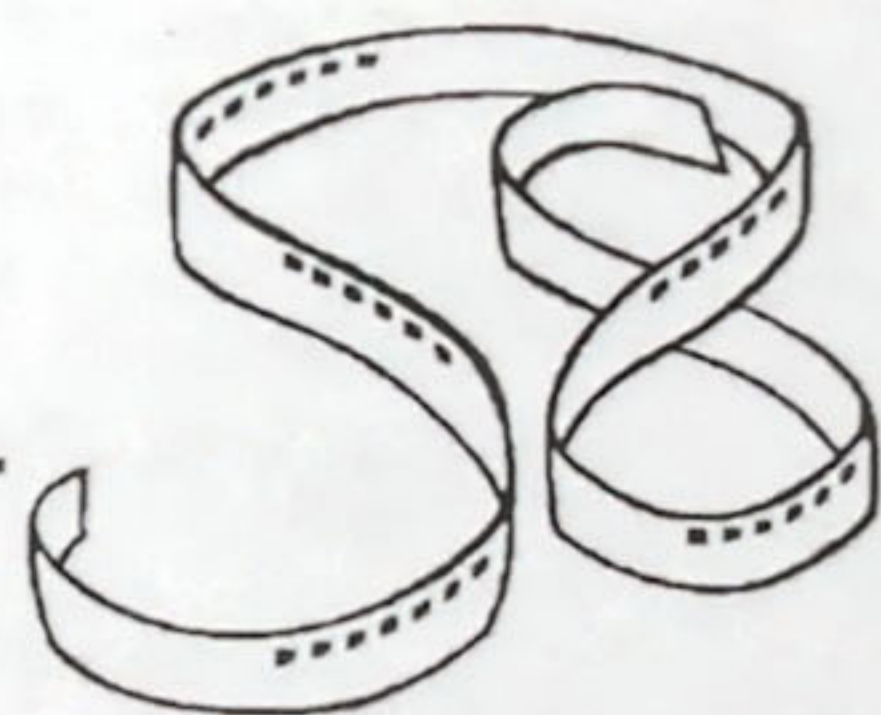


Super Eight

Newsletter of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Inc.



Issue 97 November 1994

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NEOPHYTE

★ NOVEMBER ★

★
ISSUE
★



WAS

COOL

PICTURE
START

IS



ADVICE ABOUT TELECINES

Having a Telecine made from your Super 8 original can be a fairly stressful procedure at the best of times. Not having this transfer made by true professionals can leave you with an extremely bad video and even worse an original Super 8 film; one so badly damaged during the process that it has to be re-shot all over again.

I write this letter in the hope that no Super 8 filmmaker has to endure the torture and grief that I suffered, watching my original animated Super 8 film, Pearl (18 minutes) being damaged by incompetent telecine operators.

It was with great anticipation and trust that I booked in for a half-hour professional telecine service at a large, well known Melbourne company (*not Filmplus.*). Three hours and fifteen minutes later, I walked out with a telecine which was of such poor standard, it was an embarrassment to show anybody, and worse still, an original Super 8 film that was so scratched and marked due to rough handling, I had no alternative but to re-shoot the whole film from the start.

After several unsuccessful attempts to discuss my disappointment with the Melbourne company involved, and claim some form of compensation to cover my costs in re-filming, telecine and associated expenses, I have still not as yet received an apology or any reply to my written correspondence.

