

DISCONTINUED CACHETS FROM THE FILMMAKERS



THE FUNNEL

VF-3402



INTRODUCTION

Cache du Cinema: Discovering Toronto Filmmakers is a seven-night series of local Toronto films organized by Paul McGowan, John Porter, and Dot Tuer. The first five screenings showcased work produced by students, Funnel regular members, and filmmakers unaffiliated with any identifiable film organization. The listing of the filmmakers who participated in these screenings can be located at the back of the catalogue. In addition, two screenings were arranged for April 12 and 19 to provide an opportunity for participants in the series to exhibit new work produced since the first screenings, and hopefully in some way inspired by them. Program notes for these films are provided as an insert to the catalogue.

One of the primary aims of the *Cache du Cinema* series was to create an atmosphere conducive to the conception *and* reception of alternative film. With this in mind, each screening was accompanied by its own program notes containing the filmmakers' biographies, their personal statements, and blank spaces for the viewers to jot down their immediate impressions of the work. Polaroids were taken of the filmmakers present, and the audience was encouraged to seek out the producers of films they either loved or hated. As well, informal after-screening get-togethers at a nearby studio offered a further opportunity for discussion and contact with the participants of the series.

In keeping with the spirit of this series, the catalogue essay written by Dot Tuer suggests directions and concerns which motivated the production and selection of the films. It is meant to be read as the opening remarks of a discourse, and not as a final assessment of the series. In Postscripts, John Porter and Paul McGowan offer their personal perspective on the series, and suggest their rationales for contributing to this curatorial collaboration. As well, a panel discussion is planned for April 20, 1985, at the Dominion Tavern (the corner of Sumach and Queen St. East) at 8:00 p.m. The purpose of this panel is to provide the local film community and its audience a chance to comment upon the series, its discoveries, and the issues it raised. Participating on the panel will be Kass Banning, a Toronto film critic, Annette Manguard, an 'unaffiliated' filmmaker in the series, Stephen Niblock, a Funnel member, and Darby Goulden, a former Ryerson student. Each of the panelists attended the majority or all of the screenings, and will offer their views of the *Cache du Cinema* series.

DOT TUER





INTRODUCTION

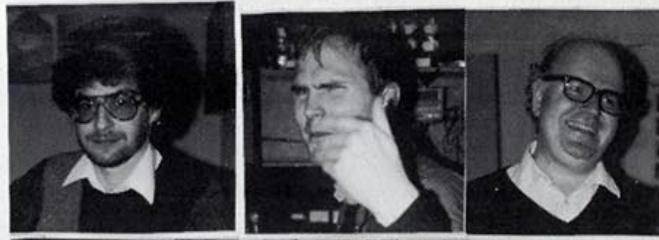
Cache du Cinema: Discovering Toronto Filmmakers is a seven-night series of local Toronto films organized by Paul McGowan, John Porter, and Dot Tuer. The first five screenings showcased work produced by students, Funnel regular members, and filmmakers unaffiliated with any identifiable film organization. The listing of the filmmakers who participated in these screenings can be located at the back of the catalogue. In addition, two screenings were arranged for April 12 and 19 to provide an opportunity for participants in the series to exhibit new work produced since the first screenings, and hopefully in some way inspired by them. Program notes for these films are provided as an insert to the catalogue.

One of the primary aims of the *Cache du Cinema* series was to create an atmosphere conducive to the conception *and* reception of alternative film. With this in mind, each screening was accompanied by its own program notes containing the filmmakers' biographies, their personal statements, and blank spaces for the viewers to jot down their immediate impressions of the work. Polaroids were taken of the filmmakers present, and the audience was encouraged to seek out the producers of films they either loved or hated. As well, informal after-screening get-togethers at a nearby studio offered a further opportunity for discussion and contact with the participants of the series.

In keeping with the spirit of this series, the catalogue essay written by Dot Tuer suggests directions and concerns which motivated the production and selection of the films. It is meant to be read as the opening remarks of a discourse, and not as a final assessment of the series. In Postscripts, John Porter and Paul McGowan offer their personal perspective on the series, and suggest their rationales for contributing to this curatorial collaboration. As well, a panel discussion is planned for April 20, 1985, at the Dominion Tavern (the corner of Sumach and Queen St. East) at 8:00 p.m. The purpose of this panel is to provide the local film community and its audience a chance to comment upon the series, its discoveries, and the issues it raised. Participating on the panel will be Kass Banning, a Toronto film critic, Annette Mangaard, an 'unaffiliated' filmmaker in the series, Stephen Niblock, a Funnel member, and Darby Goulden, a former Ryerson student. Each of the panelists attended the majority or all of the screenings, and will offer their views of the *Cache du Cinema* series.

