

NEW INDEPENDENTS ON FOUR

Channel 4 is determined to fulfil its brief to bring new voices, new forms and new areas of subject matter to British television. We look to the independent film-makers' movement to help us to do that, and we welcome their work to the screen.

We are able to show the best of their past work and, by funding their practice in film and video workshops, and by specific commissions, can offer them continued opportunities for the future.

Up to now they have been denied a national audience. Now they have that opportunity.

The challenge to us is to be an open, alert interested audience.

The challenge to them is not to substitute one set of clichés for another but to surprise, provoke, and in the end, perhaps, delight us.

Jeremy Isaacs

Chief Executive, Channel Four



NEW INDEPENDENTS ON FOUR



New independent film makers, approaching television with fresh conviction, are now able to release their creative energies to new audiences as a vital part of a Channel Four committed to diversity and innovation.

In the late 1960's Cinema Action, Amber Films in Newcastle, the London Film Makers' Co-Op, the London Women's Film Group and The Other Cinema were founded and with the development of their production and exhibition activities a new dimension to British film culture began to flower. Each of those groups reflected the need for a more imaginative, more politically responsive and aesthetically daring British Cinema. The desire for their existence reflected both the lack of opportunities within the film industry and conservative nature of television.

This new breed of independents, re-establishing and developing the work begun by the radicals of the 1930's, were interested in

building a practice of Cinema quite different from existing industrial models. Cinema Action began to show and, shortly after, to produce films from within and for working class audiences. The London Film Makers' Co-Op began to show the best of experimental films, (Warhol, Anger, Brakhage) which in turn inspired an upsurge in British avant-garde film making. The existence of the London Women's Film Group recognised the imperative to create a feminist cinema and, central to that ambition, the possibility for women to become film makers themselves rather than to service a male-run film and television industry. Murray Martin and others set up Amber—a film workshop, cinema and photographic gallery in Newcastle and in doing so foreshadowed two indispensable dimensions to this new sector—a regional presence and a desire to work closely with communities through all the processes of production and exhibition. Finally The Other Cinema (by some ironic twist one of the former occupants of the Channel Four offices) developed the role as the first distributors and then exhibitors of such influential figures as Glauba Rocha, Jean-Luc Godard, Santiago Alvarez as well as many other important films through the 1970's, offered film-makers and audiences alike inspiration, energy and analysis from abroad.

Over the last decade the new independent film movement created the conditions for unique developments in British Cinema. Film workshops in most of the major cities in Britain and many others besides serve as centres for education, training and a wide variety of cultural activities.

The founding of the Independent Film-Makers Association (IFA) in 1976 and the introduction of fresh critical and theoretical perspectives produced by journals like 'Framework', 'Afterimage' and 'Screen' served as vital ingredients in the developing strength of the sector. The IFA, a body which significantly includes writers, critics, teachers and other cultural workers in its ranks, has sought throughout the last ten years to interest funders, not least Channel Four, in supporting the new independents.

Governments have historically been reluctant to fund film in comparison with other

cultural forms, and it is only in recent years that agencies such as the British Film Institute, the Arts Council and the Regional Arts Associations have supported the new independents. Even with comparatively minimal funds, a crucial component of which has been the British Film Institute Production Board, some remarkable films have been made in the last decade.

The new independents represent an important area of innovative work within the whole spectrum of independent production with which Channel Four is building an enduring relationship.

This takes the form of both the commissioning of new films and programmes and support for film workshops. Some of the best work from the last ten years as well as newly commissioned films will be featured in a regular weekly programme.

The first four series, the Channel's funding of workshops and commissions for the future, are dealt with in greater detail elsewhere in this booklet.

The films to be shown range through documentary and fiction, sometimes, as in the first of the new commissions to be completed—Noel Burch's *The Year of the Bodyguard*—a combination of both.

Perhaps one of the defining characteristics of such a wide spectrum is its imaginative engagement with contemporary reality. One thinks of Cinema Action's *So That You Can Live*, Pat Murphy's *Maeve* and Michael Chanan's and Peter Chappell's *New Cinema of Latin America*: each grapples with social and political realities of Wales, Northern Ireland and Latin America respectively, in unexpected and revealing ways. Here is independent film making at its best.

During the next twelve months, energies will be released that have been cramped and starved through lack of finance. Ten workshops have at last been properly supported to work under the new ACTT Workshop Declaration and some new commissions will be under way.

From the basis of a short but rich history the new independents can work towards developing a new relationship with television.

Alan Fountain Commissioning Editor,
Independent Film and Video



8th November 1982
So That You Can Live

15th November 1982
Caution! Images At Work

22nd November 1982
Telling Tales

29th November 1982
Heroines

6th December 1982
Song Of The Shirt

13th December 1982
Traveller

20th December 1982
**The Year Of The Bodyguard,
Epic Poem**

THE ELEVENTH HOUR



The Eleventh Hour is the first ever series on British television devoted to the work of the new independents and represents a new era both for film-makers previously denied access to the small screen and for television itself.

The Eleventh Hour is a seven week series of programmes that looks at a view of Britain from the new independent film-makers. Most of the thirteen films on show have been made in the last ten years in Britain and outside television but there are some exceptions: Joe Comerford's *Travellers* made in the Republic of Ireland and Noel Burch's *The Year of the Bodyguard* which was commissioned by the Channel. Also featured in the programme are two films from earlier days of state funded cinema: Flaherty and Grierson's *Industrial Britain* (1922) and the Ministry of Information film *Miss Grant Goes To the Door* (1940).