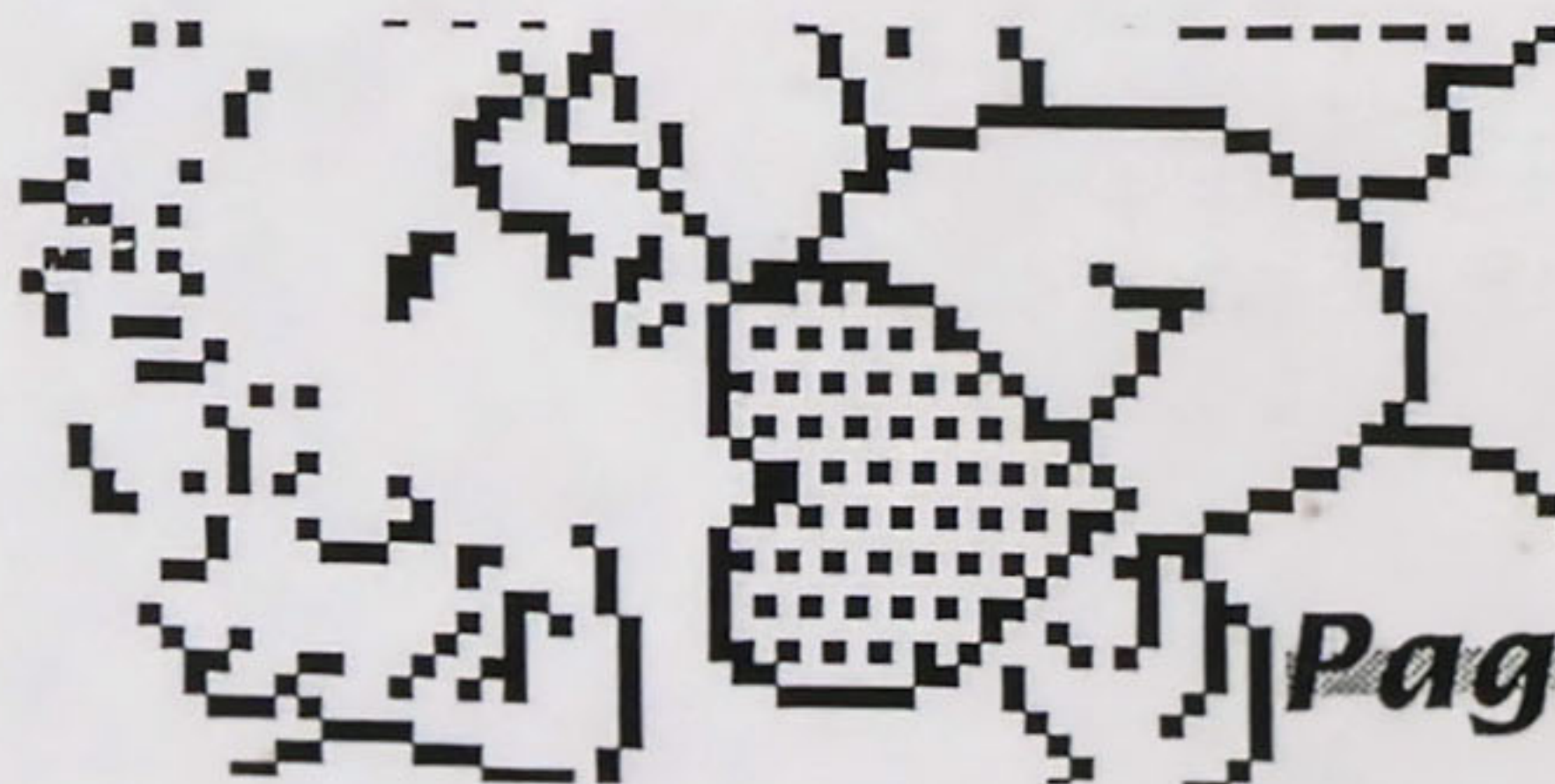
I feel this company shows no respect to Super 8 Independent filmmakers and their work, and I therefore cannot recommend their services to anyone.

Re-shooting Pearl was a costly exercise and added expenses included airfare and accomodation interstate.

I travelled to Sydney, and can highly recommend the service and quality of
Apocalypse-The Final Word in Post,
111 Chandos Street,
Crows Nest N.S.W,
Phone (02) 439 5044,
especially the care and patience of Michael Gell, who did an excellent job.