DOT TUER







Schedule

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11

152 Picture Postcards

Nicola Wojewoda, 1984
super-8, sound, 9 1/2 minutes

Forever Yours

Sharon Cook, 1983-85
super-8, sound, 6 minutes

Taxi

Cythia MacDonald, 1984
16mm, silent, 1/2 minute

He Likes His Smoke

James Allan, 1984
16mm, silent, 2 1/2 minutes

Staring at Fucking Moving Steel All Night

Sheldon Inkol, 1984
super-8, sound, 6 minutes

Northern Journies

Edith Steiner, 1984
super-8, sound, 10 minutes

Charlie, Murf and Dave Visit New York

Dave Anderson, 1974/84
regular-8, sound, 11 minutes

Charles and the Angel

Jim Anderson, 1983
35mm slides, sound, 6 minutes

Light/Line/Drawing

Villem Teder, 1978
16mm, silent, 2 minutes

I Don't Understand

Villem Teder, 1984
16mm, sound, 6 minutes

Breath/Light/Birth

Bruce Elder, 1978
16mm, sound, 6 minutes

Harlequin Dave

Susan Reaney, 1984
16mm, sound, 10 minutes

Amy J: Diary of a Teenage Locomotive

Darby Goulden, 1982
16mm, sound, 15 minutes

All photos by John Porter

from "Amy J: Diary of a Teenage Locomotive", Darby Goulden



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16

The Bird and the Bee

Stephen Niblock, 1984
three-screen super-8/performance, sound, 12 minutes

Aradia

Anna Gronau, 1982
super-8, sound, 2 1/2 minutes

What Really Happened Next

Liz Vanopdenbosh, 1984
super-8, sound, 4 minutes

Morning Bed-X

Michaëlle McLean, 1979
super-8, silent, 3 minutes

Flow

Ric Amis, 1980
super-8, sound, 4 minutes

Over the Water

Mikkey Fontana, 1984
two-screen super-8, sound, 6 minutes

Baby Green

Ross McLaren, 1974
super-8, sound, 10 minutes

Music in Colour

Rob Sutherland, 1979,
super-8, sound, 8 minutes

Summer Day No. 2

Ronald Edding, 1983
super-8, sound, 9 minutes

Once Upon a Time

Natalie Olanick, 1983
super-8, sound, 8 minutes

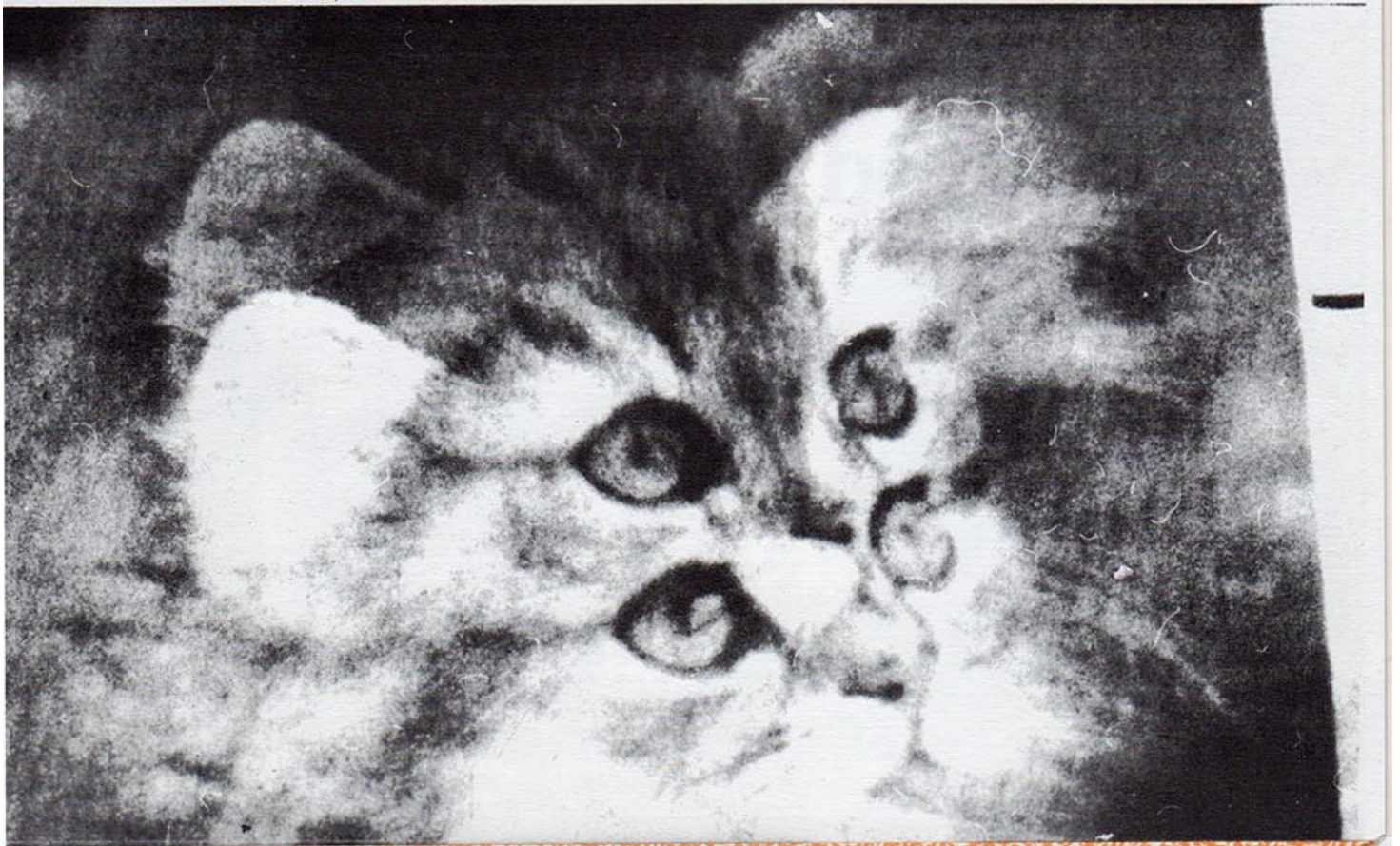
October: Blue Fruit

Joseph Tabah, 1984
super-8, sound, 10 minutes

White Noise

David Bennell, 1985
super-8, sound, 5 minutes

from "Forever Yours", Sharon Cook



untitled

Lorna Mills, 1982
super-8, sound, 5 minutes

Change is Perpetual

Mike Buchanan, 1984
super-8, silent, 3 minutes

Accident/Interruption

Cindy Gawel, 1984
16mm, sound, 8 minutes

Fat Corner

Michael Hoolboom, 1981
16mm, silent, 5 minutes

Left Wing, Right Wing

Judith Doyle, 1984
16mm, sound, 4 minutes

untitled

Mike Fitzgerald, 1984
3/4" video from super-8, sound, 17 minutes

Réminiscence

Luc Chalifour, 1984
16mm, sound, 17 minutes

Snow Search

Martha Davis, 1985
super-8, sound, 2 1/2 minutes

The Scarlet Judge

Denise Cooper, 1979/84
super-8, sound, 9 minutes

I Go to Alpha

Ian Cochrane, 1980
super-8, silent, 3 minutes

Unionville

Gloria Berlin, 1985
super-8, sound, 8 minutes

The Bank

Greg Van Alstyne & Tricia Nunan, 1980
super-8, sound, 7 minutes

from "Unionville", Gloria Berlin

Unionville man jailed 1 1/2 years

A 31-year-old Unionville man sentenced in Supreme Court last week on a manslaughter charge to the death of a 39-year-old Mississauga youth was described by Crown attorney Larry Oves as having a "Dodge City" attitude and a gun-slanger attitude.

The crown attorney was describing James Carlisle Devonport, who had been charged with the first degree murder of 18-year-old Stuart Thomas Weatherall last April following a party at Devonport's Unionville home.

