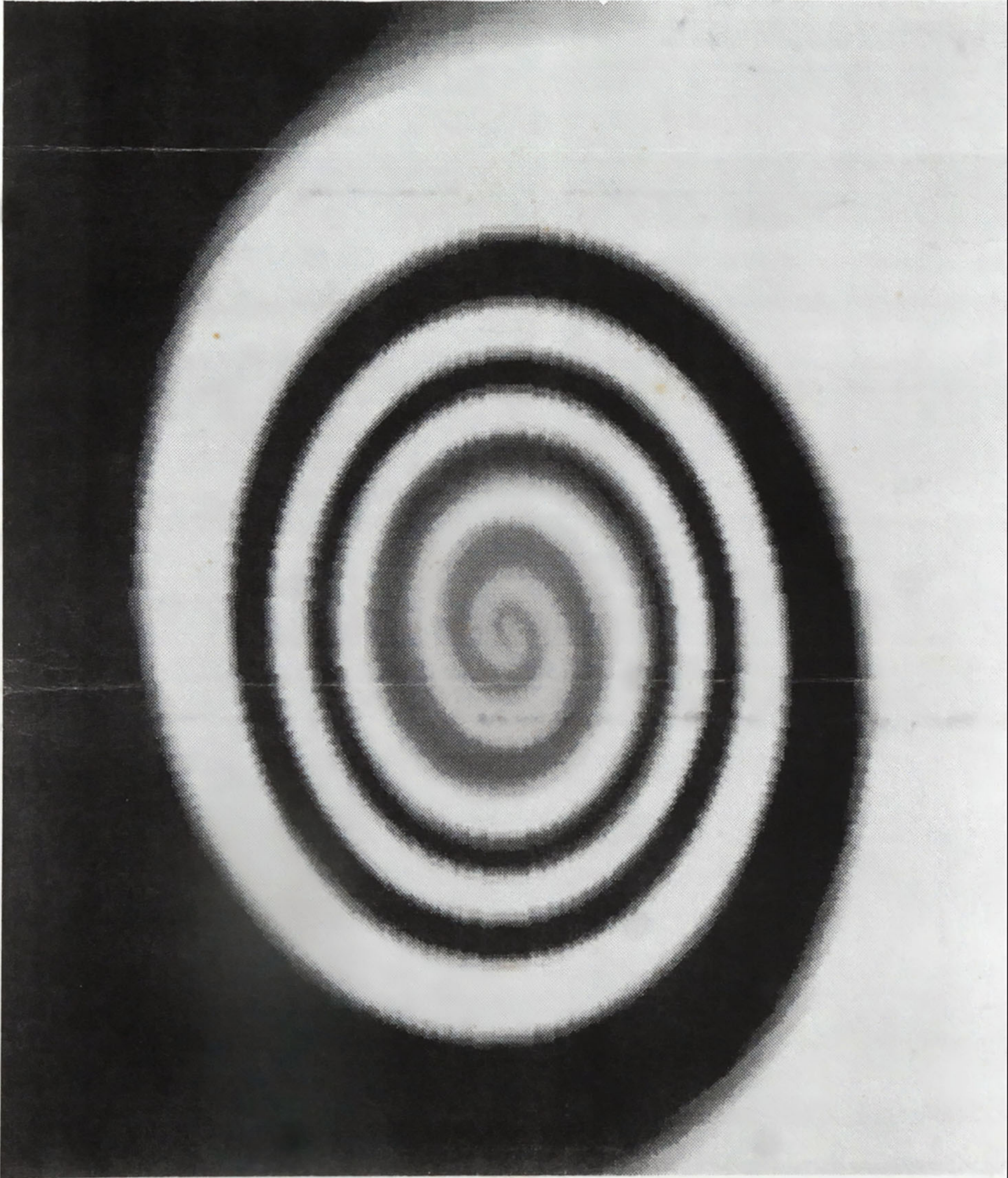
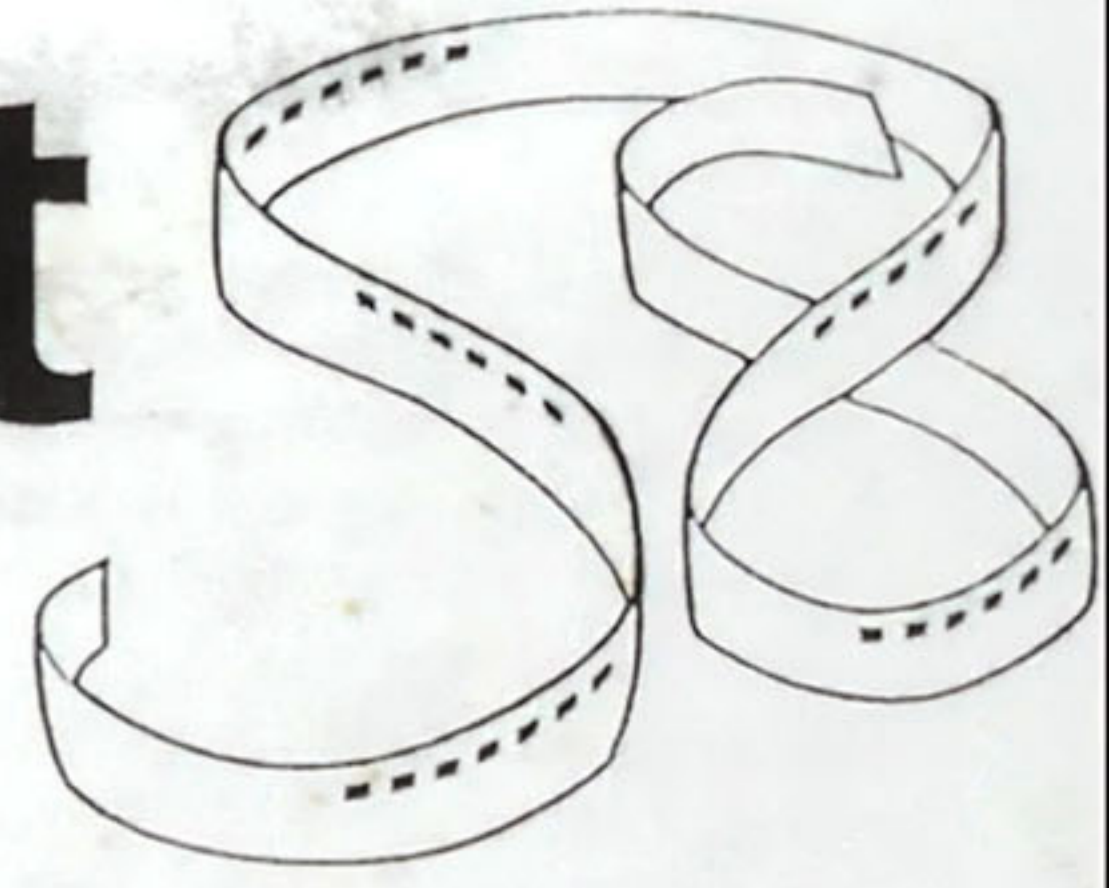