So, my advice to any Super Eighter considering having a professional telecine - start saving your pennies - because it will certainly pay to make the trip to Apocalypse in Sydney.

MOIRA JOSEPH.



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Books Books Books Books Books



A range of books and magazines have been donated to the group by MOVIE FILM ALIVE and have been a healthy kickstart to the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Members Resource Library (whew!)

If any other members have books or magazines related to Super 8 Filmmaking, and would care to donate them to the group, they would be more than welcome, and serve as an invaluable resource for other members. If you have any material to offer, contact: Tim Patterson on 417 3402 or drop them into the group office, 1st floor, 207 Johnston Street Fitzroy. (or bring them to an Open Screening!)

Here's the current catalogue available for borrowing.

Books are lent for 2 week periods, free of charge.

Add Sound to your Movies, Mike Kent 235 pgs 1979

The Amateur Film Maker, Malcolm Stuart Fellows 145 pgs 1977

All-in-one Cine book, Paul Petzold 224 pgs 1974

Directory of international film and video festivals 1991 and 1992, British Film Council 165 pgs 1991

Editing your color movies, George W. Cushman 96 pgs, 1959

Film Making, Stewart Fist 128 pgs 1972

The Focal guide to filmmaking, Paul Petzold 224 pgs 1975

Hints and Tips for the Movie Maker, Robert Bateman 83 pgs 1968

How to make Holiday Films, Focal Press 120 pgs 1964

How to make good Movies, Eastman Kodak 223 pgs

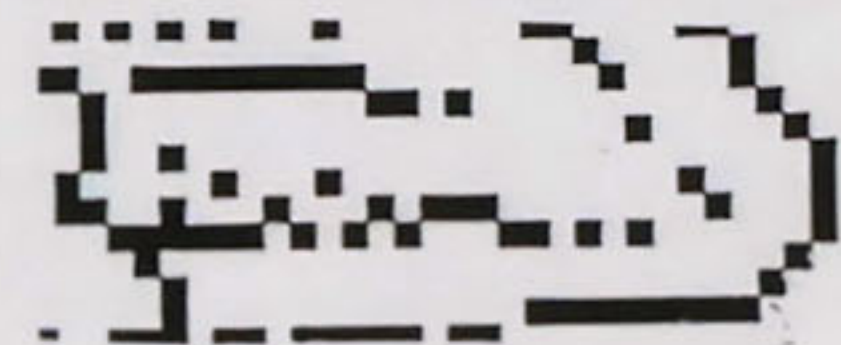
How to Title amateur Films, L.F. Minter 132 pgs 1970

Photographic Buyers Guide Cine No.1

Photographic Buyers Guide Index 1980

plus a selection of Super 8 magazines, such as
SUPER 8 FILMAKER
MOVIE MAKER
FILM MAKING

Tim P.



FIRST WRITES

Welcome to the special section of this month's "Neophyte November" issue. In the last two newsletters, I put a notice calling for contributions from people who haven't written for the newsletter before. Some suggested questions were also put: What attracts you to the Super-8 medium? Have you made your first Super-8 film yet? What kind of films do you want to make? But, really, people could write on anything, which is what most did. I personally telephoned about 15 people, and left the rest to fate. The number of resultant responses are not terribly many, but at least there's a few. Here's hoping these contributors go on and write some more for the newsletter. Remember, anyone can write for the newsletter at anytime - it's a forum not just for the Boscoes and Mooses of this world, but for everyone (it hasn't got to 100 issues by just being a bureaucratic news-sheet or a mouthpiece for a select few). Happy writing!

Bill Mousoulis

What attracts me to the Super-8 medium?

What is this overexposed, underexposed, scratchy, black and white, washed-out colour process; this strange art-form that transfixes us into a surreal world of flickering light and sound?

Well - it's our world, it's reality, it's certainly a more real world than - (here I use a rude word) - 'television'. It is a more true art-form than that slick, smooth commercial muck, that sometimes parades as an art-form, but lacks the nerve, guts and raw energy that Super-8 offers. What art-form is more down-to-earth, racy, exciting and thought-provoking?