The programme is an attempt at presenting



Britain and British history in a more diverse and engaging way. The films themselves generally take unexplored areas of Britain and question the representations that are employed in conventional cinema and television in order to present us with images of archetypal Britishness. Four films, *Song of the Shirt*, *Amy!*, *The Year of the Bodyguard* and *Epic Poem* all explore areas of women's history in Britain and *So That You Can Live*, made after a chance encounter with women on an equal pay strike in South Wales, follows the life of one family's relationship to Welsh history and the Labour movement in the county of Gwent.

If we live in an exceptionally jingoistic era, it may be important to discover how other periods of industrial decline were documented and presented by the state in terms of appeals to nationalism. Grierson and Flaherty's *Industrial Britain* is an extraordinarily optimistic and unifying picture of Britain made at the height of the depression. The Eleventh Hour presents the film with three others made by film-makers based in the industrial North-East in the last eight years. The programme examines representations of work and working-class life and asks Murray Martin a member of the Newcastle based Amber Films how as film-makers they have attempted to break with a documentary tradition which may not have served the community that it claimed to. The programme concludes with *Industrial Britain* by Roger Buck—a film with many ironic references to images of the industrial north, which also through fragmented quotations gives us some ideas about the complex relationship between history and the present.

Other films in the series include Richard Woolley's fiction feature *Telling Tales* and The Jay Street Collectives' *Sigmund Freud's Dora: A Case of Mistaken Identity*.

All seven programmes are introduced through discussion with film-makers, actors, film critics or film groups, not necessarily talking directly to the films but more often on general views concerning the political practice of the new independent cinema and the subjects it represents.

Eleventh Hour Productions: Fizzy Oppe, Mick Eaton, Steve Neal, Jeff Baggott, Frank Abbott.

IRELAND: THE SILENT VOICES



Of all the contentious areas examined by independent film-makers over the past fifteen years none can be more controversial or more important than Northern Ireland. Successive British governments have tried reform, power sharing, direct rule, internment and have come up against opposition from Republicans in the form of violence and hunger strikes and opposition from Loyalists in the form of violence and industrial strikes. In the absence of a political solution to the 'Irish problem' British forces have had little choice but to treat the issue as one of law and order, their role being simply to mediate between the two sides and hunt out the terrorists.

Or at least, that is the dominant thinking. The view taken by the opinion formers of Whitehall, Fleet Street and Television Centre. And the opinion received by a very substantial majority of the mainland population. But there are other perspectives.

Whenever they venture abroad the British run the risk of discovering that the stock assumptions and interpretations with which the conflict is understood here are not universally accepted elsewhere. Even the relatively conservative broadcasting networks of Germany and France see the 'troubles' in terms of the last stages of a British colonial problem.

Some people are now asking searching questions about the terminology adopted by the mainstream media. What is the difference between a terrorist and a freedom fighter? And about the terms of reference the media chooses for itself—should the Irish conflict be seen as a 'law and order' problem? It is questions like these that independent film-makers have addressed themselves to and the aim of the first programme in the short series is to demonstrate that fact by analysing British media coverage of Ireland using comparative material from foreign television. It also touches on the way that British cinema's treatment of Ireland reveals a deep seated continuity between film and television, from *The Odd Man Out* to the *The Gentle Gunman* and *The Long Good Friday* British cinema has tended to show Irish politics in a way that denies rationality, making the acts of individuals seem a-political and a-historical.

The later programmes in the series introduce

and present a range of independent films including:

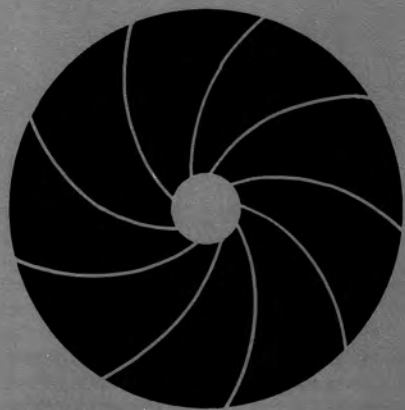
Maeve, made for the British Film Institute Production Board in 1981 by Pat Murphy and John Davies, brings home the frustrating, frightening and sometimes comic realities of trying to live in Belfast today. Maeve returns to Belfast from a self-imposed exile in London and tries to understand the present through her memories of the past.

Cross and Passion, by Kim Longinotto and Claire Pollak, takes its title from the name of a school in the Turf Lodge estate in West Belfast. While giving an idea of the situation—the violence and the presence of an army in occupation—by concentrating on one community and in particular the women, the film attempts an account of everyday life.

Bob Quinn's *Lament for Art O'Leary* was greeted as a breakthrough for Irish cinema in the Seventies, it explores the relationship between the 18th century and the present; Art O'Leary's wife expresses her sorrow through the famous lament about the death of her soldier husband who was killed by English soldiers in 1773. The film interweaves historical sequences and a present day rehearsal of a play about these events.

The series as a whole gives us a chance to expand our understanding of Ireland and the conflict in the North by extending the range of perspectives on it.

Series Directed by Rod Stoneman
Produced by the Television Co-operative



An important area of film-making—often called experimental, avant-garde or 'artists' film'—is introduced in these four programmes. Each centres on the work of an individual or group whose aims are often diverse but who all find new means of expression through the medium of film.