Super Eight

Newsletter of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group
Issue 83 August 1993



NEWS FROM ADMINISTRATION

An application for funding of the group's activities for the 1993/94 financial year was lodged with the Australian Film Commission in June. At the time of writing the AFC have not officially confirmed the funding but have indicated that the group can expect to be offered \$10,000 for regular organisation and activities and \$6,000 for programme (i.e. festival-type) events. The group has received the same level of organisational funding since 1989 and the AFC, despite applications for an increase in this amount have been consistently unable to offer more. This funding pays for open screenings, newsletters, administrators wages, rent, equipment etc. for the year which are achieved by prudent budgeting and topped up with additional income from membership, equipment hire and newsletter advertisements.

The overall management of the group is performed by a committee which currently consists of Steven Ball, Nick Ostrovskis, Jennifer Pignataro, Matthew Rees, Pete Spence, Richard Tuohy and Maeve Woods. Committee meetings are usually held on the Tuesday evening after the Open Screenings. All members of the group are welcome to attend the committee meetings and advised to contact the office for exact times.

Over the past few months the committee has discussed the idea of changing the nature of the festival. The general opinion being that the festival is perhaps not as successful a way of providing a high-profile for the group and contemporary Super 8 filmmaking practice as it could be. There are disadvantages for both the films and the audience in attempting to watch so many (largely short) films over one weekend; a year elapses between each event which results in a lack of consistent profile within both the local filmgoing public and broader critical follow-up as well as the fact that there are several film festivals that it has to compete with. After running through a number of alternatives the committee have come up with the following:

The festival will be effectively spread over the year. There will be three shorter, yet equally high profile, events at the State Film Theatre during 1994. Each event will consist of two different programmes on one evening (that's six programmes in all-one more than in the festival). One programme in each event will be drawn from a 'festival-style' entry, the other will be a programmed screening which could be a retrospective (group or individuals), a thematic programme, or a generic programme, there are many possibilities. These events will be given an overall title and a calendar with details will be

published in early '94 as well as publicity and advertising closer to each event. The festival will be less 'crammed', there will be more opportunities for films to enter at various times of the year, there will be a more consistent public profile and hopefully increased critical response, and will reflect more accurately the prolific nature of local super 8 filmmaking. These are some of the advantages. Of course one sad point is that we will be losing a festival as such, however the committee agreed that this is a small price to pay for increased potential for screenings audiences etc. The Open Screenings are going well yet we lack resources to attract a large number of people to these regular events, the group represents the only real co-ordinated & most prolific independent film practice in Melbourne (in Australia?) and there is no other organisation providing a regular public representation of local contemporary independent filmmaking. More information will be given once the funding submission to the AFC (for \$6,000) has had official approval. All members will be invited to join selection and programming committees and to volunteer to help out.

FURNITURE

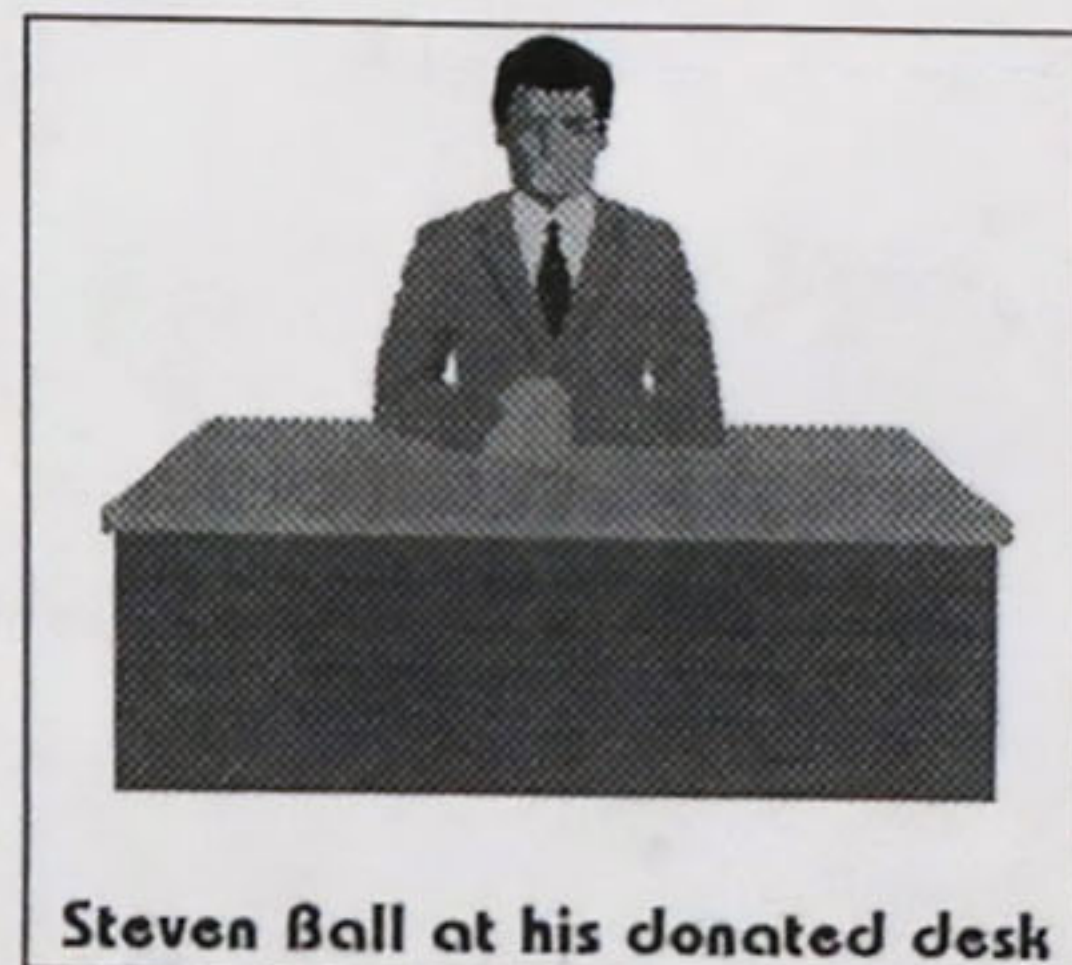
The group is currently in need of furniture for the office: desks, tables, chairs, book shelves, filing cabinets etc. etc. If any such items are currently cluttering your garage, shed, flat, garret, and you've been wondering how to get rid of them all donations gratefully received.