Mr. Devonport pleaded not guilty to the murder charge but guilty to manslaughter when he appeared before Mr. Justice J. L. O'Driscoll last week.

He was sentenced to 18 months in reformatory, plus a three-year period of probation on full release. He was charged with manslaughter and murder and ordered deported but he will not be allowed to live in the United States.

Mr. Devonport was arrested by York Regional Police after Mr. Weatherall died at the Stratford General Hospital where a bullet had penetrated his chest.

In his testimony, Inspector Brian Colbourne said that Weatherall had attended the party with friends, though he had not known Devonport very well. He said the shooting followed a series of incidents which occurred at the party.

The court was told that when Mr. Weatherall and his friends started to leave Mr. Devonport's residence, the youth discovered someone had stolen his expensive pair of cowboy boots. According to testimony, Mr. Weatherall became upset, started to cause a disturbance and when he left the party, had managed to talk the three friends into helping him take Mr. Devonport's car to a friend's house.

Inspector Colbourne told Mr. Justice O'Driscoll that Devonport spotted the car in the lot in his back yard, where he parked his car. He had a shoe at the car and Weatherall and friends were leaving the parking lot the car had been parked in.

The court was told that the bullet penetrated the body of the

victim into the back seat of the car and into Mr. Weatherall's back.

Mr. Weatherall's friends drove him to the Stratford hospital where he died on the way to the hospital. The car was found on the way to the hospital in the back of the car.

Detective Sgt. Barry Deane, York Regional Police, went to Mr. Devonport's home following the shooting to find the youth still in possession of the boot Mr. Devonport was sitting outside in his car. He found the rifle hidden under the car radiator.

The court was told that when Detective Deane first questioned Mr. Devonport about the shooting, he denied having heard a gun shot, having any weapons or being involved in any shooting.

The reformatory period was suspended by Oves and Devonport later admitted shooting at the faces of the youth in which Weatherall was leaving the parking lot. Mr. Devonport also told police he had seen the victim of a bullet of blood and vomit and was tried as being tipped off.

Mr. Devonport was sentenced to a probation report after he was arrested by York Regional Police.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

Correspondence

Michael Snow, 1970/71
photo/sound installation

An Unrigorous Treatise on Blue

Robin Lee, 1980
super-8, sound, 20 minutes

How I Am Abused

Paulette Phillips & Geoffrey Shea, 1985
super-8, silent, 8 minutes

Displacement Studies

Peter Chapman, 1980
16mm, silent, 2 1/2 minutes

By-Pass

Robert Gutteridge, 1979/80
16mm, sound, 12 minutes

Montana Shuffle

Adam Swica, 1976
super-8, sound, 10 minutes

Queen Street

Arlene Hazzan, 1984
16mm, sound, 11 minutes

Lock

Frank Sanna, 1984
16mm, sound, 6 minutes

Water Events

Martin Von Mirbach, 1984 edit
super-8, silent, 27 minutes

Fish and Finger

Heidi Rathje, 1984
16mm, sound, 3 minutes

from "lock", Frank Sanna



Prologue: Infinite Obscure

Mike Cartmell, 1985
16mm, sound, 19 minutes

Far Away Farm

Eric Fitz, 1984
16mm, sound, 1 minutes

Ken

Eric Fitz/Sean Leaning/Scott Kerr, 1981
super-8, sound, 1 1/2 minutes.