Super-8 is alive, it breathes, it jumps out at you and grabs you by the throat and says "This is reality - look and listen, for this is how the world really is! Exciting, inflaming, rousing, goading, stimulating, as well as grim, hideous, lurid, macabre, horrid and hair-raising."

Super-8 is a tangible and real art-form like no other.

Viva Super-8!

PETER LANE

from Daniel Kotsanis:

who i l l woven though sum idio oleges
 industrialisations moneys y mechanisation
 fo the minddddddrrrrrr
 s o here i am struggelinto produce
 while haten the veroy means that give me watigot
 i s t i l l got chloce i-think--?
 it dint give me that, thats migift
 B rings me to think of the luddites
 the machine braekers of the 18 century
 who foresaw the curse upon us commersdalism
 now every thing is corrupted by this mnass
 i have visions of televisions
 being ss masfhd with tjhoughtful vengn
 venggnce
 you may ask why interest in film? asfilm
 old technolog y, obsolete to thea
 mainatttece
 rrrrrrrr
 i love obsolete things
 they have a sence at liness peace
 it takes pressure off
 it stands on its own
 can become persunified
 it is not draged down by the ever increasing pace
 of the insane money seeking homogenizing world ju
 st as i am thinking this cars are thundering past
 this once quiet back street in elwood
 where are the machine breakers now !!!... frustration comes

looking for a cracks
 in the pavement where the
 grass grows through
 daniel
 when you dont go with the flow
 you hope to be breaking up some things in my time
 even if only my camera will e filming



STEVEN BALL
INTERVIEW

by Helen Mihajlovic

On Thursday 20th October, I took Steven Ball to a pub in Fitzroy to get him drunk and take advantage of him—only kidding! I wanted to do an interview on him, I knew that I could learn a lot from his experience in film. During my interview Steven was polite, very friendly, very interesting to talk to, and even though he's a very intelligent man and has achieved a lot he's very down to earth, and rather cute.

Helen Q:How did you become the administrator of the 'Super 8 film group'?

Steven A: In 1990 the group was looking for someone to direct the Super 8 film festival, at the time I wasn't very involved in the group, I'd only been to a few open screenings. But I was chosen to direct the festival. Bill Mousoulis was the administrator of the Super 8 film group, but in 1991 Bill decided he no longer wanted to be the administrator, and so I approached him and told him I was interested. There was someone else interested at the time and he got chosen instead of me, but something came up and he was too busy to take on the position, so after he rejected the offer I was second preference and I was given the position.

H Q:Have you worked with other types of film other than super 8, for example 16mm,35mm?

S A:The first film I made was on 16mm film at Art college in England. Back in England I worked with video a lot, I shot on Super 8 then transferred onto video and edited on video. But I see no real advantage to filming on another type of film, it's all more expensive, which makes Super 8 film more easier.

H Q:Have some of your films been funded and by who? How much funding did you get?

S A:I've received one grant for a film called 'Pools between land', which was shot on Super 8 film, and this grant came from the Australian Film Commission. I received \$2,500. Also I've received some funding for a project I did in London.

H Q: What do you think the AFC looks for when deciding to give funds to a person, do you think it's experience?

S A:The AFC has a grant called 'New Image Research', it's set up to fund experimental film. I had to send my resume when I applied for a grant but I didn't have to send a showreel. I guess they gave me the grant because I'd been to Art college and majored in film and video. I had also made a video in London which had screened in different parts of the world, I was involved with the Super 8 film festival at the time, and Modern Image Makers association. Though I'd like to think they liked the idea of the film, instead of just taking my experience into account. But 'New Image film makers' is a grant for first time film makers.

H Q:Have you had any formal training? (You've already said the Art college in London)

S A:Yes, the Art college in London was called 'Maidstone', I majored in film and video, 16mm film, video and Super 8.