9th FRINGE FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, EDINBURGH

will take place from the 1st to 5th December 1993. Entry deadline 31st August. It is looking for film work which could be: experimental, formally innovative, documentary, narrative, animation, low-budget or community based. It will also run a super 8 category. Entry details and forms available from the office.

FOR SALE

Bell & Howell MS45 Sound Camera with slo-mo, lap-dissolve, macro lens and other features. VGC \$200. call Peter Orr 419 5426



Steven Ball at his donated desk



A REVIEW OF THE JUNE OPEN SCREENING

By GARRY O'KEEFE

THINGS I CAN DO WITH MY TOES
by Moira Josephs

BEFORE THE PLASTIC BAG: A SHORT HISTORY OF SHOPPING CARRIERS
by Michael Kelleher

This is a carefully prepared and competently directed film from the point of view of camera strategies and direction of actors. These elements produce at times a seamless quality and yet the film is encased within a fairly pedestrian idea that seems to continually thwart Kelleher's attempts to provide subtext and characterisation. By presenting seven segments (each representing a decade) in just fifteen minutes with regulation signposts alerting us to the decade we are now in, Kelleher must have felt at times as if he had constructed an elaborate cage in which to confine his poetic soul. He does nevertheless produce some remarkable scenes. A delivery boy chats casually to a housewife on her front porch about his father's health. This scene had charm and poise as did the scene where presumably the mother with cigarette and pram is trying to persuade the daughter, who is attempting to talk while at the same time revolving a hoola-hoop around her neck, to run an errand for her. This is the type of layering Kelleher seems to be constantly reaching for. The mother and son searching for a parking space at the shopping centre where we only have their dialogue with which to construct their physical world. His short coming could be his professionalism, his strict line for the status quo. This short history is confined by his own subjective experience. His families are white, heterosexual and nuclear which could suggest an overreliance on a sanitised version of our past.

Moira Josephs abandons the chlorine bleach bucket for a moment to film the remarkable contortions her daughter can perform. Substituting toes for fingers we see her brush her teeth, comb her hair, write a story, scratch herself etc. and it all makes for a very elegant little film. The idea for the film could well have been the child's in its simplicity and yet there is a resemblance to Laki Sideris' *The Jogger* where the camera assumes the role of scientific eye. With touches of 'Weird Tales' and a small debt to filmed case studies, Muybridge or Duchenne de Boulogne's *The Mechanism of Human Facial Expression* the film resists sentimentalising or exploiting the girl's not inconsiderable talent.

VICAR
by Perry Alexander (aka Laird)
and Atlantis Jack

Vicar is a sinister tale of greed and corruption. The camera style is manipulative to the extreme as it sets about piling up evidence to support the proposition that the Vicar is of unsound moral character. He has a problem with gambling and substance abuse and seems preoccupied with fetishism, idolatry and anarchy. In desperation the Vicar gambles his crucifix and then follows a wildly menacing scene, dripping with innuendo as a handgun makes its way through the rooms of a house. The gun pulls the gloved protagonist toward a cache of jewels and in a moment of rare sensuality the hand slowly fondles and caresses the prize. This anyway is my recollection of a powerful super-8 film.

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Silent Cameras Various	\$ 2	\$ 10
Editor Viewers	\$ 1	\$ 5
Wurker Splicers	\$ 1	\$ 5
Miller Tripod Junior	\$ 2	\$ 10
Elmo St-180 Projector sound, twin track	\$ 5	\$ 30

Pulling the Trigger:

The Making of Open City (1993, Super-8, ~70 mins)



(Photo: Con Filippidis.)

On set. From left: Claire Paradine (actor), Jenny Leach (camera operator), Bill Mousoulis (director), Daniel Kotsanis (sound), Clem Stamatian (lights), Sarah Johnson (onlooker), Nicloe Bensimon (continuity for the day), John F. Howard (actor).

Prologue:

At this particular moment in time in the history of the world (late July 1993), I am editing a feature-length narrative drama film which I also wrote and directed. With this piece I want to outline the making of the film, to give an idea of what was involved, especially for those of you who would like to undertake a similar venture. (Indeed, I am not alone: Mark Zenner's own Super-8 feature - provisionally-titled *Nada* - is currently in production.) The underpinning to all this is that magical phrase: it can be done.