This series, a joint production with the Arts Council, is the result of a collaboration between a group of critics (Ian Christie, David Curtis, Phillip Drummond, Tamara Krikorian, A.L. Rees, Simon Field), the independent production company Arbor Production Ltd (Margaret Williams, Fizz Oliver) and the featured film-makers. The profiles use clips, interviews, live action and 'demos' to show the film-makers' aims and ideas. Because each profile has been realised with the direct participation of the subjects of the series, the programmes may be seen as an extension as well as demonstration of their work in film.

PROFILES



Jeff Keen

For the last 20 years Jeff Keen has worked in Brighton as an artist, poet and film-maker. The films, often quite literally 'hand-made', are a wild collage of Hollywood memories and B pictures, family fun, melodrama, cartoon drawings, spray-on slogans, and are festooned with popular icons from dolls and robots to plastic monsters. Rough, fast and furious, they are funny, hypnotic and disturbing all at the same time. Friends and relations, his 'Family Stars', are given free rein to act as will and imagination takes them; and the results are shaped by Keen's sense of colour, rhythm and graphic vision. In a special 'Profile Performance' Keen's alter-ego 'Dr Gaz' introduces themes, variations, stars and motifs from his Magic Theatre, ending with an explosive enactment of the multi-image projection-event 'Ray Day'.



Margaret Tait

The camera is often used to record familiar scenes and people—and these simple and publicly shared themes are characteristic of Margaret Tait's films. Since the mid 50s her work has included portraits, records of everyday events and 'personal landscapes'.

With these 'simple' subjects, her films explore the infinitely complex processes of 'looking' and remembering, and the poetic and musical resonances that can occur between images. As a film-maker and poet living and working in Orkney, she also offers something very rare on film—a glimpse of an authentic unglamorised Scotland.



Malcolm Le Grice

Malcolm Le Grice has played a key role in the growth of an independent film culture in Britain, through his involvement in setting up an open-access workshop at the London Film-Makers' Co-op in the mid 60s, through his teaching and writing, and not least through the influence of his own work. Like many artists-turned-film-makers, Le Grice's early films were an aggressive attack upon everything he felt film ought not to be. But throughout his large and varied body of work, which takes in multi-screen projection, films combined with live performance, 'still-lives', and complex narratives, he reformulates the film experience

to stress the viewer's active role in the film process.

Five Women Working with Film

Independent film-makers—including artists, community workers and political activists—are working to build up new contexts, workshops and audiences which will alter and revitalise the traditional relation between the spectator and cinema. The four film-makers in this profile are shown at work with Felicity Sparrow of Circles, the women's film distribution group which they helped to found, and relate the struggle for a new cinema to the wider aims of the women's movement. Together the five women suggest new definitions of 'creativity' connected to their own film and performance work, emphasise the importance of the story and the image in contemporary work, and the importance of rediscovering unknown women film-makers of the early cinema. They suggest new connections between past and present, and between different aspects of the women's struggle.

NEW CINEMA OF LATIN AMERICA

In Venezuela, a film director named Luis Correa appears in court after 15 days in prison on trumped-up charges for having made a film exposing police corruption. In Panama, the director of the University Experimental Film Group talks of the uncertainties now facing the group following the disappearance a year earlier of Panama's popular revolutionary leader, General Omar Torrijos. In Nicaragua, as the Sandinista Revolution celebrates its third anniversary, the film institute they have set up is getting to grips with the development of a new and critical popular film culture, while a feminist film maker from Mexico, Rosa Martha Fernandez, makes a film on popular education for showing abroad by solidarity organisations. In her own country, workers in a makeshift community cinema in a Mexico City shanty town, discuss a film made fifteen years ago in Chile by Miguel Littin, *El Chancal de Nahueltoro* (The Jackal of Nahueltoro). In Cuba, Miguel Littin completes editing of his latest picture, a

co-production shot in Nicaragua, *Alsino y el condor* (Alsino and the Eagle); whilst his compatriot, Patricio Guzman, director of *La Batalla de Chile* (The Battle of Chile), shoots the final scenes of his first fiction film, another of the co-productions with which the Cuban film institute, ICAIC, is nowadays engaged, *La Rosa y el viento* (The Rose and the Wind). This is the new cinema of Latin America in action. As Fernando Birri, one of the pioneers of the movement, expresses it—'There has been auteur cinema, there have been national cinemas and film movements, now for the first time there is a cinema of an entire continent: The New Latin American Cinema'.

All these are scenes in documentary by Michael Chanan and Peter Chappell which introduces a season of Latin American films, both fiction and documentary, on Channel Four. The season comprises both new films and old (including most of those mentioned in these lines), spanning the 25 years since Fernando

Birri set up the Documentary Film School of Santa Fe in Argentina and produced *Tire Die* (Throw us a Dime); since in Brazil the first films of what came to be known as Cinema Novo appeared; and since a group of revolutionary Cuban intellectuals made *El Megano*, the precursor of the cinema of the Cuban Revolution, the proudest body of achievement in Latin American Cinema.