Full Moon Movie

David McIntosh, 1985
super-8, sound, 3 minutes

The Dead Zone

Midi Onodera, 1985
super-8, sound, 2 1/2 minutes

She Bit Me Seriously

Annette Mangaard, 1984
super-8, sound, 18 minutes

The Death Rate on Earth is 100%

Bruce Gauthier, 1984
16mm, sound, 9 minutes

How's That New York Film Coming Along?

Andrew Green, 1984
16mm, sound, 13 minutes

And God Created Man

Judy Rozencweig, 1984
16mm, sound, 2 1/2 minutes

Handtinting

Joyce Wieland, 1967
16mm, silent, 5 1/2 minutes

The Film is in the CANNES

Donna Lypchuck, 1985
super-8, sound, 20 minutes

Subconscious Desire

Peter Gress, 1984
super-8, sound, 9 minutes

Loblaws Checkout Game

Munro Ferguson & Pascal Sharp, 1984
super-8, sound, 7 minutes

Poodles with Problems

Munro Ferguson & Pascal Sharp, 1984
super-8, sound, 2 minutes

Praetera Post Futurum

Jo Ahlers, 1968
16mm, sound, 12 minutes

from "Loblaws Checkout Game", Munro Ferguson and Pascal Sharp





STRATEGY AND THE CURATORIAL PROCESS

As one of the three curators who contributed film selections for the *Cache du Cinema* series, I am in the unique position (within the context of the season's catalogues) to offer an after-the-fact, after-the-screening, account of our curatorial process and its aims. This is in line with an overall strategy which seeks the tentative rather than the conclusive; which hopes to question, not to define. It is a strategy which grew out of our discussions as Funnel members and filmmakers about the relationship of The Funnel to a contemporary local film practice. It coalesced around our discussions about the relationship of curatorial positions to the active production *and* reception of an alternative cinema in this city. As such, the decisions we arrived at in forming a perspective by which to present local work were a function of discourse. It became our concern, both in the screenings themselves, and in the course of this essay, to create a context for further discourse. Thus we encourage you as a participant (filmmaker/spectator/reader) to ask your own questions, and to form your own conclusions, around the issues which are raised in the course of this commentary.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SERIES

The three areas which defined our curatorial parameters (student/unaffiliated/Funnel films), were instigated by our individual interests and involvement in the Toronto film community, and preceded any decision to work collaboratively. Paul McGowan, a film graduate of Sheridan College, had been interested for some time in presenting student work at The Funnel. In so doing, he hoped to provide a more cohesive link between the teaching centres for film production and an artist-run centre for production, distribution and exhibition. As well, he was concerned with offering students a context for screening their work beyond the confines of a classroom environment. John Porter's long-standing involvement in the Toronto experimental film scene had led to a specific focus in exploring and documenting less visible aspects of this community, both in a contemporary and historical perspective. In relation to this activity, he was concerned as a Funnel member in encouraging the organization to provide as much exhibition space as possible for beginning and unknown filmmakers. Thus he intended to curate a series at The Funnel which would showcase filmmakers, who through diffidence, inexperience, or choice, were unrepresented by any local institution. As a new member of The Funnel, a beginning filmmaker, and a 'Toronto critic new to the scene', I was also curious about work which had not been validated by organizational affiliations or critical writing. My particular concern, however, was not just to present unknown films, but to juxtapose my discoveries with the body of work associated with The Funnel, suggesting political and aesthetic issues which either linked or differentiated these two areas. When, through informal discussion, we realized our mutual commitment to the exhibition of local filmmakers, the most logical course of action seemed to be an amalgamation of our forces. And in so doing, the scope of the series was not only broadened, but larger issues concerning the relationship of film production to a curatorial position were articulated.

John Porter and Paul McGowan had both been members of The Funnel since its incorporation with a Board of Directors in 1978. And as earlier members than myself, they had experienced and supported monthly Open Screenings: a forum for anyone, student, beginner or recognized filmmaker, to show their films without prior curatorial approval. With the banning of the Open Screenings in 1982 by the Censor Board, and The Funnel's submission under protest to censorship by documentation, the opportunity for newer filmmakers such as myself to screen work on an ad hoc basis ended. And although The Funnel substituted the Open Screenings with the more formal exhibition of new films through a twice-yearly showcase, the relationship of the organization to the emerging elements of a local film practice subtly changed. For in submitting my first film to the Programming Committee to be curated as part of a New Work Showcase, I experienced near hysteria that it would not be accepted (although it was), and fear that a possible rejection would signal an invalidation of the work. Now I am probably more neurotic than most, and I am not denying that any curatorial element provokes these reactions in beginning filmmakers, but what is troubling is the lack of any other option in Toronto for screening 'unknown' work. As such, newer filmmakers are placed in the unfortunate position of relying upon an organizational acceptance of their films; a position unnecessary in Open Screenings; and a position which deters many filmmakers from even attempting to submit their work for consideration.