(1) The "Waiting" disease.

This disease needs conditions, and the conditions are as follows: one makes several short films (even on 16mm.) and then gets ambitious, planning a feature-length film. And so in steps a funding body (or vice-versa). This "waiting" then takes on the form (and euphemism) of "liaising". This "liaising" has been the Famous Last Action for many a filmmaker. The AFC funds approximately 5 features a year (from, I would reckon, 200 possibilities). Going for this million dollar prize spells atrophy - that is the net effect of the "waiting" disease. This disease, of course, is closely related to that other disease - the "celebrity" disease. There are those lucky 5 each year, sure, but what about the other 195? What happens to them? Where do they go? What do they do?

(2) Gaugeism.

We live in hierarchical times. One can go against the grain, of course, but it is difficult to overcome certain tendencies. A hierarchical structuring of things necessitates bigotry and discrimination, and this applies to film gauges as much as it does to anything else. Super-8 is considered inferior, by many,

many people. Films on Super-8 are not valid (this is the ultimate in Right-wing ideological thinking). A group like the Super-8 Group is also gaugeist, but the other way, against video, 16mm., etc. Discrimination has been a part of our psychological make-up for about 2500 years now. Are we heading for a "new age"? Let's hope so.

(3) Arrogance and Inspiration.

Watching TV one day, I saw a basketball player at the free-throw line. Just before taking his shot, he closed his eyes. He let the ball fly and it went through the hoop. This image of arrogance and inspiration informed me as I was making my film. But an image is only an image, of course - action and performance are entirely different things. It's adrenalin and magic and faith, combined, that create the performance. In my case, anyway. I say - to others, but also to myself - "Okay, I'm going to pull the trigger now", and then I do exactly that. I am not a procrastinator or a perfectionist. This has its down sides, but, hey, check the up side - I have a film.

(4) Timeline.

A film needs planning and organization, especially a big film. For a start, I made sure to make *Open City* when I knew I would be free from other commitments/projects. I also decided to do it in one big hit - Pre-production for 3 weeks from April 19, and Production for 3 weeks from May 10. I ended up doing one or two pre-production things in early-to-mid April, and the shooting period had to be extended by 4 days (more on this later). Needless to say, it was a very busy 7 weeks - the only time off I had was to go to the football each weekend. As well as directing the film, I produced/production managed it - that explains the sense I had of being on a roller coaster, unable to get off until the ride was over. (Not surprisingly, we had a good wrap party.)

(5) The Script.

Open City truly was spontaneous film-making: when I started pre-production on April 19, I hadn't even written the script. I had the characters, plot, structure, and some scenes in my mind, but there was nothing on paper. The script was finished a week or so before shooting commenced. The script was based on a 30 min. script by a friend Andrew Preston, from 1990 - a short film to be directed by me that didn't receive funding. I opted for that script, rather than any of the feature-length ones I've written in the last few years, because it could be realized easier. That is the key for self-funded films - film stories that don't require difficult production set-ups (I kept this in mind when writing the actual scenes).

(6) Budget.

The film cost \$2000 overall to make (this is a rough figure). The breakdown is as follows: film stock \$800 (2:1 shooting ratio); main actor's fee \$300 (everyone worked for free on the film except the main actor - he asked for money. I complied, because of time and preference, but I felt that it soiled things a bit); production items \$600 (mainly food and petrol, but also copying, adaptors, stills, props, etc.); titles \$50; editing materials \$150. This \$2000 was my own money, although I am now in debt for half that amount. (The other half was saved over 4 months, from my dole money, after paying rent, etc.) There is very little chance that the film will make this money back.

(7) Equipment.

Gratefully borrowed from various people, fellow film-makers. The camera was my own, but it wasn't used: it was lost (no fault of my own) only days before I was to shoot. This was the first of two major calamities to hit the film. The thing is, one knows what one's camera can give one. The loss threw my lighting scheme out the window (pun intended - I'd lost my fl.2). It created teething problems: we went through three different cameras in the first 2 days of shooting. We settled on the third one (having to reshoot Day 1), but we were still shooting "blind", not knowing what we were going to get. There was no time for a camera test even. I was relieved when I saw the first lot of rushes ("dribbles"? - 3 weeks!)

(8) Crew.