H Q:How do you get ideas for your films, what is your inspiration?

S A:Everything. I think the whole idea of inspiration is a bit of a problem, I'm not going to wait for inspiration. Most of my films start with an image of something. The last film started out with me shooting film through my window, without even thinking about it.

H: I like that idea.

S: Where I live there are many helicopters which I filmed outside my window and that's how the idea of the film 'However, the Autodidact' came about. I like to film things in everyday life. Everything has the potential to be used as the basis for a film. Then after I shoot something I work on it, adding sound and so on. I very rarely work out ideas and shoot for a film. I'm very interested in re-shooting film off screen. For example shooting film and then screening it and filming the screen again and again, I like to see the image degradation, what happens through generations. I also like abstract film because it makes an audience think more.

H Q:What happens with the AFC if the project they fund doesn't make enough money to pay them back what they gave, does that mean the person that applied for funds has to start selling their belongings in order to get money to pay them back?

S A: It depends on the type of grant I suppose. Most of the time they see film funding as an investment in a film. With first time film makers they would probably see it as a film that doesn't have to make money, as an investment in culture, to keep film making going.

H Q: What was the film that you received funds for about?

S A: It was about energies embodied in landscape, it was shot on Fraser Island in rainforest bush. It was a journey through landscape, there where no actors involved except for voice overs. But it was a one second on a frame, type of rhythmic film.

H Q:What is involved in being the Super 8 film group's administrator?

S A:Doing everything, organising open screenings, the newsletter, financial business, new membership. But there's a committee, they help to vote on the decisions that are made and then the administrator does the work to make sure that the decisions made actually become a reality. So the administrator basically does the work so the group can keep running.

H Q:If I was to ask you to go to the movies with me, and I allowed you to choose the movie, which movie would you pick?

S A:I don't like a lot of movies, but that doesn't mean I'm not interested in seeing them. I'm interested in seeing 'Natural born Killers', I've liked Oliver Stone's other films. I also heard that he used different types of film stock.

H Q:When did you become interested in film?

S A:I was more interested in music before film. In London after High School there is what's called a foundation year, and it was during that year that I became interested in film. I was interested in photography and painting during the foundation year, and I had painted a big abstract painting, I had left a white blank corner at the edge of the painting for which I was planning to show slides at that corner and play music, while I presented my work to a lecturer he told me the slides and music worked well. I re-shot the slides onto video and added music, that was my first real attempt at making a film. Then ofcourse I applied to go to Art college.

H Q: You've decided to retire as the administrator for the super 8 film group, who will take over your position and why was he chosen?

S A:Tim Patterson was chosen to be the new administrator for the 'Super 8 film group', he's actually been running the group now for 2 or 3 months. He was chosen because he has great organisational skills and he is familiar with Super 8 film making. He had to fill in an application form to get to apply for the position. The administrator actually gets paid a little money to run the group.

H Q:How much money does the AFC give you as funding so the Super 8 film group can be run?

S A:The AFC gives \$10,000 a year to the Super 8 film group.

H Q:Are there any limits to what can be shown at kiosk 8, for example can documentaries, animation, films with graphic sex scenes be shown? And, how do you feel about censorship?

S A: The only limit is that it must be filmed on Super 8. I don't like the idea of censorship. I don't like anyone acting as a moral arbtrator. But there is a feeling in the committee that the committee itself is like a boys group, run by men, and most of the film makers of super 8 film in the group are males. There is 1 female on the committee and 6 males.

H A: THAT'S DISGRACEFUL!!!!!!(This is a note to the female readers of this interview, I vote that we should all apply to be on the committee and by the year 1997 it should be run by women).

S: So to put a film that has graphic sex scenes in the kiosk 8, might make the committee members feel uneasy because we're all mostly male.

H Q: What are your plans for the future?

S A:To spend more time on my own work.

H Q:How many films have you made?

