Super Eight

A NARRACTIVITY RESPONSE Norma Pearse.

open the curtain pass on down the highway
(wyeth dreams of spiders long before incywincy got his leg into stirrup)
in fact long before jack the cardboard catolic has his pincers tapped impatiently a window
sill dropped and countered all measures about the round.

Hidden from view the narrative endeavour plunges into an icing cake left all by itself on the run 0410. Sheik glimmer was to chase tandem gnome across the patio down the verandah along the entry road and they were to both settle near the pond for lunch in real time. Alas rickard was under a spell for the night and no-one but him-he kn knew the lines were not in perspective when spoken with the lips.

Inviting him into a sentence she alliterated then deciding not to be such a s a in light clothing she gasped as long as possible without giving away one little fool for a wise purr. agora agora in black hair this way!

How much research is fair how much did the soviets know about health why were they pursuing areas of immunity-do bulgarians mountainous live extra vigourously-there cant be any related question especially ones with finger waved at female-male shopping- all attempts to discredit in terms of western social superann, to valance the book-is as a blue move on a red carport-very visible with sudden fuzzy edges.

Technology and the 'Utility Calculus' in Independent Film Practice:

While the topic of this article involves film equipment, what I shall be speaking of here will not be my own experiences with particular pieces of equipment, but rather about a philosophy of practical employment of equipment in independent film. Of the kind of independent film practice I am going to be dealing with here, nothing is more axiomatic than the belief that familiarity with equipment is everything to achieving your intention. For instance, in this type of film-making, one could never, except in extreme circumstances, decide to go ahead with a project using a camera you have never run film through, to take a rather fundamental example. What I am about to outline here - that which I shall call the Utility Calculus (literally, an approach to the calculation of usefulness) - is, I believe, essentially only relevant to that part of film practice where all or some of commodities such as time, money, equipment, people, space, etc., come at a premium and where the carefulness of management of these commodities will determine if any kind of intended result eventuates at all. From this it follows too, that the utility calculus will have increasing relevance to this film practice as the dependence on these premium cost commodities increases.

This type of material dependent practice is one where chance is of no, or at best little, relevance to the rendering of the aesthetic; it is something to be dominated, controlled and minimised as far as possible. In a similar way, technology in this cinema is to be dictated to - and essential to this is knowledge of what the technology is. Put simply, the utility calculus involves comparing the usefulness of an item or system of technology or equipment with its cost, subtracting

what is detrimental in its inclusion from what is beneficial, and opting for or against it on these grounds.

All equipment or technology comes at a cost - but what needs to be remembered is that the totality of its cost is more than merely that of its acquisition. This can clearly be illustrated with an example. Let's say in a narrative film production (that which I have most familiarity with) involving indoor filming, a seemingly simple decision needs to be made about what kind of lights to hire. There are, of course, a number of options. Each option will provide a different set of lighting possibilities. Each will also cost a different amount to hire. For simplicity's sake, let us say it comes down to a choice of three readily available systems. Firstly, using three 'red-head' (800 watt) lights with no accessories. Of the three systems, this will cost the least, provide just enough light to shoot resulting in a slight loss of sharpness from the use of the maximum aperture, or alternately an increase in grain from a faster speed film and tend to make 'flat' lighting the most successful method. Secondly is a system using three red-heads, a couple of their big-sister '2-K' (2000 watt) lights, and some accessories like flags and 'cee-stands' (to control the light more). This will cost at least double that of the previous system, but allow for more sophisticated modeling of light as well as a higher 'technical level'. Thirdly, there is the option of some kind of 'fresnel' lensed focusable system of spot lights. This is the most expensive option but it provides for, among other things, very precise control of light quality and direction, etc..

Now, as each successive system offers advantages over the last as well as an increase in price, it might seem that one should decide on the most advanced system that one can pay for. Yet each system has other costs that must be equated. For instance, the sheer

increase in equipment of each successive system results in greater loading and unloading time, more objects cluttering up the set, far greater set-up time in achieving the subtler effects made possible and consequently a greater boredom factor for the actors, more power required and thus an increase in the possibility of blowing a fuse, more people needed for setting up and operating the greater amount of gear, the transport, organisation, feeding and watering of those extra people, etc..

Also, there are things like the fact that with more light comes more heat and consequently the actors are more likely to become fatigued more quickly. The greater the number of lights, lighting accessories and the greater their degree of sophistication also bears a fairly direct relation to the speed of your shoot and how long you need your actors, crew and locations for. Applying the utility calculus then, takes all of these disadvantages into account along with the attendant advantages and helps one remember that 'bigger' and 'better' (or more useful) are not mutually dependent. Even if you can afford the most sophisticated lighting system, to continue our example, that money may be better spent of providing tastier food for those on set so as to keep up their enthusiasm.

Hopefully it seems clear, then, that essential to this idea of the calculus is an understanding of the technical, aesthetic and practical aspects of the pieces of equipment being contemplated; one must know how it works, what it does and how it is made to do it if one is to tally its pros with its cons. Importantly, however, and a point I must make clear, is that any piece or system of equipment does not have intrinsic utilitarian value outside of any particular film project; value is entirely relative to the aesthetic one has in mind. For instance, include a dolly and track in a film and the shoot will take, all other things being equal, twice as long to complete (as well as use twice as much film). But if fluid movement of the camera is essential to your aesthetic, then it is clearly of the greatest value: other things may, and probably will, be sacrificed for it. The point of this utility calculus idea is not just that a film is made, but that a particular film with a particular aesthetic drive is completed. If fresnel lensed lights are the only lights capable of giving the required light quality, then there is no point making the film without them - they are essential and have greatest weight in the calculus.
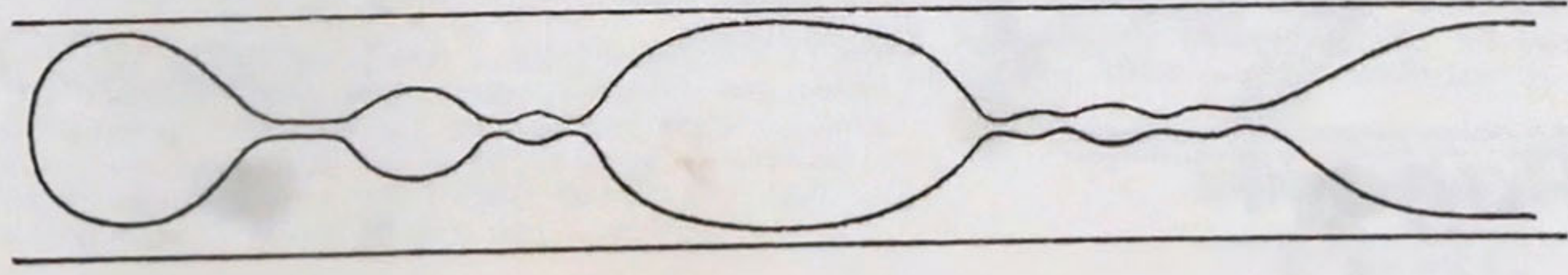
The utility calculus, then, is a system of evaluating how best to go about achieving the desired result, and how best to employ the resources at hand. Ultimately, it is simply about having intimacy with your equipment and knowing what its use will give and at what cost. It is really just common sense - and if what I have said is entirely obvious, then so much the better.

Richard Tuohy.
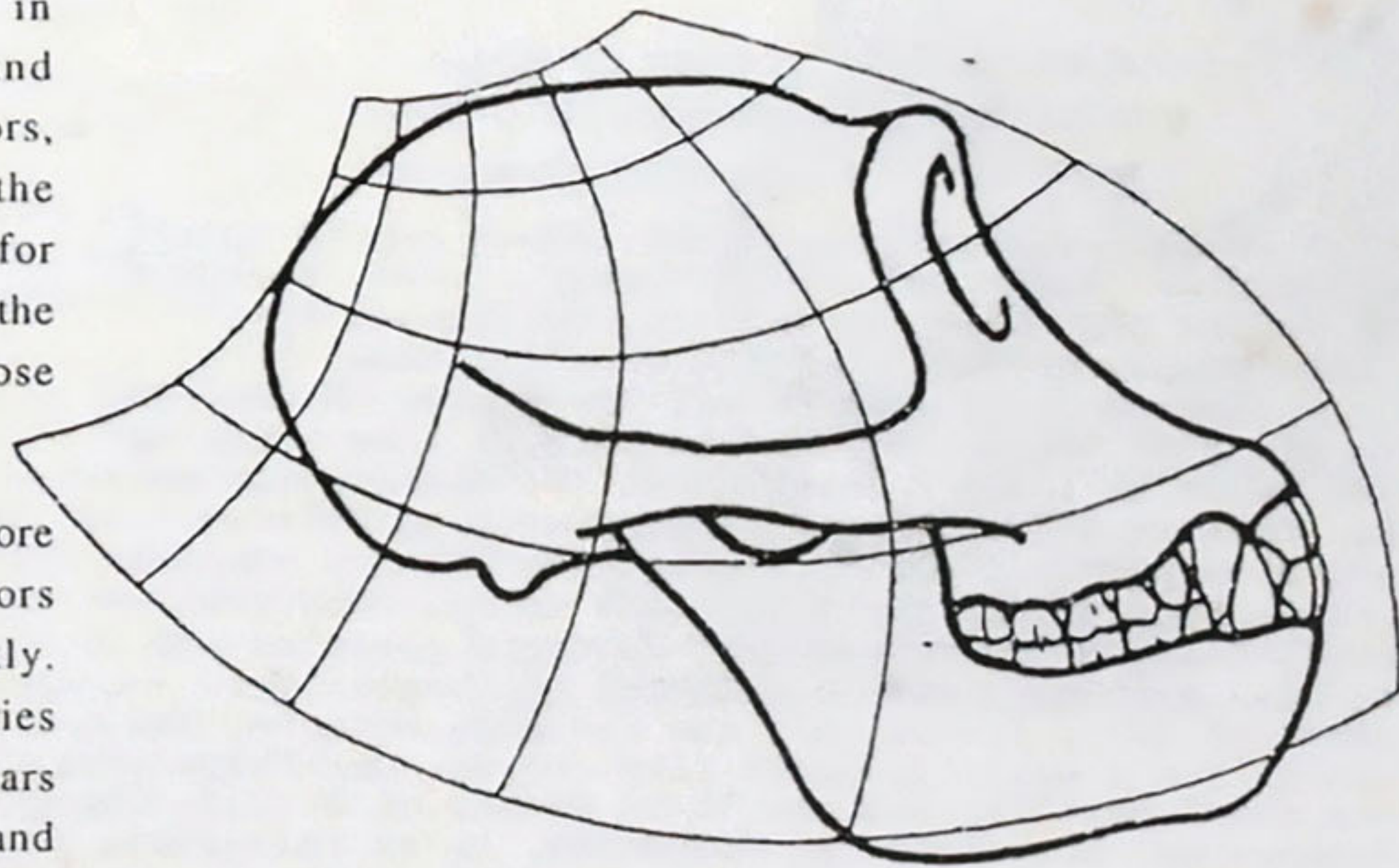
A NOT(e) on the Narrativily.

cons Richard the Narrativity went well, maybe nice model for other group documentations. The real star in the last issue though was the Jonas Mekas of the nor'western suburbs Jim Bridges whose notes and ramblings of the last two screenings made fine reading. i might point out Jim that i mean realtime in re-presentation specially the kinetic virus doesn't exist. the only problem i have with the narrative mentions is that Michael Filippidis is far from right when he states that without meaning there is no structure no order and no work of art thats all a wee bit Platonic for my dustbin,,ART doesn't use meaning to make sense rather ART tries to make sense of meaning, you could build a house out of the volumes that have been written on the problem of meaning.

[interleaved inverted text:] pete spence. quid, pamper, "time" my sans quote no rinse! le mock! fab complete. that met a a looseness so tangle huh! displace this picture foment, flab. eyedilates mince like dance Bazin! a tonic i not rebus Rikard! aplombs Cons did! so splen a not take note i but narrative... is how a "Triatholon!" do it saw i never "yeah but "water runs"

DOWNTOWN

A collection of spatial films
exploring the ambience of urban
environments around Melbourne

Last open screening a lot of wet people turned up to view "Downtown" and to openly screen. Whispers of a film glut start to surface, not enough time! "Some people have to work you know"(I know!)