I had put an ad in this Super-8 Group newsletter (April), calling for interested people. I intentionally didn't approach anyone (especially people I'd worked with before), because I wanted inexperienced, young, keen people. (And also for myself - to meet and work with a different group of people). And so: Daniel Kotsanis (weekday sound), Clem Stamation (weekday lighting), Rodney Bourke (weekend sound), Con Filippidis (weekend lighting), Jenny Leach (camera operator indoor scenes). Two or three more people rang me, but the places had been filled. The creation of two crews - a weekday one and a weekend one - was in accordance with people's availability.

(9) Cast.

A combination of professionals and non-professionals. The main actor, John Howard, I knew casually and so simply approached him when I saw him in Mario's Cafe after the April Open

Screening. (He is a professional actor, with one feature lead-actor credit to his name). The other main parts: Georgina Campbell (an art director for films, but with acting experience), Claire Paradine (an aspiring actress), Peter Tsoukalas (a complete non-professional, who was quite keen). The 20 or so bit parts were filled by either professionals suggested by John, or non-professionals cast by me. The film's second major calamity occurred when the actress originally playing Claire's role left the film. Thankfully none of her scenes had been shot already, but it meant that the production period had to be extended.

(10) Shooting Days.

The shooting period was over the 25 days from May 10 to June 3. We shot on 12 of those days, leaving the others for rest, rehearsals, production organizing, etc. The days were basically 8-hour ones. (We sometimes worked half-days or quarter-days, but the total overall was 12 days, i.e. 12 x 8hrs.) This is basically shooting 6 minutes of screen time per day, which is 3 or 4 times more than the average. I wanted to shoot this quickly in order not to use up more of my cast and crew's time.

(11) Exploitation.

A word to budding producers of no-budget feature films: schedule well. Do not let your director be the "demented genius" who wants to rewrite a scene on the set, or film everything again because the light has changed. Cast and crew must be respected - they should be told at the outset what will be required of them, and what the basic working conditions will be. Don't keep them waiting whilst the director works out what his vision is! And a word to budding cast and crew members: be wary of producers who preface their answers to your questions with "I don't know". Don't work for them - you'll be abused no end. Better still, don't work for anyone - make your own films!

(12) Detachment.

The main job of producers and directors when making films (any kind) is to find straight lines. If a problem arises, don't dillydally or fret over it - correct it immediately. This requires a workmanlike approach, and an emotional detachment. Convert your passion into adrenalin - don't use your emotion reactively (i.e. in reaction to circumstances). Clarity of mind is another important ingredient. Of course, these qualities probably can't be learnt, but maybe they can be adopted then and again.

Epilogue:

Who knows what the final result will look and sound like? Certainly the production values determine or shape the aesthetics, form, style, content, of what one does. In Open City's case, in a certain way. People can see and hear for themselves in what way when the film is screened in early October (details will be in the next newsletter).

P.S. For those fans (sic) of my writing in the Super-8 newsletter who chuckle bemusedly every time I mention 'Springsteen', 'the football', or 'love' when talking about Super-8 films, all I can say is: two out of three ain't bad.

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NEXT OPEN SCREENING

7.30 p.m.

Tuesday 10th August

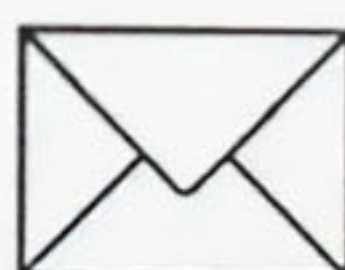
211 Johnston Street

Fitzroy

featuring:

Films by

Richard De Souza &
Rhondda Kelly



Another World

(made with John Hoey)

5 mins 1984

"(images of) the university, funeral parlour, trains, the IBM ad, Brisbane houses, Brisbane people, Spring Hill fair, me-the reflection of my head on the camera, people's feet, the cross on the train seat. ...and also the sound, it represents my father, personal matters, hoping your father would understand you a bit more" (RDS)

Intuitive Strategies

(made with Tony Forde)

10 mins 1985

"The idea was to make an experimental fusion of image and sound to result in an interactive approach to combining strategy and intuition. We tried to match sound to image and image to sound in a symbiotic way to involve the audience in a sort of excursion of moods and atmosphere. The most important image in that film was the tree. I saw this dead tree and it intrigued me... I was obsessed to the point where I couldn't sleep, and I created the piece about 4 o'clock in the morning in my head." (RDS)
"And two days after we filmed that tree, it was cut down." (RK)