S A: So many, I made five films this year and six films last year which were all shot on super 8 film.

H Q:What have some of your films been about?

S A:I don't like to use actors in my films, I've never used actors except for voice overs. I don't like to use the human image in films because everyone else does. I like experimental movies. Film making to me is like the reflection of the world around you. I think my films are like fake documentaries, I make films about the real world, nature, but as soon as you put it on film it becomes a film image, so there's nothing less realistic than film.

H Q:What do you do when you're not making films, do you have any hobbies?

S A:I ride a bicycle, that's the closest thing to a hobby that I do. Everything I do is related to work, but I enjoy bushwalking, but even if I go bushwalking I have a camera with me. *

SELECTION OF FILMS FOR KIOSK 8

On Saturday 8th of October, the selection of Super 8 films for Kiosk 8 took place at the Erwin Rado Theatre. I was interested in attending this meeting to see what kind of films the committee would approve as suitable for being shown at kiosk 8. The last 'Super 8 film group' newsletter advertised that any member of the group could volunteer to be on the committee to give their opinion as to which films were suitable. Even though I am a new member, I decided to ask the director of the group if I could come along and give my opinion, and he agreed. The selection procedure was as follows, everyone was given a scoring sheet, to mark after seeing each film, with either an A=Yes ('yes' it should be screened at Kiosk 8) B=Maybe or C=No. The aim of the selection procedure being, to select a programme of 90-100 mins. There were 16 films from which to choose from, and 11 were chosen. The meeting started at midday and ended at 7.00pm. This time was taken up by screening the films, and long discussions and debates over fairness of whose films should be shown at kiosk 8. Even though we had already voted, some of the choices that were eventually made, were against the voting score. I feel that the committee were trying to be as fair as they possibly could. The final choices made were based on personal preference, but also the committee tried to include new super 8 film makers, or film makers who had not had a film screening at kiosk 8 before. If a person was to submit a super 8 film, in the hope of getting it in kiosk 8, I personally feel that they have a good chance of getting in, since only 5 films were rejected out of 16. But I feel that the people whose films were rejected was due to the fact that the committee felt they had already had enough exposure, or they felt some of the films were a bit cliched. My favourite film that I viewed that day was 'E' by the film maker Jennifer Leggett. I also had 3 other choices in films which I voted for that were rejected by the rest of the committee. I feel that some of the films that were not chosen, were better than the ones that were chosen. Which proves to the film makers that were rejected that there is an audience out there who will appreciate their films, who have the same taste as me.