Richard Touhy took us all for a ride in the dark to his PINK DESERT. My secound trip, I know where we are going so I don't worry about the destination but sat back to enjoy the view. His precision driving get's uu pretty close to the budding factory complex walls. So close in fact, at times we can read the grafitti. His camera comes to concrete clearing and circles a large concrete U shaped rectangle. We think of 2001, future uses and man made objects. The screen for a while is split into thirds. One third sky, one third building and one third mounds of dirt in the foreground. Soundtrack by GONDWANNA, is at this stage at a sustained pitch, obviously leading somewhere (but not too fast). Signs start to appear FOR LEASE and names of builder's. Film's rhythm is already very strong. built up by slicing through the vertical and horizontal lines of the buildings. Richard's cornering is politically and cinematically correct. The ground is suddenly wet, lake sized puddles appear, along with high mounds of soil in the foreground of embrionic buildings. Soundtrack changes as the didgeredoo enters the three peice combo, and its effect consoladates a lot of my stray thoughts into a larger epic style film.

The signs continue GLAD, ENERGISER, PETER'S ICE CREAM---the effect this time is deeper irony fanned by the soundtrack,as it barrels along. Lawns and shrubs appear, seats and tables for luncher's are sandwhiched on narrow grass strips between footpath and road. Richard's van is caught sight of in one of the window's. We see the tripod in the opening of the doorway of the V.W. I don't see anyone behind the camera and my skull tingles as Richard (always the auteur) is driving this film in more ways than one. I know feel his presence with every frame, even his intent.......moving from an epic feel to the compression of an individual's concentration and then back again.

Fences appear and take me away with a slight feathery strobe effect, then we pass BUDGET BOOKS, where the dispatch doors are painted with huge numbers. 1 is about 12 feet high, the camera continue's to collect numbers and I'm amazed at Man's ability to letter and number the landscape.

Shiny new steel rollerdoors are horizontally transversed soothing us in a way that only architects and designers dream of. Camera starts to look up, bits of sky appear in small blue triangles, circling of cinematic corners continue.

Barbed wire enters our screen and tears our sensibilities but Richard steps on the gas and turns them into a humming visual soundtrack of horizontal music bars. We come across our U shaped concrete block again and the camera lovingly circles and caresses its marbled grey face. And then I find like T.S.Eliot our destination is our starting point as Richard slowly and gently deposits us back where we first embarked.

SMART CITY. Melbourne buildings/American soundtrack. Railways,trams, pedestrians, glass and metal verticals and sloping horizontals and various grids make up this film. Soundtrack is stop/start and repeat rendition of some american song. The editing is so rough that it rocks buildings to their foundations and knocks the focus off its feet each time there is a cut. Sound, back tracks over and over some girl talking about her past in Arizona where the bufferlo were'nt roaming but the clouds were long a fluffy. Brett Carroll has designs on editing and movement, cutting up emerging pedestians from the under-ground with a similiar vertical(usually a building) shot and back again, building up short spurty rhythms.

A lot of what is filmed looks automated(hence title?) People weave in and out of street scaffolding intercut with vents on buildings. Chrome, concrete,steel and glass all melt into editing and b.&w. photography. Glass reflections are very watery and fluid. More short and sharp rhythms are built up twixt cutting and soundtrack. It's a pleasent playful sort of exercise with film. The phrase "fluffy rock" comes to mind as the film ends. The film is marred by the physical effects of the splices, which alter it subtley like a game of snap.

CINE IS A CINCH
::::::::::::::::

SCARS ON FILM
FILM OF SCARS
CINE ANGST CINCH

YOUTH ON AGE
AGE ON YOUTH
CINE ANGST CINCH

BOTH SIDES FILM
FILM BOTH SIDES
CINE ANGST CINE

SHOOT THEN CUT
CUT THEN SHOOT
CINCH ANGST CINE

LIFE PRINTS SCARS
SCARS PRINT LIFE
CINCH ANGST CINE

CLAW THROUGH LIFE
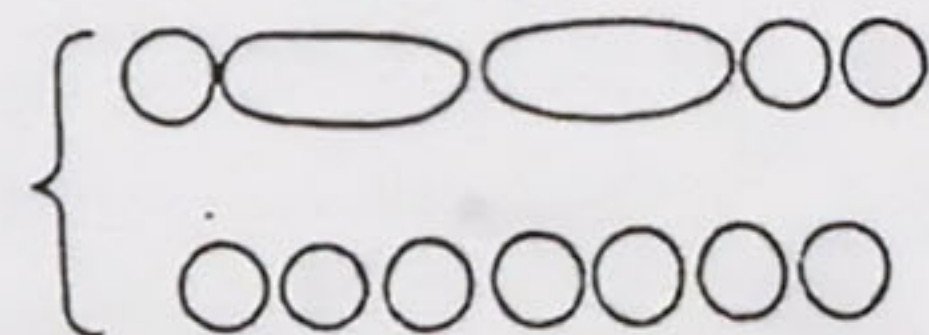LIFE THROUGH CLAWS
CINCH ANGST CINCH

FLASH ON SCREEN
SCREEN OFF FLASHES
CINE ANGST CINE

MARKS ON FILM
FILM OF MARKS
CINE ANGST CINCH

LIGHT AND DARK
DARK THEN LIGHT
CINCH ANGST CINE

LIFE IS A CINCH
CINE IS A CINCH
CINE ANGST CINCH
CINEANGST CINCH
CINEANGSTCINCH...

Jim Bridges.

MIDSUMMER..... film of moving photographs.
A park, it's boundaries, bird on horizontal bars, grass
is grey in black and white film. Long african kikuri grass
grows over tree root. Trees are bare-ish for summer and
the film has a warm grey autumn feeling to it.
    Still branches hang down trying to touch grey grass,
wind rises and the leafless branch closer to the camera-
seems to be caneing the other branches.
    Leaf and tree debris litter the grass in OONI PEH'S
unpeopled park in midsummer melbourne. Distinct feeling
of walking out of a photo poem as the photographers in
the audience clap louder than the rest.

    Next film tells us that we are definately in STEVE BALL'S
BALL'S court. Those watery vertical zig zags are turning
over on their horizontal sides again. Out of focus shots
turn into Ivan Nevsky helmets this time around. We now
have parrallel lines at 45°, settling along with rest of
building tnto horizontal mode. More out of focus buildings
superimposed reflections in and out of focus which seem
to physically flatten out. Dark machine heart pulses on
soundtrack and we seem to have entered a very dark place
indeed. Third part of film has lots of watery glassy grids.
Soundtrack is slightly oriental, glass reflections twist
and distort their bounderies. Shots are all hand held with
arrogance of an explorer. Film ends with soundtrack
revealing itself as japanese architectural music.

    Next property is ARKITEKTURE. Pete Spence wanders
around his new-found-land(St Kilda) his film is beautifully
shot in daylight and tri x. Tops of buildings star in this
history of building styles. A zoom out from a white
building saturated with light, zoom drags in dark silhoettes
of plants into foreground who attempt to strangle the little
remaining peice of light left before the zoom mercifully
comes to a stop. Keystone is planted twice in Roman Arch
(the real star of the film) Elegant and spiralled lightning
rods vie for vertical supremecy with stink poles and pigeons.
    Roman arches are married to corrigated iron roofing,
which as every one know's is made up entirely of little
roman arches standing side by side. A synagogue igloo's
itself out of the surrounding skyline. Luxor 9 addresses
us as peters intent takes us egypt,peter finds humour
wherever it lurks. Architecture is all hand held, single
synagogue becomes a doubled domed place of worship.

    Chimneys are a 6 peice floral band. Yet another roman
roman arch shelters a vacant shell...has venus gone down

the beach with bottecelli? Three arch windows reflect onto
a corragated roof as the Eisenstein triad devil wakes in
me again. was sergei gay? or just catholic!!
    Double decker bay windows and stairs leading into an
Escher montage of Architexture...the Alhambra in wood!
Cut out cocky not flying today...waiting for a friendly
breeze to pull its strings. Ambient bird calls over
humming street soundtrack, film ends. He obviously likes
his new abode and I believe he'd try x anything!!!!

    Moira joseph has pcked the Flinders St. junction for
her film set. CITY WALK. The film progress is of a photo-
graphic pilgrim stepping out and filming once around the
intersection. Physically the film has several levels, the
actual colour neg, bits of black film backing(GRUNGE) and
scratchy emulsion...film is direct sound also with black
grunge on the soundtrack.
    Everything is dark and dirty orange negative(this
melbourne feels like sydney) We become very aware of shadows
 which are locked to people's feet like reversed pajama's
with boots on. We go to another side and wait, Young and
Jacksons never looked so good. The grunge starts to come
foreward and gets very scratchy with effects like Hawaiin
shirts splattered with neutral density filters.
    Moira's camera is once again locked into the pedestrian
surge, cars are turned into stretch limo's which float and
hover over orange shadow's.
    Light's change and we are off again. Ms joseph has peeled
off the skin of film and let us swim in photography's
inner workings. This is a thick soup of a film with a
complex aftertaste from simple ingredients.

    Museum... First shot seems to be telling me that this
is an esculator to hell! A modern version of Metropolis
with it's shimmering metal. The rolling over of the steps
looks like a torture machine and the steps descending at 45°
are like finely drilled little soldiers all going over the
hill to their deaths. We then go underground(with birds on
the soundtrack)?
    T.V. monitor's hum patterns. The freshly mopped floors
are glossed over by the camera. The floor reverts to glass
with frozen fires beneath the glass, reflected from lights
above. We go back up again. (and he's filming a stairway
to heaven) The steps assemble as they get ready for the
curve which sends them back downstairs.
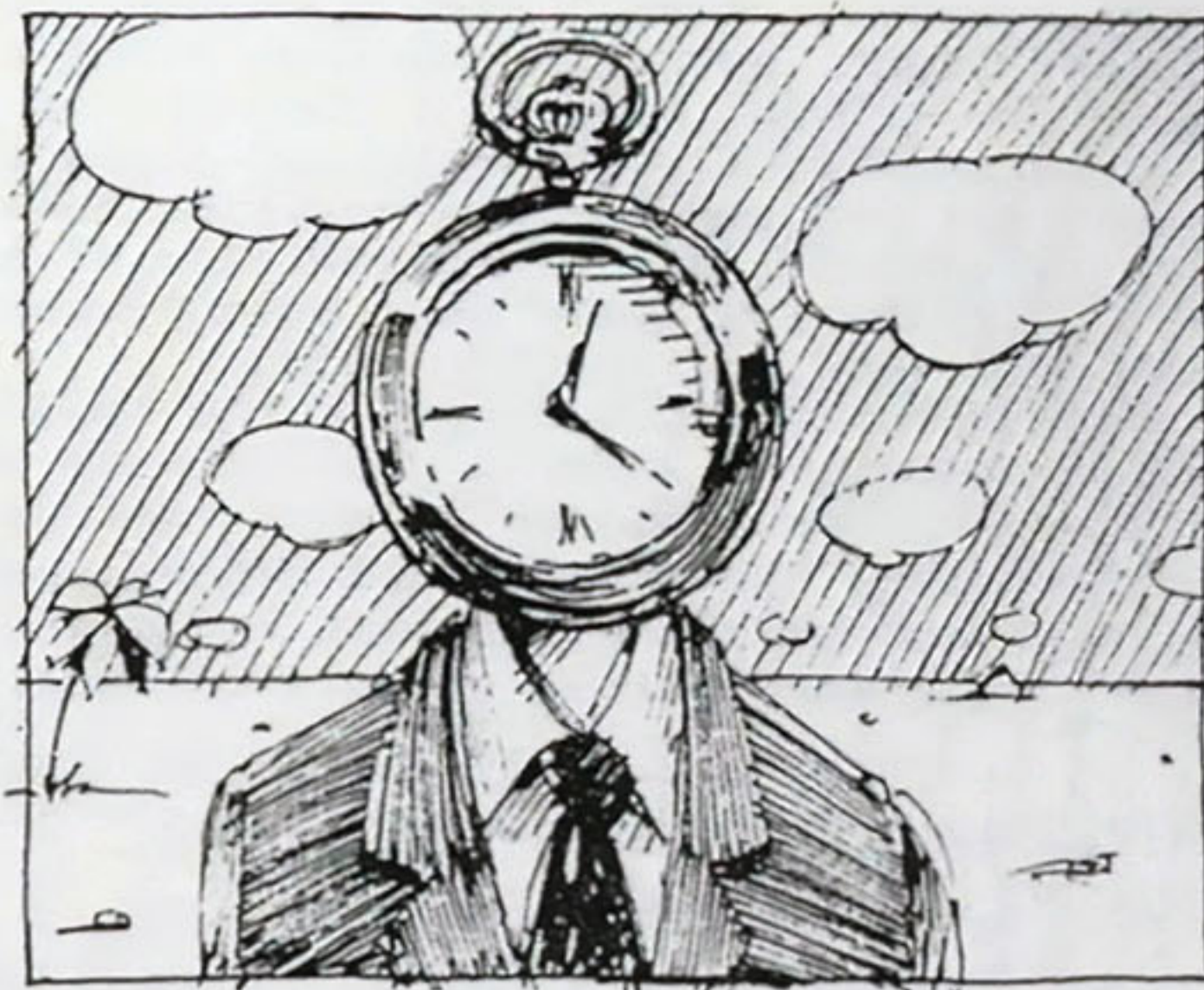
PREMISE GATHER

bring
home the beckon.
certainty
ruses quietly.
status queue.
matter wrapper
met in polished
darkness.
bunch September.
aware make rolls
off service, on
screen cholic appears
loud in temporate
prattle.
tension walks
in premise
gather, undoes
at precise
inclusion.