The documentary by Chanan and Chappell represents a kind of aesthetic fact-finding mission in which the film makers are able to speak on their own behalf, explaining on the one hand the kind of cinema they dream of, and on the other, describing what the Columbian Jorge Silva has called 'The 800 Kafkaesque obstacles between what you dream of for your cinema and what you're able to do'. They express the sense of struggle and urgency which is the hallmark of their work. At the same time the film signals the questions that have arisen within the movement, such as the question of the continental enemy, imperialism, in all its forms, cultural as well as economic. The Nicaraguan Minister of Culture, the poet-priest Ernesto Cardenal, argues that cultural imperialism robs people of their cultures, even the North American people themselves. For the Cuban film maker, now Vice Minister of Culture, Julio Garcia Espinosa, the culture of the imperialist countries is a culture of waste, corresponding to their wasteful economies. Cinema in the underdeveloped countries, he believes, cannot afford to ape the kind of perfection you find in the products of the big capitalist film industries. Neither they nor humanity will survive with that kind of waste.

The exiled Argentinian sociologist Hector Schmucler explains that imperialism has indeed imposed cultural tastes, deformed ones, on the people it has subjugated, and this film therefore also touches on how the struggle to create a new kind of cinema in Latin America inevitably involves questioning the processes by which film images are produced. Because, the aim of the new film makers is to produce, instead of the old unreal anaesthetising images, new ones which reintroduce the reality the old cinema rendered invisible. In short, their aim is to produce films that are a force for liberation.



WORKSHOP FUNDING

Channel Four's funding of film workshops represents a unique cultural partnership between independent film-makers, the Channel and the Association of Cinematographic and Television Technicians. It makes a significant contribution towards strengthening regional film culture from which the Channel can confidently anticipate the emergence of a wide range of imaginative and unusual work.

To date the network of workshops throughout Britain has been characterised by inadequate production finance and the absence of waging for film-makers. Yet, even with the additional burden of primitive equipment, a flow of remarkable films has somehow been produced. The workshops have also served as the most innovative film programmers and exhibitors in recent years and as the enablers for a great many people who want to make films but lack the real money or expertise to do so without help. The workshops have functioned as the material basis—the backbone—of the whole new independent movement.

By helping to improve the technical standard of equipment and supporting production groups based in workshops, Channel 4 will not only be financing film production for television but also contributing to the enrichment of the culture as a whole. The fact that groups were asked to submit 'programmes of work', central to which is production but also including other forms of film activity, represents a new departure for British television, as does the equally new practice of financing groups over one, two or three years during which time it is principally the groups themselves who decide what films to make. Although each of them works closely with the Channel there is a genuine creative space in which to pursue and produce ideas and films.

Following negotiations between the Channel, the ACTT and other funders the introduction of the Workshop Declaration, which calls for a minimum of four members within each group to be paid £8,000 per year, means that supported groups will be able to work together consistently over long periods of time. The Declaration also permits a high degree of flexibility in crewing and cross-grade working.

From the first wave of applications eight groups have been funded sufficiently to work under the Declaration. Eight other groups have received smaller amounts of money which will enable them to develop their work in a variety of ways. Some of the most experienced groups in Britain who have already produced internationally acclaimed films have been supported. Cinema Action, Amber and Newsreel, for example, have a wealth of experience and achievement behind them. These are complemented by newer groups such as Birmingham and Trade.

Capital funding has been spread across seventeen workshops with the intention of directly benefiting as many film-makers as possible as well as strengthening those groups in which Channel Four already has a direct interest.

In making its commitment to workshops the Channel will be involved in far reaching repercussions within television and Britain's wider film culture.

Roy Lockett Deputy General Secretary ACTT:

In the past two years the Workshop sector has emerged rapidly and confidently from under-financed obscurity. It is a unique and powerful force in film and television. Regional democratic, autonomous, and radical, with an increasingly effective base of equipment, personnel, finance and expertise, it is beginning to realise a potential which will change a lot of heads in the commercial mainstream.

In an alliance of clout and ideas, the Union, Regional Arts Associations' Films Officers and the Independent Film-Makers Association have created a Workshop Declaration in which Workshops franchised by the Union, will operate flexibly and autonomously, with full Union recognition and unprecedented stability and continuity.

While the Declaration was not designed for Channel Four, the Channel's imaginative leap in committing resources to underpin the sector's potential has been of real significance.

Technicians in the Workshop sector are building new relationships with audiences—antidotes to viewer passivity. They are committed to power sharing behind and in front of camera. They see research, distribution, production and exhibition as integrated. The Declaration reflects this. With adequate annual funding, collective decision making and built-in autonomy from funding sources, they challenge the unemployment, discontinuity, underfunding and creative heart-break which has disfigured the cultural sector and too often characterises the freelance mainstream.

There will be ten production units (eight financed by Channel 4, two by the British Film Institute) under the Declaration in the first year. That figure will grow. The relevance and recognition already won by the sector augurs well for the drive to mobilise additional resources. Inevitably with many units rooted outside the metropolis, the sector is responsive to the growing economic and social crisis which has eroded the consensus and confidence of the Sixties. Politically abrasive, feminist and anti-racist, many will seek to engage in the struggles of the Eighties.

Opening up the Union to regional independent film-makers has not made for a quiet life. But they have brought an energy and imagination which has been of inestimable value. Through the Workshop Declaration, that same energy and radicalism can provide a key growth point for film and television in the 80's. Their films will be seen on Channel 4 and in a lot of other places. Watch out for them.



Frontroom



City Farm

Frontroom was initiated on the streets of Belfast in autumn 1980 whilst all the members, Ellin Hare, Robert Smith, Kate McManus, Alastair Herron and John Davies were involved in the making of the BFI/RTE feature film *Maeve*. It came out of a debate centred around the gap between documentary and narrative in the representation of such a location.