IVOR'S EXHIBITION by A & C. Cantrill, a camera exhausting

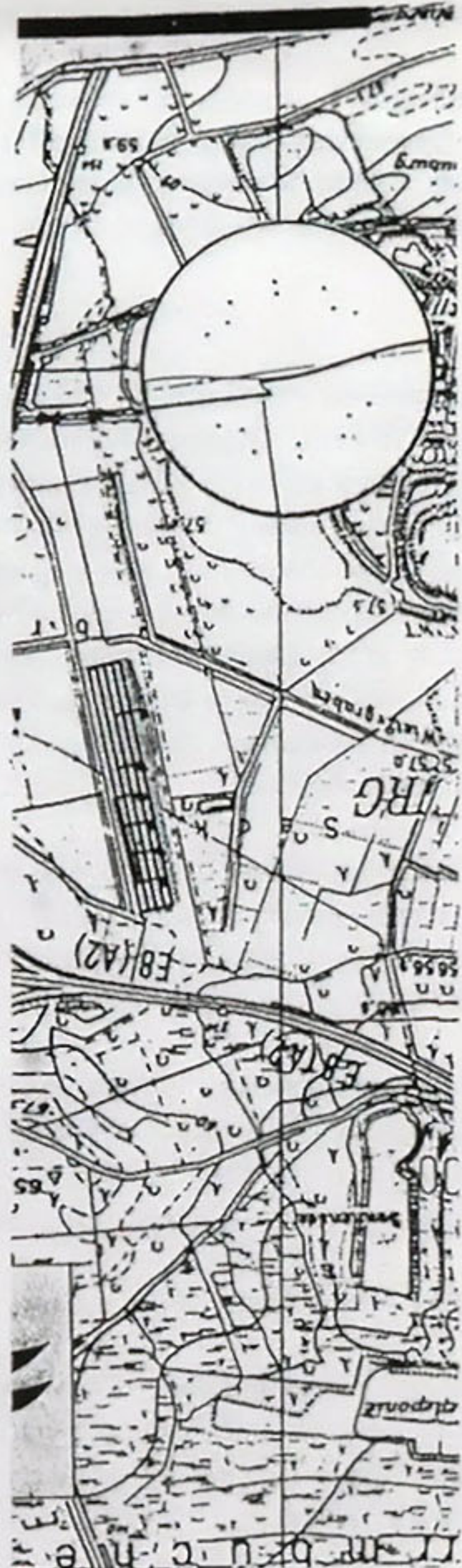
its innovation at an exhibition of paintings by Ivor Cantrill, provides more for contemplation than the event document it gives air of being. The film imposes the frame of the Super-8 camera onto various frames of painting and onto the space of the conventional gallery. An eerie sense of watching through multiple eyes, yet never really leaving artistic space, leads over my viewing.

Traditional framing in an artistic sense has been a revelatory procession of aesthetic insight. Yet the duplicity of frame is an effective feedback, giving that very procession an opportunity to pull curtain on itself. Incest perhaps? Or merely a further site for aesthetics?

For this viewer, the conclusion is eluded in a repetitive rectangle, an uncomfortable labyrinth of wall and right-angled join. The gallery space in Ivor's Exhib becomes the focus, and the paintings are disc. redited as delusion. These foci of the space become merely further frame, another duplication of the screen we're watching.

If, as Marc Sezeanna suggests with the "reading" of Pete Spence's Visual Poems, there is a danger in passivity, I might suggest our viewing of Ivor's Exhib on a purely aesthetic level is frightening in its implication of the positioning of Super-8 in the realm "art" or as a further extension of gallery space. Perhaps in the unconscious realisation of this, the camera is drawn to a shot of sunlight, through yet another frame of latticed window, moving over a painting and the gallery wall. The unseen suns movement, sought out in the corner of the gallery space, comes of crucial importance as evidence of "outside" the structure. This shot attains even more significance in portraying the immense power of the suns movement in actually changing the composition of the frame of light and shadow, as the movement is elongated across the paintings stagnate rectangle. Later, a shot of gallery lights dimming and lighting again, in a desperate attempt to replicate the motions of the sun, is not nearly as effective in its aesthetic origins in artificiality, in the world of frame and framed. Our eyes are more attracted to the movement of people in the space, their ridiculous attraction to the painting squares a reassurance for our own action in voyeurising to our own frame of light. The gallery space is as the film theatre, and all is well.

Like the abstract and unconventional painting, the Super 8 filmmaker in experimentation is attempting a subversion of the inherent stagnation of the frame. Scurrying through emotion and thought, the experimental filmmaker is attempting to confront the corners of their projection. The boys toys of Super 8 have now been deemed archaic by the creators of the labyrinth, and this makes the Super 8' frame the almost exclusive plaything of those whose galleries lie as easily in the sewers as in the white rooms. So framing the frames of others creates some spacial fascination, and in the case of Ivor's Exhib highlights each frames contextual peculiarities.



P.S.



SOME THOUGHTS ON CREATION AND THE IMAGE

SNOWY JAMES

by Ben Sheppard

CINEMA's greatest effect is unconscious. As soon as you can say about a particular film "This is great art!", you have found its first flaw.