It was this problem which we sought to address in our collaboration as curators. Our concern, then, was to rekindle through the context of our series a non-intimidating atmosphere in which unknown, and younger filmmakers would feel comfortable screening their work at The Funnel. We were interested, not in 'strong' work, but in on-going unvalidated work. And we hoped, by searching out new filmmakers and actively encouraging them to exhibit their work, that this series would provide the incentive to finish films in progress and the motivation to continue production in the experimental cinematic medium. In order to accomplish this aim, each curator solicited films from a particular area, and retained jurisdiction over the inclusion of work within his/her parameter. Paul McGowan talked to students at York, Sheridan, Ryerson, and O.C.A. John Porter asked throughout the artist and film community for submissions, and initiated an 'illegal' open screening night at A Space, finding many of the films for his part of the series through this monthly opportunity for people to show up and informally present their work. Since John Porter was concentrating on unaffiliated films, I limited my investigation to the selection of work by regular Funnel members. In looking at their work, I chose in collaboration with the filmmakers, productions that had been neglected in distribution, shelved by age or ambivalence, or films that were made especially for the series. By selecting work in this manner, I became interested, not in the validation of particular films as 'strong' pieces, but in encouraging the members to consider The Funnel as a collective entity which could facilitate the production and distribution of *all* members' work. In conjunction with McGowan and Porter, our overall guidelines were fairly loose. We defined experimental cinema as any work which proposed an alternative framework for the viewing of 'moving' images outside the construction of dominant Hollywood codes of narrative. We were motivated in our choice, not by political or aesthetic parameters, but in what existed in Toronto in terms of a local film practice.

Within this context, certain constraints, certain exclusions inevitably occurred. In our concern to highlight the diversity of film production in Toronto, longer and often interesting work was sacrificed in the interest of exhibiting a larger number of shorter films. The other, and more unfortunate, consequence of our parameters for selection was the structural limitation. For John Porter's decision to choose work by filmmakers who were unaffiliated with any institution (The Funnel, the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, the parallel gallery system) and the time constraint which forced me to focus upon the work of regular members at The Funnel only, led to the exclusion of Toronto filmmakers who have been recognized through their production, but were in some way 'aligned'. Kay Armatage, Peter Dudar, Betty Ferguson, Phillip Hoffman, Rick Hancox, Patrick Jenkins, Richard Kerr, Keith Lock, Lorne Marin, and Peter Mettler all distribute through the C.F.M.D.C., and therefore were 'structurally' ineligible. Another group of filmmakers, peripherally associated with The Funnel through its film collection and larger membership, were also left high and dry without representation in this series. Rebecca Baird, Fast Wurms, Eldon Garnet, Toby MacLennan, Adrienne Mitchell, Sandra Meigs, and Carolyn White all produce interesting contributions to the Toronto film community and fall into this 'excluded' category. Other aspects of a local practice, such as A Space's commissioned films on women's alternative erotica, and newer, and until very recently unknown groups of filmmakers, such as the artists associated with the Eye Revue, also went unrecognized. And by listing this long number of filmmakers who work in Toronto, but for one reason or another were unable to participate in the series, I am not only pointing out the failures which occur through a selection process by categories, but I am also suggesting the range and volume of local production which deserves exhibition time. For with the diversity and numbers of filmmakers working in Toronto, it could be argued that in order to properly showcase a local practice, we would have needed five, six times the amount of exhibition space we were allocated. And these lists certainly suggest the need for another series devoted to those films which were beyond the scope of our narrowly defined curatorial positions.



A BRIEF COMMENTARY UPON THE FILMS

In our own discussions around the selection of films, the largest discrepancy of opinion arose over the inclusion of some of the student work. My personal feeling was that certain of these films were unequivocally horrible, and had no place within the series. But as it transpired, even the inclusion of the worst films had a role in creating discourse. For on Wednesday, February 1, the back-to-back programming of Mike Fitzgerald's *Untitled*, an excruciatingly raw super-8 transfer to video of a man searching through a bottomless box of junk for a match, with Luc Chalifour's *Réminiscence*, an impeccably crafted, exceedingly vacuous 16mm camera pan of an empty restaurant while a crooning voice murmured about lost love, provided a focus for the consideration of experimental film techniques and the signification of meaning. Each presents a classic extreme of student filmmaking, and interestingly, classic examples of the layman's perception of experimental film. The first work imagines that a gag-idea, the availability of a super-8 camera, and a murky, ill-defined shooting technique, constitutes alternative cinema. The second work, in comparison, imagines that over-cautious composition, and a dollop of pretentious narrative discussing memory, absence, and love, produces an intellectually moving experience for the viewer. As individual works, these films will never make it to a group show in New York, but within the context of this series, their exhibition raises questions concerning the relationship of cinematic style to its exposition of subject-matter, and suggests the basic errors which stem from the mis-comprehension of these interlocking facets.