Working collectively from a base in Wardour Street the group have developed a number of projects which include two large scale films *Acceptable Levels* set in Belfast and London and *Stake in the Future* set in London, Wales and Birmingham. Other projects include an approach to 'fatherhood', a Cuban Theatre group, a view of 'epilepsy', the establishing of a community based drama/video group in Belfast and a mobile video resource unit. The group's work includes: *City Farm*; *Maeve* (with Pat Murphy); *Two Sides of a Door*; community video's in Belfast and Derry; video tapes on traditional ways of life in Ireland and *My Favourite from the South*.

Newsreel Collective

The Newsreel Collective started work in 1974 with the aim of making films about the daily lives and struggles of working people. During the last eight years we have made nine films which range from a film about abortion (*An Egg is not a Chicken*: 1974) to a film about Grunwicks (*Stand Together*: 1977) to our latest film *True Romance Etc* (1981) a drama about young peoples' lives.

We are a mixed group committed to a feminist perspective. We try to be aware of issues of sexism, both in the context of our films and in the way we go about making them.

We work collectively, sharing skills and decisions about the production process. Our aim is to also involve other people — both people who are in our films and those who use them — to be involved in the making of the films.

For Channel 4 we are going to make three



films under the Workshop Declaration which are connected in terms of subject matter, of audience, and of theoretical concern. The individual films deal with three distinct issues.

The first is concerned with mothering/parenting and the value that we give to this work in the context of fragmented inner city life. The second film is an enquiry into nuclear power and the bomb from the perspective of radical arguments about science and technology versus nature. The third film looks historically at the city we live in — London — through the lives of some of its residents and raises questions about popular planning for social need.



Birmingham Film Workshop



Since its inception the Birmingham Film Workshop has developed a vigorous and forward looking collective practice, centred on film production but combining that with exhibition and educational activities.

The Workshop has consistently pursued a policy of developing links with a diverse series of groups and constituencies throughout the region. One example of this is the work of Yugesh Walia whose latest film *African Oasis* was made with the Handsworth Cultural Centre and focuses on the activities that the Centre organises.

One key theme of Workshop initiatives has been to pursue a public investigation and discussion of more general 'media' issues. One example of this was the 'Four on 4' event, held in the Arts Lab in the Autumn of 1981 which analysed four key areas of Channel 4. The Workshop is also currently attempting to stimulate greater awareness of the issues surrounding cable television and its implications.

The Channel Four monies are to be used to finance three full-time workers for a period of two years. We anticipate that this will provide a degree of stability to the Workshop's practice as well as resulting in productions for the Channel. Two projects are planned currently — one will investigate a rape case in early nineteenth century Birmingham and will also explore contemporary reporting of the issue. The second involves working with young people on video in such a way that their ideas and aspirations are clearly and accurately reflected in the final product.

Cinema Action



Cinema Action have been to the forefront of the independent cinema movement since their foundation in 1968. Their history has been fundamental to the creation of methods of production and exhibition which involve the 'subjects' of their work at all stages in its attempt to break down the distance between producer and consumer, a process which has found its most recent expression in their latest film *So That You Can Live* and in the completion of their 'workshop', incorporating production and post production facilities and screening and meeting space, in North London.

Through films like *The UCS Struggle*, *Arise Ye Workers*, *The Miners Film* and *Fighting the Bill*, Cinema Action have based much of their work within the Labour Movement, making films which, with the participation of trade unionists, have been relevant and useful to the Movement as well as important documentaries in their own right.

So That You Can Live, the opening film to *The Eleventh Hour* is one of the most original films to come from the new independents and perhaps represents the most achieved result of the group's documentary methods to date.

Over the next twelve months the use of the workshop as a centre for 'production' in its very widest sense, the making of at least two films and the continuation of others will constitute the group's main focus.

The creative use of the new workshop, the development of their documentary work and a move towards fiction promises a fascinating decade to come.

Northeast Films

Northeast Films were established in 1975 with a commitment to social documentary, regionalism, and a working practice in which production, exhibition and dialogue with audiences were integrated and interdependent.

One of the group's early priorities was to set up a system of local exhibition in the North Yorkshire/Teesside area and a mobile Cinema unit began to operate in 1975.

Many of the productions, for example, *Staithe's: Lifeboat Weekend*, *Michael and Ellen* and *Jubilee Clips*, have documented life in the region. Current productions continue this preoccupation through films on Saltburn, Rosedale and the music festival. The group recently completed an Arts Council film on Basil Bunting.



Staithe's: Lifeboat Weekend.

Four Corners



We are a group of film-makers based in East London. The initial group began work together in 1974 and have since produced a number of films. Most recently completed are *OS '77*, a film made from still photos about a crisis within an alternative education project in Germany and *Bred and Born*, a film about motherhood which developed out of a series of public film shows and discussions on mothers, daughters and the family.

From 1975, when we started converting our premises in Bethnal Green into a small cinema and workshop, we have been pursuing two areas of work. On the one hand establishing a production office and equipment base where we can make our own films, and which also functions as a centre for co-operation, both practical and theoretical, with other film-makers. And on the other hand we have been seeking to work as film-makers with an audience, hence the events in the cinema which are often accompanied by discussion and involve a wide variety of film programmes.

Many of the events are intended specifically for women. *Circles*, a feminist distribution company is based at Four Corners and also holds regular shows of women's film, video and performance here.