The Image's meaning is impossible to comprehend intellectually and therefore impossible to speak about with finality. Many will try and ascribe a particular interpretation to a particular image (or even a particular interpretation to all images) but it will always be like getting off the train before reaching the station. My feeling is that whenever you open your mouth to speak about art is too soon. If you keep your mouth closed and think or observe for a little longer, you will come a little closer to the heart of the matter.

Unfortunately, in that time it often happens that your original thesis comes to seem shallow, and you even might come to regard its antithesis as being a position closer to the truth. For some, this realisation leads to a crisis of confidence and to states of aporia and aposiopsis, if not complete silence. If such people decide to persevere at all, it is to go past the vortex of thesis/antithesis toward a region of non-dualistic truth.

Others are not so shaken by this confrontation with paradox and simply change their position as often as they change their minds. For some reason the French seem to be frequently disposed to this way of thinking.

Still others are completely unaware of such dialectics. They can't understand what all the fuss is about and why people can't generally be a bit happier with their lives.

So we come back to the Image and look a little harder. It is now that we begin to become aware of quality. I believe that an artwork, be it film, painting, sculpture, poetry, music or whatever, that seems to improve when viewed through a text (i.e. an 'explanatory' text, not part of the original artwork), is not necessarily inferior, but that if it is more interesting to read about than to experience directly, then that work contains a serious flaw, a deficit. It is necessary, perhaps crucial, to be constantly asking - "What part/s of what has been said about this work is/are actually present in the work itself? What parts are just hype?" Over time, I believe a critical faculty can be developed that extends past basic personal taste, although never further than subjectivity.

"God has made it so that even a man who has nothing else in the world is rich in emotions."

- Isaac Bashevis Singer

Those who are happy to become like those around them will be content to learn from others and absorb outside knowledge. Those who wish to realise a vision unique to themselves will only be diverted from that vision by outside learning. Instead they need time to have their vision, their inner knowledge: to let fall away all the imperfections and vanities contained in their vision, until its essence is revealed.

from previous page

The former path is undoubtedly the speedier of the two, and is the more productive. The latter path is characterised by long periods of silence (again, aporia, or aporetic silence), periods of inactivity where the internal vision is sorted through like a lone fossicker sorting through a mullock heap for flecks of gold. The advantage of the latter path is that there is, I believe, a greater chance that the individual will understand what it is s/he produces. Also, there is a greater likelihood that what is produced will be startling, unique, new.

The poet strives
not to equal nature
or the gods,
but to speak at all.

There are many fewer people on this planet than there are demons, spirits, phantasms, fancies and ideas. Of these there are endless millions.

Real people are so rare that they are constantly astounded whenever they bump into one another whilst going about the business of living.

I recently saw on T.V. that the brain contains 1,000,000,000 neurons and 1,000,000,000,000,000,000 connections between these neurons which together enable a possible number of variations of thought patterns greater than the number of particles in the known universe. Therefore Hamlet was not completely right when he said (apologies if I quote incorrectly): "There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Potentially the very opposite is true.

Static camera. Static actors. Little movement. Long takes. Wind, trees, mist.

The preceding notes were taken from my workbook of the last four years where I've recorded some (all too few) of the ideas that have struck me forcefully. They are presented at random and with no real linking idea. They reflect not just my interest in cinema but also my training in photography, printmaking and the visual arts, so if sometimes my terminology sounds confusing it's because I retain remnants of dialogues on fine art.

B.S. 18/10/94

S.O.S.

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

The group has been contacted by Rebecca McLean, who is researching a documentary on the Save Our Sons movement (S.O.S) who were active between 1965 and 1973, and she is seeking any Super 8 or 16mm home footage that is relevant, regarding the demonstrations - protest marches and candlelight vigils, as well as any footage taken by families of conscripted soldiers that may have been taken at the time

Any footage whatsoever would be of invaluable use and Rebecca asks that if any member might have any footage that you think might be appropriate, could you please contact her on:

Rebecca McLean
93 Kent Street
Richmond 3121
419 2065 or
429 2782