Play

5 mins 1986

"Play was to do with my frustration with Sydney, it was stifling me, it was killing me. I was dying. Not just the dirt, but how it pulls you along, it's like a drug, you have no control over it, you can't stand back and view it, you just flow with it. It's overpowering, you feel so small and insignificant." (RDS)

Limited Vision, Version 1.1

6 mins 1987

"...computer programs have updated versions all the time, number 1.1, 1.2 and so on as the old versions become redundant. It's just like life, we are constantly updating life." (RDS)

Films by Richard De Souza & Rhondda Kelly:

Twisted Legend

4 mins 1986

"Twisted Legend is a mini performance piece. The film is to do with the struggles of life, and also using the ritual, the thing that captured you in the past, that you always have forever and can't rid yourself of. My intention was not to re-enact the crucifixion-struggling up to calvary, but there's a suggestion of it." (RDS)

Suspending Spirals

6 mins 1986

"...the title came to me walking in the street, feeling depressed, diverting my mind by playing with words, associations, trying to create a title. The first process was doing large collages of torn-out magazine photos stuck onto six clear cels-they were 6 or 7 feet long. Some images were spaced apart, others were denser, and we shot the clear cel moving along on top of similar magazine photos, so you get this juggling of images, in single-frame animation, pretty erratic." (RDS)

"We rephotographed a lot of the images from the super 8 by still framing the film on the wall. We scratched and reworked the photographs with art work and filmed them again as single images." (RK)

Films by Rhondda Kelly:

Sunday Service

5 mins 1986

"I decided to make it because there was little Aboriginal representation on film. And if and when Aboriginal people were seen it was mostly in a derogatory or mystical way. There is plenty of anthropological/archive footage but I wanted to divorce myself from this style which tends to stereotype Aboriginal people and is somewhat limited. I do not deny that there is a high degree of spiritualism amongst Aboriginal people, but there is also a normalcy to our lives which is rarely seen." (RK)

The Letter

6 mins 1987

"The Letter is a love story, about two women who were once in love. When the affair is over, like most relationships, it never ends. One of the women decides to write a letter, 'a declaration of love'. She summons the courage to post it. As an Australian Post employee is collecting the mail, the letter is dropped, so it never reaches its destination. Life is full of accidents which separate and bring people together." (RK)

Yirraru

6 mins 1987

"Yirraru is essentially a diary film. I had several rolls of footage which had been taken over a span of 2-3 years, again wanting to show Aboriginal people in everyday activities. 'Yirraru' means 'worrying about the land'" (RK)

Richard De Souza and Rhondda Kelly live in Brisbane and through the 1980s made a number of films both individually and in collaboration. They have exhibited their work in Melbourne in the past, during the earlier days of the Super 8 Group and at the 1988 Experimenta, however this is their first dedicated public screening here and represents a body of work produced between 1983 and 1987.

This screening was made possible by Arthur & Corinne Cantrill who procured the films on a recent visit to the couple in Brisbane. The notes that accompany the titles listed below are taken from an interview conducted by the Cantrills in 1988 and appear in full in Cantrills Filmnotes #57,58.

Films by Richard De Souza:

Butterflies Welcome Spring

3 mins 1983

"...centred around fire work construction, recorded in the park. For that piece I constructed about six or seven city-like constructions with the fireworks and linked them all up with fuses and they went off like a chain reaction, one after another." (RDS)

Permanent Change

3 mins 1983

"... was edited in camera, about two bodies" (RDS)

Landscape I

3 mins 1984

"The music on that is by Eugene Carchesio. In a way it's my tribute to Marvin Gaye the soul singer who died in 1984, there's a portrait of him in the film. He was shot dead by his father on April Fools day. It starts with these blue images of the sky and a tumbling movement in a washing machine, and it goes into a shot of a record and then into the photo, and then into the colour splatter. The splatter effects are done with overhead projection pens fitted to an airbrush." (RDS)



p+ors



pause

LAST OPEN SCREENING

paws

at 7.30pm:

pores

Jim Bridges
Richard Tuohy
Steven Ball
Ooni Peh
Matthew Rees
A & C Cantrill
Moira Joseph
Rodney Bourke

p+ors
String Theory
Archeology of memory
Pause
p+ors
Pause: Between the frames
Paws
Pause

pours

at 8.30pm

Circle of confusion Steven Ball /5.75 mins
Remeuising D. Kuslnir /2.5 mins
Trees from trees A & C Cantrill /5 mins
Untitled Dirk De Bruyn /20 mins
Black Monday Moira Joseph /10 mins