Alongside these events in the cinema are various workshop sessions designed to teach film making (Super 8 and 16mm) by looking at how films are constructed while also teaching basic technical skills.

Through this programme of film production, public film shows and workshop sessions, we are building a base where activities are informed by and contribute to a critical awareness of the cultural and political significance of film and television.

Amber

Amber has operated as a film and photographic collective based in Newcastle for more than ten years. In addition to our production base we also control exhibition and distribution outlets in the form of the Side Gallery and Cinema.

Our work has always been rooted in the documentation of 'working class culture', and we clearly acknowledge a debt to John Grierson's British documentary movement with its emphasis on 'a creative interpretation of reality'.

We have tried to develop skills as articulators of working class ideals and values. This has led us to adopt a number of 'stances' sometime celebrators of industrial work (*Launch* 1974); sometime reflectors of working men's romantic vision of themselves (*High Row* 1975) and more recently engaged in intimate dialogue around family conflict and aspirations (*The Filleting Machine* 1981 and *Dance* 1982).

We have long recognised the need for independent workers to engage in exhibition and distribution as well as production; and these aspirations are clearly reflected in the Workshop Declaration fostered by ACTT under which we now work. The new relationship with Channel 4 and its access to mass audience is bound to provide an interesting and challenging dimension to our and other grant aided film-makers' product.

Amber's Launch and *The Last Shift* feature in *The Eleventh Hour* in November

Trade Films & The Northern History Television Archive

Based on a record of independent film production Trade Films was awarded funding from Channel Four to establish a regional film and video workshop concerned to explore the cultural and industrial history of the region. In the field of production we are setting up a series of interviews with individuals who can offer a particular perspective on local industrial history and also embarking on a co-funded film production with Channel Four and ZDF entitled *The History of the City*. In addition we are working on two 'compilation' films, the first dealing with the politics of housing, the second, with a history of industrial legislation.

As means of developing a distribution and educational dimension to our work we have

established The Northern History Television Archive which will both store the tapes we produce ourselves and acquire other locally relevant material. The archive will be open to researchers and educational groups, particularly those engaged in adult and continuing education, for viewing and study. We will also have the facility to produce, for example, compilations of material for use in outside teaching situations.

Our exhibition policy will involve us in

setting up film screening events around particular themes of local importance: for instance next year we are planning a series of films on the theme of the mining industry.

The locally based provision of an archive and an interrelated production and distribution practice with a distinct social, industrial and historical perspective, will offer a challenging focus on the traditional representation of the region.

Workshop Funding 1982-83

Amber Films* £48,000
Birmingham Film Workshop* £59,000
Bristol Co-op £5,000
Changing Images £4,000
Cinema Action* £90,000
East Anglia Co-op £5,000
Four Corners* £25,000
Frontroom* £96,000
Lusia Films £3,000
New Cinema Workshop Nottingham £2,000
Newsreel* £19,000
Northeast Films* £52,000
Poster Collective £15,000
South Wales Womens Collective £5,000
Trade Films* £41,000
Workers Film Association £8,000

*Denotes groups funded to work under the Workshop Declaration.

Capital Equipment 1982-83

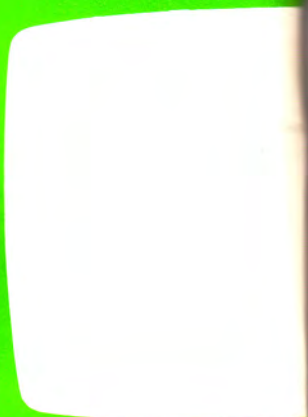
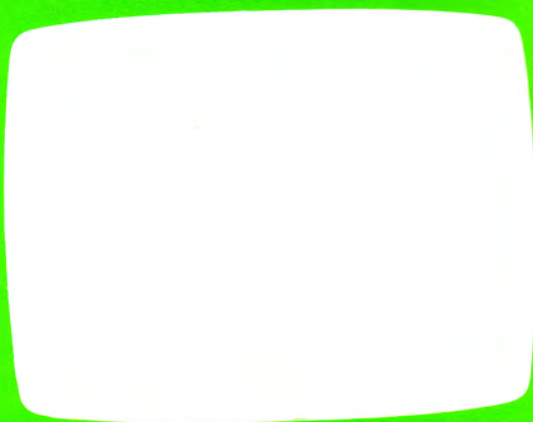
Amber Films: Steenbeck £6,900
Birmingham Film Workshop: Steenbeck; camera: lights £15,000
Bradford Communications Centre: Steenbeck £6,900
Bristol Co-op: Steenbeck £6,900
Chapter, Cardiff: Steenbeck £6,900
Cinema Action: towards completion of workshop £20,900
East Anglia Film Co-op, Norwich: Steenbeck, improvements to new premises £12,000
Four Corners: towards completion of workshop £6,240
Leeds Animation Workshop: Line tester; enlarger £5,000
London Film Makers Co-op: Camera £5,000
Lusia Films: Steenbeck £6,900
Manchester Workers Film Association: Improvement of processing and printing equipment £3,000
Muscle Films: Towards Steenbeck costs £1,500
New Cinema Workshop, Nottingham: Double head projector £7,000
Open Eye, Liverpool: Steenbeck £6,900
Poster Collective: Steenbeck £6,900
Sheffield Co-op: Steenbeck £6,900
Thamesdown Workshop, Swindon: Camera £5,000
Trade Films, Newcastle: Steenbeck; establishment of workshop £12,000

VIDEO

Channel 4 is also funding several video workshops throughout Britain and will be commissioning and showing the best of existing independent video in the future.