While these were particularly radical examples of student appropriation of experimental film techniques without an understanding of their structural and narrative significations, most of the student work was affected to some degree by this problem. Frank Sanna's portrait of a young boy's relationship to nature and technology, *Lock*, lacked a complexity in its correspondence of visual and narrative codes, leaving me with the impression that sequences were constructed on the basis that they 'looked good'. Arlene Hazzan's *Queen Street*, on the other hand, employed some very effective camerawork, particularly in her b/w to colour changes, and her lyrical evocation of moods which characterized the neighbourhoods she explored. The film as a whole, however, was marred by her more literal transpositions of cinematic mechanisms to narrative connotations, such as a swirling camera movement and the voice-over of a drunk, and a final sequence which lapsed into sentimentality. Bruce Gauthier's *The Death Rate On Earth Is 100%*, and Judy Rozenzweig's *And God Created Man* felt the compulsion to tackle most of the world's problems within a few minutes of footage. As such, their subject matter (death/war/oppression) far exceeded the capacity of their visual language. Darby Goulden's *Amy J: Diary of a Teenage Locomotive*, and Andrew Green's *How's That New York Film Coming Along?*, were troubled by the opposite problem. For in constructing collage montages that ran the entire gambit of cinematic expression, the relationship of the images to a structural and contextual representation was deluged in their films by a sheer reverence for the technical possibilities of juxtaposition.

Student filmmakers, then, seemed to have been influenced by a substantial exposure to experimental cinema; an exposure which is in itself remarkable considering the marginal relationship of alternative films to the educational institutions only ten years ago. Their exposure, however, seemed to be troubled by an inadequate analysis on their part of the political and aesthetic parameters which have characterized the use of this medium by more experienced producers. In contrast, the unaffiliated filmmakers were much simpler, much less ambitious in their efforts. Working primarily in super-8 (most student filmmakers are taught in 16mm), they utilized a far more economical relationship of the visual and audio possibilities which exist in the experimental cinema. Sharon Cook, in *Forever Yours*, filmed a series of 3-D greeting cards of cats, contextualizing this simple image by overlaying a choral soundtrack of voices which recited the banal poems which accompany these cards we send to 'loved ones' on the occasion of death, birth, marriage and illness, suggesting the relationship of representation to a consumer society's obsession with both social convention and euphemism. In a similar vein, Nicola Wojewoda's *152 Picture Postcards* undermines our investment in a factitious representation of the world, constructing a simulation of the east coast's scenic moments and then interrupting this seamless 'beauty' with a Frank Sinatra love song. While these two films depended upon the audio component of the cinema to alter the signification of the photographic image, Martin Von Mirbach's *Water Events* and Ric Amis's *Flow* concentrated upon the textural element inherent in the camera's manipulation of visual representations. Amis's in-camera editing and time-lapse shots of trees and grass contrasted sharply to Mirbach's three-minute durational sequences of light reflected upon water, but both succeed in creating a sensuous and lush alternative to the 'realism' of the original objects they are filming.

Taking over

changing

changing
in all parts
of the work

Another concern evidenced by the unaffiliated filmmakers presented was an interest in the relationship of cinema to simulation and the media's exploitation of this interface. In *How I Am Abused* by Paulette Phillips and Geoffrey Shea, the film opens with a long take of the filmmakers staring at the audience from within a video monitor. This layering, and distancing of a simulated image constructs a narrative between sequences of film, and sequences of film shot off a video monitor, and suggests the complex relationship of an 'image' to the construction of its representation. Gloria Berlin's *Unionville* also incorporates simulation as a commentary upon the position of the subject within visual mediums of re-presentation. Based on the 'true' story of a murder committed by an acquaintance of hers in a small Ontario town, the film reconstructs the media's coverage of the event while a voice-over recounts the context for the murder as a dialogue between two local friends. In the end, we learn little of the event or the rationales which surround it. The two friends talk endlessly of the murderer's 'girls' and drugs and sex, while the simulated media vignettes contain harried witnesses with no comment, and people rushing into courtrooms with coats over their heads as the press hound them for information. Evocative of the publicity which created a Charles Manson story, the film points to the sensationalism that accompanies modern representation, and the inability of the subject to extricate him/herself from the mass media's framing of information.

The issues raised in the above films are only a small sampling of the directions one could identify in a more thorough examination of the unaffiliated work. Annette Mangaard's *She Bit Me Seriously* reveals a sophisticated attempt to provide an alternative film language for the representation of women and the issue of sexual difference within the construction of visual symbols. Jo Ahler's *Praetera Post Futurum*, a film made in 1968 and never publicly screened as a result of censorship problems and a lack of exhibition possibilities, deals with the subject's construction as a symbolic and phenomenological site of meaning, subverting this position through a displacement of character and narrative. And Donna Lypchuck's *the Film is in the CANNES*, provides us with a brilliant spoof on the Godardian concern to locate a revolutionary cinema within a feature film narrative tradition, pointing to the difficulty of importing theoretical models as vehicles for attributing a political significance to home-brewed work.