pete spence
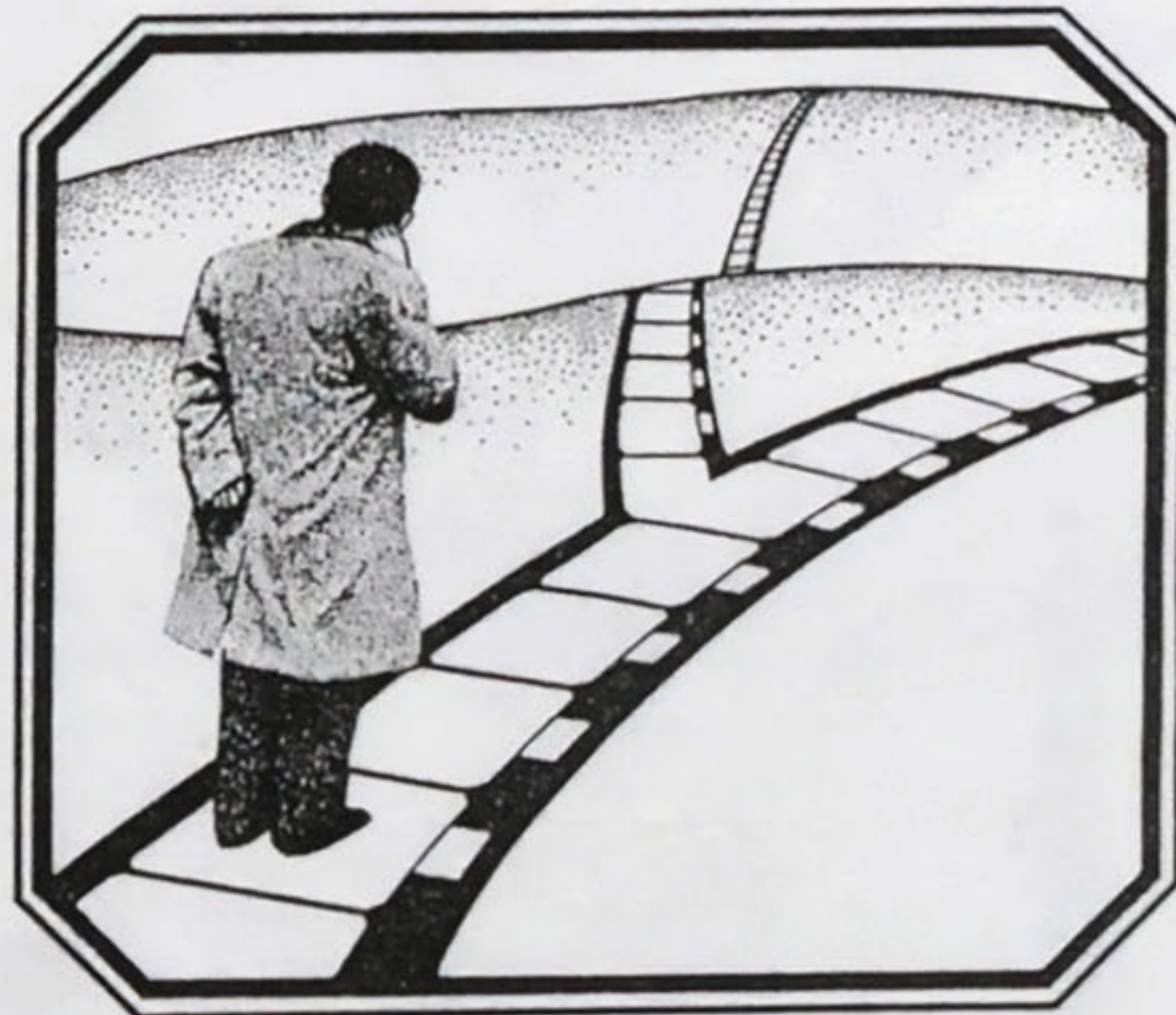
Steely reflective, grainy light shimmers on the walls next to the rising steps...the light genereflects to a higher light source.   Metal stairs cascade down to watery moire pool of light. Methinks everyone makes a train film but this time without trains! a real museum piece !!

Camera carefully walks to and looks over the edge of the stair well and almost as a reaction to what we see, camera pans 45° and follos the curved line of the top of the stair well...camera and stair well holding hands in complete harmony...very satisfying stuff.

Film maker decides to go to the toilet, soundtrack exudes toilet humour. We enter a cubicle with the sensitivity of a Howard Hughes and look at scattered single leaf sheets on the floor and then the camera gingerly goes to see what's in the bowl but chickens out just as we are about to see it's soggy contents, decides to hold on until he runs out of film.

HOME FOR THE
CONCEPTUALLY
HANDICAPPED

L. Brown

Symbols of man on light cube hang from the ceiling, hinting at man's presence. A coke and food machine guard the far wall and platforms 3 and 4.

Finally, a train traveller,(waiting of course) Time esculates and travelor gets more and more impatient. Watch is checked then goes off in search of a...tram?

Soundtrack and body language of 2 people tell us that a train is finally coming, but a scratch down the middle of the film arrives first. The train crashes into the scratch but does'nt dislodge it. The scratch continues to drip like water. Last shot is filmed in the middle of platform and shows a perfect balanced symmetry. A fine and sensitive study of light and urban environment.
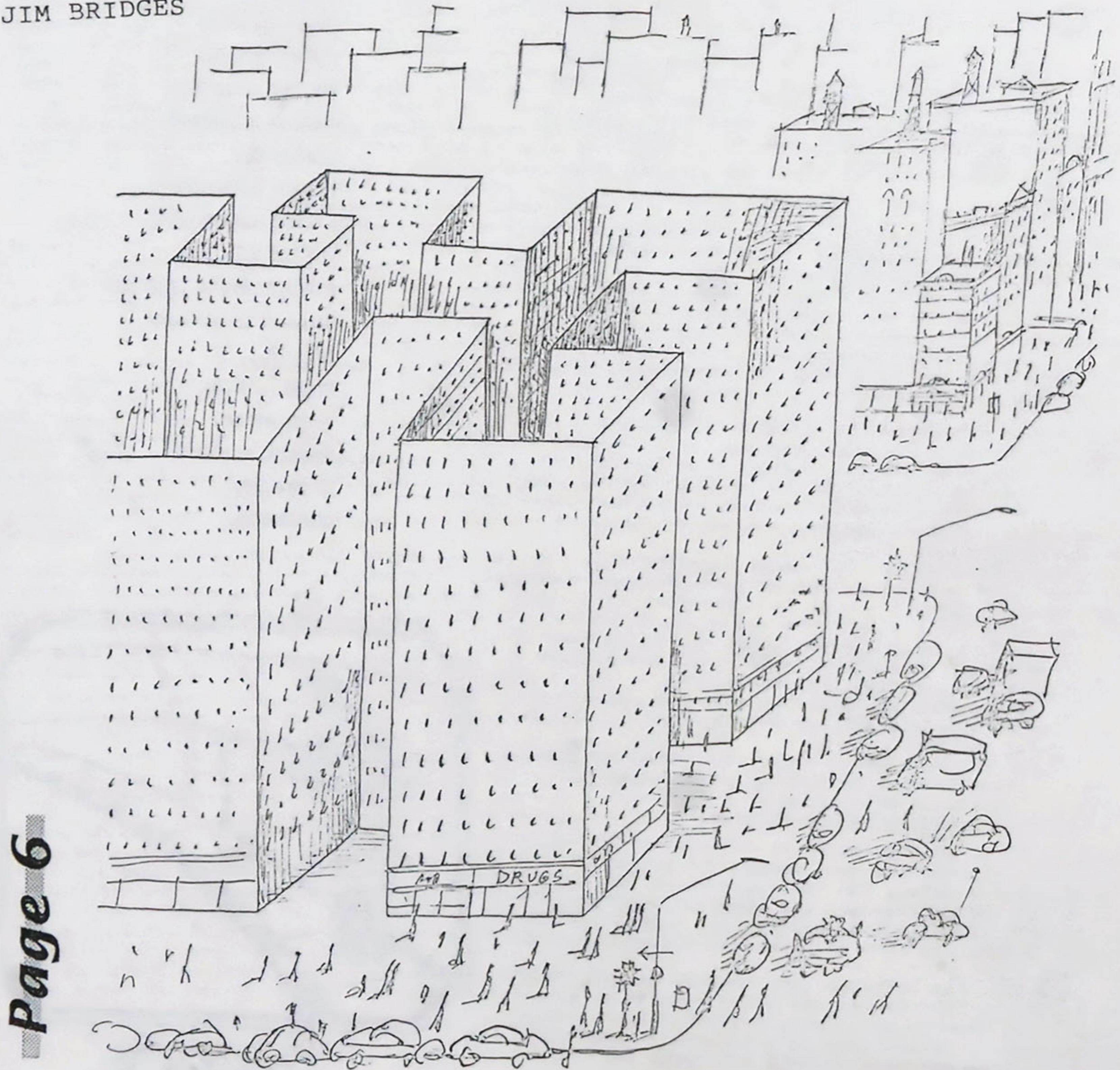
Time to go to the toilet, it's interval.

JIM BRIDGES

DRUGS

by Bill Mousoulis

1. Cine Angst Cinch by Jim Bridges

You know, the big five: life, death, marriage, taxes and the cinema. Well, maybe not death (not yet, anyway). And certainly not taxes - Jim's vision is far too far-sighted for such trivialities.

To be honest, I can't quite nut Jim out: he seems like a strange hybrid to me, appreciative of both narrative and non-narrative forms in the cinema (in both his watching and making). The rest of us sort-of stick to either one or the other field.

What a film. It shouldn't work, almost at all, but the results are right there on the screen (and out of the speakers). It works because this man has soul. What else can explain it? He uses cinematic tricks, but they are not gratuitous; he is personal, but it is not grating; he juxtaposes personal images with public ones, but it is not pretentious; he piles on the images ad infinitum but they're never out of control; he expresses "big themes" but with simplicity; etc.

Jim introduced the film by saying it is "funny ... and sad". He is modest too! What we get is a bit more: we get joy, beauty, tenderness, love. And dread, confusion, even Van Gogh's abyss. Was that a "Fin" I saw at the end? Could that be all? Or have we a born-again film-maker on our hands? (The Super-8 Group's wonderful, open hands.)

I came up with this visual/verbal sign for myself a few years back, but I will loan it to Jim for the moment:

2. Fading Light by Ian McIntosh

A woman with a slick hairstyle and long fingernails smokes a cigarette in bed. A prostitute? She may not be, but we get the picture: the camera pans over to a man, head bowed and back turned to the woman, getting dressed. Our hero. Or anti-hero.

Ian deals in dangerous themes: love, rejection, alienation, obsession. He has had problems in the past having his work accepted and/or appreciated, but his ouevre is increasing, and I, for one, will defend his work (now, if not in the future).