Details of these developments – new to British television – will be the subject of a later publication.

COMING SOON



FOR THE FUTURE

Many of the existing film projects commissioned from the new independents will appear on the screen in 1983.

Ranging from experimental fiction to documentary, film and video, single programmes and series, here is a body of work which in subject and form will constitute radical new departures for the television audience. We offer a 'preview' of a few of them here:

Nicaragua Director: Marc Karlin

A three part documentary which goes behind familiar Third World imagery to explore the deeper hidden feeling of what is at stake in a country, Nicaragua, developing for itself a new identity, nationhood and memory. What tensions and strains twist and contort that process in a country that builds itself between the conflicting claims of the USA (the El Dorado of Miami), Castro's Cuba (the heroic socialist struggle) and the Catholic church (the divine hand of God)?

Marc Karlin's work through films like *The Nightcleaners* and *36 to 77* has been crucial to the development of new documentary forms adequate to the complexities of contemporary reality; in an invaluable combination of analysis, reflexivity and feeling his work points towards a truly politically responsible cinema.

The Ghost Dance Ken McMullen

How to find fresh and meaningful words and images to offer new ways of seeing familiar problems – rich/poor; south/north; West/Third World – without cliché or instant 'solution'?

Cargo cults – the belief that by acting out religious rituals material goods will be provided by Gods and dead ancestors – form the starting point for *The Ghost Dance*, a film set in an un-named land at an unknown time, but which seems to be full of echoes of the Britain we find around us.

Sylvia Pankhurst – Romance, History and Heroism Co-Option

Sylvia Pankhurst, socialist, feminist is the subject of a first film by Co-Option, a newly formed group at the London Film-Makers' Co-Op, home of experimental cinema since the 1960s.

The later stages of production will be influenced by women film and video makers participating in a production course also organised by Co-Option. Both future developments will be the result of this typically feminist collective approach to film making.





Commodities Jonathan Curling/Sue Clayton/
Jonathan Collinson/John Anderton

A series of programmes which will make a multi-dimensional investigation of some widely consumed commodities – tea, sugar, coffee and gin. Lusia's very unusual approach will not only weave together economic, legal, geographical and political considerations but will also be concerned, for example, with the function of those commodities as represented in folklore, ritual and picture and film archives.

The programmes will offer perspectives not only of the commodities' function in the world but also the world seen through the commodities.

The group's *Song of the Shirt*, one of the most influential documentaries of the 1970s, is featured in *The Eleventh Hour*

Elizabeth Etc. David Larcher
David Larcher's *Mare's Tail* and *Monkey's Birthday* are two of the finest experimental films made in Britain. His new film *EETC* re-presents, re-acts and re-constructs the experience of a love affair on several levels. At present the holder of a Gulbenkian Video Bursary, Larcher will be working both with film and advanced video techniques.

Sexuality Pictures of Women
New feminist group Pictures of Women take a radical look at sexuality. Through an assessment of the place of women in pornography and advertising, the way that rape and prostitution function and are represented and the widespread presence of sexual harassment they offer cogent analysis and urgent feminist perspectives for change.

The series has been developed through a co-operative feminist process and will be relevant and accessible to a wide audience of women and men.



In the Wash Melanie Chait

Young gays often find themselves overcome with feelings of being different and isolated. Melanie Chait has been talking and working with young lesbians to present *In the Wash*. What emerges is a film of tremendous honesty, warmth and humour which in its exploration of some of the problems faced by young gay women never lapses into clichéd 'problem television'. The viewer is privileged to share not only the difficulties but also the joys of young people discovering their own identity and individual and collective strength.



Live a Life Maxim Ford/ Parallax Pictures
In November 1981, as unemployment in Britain passed the three million mark, a Concert for the Unemployed was staged at the Rainbow with a line-up that included Tom Robinson, Alexei Sayle, The Beat, Black Slate and OK Jive. *Live a Life* is a record of that concert, and of the situation which prompted it: discussions with the young unemployed of London, Birmingham and Bristol are set against the rhetoric of the Thatcher regime to reveal the reality behind the statistics of unemployment and the history of economic exploitation in Britain is traced from the Slave trade to 'the new technology'.

Live a Life is Parallax's first feature length film and was selected for the 1982 London Film Festival

Autobiography of a Man Richard Woolley
Richard Woolley's *Telling Tales* and *Brothers and Sisters* were pre-occupied with the interface of sexual and class politics. *Autobiography of a Man* takes this concern even closer to the director's life in its attempt to understand his own class background, upbringing and sexual formation.

One of the few male directors prepared to honestly tackle these questions we can expect an intelligent, direct and witty self-appraisal. *Telling Tales* can be seen in *The Eleventh Hour*.

INDEPENDENT FILM-MAKERS ASSOCIATION

The IFA represents the views and interests of a wide variety of groups and individuals working with or through film and video. It was founded in 1974, initially to negotiate with the BBC over the proposed transmission of a number of independent films which attempted to re-examine and extend both the subject matter and also the formal and technical operations connected with most industrial and institutional uses of the film medium.