As a group, then, the selection of unaffiliated films reveals a common interest in the investigation of representation and the possibility of undermining its dominant forms through the utilization of the cinematic medium. And as a group, their work reflects broader affiliations with the visual arts and the alternative music scene, rather than a specific training in the medium, producing work which is more conceptually than technically sophisticated. The Funnel films, on the other hand, suggest the advantages gained from working as members of a centre committed to the production, distribution, and exhibition of an experimental cinema. The facilities which The Funnel provides has enabled its filmmakers to create a diversity of work that reflects an access to *both* critical discourse and a technical expertise. As such, the inclusion of Funnel films in this series serves to emphasize the importance of a community in the production of an alternative film practice. And more specifically, their identification as a group underlines the need for The Funnel to create an atmosphere conducive to the encouragement of isolated and younger filmmakers. For it is through contact, discussion, screenings, and availability of production equipment, that an alternative and local film practice is both sustained and advanced.

While the shorter films chosen for this series do not accurately convey the breadth and scope of The Funnel's production, they do suggest the potential the cinematic medium offers to express a range of concerns. Stephen Niblock's three-screen/performance extravaganza, *The Bird and The Bee*, explored the disjunctions and accidental relations which present themselves in the context of 'moving' images, underscoring the dominance of narrative constructions through an editing process. In a more subdued and subtle approach, Mikkey Fontana's two screen projection of 360° pans of different cities, *Over The Water*, suggested a similar interest in this issue. Jim Anderson's slide and sound piece, *Charles and the Angel*, explored the mechanisms of a cinematic structure through the use of 'still' images and a fanciful storyline, painting on the slides to locate and dislocate representation as a disjuncture between the 'expressionism' of painting and the cinematic 'truth' of photographic realism. Dave Anderson's *Charlie, Murf and Dave Visit New York* referenced a home-movie genre which has influenced the use of super-8 in experimental cinema, while Villem Teder's *I Don't Understand* utilized chemical processes, optical printing and hand-processing to create an abstract episode in his endless fascination with the cinema's textural and 'material' qualities.

Anna Gronau and Ross McLaren both sought to identify a region of sexuality within their films. Using the cinematic apparatus to produce trance-like visuals of the human figure, and overlaying their representations

with jarring, dissonant music, Gronau's *Aradia* suggested the powers of a matriarchal lineage of goddess deities while McLaren's *Baby Green* revealed the underlying polymorphous desires which men suppress in their social construction of heterosexual identities. Cindy Gavel and Mike Cartmell entered a discourse on the subject and sexual difference from a textual rather than visual perspective. In particular, Cartmell's use of Herman Melville's text to question the relationship of language to authority, the relationship of symbolic construction to sexual identity, made his film *Prologue: Infinite Obscure* a powerful merging of literary and cinematic concerns. Approaching cinema as a simulated 'experience' of representation, Peter Gress films himself projecting a home-movie of his parents, and then refilms himself projecting this second film, in *Subconscious Desire*. And the interest in his filmmaking to find through the construction of images a distancing of meaning, of desire, and yet the compulsion through this medium to gain access to the sight of the 'real' (the unconscious), parallels an issue which permeates much of the recent investigations in experimental cinema. In Munro Ferguson and Pascal Sharp's *Lowblaws Checkout Game*, simulation is encapsulated in cardboard ladies traversing a board of miniature supermarket items while plastic shopping carts pass across the frame full of tiny replicas of consumer products. This is a 'teeny-vision' of the cinema, suggesting in a humorous fashion the shifting focus of experimental film. For in The Funnel selection, and within the series generally, one finds a mutation of the traditional concerns which have characterized experimental cinema. Representation itself, rather than just its dominant codes, is being called into question. Epic and encyclopedic filmmaking, as well as discursive forays into the 'true' meaning of the image have been supplanted by a more specific focus upon the inability to locate meaning at all within the simulated confines of a projected image. Disjointed, fragmented, tentative in their exploration, the films in this series signal both a break and a continuation of an avant-garde investigation of the medium. Critics steeped in the modernist enclave of a structural film practice, and searching for critical manifestos will find little in this work to recommend itself. But these films' concern with simulation, disruption, and with the position of the subject in representation, suggest the groping and beginning attempts to break clear of a modernist stranglehold and establish a post-modernist film practice.

from "Charles and the Angel", Jim Anderson





POSTSCRIPT BY JOHN PORTER

By early 1984 when this series was planned, The Funnel (of which I am a member) had developed a reputation for sophistication and an increasing intellectual audience for world-class "experimental" film exhibition in Toronto. It also helped to motivate more local artists to make films, but it did not accordingly step-up its active search for more local films to exhibit. Many of these new film artists, working in Regular 8mm, Super-8 and 16mm, have never even considered applying to The Funnel for a screening, presuming that their work wasn't good enough for The Funnel. Some have organized their own screenings — a positive move for Toronto's film community except that most members of Toronto's independent film institutions (The Funnel, Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, and others) rarely attend such alternative screenings other than their own. For these reasons I felt that local institutions were not supporting their own community, a practice I consider suicidal.