Back to the film: our anti-hero ("the man", writes Ian in his credits, suggesting an "everyman" rather than an "anti-hero"), after his little sexual release, thinks about and then follows his ex-girlfriend around (hey, one can't release that stuff). He confronts her, hassles her - she wants nothing to do with him. The final scene is the man walking along Brunswick St., in the title's "fading light".

I personally don't understand the ending: it
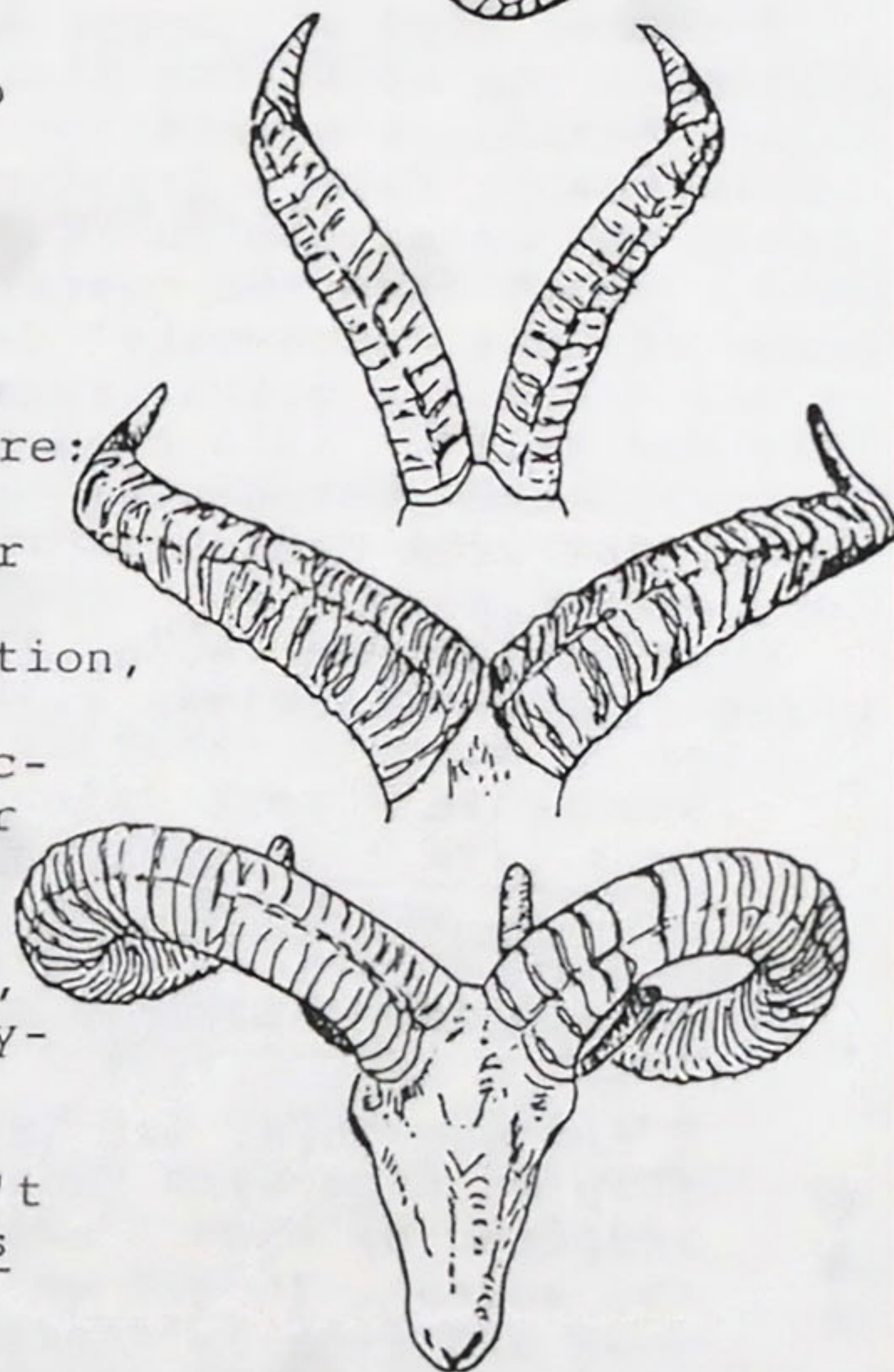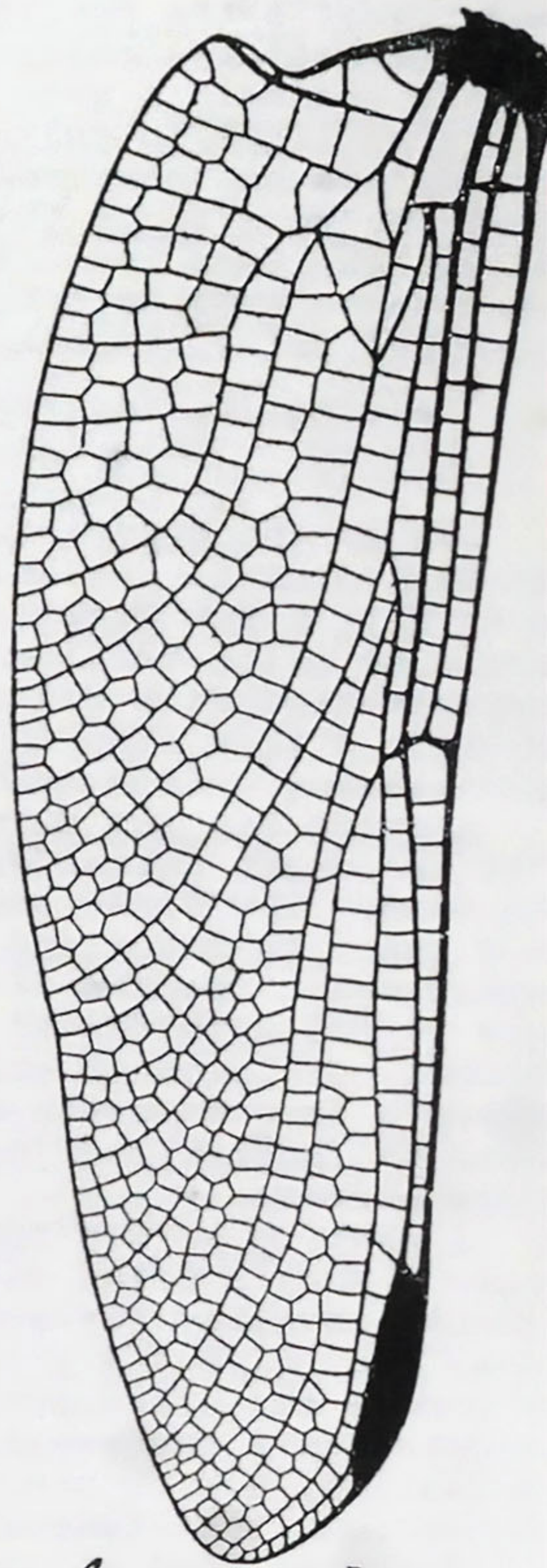
goes against all the normal rules of drama. I mean, what's the <u>resolution</u>? I suppose it doesn't matter - resignation or resentment, it's a <u>dark</u> ending. A question for you, Ian: is there no light in this world, no <u>glimpse</u> of redemption or transcendence? Or are you showing that you're a <u>tough</u> film-maker, <u>strong enough</u> to do without that (or: to express it by its very absence)? As I said in a review of one of your previous films, I look forward to more ...

3.   **Leaving** by Ian Poppins and Phil Jakubik

who is the good infuence on whom here - Ian on Phil or Phil on Ian? Those of us familiar with Phil's **Pub Crawl** and Ian's back catalogue would be quite bewildered. And impressed. Their **Experimental Film** was entertaining, but this film is a true step forward. There's nothing like seeing a film-maker(s) develop.
Leaving has its quirks, though, its wrinkles. The two major formal decisions have me scratching my head. The first one is the shift from black and white to color and then back to black and white again for the film's ending. The second one is the directorial (I guess, rather than formal) decision to only shoot the main char- acter's face in extreme close-up and never from face-on (apart from the eyes in the car's rear- view mirror).
I want to scream from the top of my lungs here - WHAT'S GOING ON? Surely color wasn't used simply to allow for sync-sound dialogue record- ing? But if B + W = imprisonment, and CLR = freedom, the wrong points are chosen. The change points don't correspond to the ex-con's literal situation, nor to his emotional or psychological situation (the changes, fluctuations in it).
The same kind of imprecision of meaning permeates the other stand-out feature of this film. Again, it's metaphorical: Faceless = imprisonment, Face = freedom. Ian and Phil are simply not careful with their directorial decis- ions. Apart from the tentativeness of their usage of this "anonymity" device, the mirror shot is all wrong. A mirror suggests the area of the "divided self". It's clearly wrong in this context: the protagonist is divided from the World, not from himself. (Although he is that too, of course.)
Congratulations, guys - I found it a fascin- ating film to watch, to follow its story.

SUPER   MARKET

* I did say this, but it did'nt
* stop me from also being
* inspired by what I saw up on
the screen. It got me off my
arse and finally finishing a
film. jim bridges editor...

THE BUCK NEVER STOPS

by George Goularas

It is somewhat pointless to accuse the Melbourne Super-8 Film Group of being a gathering of extremely smelly, hormone deficient man/boys with severe social problems. These accusations are pointless simply because they are too true - Super-8 Group is a synonym for Spotty Smelly Wannabees.

Clothed in their nappy bottom K-Mart jeans, these passive, flabby Cine-asses and oversized Film-butts make films not with testes or real ovaries but with their haemorrhoids. So once a month out creep these anaemic wonders with their tedious and insipid little Super-8 tapeworms that go on and on and on ...

For some unknown reason, after three years absence, I chose to attend the last Open Screening. I instantly regretted my decision. For a moment though, the wonderfully silent projector, the improved sound system and the almost fine venue had me in a hopeful mood. (A great improvement from the dicky RMIT Nightmare and the era when the Super-8 Newsletter editors mindlessly allowed embarrassing and slanderous squabbles to enter their 'information sheet' - was this to attract more perverted members?)

What unfolded that night was the same glib, repetitious textured bunk I was afraid of. Even more infuriating was the polite clapping, followed by inane silence. Although I missed the first few films, I was disappointed except for one redeeming short film. By 10:30, with a full bladder and suffering Super-8 stress, I was about to run home, especially after hearing that the last film was 35 minutes long.

But something happened. Someone got up and actually talked, introducing their film - he said something regarding cinema addiction and editing 20-year-old footage and that it was funny too. I sat down and crossed my legs; damn it, I was interested.

There was something already apparent - this wasn't Super-8 Group, i.e. physiological, addictive compulsions are not Super-8 Film Group, whereas pseudo-intellectual aspirations ARE. You just had to look at the last newsletter. People responded to a question to do with narrative versus non-narrative (talk about letting the chickens run amuck with a thesaurus).

Regarding the newsletter, some general points:

*   Film style categorized as boring/non-boring is a more essential and appropriate question for the Super-8 Group.

*   The Super-8 film-maker will happily waffle on in print, but, unless it is gushing, unproductive sentiment, nothing is actually said at Open Screenings.

*   Narrative/non-narrative/anti-narrative all fundamentally hinge on cause/effect. This is a tenuous statistical farce. Why? Well, cause/effect hinges on the supposed influencing of events through Time and despite cultural differences with the perception of Time, or cause and effect for that matter, you can never (as yet) go back in time to prove a single event/outcome could have been done another way. Shit happens.

On closer inspection, cause and effect breaks down because a system can never be closed to the point where "all" conditions can be reproduced exactly ... You asked me to turn on the light - did I cause the light to go on or did you, or do you blame the darkness or the builder for making the windows too small? Even motivation of cause becomes cyclic, it dissipates. The buck never stops.

*   Motivation, perhaps, is the only resolution. Personal will of self and/or god that instigates versus apparent predestiny of all things.

*   There is no distinction between narrative/non-narrative/anti-narrative - the only linking thread (let alone complete barrier) between any two 'scenes' is splicing tape.

Back to Super-8:

*   the dilemma may be the bond between the significant and the apparent.