NEXT OPEN SCREENING

7.30 pm

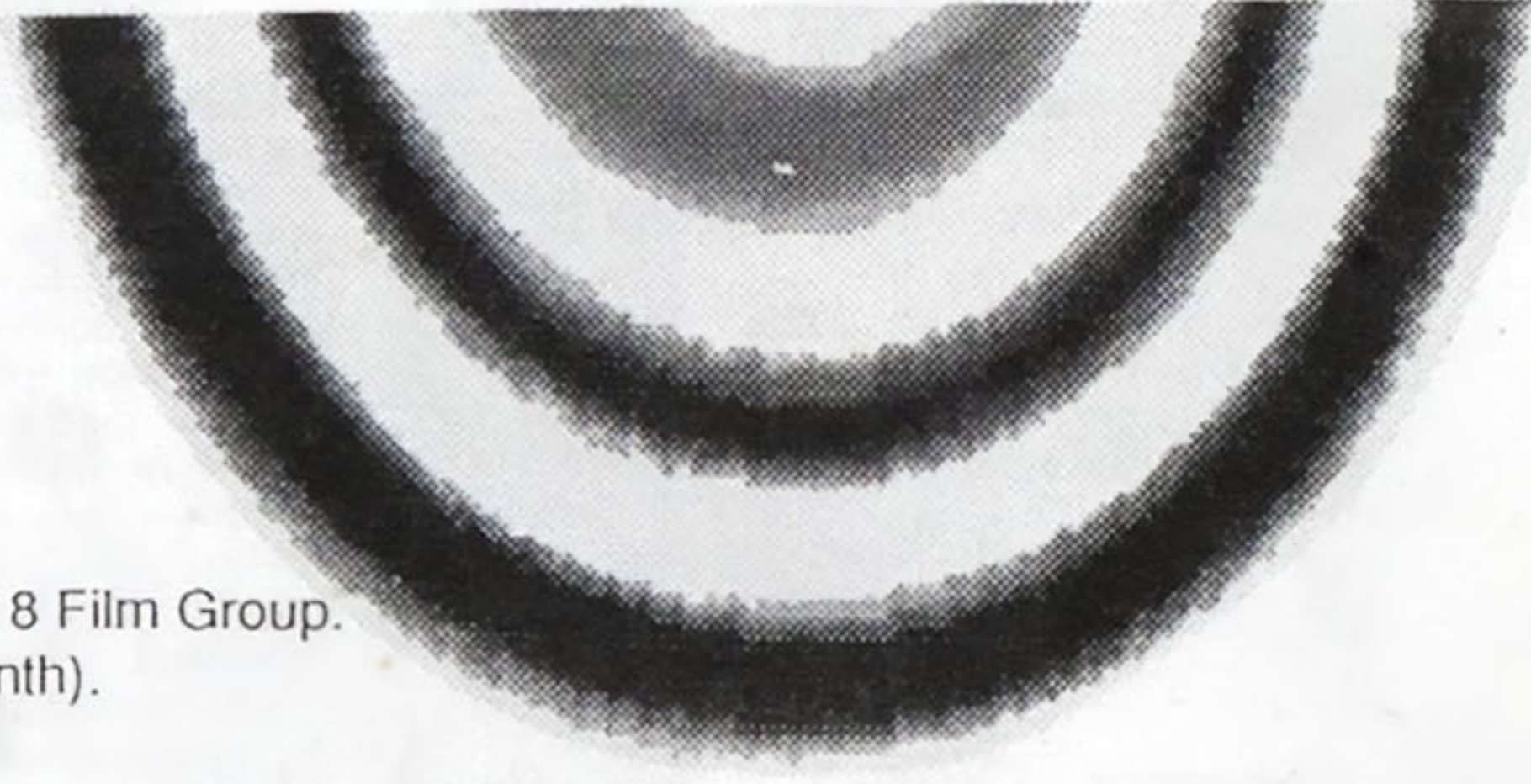
Tuesday 10th August
211 Johnston Street
Fitzroy

featuring:

Films by
Richard De Souza &
Rhonda Kelly

followed by an open
screening-byo super 8 films-
first in, first on

SEE INSIDE FOR DETAILS



Editorial & Layout By: Matthew Rees

Contact Number: 03 417 3402

This newsletter is published monthly by the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group.
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Super Eight



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