

SPECIAL EVENTS

TORONTO SUPER 8 FILM FESTIVAL

The first Toronto Super 8 film festival will be held April 1-4 through the combined efforts of Cinema Lumiere, the Ontario College of Art, Photoelectric Arts, and Imagine 8, an ad hoc collective of S8 filmmakers. There will be two days of film screenings and workshops in S8 production methods and technology at the Ontario College of Art and a weekend screening of selected films in the 35mm (!) facilities of Cinema Lumiere.

As far as we know, this will be the first North American festival to be specifically devoted to films in S8 and to include the work of artists, amateurs, students, home movie makers, independent filmmakers, and commercial filmmakers who are using the S8 format. It is a unique characteristic of S8 that the medium now lends itself to the production of films which range from pure folk art to technically complex professional projects. We hope to combine these facets of the medium by screening a wide range of the different types of films now being made in S8 and by offering workshops where S8 filmmakers can contact each other, share experiences, and learn recently developed production technology and methods.

There are now many filmmakers working in S8 and many who have chosen S8 in preference to 16mm; we are all trying to feel our way through the unique methods of S8 production and to make better films with this medium. Now we are in a similar situation to the early 16mm "independent filmmakers" of the late 1950s or the videotape makers of a few years ago. We are isolated from each other and not able to share experience with or see the work of other filmmakers; we have no organized distribution methods for our work and virtually no public showings at all; we work with a medium which is the most widely accessible of any film or video format - a medium which is, however, rejected as technically inadequate by the film industry and television and is even banned by most independent filmmakers' festivals. And we may just possibly be learning to make films which are qualitatively different than films previously produced in the traditional formats of 16 and 35mm.

We hope that this festival can be a "coming out" celebration for all S8 filmmakers - a chance to meet other people like themselves, gain production knowledge which will enable everyone to make better films in the future, and to finally see their work portrayed on the *big silver screen* after years of being played on the basement wall.

We would like to emphasize that we are open to receive *any and all work* in S8 format from any and all filmmakers, whether they be kindergarten students or television professionals. Though we hope to be showing some technically refined productions which were made with more or less "professional" facilities and techniques, the majority of films made in S8 are not done in this manner. Some of the most interesting S8 films are made by people who neither have access to elaborate technology or are even interested in trying to reproduce Hollywood techniques in 8mm. A dramatic instance of such a film is the most politically important documentary to be made in the 1960s - the Zapruder 8mm film of the assassination of John Kennedy.

It is obvious that 16mm production practices are widely known and standardized. The technology of S8 is extremely different though, and a filmmaker cannot learn to work in S8 by learning about 16mm production. There is great difficulty in obtaining systematic information about unique S8 characteristics, such as filming with available light cameras or transferring S8 to broadcast color videotape through a Kodak image scanning machine rather than the traditional telecine. And then there is the often repeated question: is S8 more, or less, difficult to edit than 16mm? The differences in technology give rise to completely different approaches to filmmaking and, consequently, to very different styles of films. For instance, a lone S8 filmmaker working with a miniature, available light, single system sound camera can collect documentary information which is qualitatively extremely different from the information usually gathered by a 16mm Eclair/Nagra crew of two. Technology is not simply a matter of grain size in the

photographic image but the factor which determines what sort of information can be dealt with by a medium - as videomakers are quick to point out. S8 filmmakers have so far had little opportunity to get together to examine our medium's tools, see what has been done up until now, and speculate on what could be done in the future.

At the festival, workshops on equipment and production methods will be held with the participation of laboratories that are doing S8 work, equipment concerns, and filmmakers who have had experience in using some of the recently developed S8 technology.

All films received will be screened publicly at the Ontario College of Art and we hope to return some form of evaluation to all filmmakers. As we do not wish to form a panel of expert filmmakers (i.e. professionals who work in 16mm) to judge the S8 works, the better films in various categories of animation, documentary, dramatic; experimental, home movie, and commercial/educational/industrial will be selected through a combination of audience reaction and evaluation by a group of S8 filmmakers. The best films will be shown in the 35mm facility of Cinema Lumiere, and we hope to be able to offer modest prizes to the better films of each category. There will be some films from the U.S., but the festival is intended primarily for showing the work of Canadian filmmakers. The festival is really meant to be more of a celebration than a competition - a means for S8 filmmakers to share their work with others.

Write for entry forms to the Toronto Super 8 Film Festival, c/o Cinema Lumiere, 290 College Street, Toronto, Ontario. All films in S8 are eligible. Prints are preferred; well spliced originals will be accepted and handled with care - at the filmmakers' risk. Sound tracks on magnetic edge stripe are preferred; non-lip sync tracks on cassette or reel audio tape or lip sync tracks on S8 fullcoat magnetic film are acceptable for double system screening. Deadline for films and entrance forms is March 22, 1976. □