*   A bad film can make you sick and in Super-8 the symptoms are pretence and aspiration, i.e. personal, esoteric motivation. Film-making, food-making, etc. is a compulsion of the flesh. Purpose and addiction manifest on some level where light photons and brain alpha rhythms meet.

You can't intellectualize it.
You can't keep quoting Godard.
You can buy a rug if you want texture.
You can buy a banjo if you want rhythm.
Stop making bad films.
Take up sculpting so we can at least walk away quicker.

*   Stop making excuses for Super-8. It is an incredible medium - it has no drawbacks.

*   Last word on Super-8 film-makers. Film-making isn't easy - you can't choose to be enigmatic or zany with an edit or a lighting technique. Forget contrived moods - it is there or it isn't.

Peter Schuller's Museum is a helluva film. A hypnotic, head-throbbing testament to the fact that Melbourne needs to filmed in black and white for at least 10 years to overcome the dreadful color scheme.

Some rare combinations of composition and movement make this a claustrophobic gestalt of stainless steel and toxic air-conditioning hum which removes all life from planet Melbourne. The most hysterical and surprising scene was the double take in the washroom - this boy is strange. After so many great images, one becomes critical in the last four minutes. Maybe a few more edits, and a little less of the classical type symmetrical shots which have been done to death. Just a little shortening may have sustained this very good film. Unlike other films of the night, which should have been reduced by about 99% - do these filmmakers actually watch their films after they plan and construct them?

The sad fact is that the majority of the Super-8 Group don't even realize what losers they are - it is a certainty though if you are reading this you are probably one of them.

Jim Bridges' film Cine Angst Cinch - Self-Portrait '68-'70 is a gem. It consists of 20-year-old footage (only Super-8 film can sit around for so long, its power so minimalized by opinion and then returned to like an old writer reading through youthful notes). It is tightly edited to a series of songs by Loudon Wainwright Jnr. A mix of scenes run by: family shots, abstract visual tricks, picture-scapes, animal-scapes and TV footage. Not one tedious moment, every image is compelling, he shows no fear of editing or juxtaposition. A seemingly personal response to the Super-8 remnants of his life.

Jim Bridges said he went to the Super-8 Festival and said he could do better than that - one cool attitude. Cool is not Super-8 Group. His film has humor too - that is not Super-8 Group.

The film has a familiarity that permeates the viewer. Sometimes you dream, sometimes you listen to the music. The music is peace, but you verge on distress and cessation. Then you stumble even deeper on the clichéd fear as you contemplate "where has the time gone?", "where have the years left me?".

You are drunk and listening to your favourite record. This familiar feeling that only a necessary brain damage can and must prevent us from returning to these paralyzing states of mind.

Jim Bridges' film transports you, the feeling is the most devastating, at the moment one song finishes and the next song starts - a mixture of 'here-we-go-again' and surprise, at this moment you feel you have aged 10 years.

You are drunk and listening to your favourite record. You are still surprised by this film. It is 11:30, you are tired and you want to go home - you wish the film would finish. Still attentive, you see the film finish suddenly, sadly. You regret your impatience. ∎

The Exploding Narrative:

Whose Film Is This Anyway?

Structure in **Open City**.

by Bill Mousoulis

I welcome this opportunity to add to, or extend, the comments I made in the last newsletter on my film **Open City**. As I said then, that piece was a preamble - that exercise was like asking someone to tell their life story in 10 words or less. This exercise is much better: it focusses on one particular area - structure.

For the purposes of this piece, I will limit "structure" to "ordering of the scenes in the whole". This is the clearest, simplest meaning of it anyway (for narrative films), but one could easily apply the word to everything in a film - ordering of the shots within a scene, ordering of the mise-en-scene, of the sound, of the overall formal decisions, etc. As Richard Tuohy said to me once, "everything is order".

To **Open City**. At exactly the half-way point of the film (at the 40-minute mark) an unexpected

scene arrives. Up until that point, the film is a fairly neat triangle relationship study, although strongly weighted to the male, James, the journalist. The scene is of a young man pacing in his bedroom, listening to hard rock music. The viewer experiences mystification, and also expectation that this new character will link up with the old ones in the following scenes. But it soon becomes apparent that this character will remain separate. This is George, and if James could step outside the frame and see what's going on, he'd surely cry: Hey, whose film is this anyway?

It is from this point, the point George first appears, that the film changes dramatically. It explodes. But the bomb was always there. How could it not be? C'est la vie. What is life? Well, it's certainly not what is presented several scenes into the film: James, shell-shocked, is now back home. Ah, peace at last. No, life is never that simple, that stable, that sure. The undercurrent of disruption in this peaceful surface increases - it takes internal form at about the 20-minute mark (James starts wandering, literally and psychically) and then - with George - external form.

I risk everything, as a film-maker, at this point. Viewer identification is practically abandoned: James' emotional story disperses, more characters appear, both ellipsis and time-compression are used. What was an easy flow between scenes in the first half, now becomes a jarring: every scene seems to have its own rhythm. Disrythmia results. And at about the 65-minute mark, things get worse: James and George's separate stories start going perpend-icular to each other, not parallel (the viewer has to feel two different sets of emotions), culminating in a last scene full of irony. What is going on here? Why all this jumping about?

It's very simple of course: it's there in the title, and in the opening sequence. Life is open, there are four million - or is that four billion? - stories out there. My film is stru-ctured in such a way to express that. And so it is a radical film, in the area of the politics of drama (i.e. the classic Aristotelian paradigm). George does to this film's narrative what he does to eight innocent people at the end of the narrative: he intrudes.

And this political act is determined by some-thing deeper - the philosophical world-view one has. Discounting shades, views can be dichotom-ized thus: the Christian, Western, Platonic/ Aristotelian veiw on one side and the Tragic/ Optimistic, Eastern, Nietzschean view on the other side. Or, in other words, closure or openness. I know which side I'm on. As James says just before George appears: "Anything can happen, at any time".
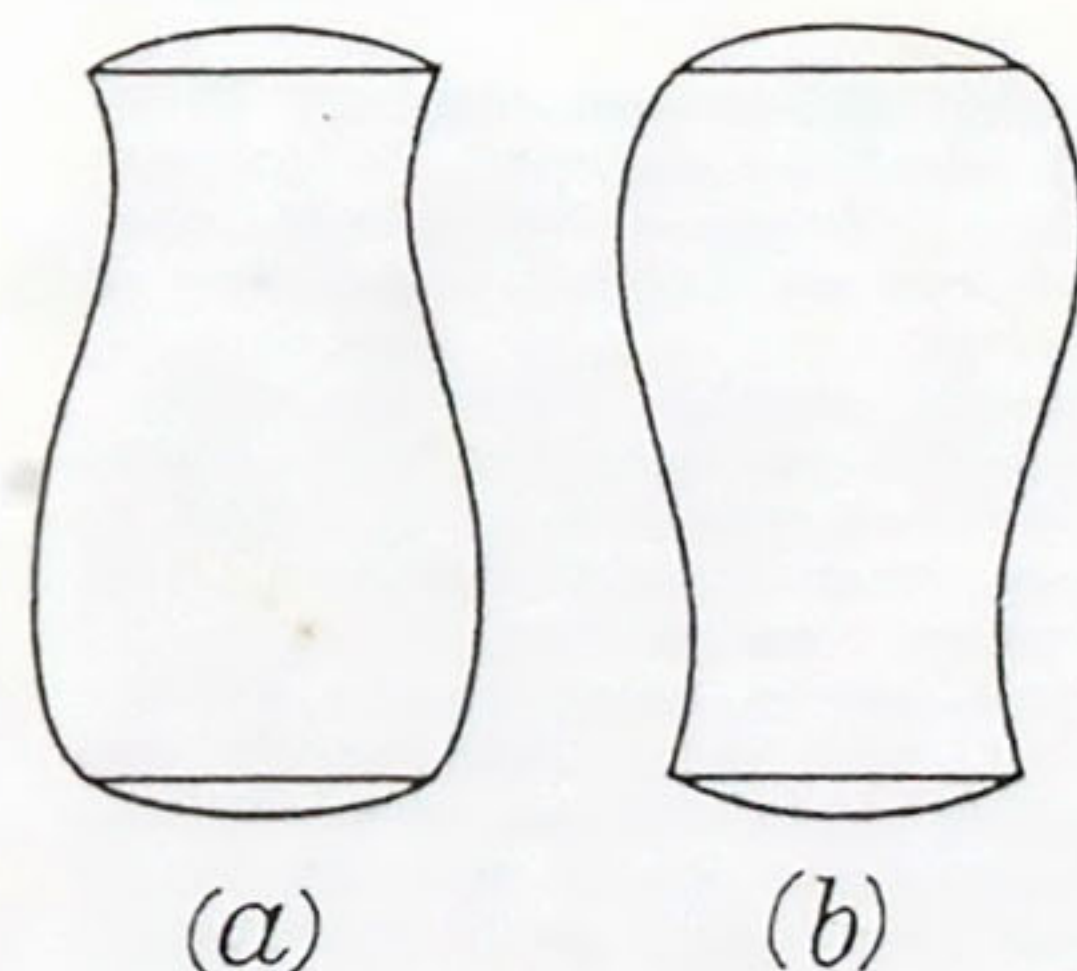
(a)   (b)

SILHOUETTE MUSTER.

wrist static
charts read
shift. flex one
moment before
the outer.
sample erosion.
next an and
to that. pall
around adjustment
wrung out
stiff wind.
lob strew trim
over peltdowns,
other utter
scraps decorative.
if's. aplomb
bobs deafening
strained window.
an attract
opens simple
rim tarnish,
silhouette muster
out of rain's
shadow. alfresco
tourniquet.
emblemished.
cut links.
hype odds corner
stark sampler
habit, incline
of clutter
motion, torn
of the century,
under described
(slipspeak), content
drift, haze
heaving rebound
instant rise.

PETE SPENCE

I have acess to five camera's which I regulary use.
Each has it's own personality and particular way of
being handled and they are all best suited to specific
filmic situations.

My choice of camera is determined by having some
pre-conceived idea about the total look I wish to
acheive in each film. e.g. having sharp, crisp detailed
imagery or a soft, painterly effect. Or being able to
precisely determine the rhythm of the film through the
use of single frame, compared to using the camera in a
freer Ad Hock manner.

Another reason for selecting which camera to use is
the actual environmental situation where filming is to
take place. If easy mobility and remaining inconspicuous
is important, a small, hnad held camera is a must, but
if the filming situation allows slow precise work with
attention to detail, a heavier more cumbersome camera
can be used with a tripod and, if necessary, a cable
release or remote control.

Some details about each of the cameras.......

* CHINON POCKET 8

A small compact and very quiet camera capable of
hanling low light situations. It has fixed focusing and
is quick and foolproof to use. Purchased from a former
private detective, this camera is excellent for filming
discreetly and "on the run". It has two film speeds-18
and 36 (for slow motion), it has a backlight control and
attachable wide angle lens. There is no intervelometer,
single frame or remote facility, so this is not a camera
for any special effects.

* CANON 814 ELECTRIC

A good reliable all round camera which has good macro
facilities, remote control socket and flash synch. as well
as many other features. This is the camera I am happy to
use most because of it's ease in handling and the excellent
quality it gives. Most of my animation and experimental work
has been done with this camera.