As Toronto's only production, distribution or exhibition service for multi-format artists' films, I wanted The Funnel to sacrifice some of its sophisticated reputation and either accommodate the increasing local work in this medium or at least actively support alternative groups. So, with The Funnel's new programming policy of guest-curators, I proposed a series to showcase "unaffiliated" (non-Funnel/CFMDC/etc.) Toronto film artists chosen not on the basis of some curator's idea of "strong work" (a Funnel preoccupation), but of the seriousness of the artist. This approach required as much personal exchange as previewing films. Together with Paul McGowan's student series and Dot Tuer's series of rare Funnel films, I saw our combined series as a chance to see an inconspicuous part of Toronto's film community, its relationship to The Funnel and vice-versa. Paul was a fitting curator of student films because he's so accepting. Dot was a fitting catalogue-writer and curator of Funnel films because of her writing experience and because, as a new member of the community and The Funnel, she offers a fresh view.

My general appraisal of the series' sixty films is that I have preferences, but all the films are interesting for some reason or other, and therefore deserve to be seen at least once. My only regret was the necessary exclusion of so many other unaffiliated filmmakers and I pray that new curators will continue this series with improvements and expansion next year, and every year.



POSTSCRIPT BY PAUL MCGOWAN

Artists are often obsessive. This is understandable as we live in a society & historical time that places less value on art than the packaging that sells it. To persist in the goal of being an artist requires sacrifice, for there is little recompense, by no means enough to raise a family or lead even the poorest working class life. For this series, I chose work that displayed an intuitive or analytic awareness of this, the artist's dilemma.

It is a bit unfair & patently absurd to apply the same standards of criticism to artists whose only motivation is an obsession with art, as those applied to commercial cinema.

Now a rough breakdown would explain & support my argument. Cost per minute of experimental films is probably mean of \$100.

Low budget documentaries & dramas \$1,000.00 per minute. Hollywood style features run \$50 to \$100 thousand per minute. Therefore, artists receive 1c for every \$10 that the industry receives. An industry that devotes 99% of its energy to filming dime store novels.¹ Interestingly enough a character out of one of those novels is at present President of the United States. Is it possible that Media, Money & Politics are somehow linked?

Let us return to the artist as obsessive. Art is more or less, in an economic sense, a working phenomenon, it being a productive activity as opposed to a managerial activity. Management & government seems to be a matter of savoir faire. Those that have this savoir faire tend to inherit the understanding and connections (as well as the ability to sit at a desk for great lengths of time & push paper), the wherewithall to deny the productive drive inherent to the working class.

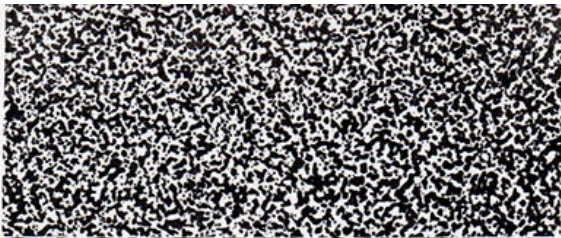
So I believe this series is really only a small beginning, but a beginning, in the right direction providing support and access to local artists who are long overdue it. Who as a result of an almost Galahad-in-search-of-the-Grail obsession are barred from the mainstream of society & its technical and intellectual benefits.

Film should stop being viewed as a production for the managerial class, and start being viewed as a creative process which because of a misperception of value is about 1000% in arrears.

¹ To paraphrase Stan Brakhage, speaking at the Art Gallery of Ontario's Autobiographical Film Series, 1978.

from "The Film is in the Cannes", Donna Lypchuk





CACHE DU CINEMA: DISCOVERING TORONTO FILMMAKERS

Published by The Funnel, 507 King Street East,
Toronto, Canada M5A 1M3

© 1985 The Funnel and the Authors, copyright for photos as
credited with each photo.

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Tuer, Dot

Cache du Cinema: Discovering Toronto Filmmakers

Catalogue to accompany the film series Cache du Cinema: Discovering Toronto Film-
makers, shown at The Funnel Film Theatre, Toronto, January 11 - April 19, 1985
ISBN 0-920555-06-3

1. Experimental films - Ontario - Toronto -
Exhibitions. I. Funnel Experimental Film Theatre.
II. Title.

PN1995.9.E96T93 1985 791.43'09713'541 C65-098719-9

The Funnel would like to thank the Canada Council whose Special Exhibitions
Grant has permitted the writing and publishing of this series of catalogues, Dot
Tuer, John Porter and Paul McGowan for curating and documenting the program-
mes and David Buchan and Tanya Mars for their work on the catalogue.

The Funnel is an incorporated, non-profit and registered charitable organization
(No. 0647214-22-13). It is supported by the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts
Council, The Toronto Arts Council, Metro Cultural Affairs, its membership and
private donations. The Funnel is a member of the Association of National Non-
Profit Artists' Centres, CAR-Ontario, The Canadian Museums Association, IFACI
and the Experimental Film Coalition (USA).

Design, Production and Catalogue Series Co-ordination: David Buchan
Typesetting: Tanya Mars
Printing: Printer's Ink

PRINTED IN CANADA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dot Tuer would like to thank Kass Banning and Jim Anderson for their encouragement in this series,
and their substantial contributions to the formation of her own ability to locate a discourse in the pro-
duction and reception of an experimental film practice. She would also like to take this opportunity to
thank John Porter for the enormous commitment of time and energy he gave to the series, and his
substantial contribution to its success.