*_NIKON R10 SUPER

This is an excellent camera in every aspect and has many
features including backwind facilities for superimposing
images. As with all Nikon gear, lens quality is superb with
the macro lens; so good that even the minutest details can be
captured clearly, e.g. tiny insects, pores on skin, etc.
On occasions, though, I have found the macro lens too good, as
it is so sharp, more detail is conveyed than I have actually
wanted,i.e. in animation work I've found it too be a little
too distracting seeing the actual texture of the animated
surface projected back so sharply. One feature this camera
lacks is an intervelometer, although it does have a single
frame and a wide selection of film speeds to choose from.
The other disadvantage with the Nikon is it's heavy weight
it is best used with a tripod. I also find it time consuming
setting up each shot in the camera.
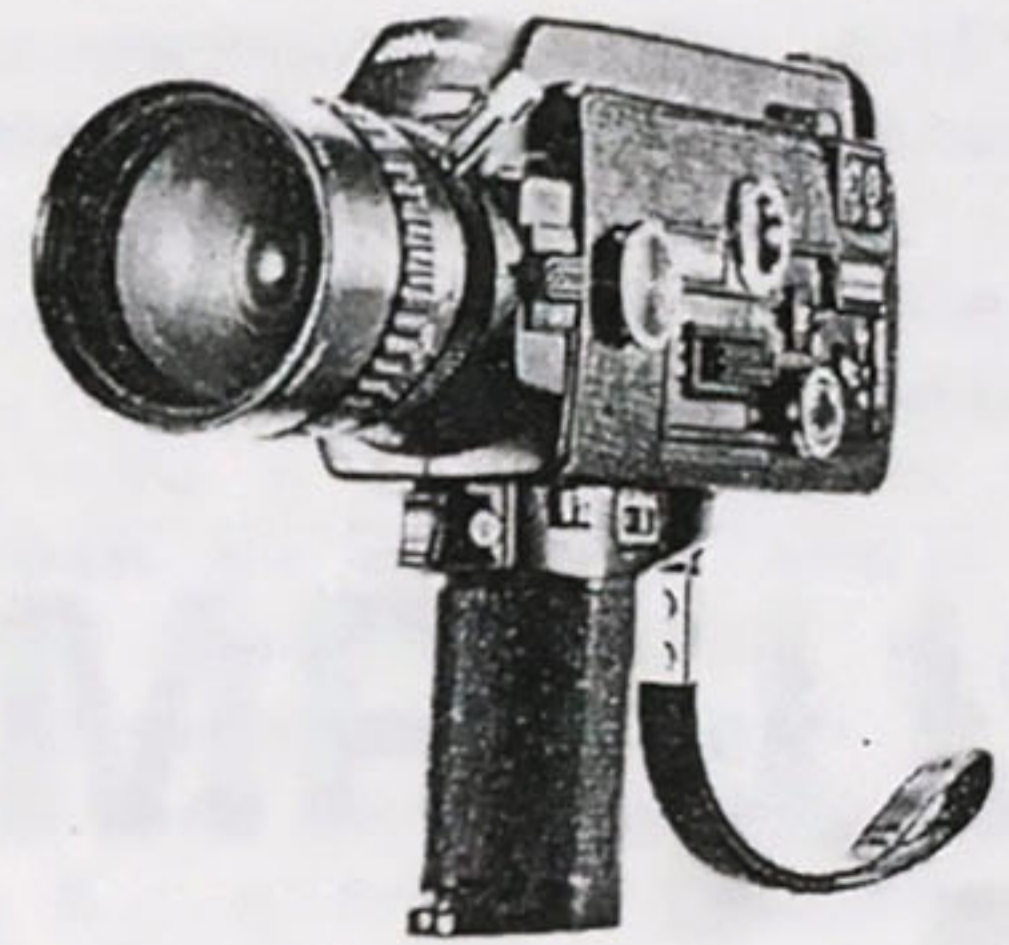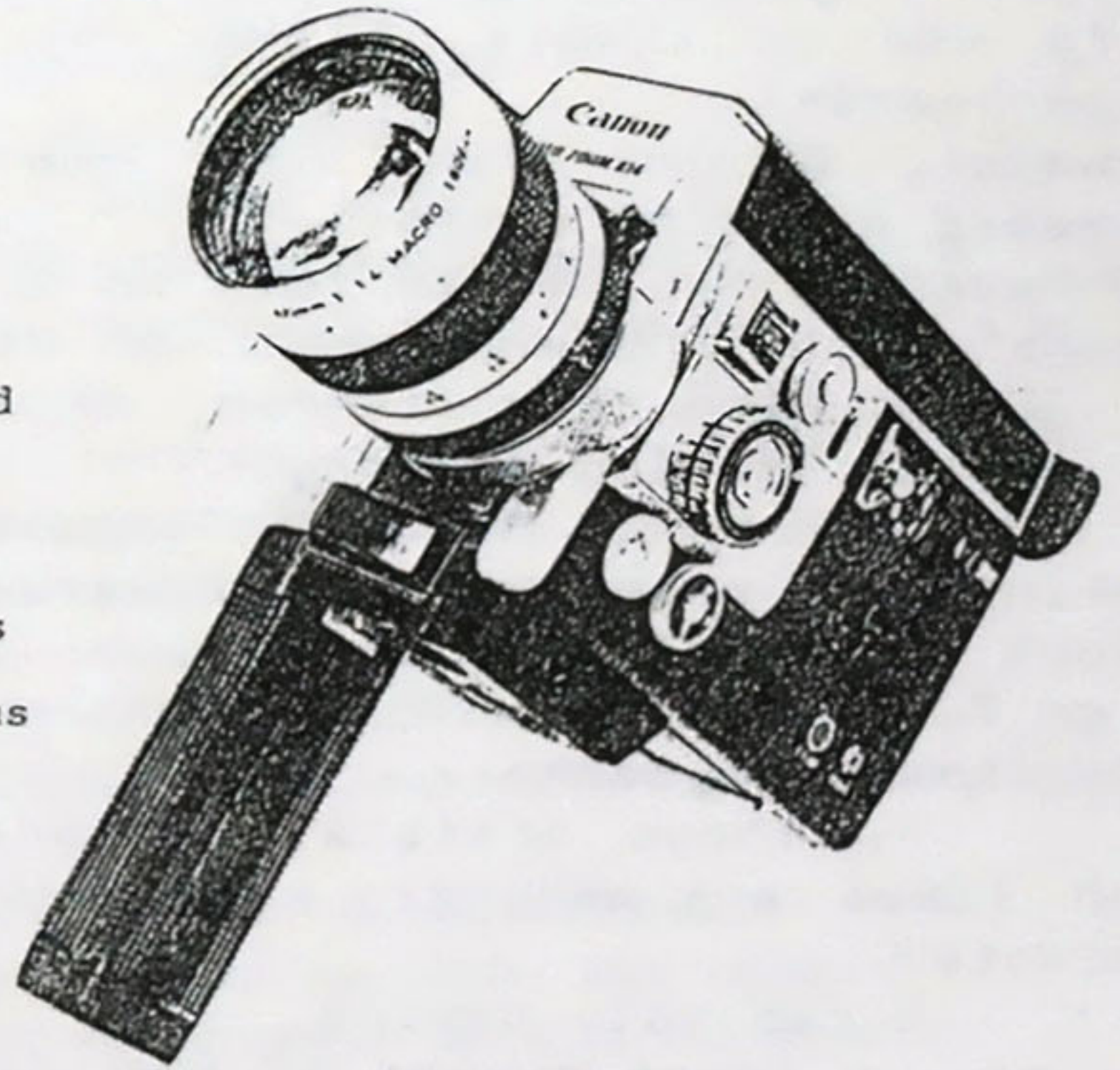
Nikon R10

* FUJICA SINGLE 8 P2 ZOOM

At the time of writing I am still waiting to see
my first "test roll" using this camera. I would describe
the Fujica as "toy like" with it's soft lens and small,
extremely light black caseing. Simple to use with a basic
on/off trigger switch. The appeal of this little hand
sized camera is in it's ability to remove the cartridge,
rewind it and multiple expose. This opens up many filming
possibilities--superimposed dream sequences or long
scenes which need dual imagery, and even titling is possible.

* MINOLTA XL SOUND

A reliable, good camera, quite solid and hardy in it's
construction, yet small enough to hand hold and use in
low light conditions. Sound facilities on it are easy to
operate and have produced good results...........

Fujica P1
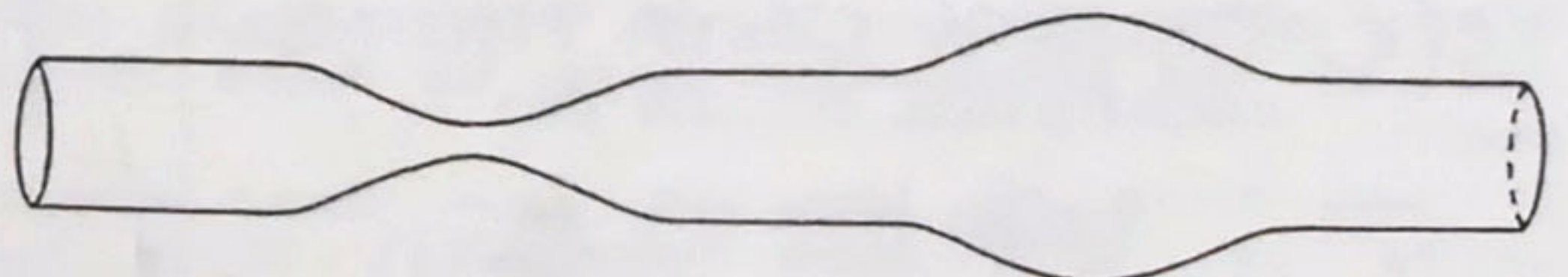
Before I received my copy of the September 1993 issue of "Super 8", life was so simple. Films, for me, were divided into Narrative or Experimental.

However, I now find upon reading this issue that all films are classed as being narrative.

Confused, I decided to look up my dictionary. Yes the word narrative means:-1.an account,report or story, as of events, experiences etc.,
     2. Part of a literary work that relates events.
     3. Telling a story.

I then looked up the word "experimental". It means "relating to or having the nature of an experiment". I note that it says nothing about story telling.

I go further and look up the words "Avant Garde". According to my dictionary it means:-
     1. those artists, writers, musicians etc., whose techniques and ideas are markedly experimental or in advance of those generally accepted.
     2.radical, daring.

To me, a large number of the films shown at the meetings seem to apply to the dictionary definition of Avant Garde or Experimental.I really do not understand what some of these films screened at the Open Screenings are trying to say.

There does not appear to be a storyline to them. If there is, then it escapes me, so why are you calling them Narrative?

If all films are narrative, what do I now call a film with a storyline,with perhaps, although not necessarily with,actors in them.

To find out I turned to the 1993 Australian Film Institute Awards screenings booklet, which has details of all films screened and their categories.

There are Feature Film, Documentary, Short Animation, and Short Fiction nominations in the booklet. All films have a synopsis. So each of them tell a story.

Decisions have to be made, so from now on I shall call films which tell a story, Short Fiction or Feature not narrative any longer. So, in regard to short fiction films in the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group, where are they? There have been very few shown at the open screenings recently. A few years ago we used to see quite a lot of them. Where have all these films and their film-makers gone?

How about some of you getting together and making some. Of course, these films take a great deal of time and effort, and perhaps with the busy life that most of you seem to lead, does not allow you the time or commitment it takes to complete one of these films.It can take a year or more to complete one.

Firstly, you have to have a good story, otherwise it is no use in starting.

Where do you get original stories ? Well a story is something that first happens in your mind. It is a series of events which comes from the imagination.

Any human events or experiences can be developed into a story. All stories have a beginning, middle and an ending. Usually, the main character has to be strongly motivated and intends to take action to satisfy their goal or desire.

To get to their goal, the writer puts a few obstacles in their way, so it provides suspense, drama,intrigue etc for the audience. Most people like happy endings, so the character eventually attains their goal or desire, but not always.

It is how the writer constructs all the elements, which makes or breaks the story. It is then up to the directors, actors and the rest of the production crew to make it into a film everyone wants to see.

If you have an idea in your head about a story, work on it, and write it. I'm sure you will find some of the Group members interested enough to help you film it.

Hopefully, there is enough of you with stories in you, that we see a resurgence of the Short Fiction film in the Super 8 Film Group.

Fig. 4.

SHAKESPEPEARE HAD A BROTHER
WHO SHOT ON SUPER 8...

TO FILM, OR NOT TO FILM?
THERE IS NO QUESTION
FILM IS EGO, EGO I FILM.
FILM IS AUTEURED, AND AUTEUR IS FILMED.
I FILM, THEREFORE I AM, A FILM.

TO PLAY WITH ONE'S DOODLE
AND DOODLE WITH ONE'S PLAY.
TO ENSHRINE OUR COSTLY FEELINGS
ON SO FRAGILE A STRIP.
JUST FILM, PROCESS AND PROJECT,
AH THERES THE RUB..AND THE SCRATCH..AND THE TEAR.

TAKING OUR TURNS ON THE DARTBOARD
REVENGEFUL, JEALOUS WATERY EYED BLIND.
SKEWED AND SQUIRMING EGO'S IN OUR MINDS
STILL SCORE BULLSEYES, EVERYTIME.

PLAYING WITH FILM, ARE WE, SERIOUS?
IS THE PERSONAL PUBLIC, AND THE PUBLIC TOO PERSONAL?
ARE CHANGING PERCEPTIONS, UPGRADING OUR GUAGE?
DO WE ALL HAVE ENOUGH SUPER 8 ANNUATION TO ROLL OVER
THERE BUT FOR THE GRACE OF MY GUAGE, GO I.

ALAS POOR EGO, I KNEW HIM TOO WELL!
EGO IS NOT A DIRTY WORD, ITS A FILM
PROJECTED ON A CLOUD AND HUNG BY SKYHOOKS.
PROJECTED WITH A GLOBE, THAT WE ALL BELIEVE
WILL NEVER GO OUT.........................THE END.
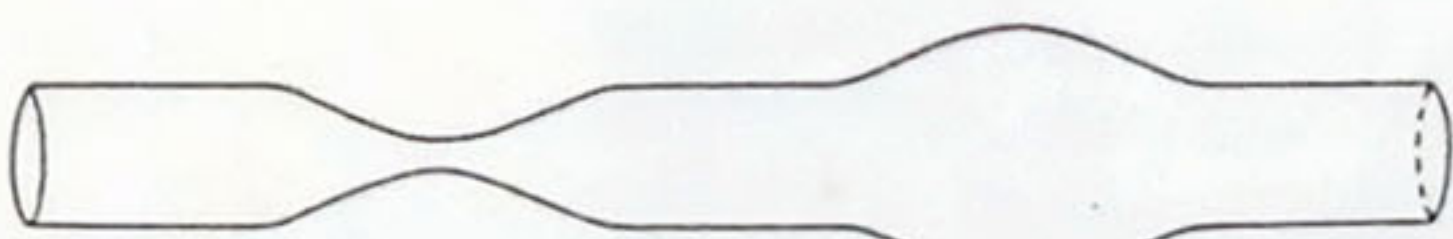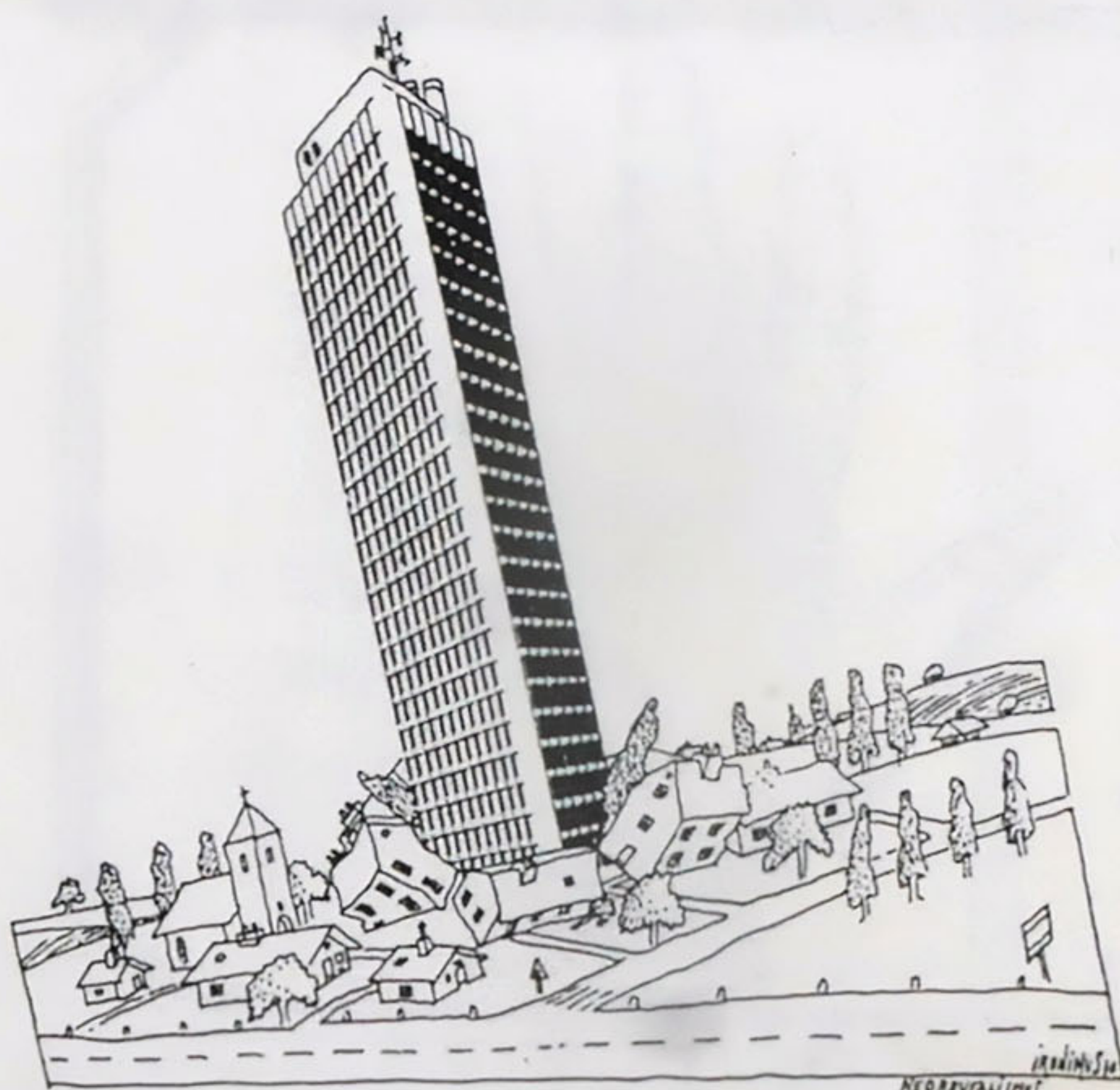
JIM BRIDGES

IRRESPONSIBLE

The voice on the answering machine said:
" Hi, this is Jim Bridges, I wonder if I can
speak to Bosco please, I'd like to talk to
him about his film last night and if there's
any chance of getting a small article about
structure of film or his relationship with his
equipment out of him for the next issue..."

Some film bequeathed by Steven Ball. A
drive out from Coober Pedy (a mine kind of
town) shot in January 1989. All around the
outback horizon hemmed in by distance,
paradoxically claustrophobic, the middle
distance distant. The road stretches ahead,
keeping the horizon level, zooming in and
out, the road expands and contracts with the
hot, slow, dry breaths so common at this
time of year, in this kind of place.

Relationships come and go but the film is
still here, cut down from thirty to ten
seconds, structured, reconstructed as a
loop, continuous at 3, 6, 9, 12, 18 frames
per second, re-shot, re-shot, re-shot,
becoming molecular. Film is all lies at
18fps, at 3fps it approaches truth: the truth
of focus (or lack of it), grain, scratches,
exposure. This film was made by another
person, the filmmakers intention, ego,
psychological garbage: the stuff that makes
most films unwatchable, left in the bin
where it belongs.

A film based on the most interesting and
most interchangeable bits of narrative films
(back to that old one), those bits that don't
serve the narrative intention directly, the
fill-in bits, the travelling shots, the
structural devices that are more interesting
than the ostensible content.

Middle Distance Distant: a road movie
in which the road is the movie, not a
metaphorical device for staging rites of
passage or the regurgitation of threadbare
plot lines. **Middle Distance Distant**: a
sci-fi movie, like those grainy desert shots
in **It came from Outer Space**. No
surprise to find that some of the avant-garde
old timers like Brakhage, Conner and Snow
were fascinated by sci-fi, but their garde is
no longer avant-. This is post-abstract,
post-representational. Although those old
guys knew and clearly demonstrated what
many popular academics have only just

realised, that an image is just an image,
vaporous, paper thin, floating meaningless
in the air, in the space between abstraction
and representation. Context is all. Structure
is but one of many channels for context.
The task at hand was to explore that space
which is the space of the image, between
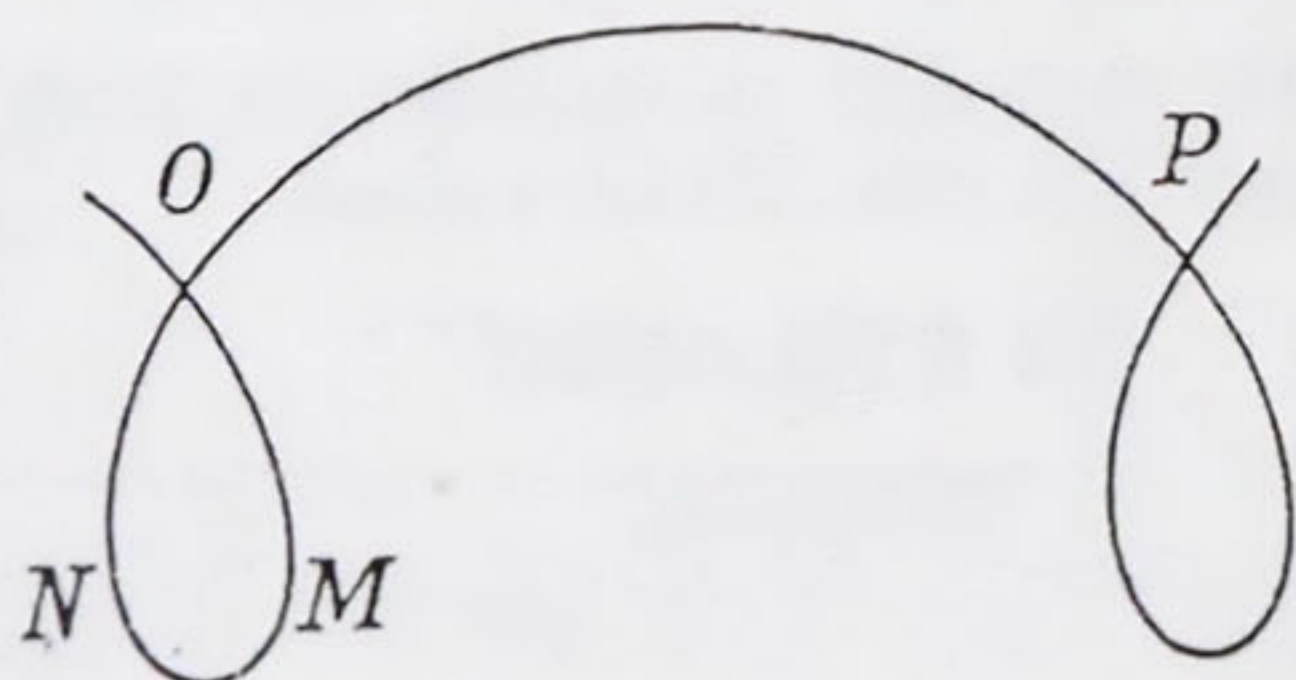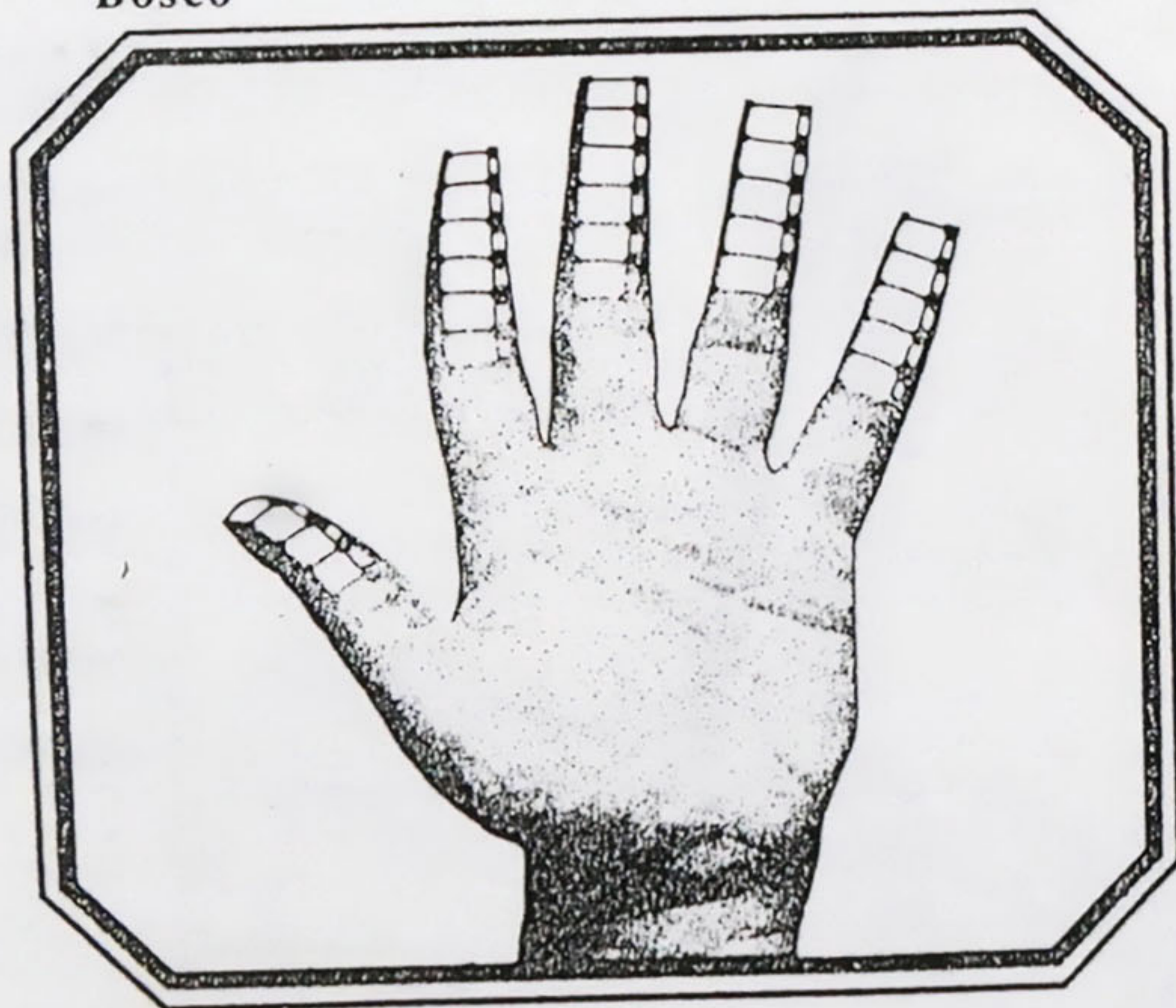the image and the sound, the world
inhabited since the death of God.

After a long period of reworking the film
was edited with deliberate speed late on a
Saturday night. The structure was
determined quickly: as the loops get slower
and more molecular, the soundtrack
increases in tempo. Uncoordinated but
conceptually linked: a phase slippage
between sound and image, transfigured
motorik. An open system imaged in an
enclosed open space. At 18fps the image
track was longer than the soundtrack, at
24fps the soundtrack longer than the image
track. Finally I ran it at 24fps, stopped the
cassette tape at the end of the film and
erased the remaining sound. Practical
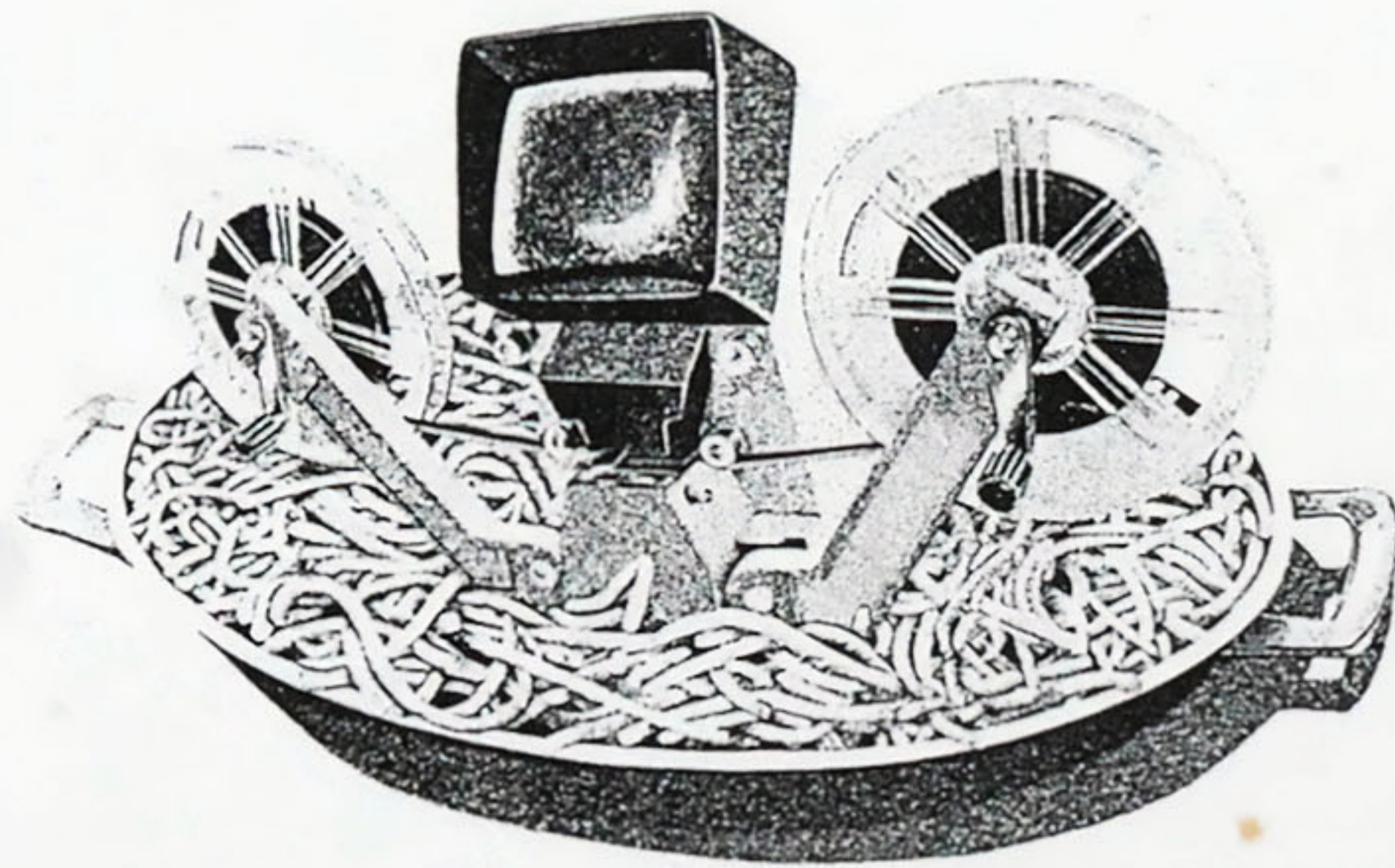considerations determined its projected
form.

The camera is dying. Its circuit board is
slowly decaying, suffering from terminal
erosion. Technicians have been consulted
but nothing can be done. How long the
virus will take to wreak its damage they
cannot say: it could be months, it could be
years. It is working perfectly at the moment
but each shot may be its last.

I'm tired of going over the same old
ground. Is there meaning in the moaning?
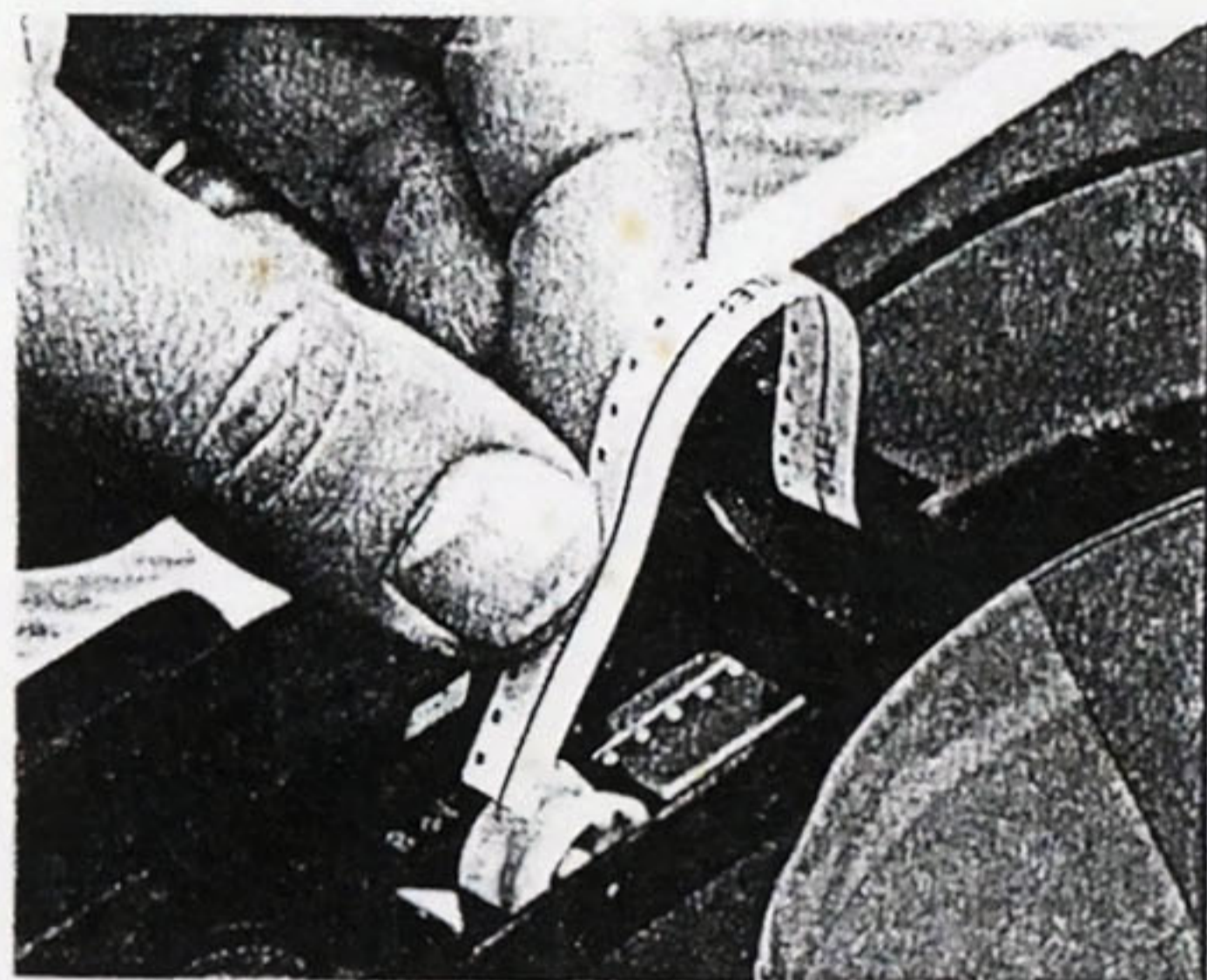Who cares about all this?

Fuck it all.

Bosco

Last Open Screening

DRIVING FROM MING WEI TO SINGARAGA
   A & C Cantrill.........7½ mins.
LEAVING.
   Ian Poppins & Phil jakubik..8 mins.
10. X . 1990
   B. Brown..............3 mins.
MIDDLE DISTANCE DISTANT.
   Bosco.................6 mins.
NON PLUS NON.
   Pete Spence..........4 mins.
FADING LIGHT.
   Ian McIntosh.........12 mins.
GET YOUR MATCHES READY.
   David Kusznir........16 mins.
CINE ANGST CINCH.
   Jim Bridges.........35 mins.

At 8.30 pm

Open Screening

Bring your movies or someone else's! or just bring someone else!!

Next Meeting

At 7.30 pm

FILMS BY NORMA PEARSE.
==================
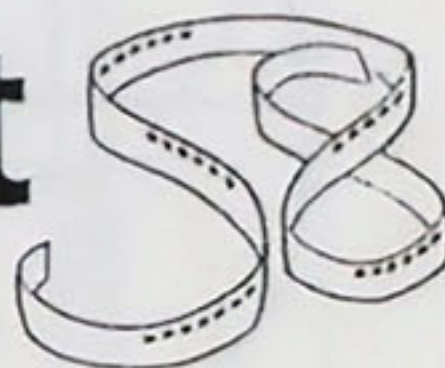
Editorial & Layout By: JIM BRIDGES AND PETE SPENCE.

Contact Number: 03 417 3402

Super Eight

If undeliverable return to:

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Melbourne
Victoria 3000**

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