The modes of production, distribution and exhibition employed by IFA members differ markedly – embracing on the one hand individual film-makers who control every part of the film-making process through to those who seek to incorporate the dynamic potential of group or collective work into the production of film and its subsequent distribution and exhibition.

The IFA has established a national network of groups and individuals consisting not only of film-makers but also of critics, teachers, technicians, exhibition and distribution workers – in short all those engaged in developing independent cinema. This is a project which entails working towards the productive integration and use of film and television within existing social relations rather than, as has traditionally been the case, their consumption as items of product within the leisure industry, and also attempts to involve a wider range of audiences and potential 'users of film'.

The Association, through policy groups and working parties, has played an important part in a number of central debates on film and broadcasting policy in this country. It was involved in discussions with the Department of Trade about the place of independent film in the reorganisation of the British film industry proposed by the last Labour government, and played a leading role in debates on the nature of the Channel 4, arguing that it should allow due space for social and cultural innovation in programme production and programming. With the advent of Channel 4 the IFA has been closely involved with contractual and workshop issues and advice to members commissioned by the Channel.

The formal aims of the IFA are:

To develop the practice, understanding and knowledge of independent film-making, distribution and exhibition.

To represent groups and individuals in independent film and video.

To establish a wider recognition of the role and significance of independent film and video in the UK.

To provide a forum for the discussion and study of independent cinema for those who are film-makers, distribution and exhibition workers and for critics, students and educationalists.

To fight for adequate finance for independent cinema and the improvement of facilities to support and sustain it.

The IFA is organised into regions, linked by a national committee; normally members receive information about national IFA activities through their regional groups.

For further information:
IFA, 79 Wardour Street, London W.1. 439 0460

There is useful bibliography on British independent cinema in *The New Social Function of Cinema*, British Film Institute 1981.

THE ACTS OF VIEWING

1909, 1980. The dates of 2 different Acts of Parliament, separated by almost three-quarters of a century, dealing with new developments in what are now called the media.

The Cinematograph Act 1909 was the first recognition by the English state of the emergence of a new machinery for producing moving pictures; an apparatus that had also begun to develop its own distinctive 'housing' — the cinema. The 1909 Act helped to legitimise and promote a model of cinema (and the film-making to go with it) whose central features still provide the most common version of what 'going to the pictures' will entail.

This model — fixed seating, payment at a box office for the right to a (single) viewing of an already finished production etc. — has, nonetheless been regularly contested by those who wanted to use the cinema space and the film medium for purposes other than making money; educational, social, religious, political. They have treated the gathering together of an audience as an occasion to do more than take money from their pockets: as an opportunity to encourage discussion, to look at work still in progress, to raise questions about the way what is seen and heard *in* the cinema relates to what is seen and heard *outside*.

At the heart of this other cinema is the desire (unevenly realised, of course) to create the time and the space necessary for a much closer, more sensitive and responsible relationship between film-makers/exhibitors and their audiences. The public forum which the cinema can offer — the viewing and debate in a group context, the direct response to the film-makers — has been vital to making this work possible.

The 1909 Act stated quite explicitly that it was not concerned with 'an exhibition given in a private dwelling-house to which the public are not admitted, whether on payment or otherwise'. This is the space that television has won entry to, by providing 'wireless' exhibition funded through the licence fee and expenditure on advertising.

The Broadcasting Act 1980 provides the framework for a new phase in the development of television. Channel Four and the Welsh 4th Channel Authority are both attempts to respond to the needs and interests of audience constituencies which the controllers of broadcasting have ignored, caricatured, or treated in 'token' ways.

However, these attempts are not likely to succeed if they remain at the level of 'new' subjects 'dealt with' in the old ways. Here the contrast between the modes of television and independent film-making and cinema are most relevant, and most pressing. . . . What mechanisms, what ways of relating to its audiences can television find, so as to begin creating the kinds of producer/viewer exchanges which the new independents have made possible?

The volume, diversity, and complexity of responses to (and interest in), television is very evidently a problem for broadcasters. 'Something' has to be done, but arguments must not, of course, be allowed to 'get out of hand'. Hence programmes like the BBC's 'Point of View' — 10 minutes every 7 days given over to making fun of viewers' letters, and 'balancing' them out so that broadcasting policy can carry on undisturbed. In a similar way, when the broadcasters take the initiative to contact viewers about their attitudes to programmes, the damping down of what might otherwise become an open-ended exchange of views is ensured by the questions asked and the primitive range of allowed replies.

Not only is television backward to the point of phobia about broadcaster/audience relations, it has also done very little to encourage contact as it were 'sideways' — between viewers. To bring groups of viewers together to watch and discuss particular programmes is important in itself, and is an essential prelude to any kind

of meaningful attempts to involve them in more direct ways in shaping the form and content of television's output. The new independent cinemas/workshops will be able to provide one sort of context for this type of gathering, and Channel Four's support here — and the backing of the ACTT — are important steps forward. The channel is also committed to supporting various kinds of 'follow-up' for its educational programming, but such work must not be allowed to remain the sole province of 'education', however broadly defined: it has to flourish across the full range of the Channel's activity.

All this will mean a continuing commitment of resources by Channel Four, and the imaginative mobilisation of fresh interest and energies in other contexts.

What those contexts will be — public, private, institutional, improvised — remains to be seen.

Simon Blanchard

Organisations and Addresses

Film Workshops

Amber Films
5 Side, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE1
Murray Martin. Telephone: 0632 322000

Birmingham Film Workshop
c/o BAL, Holt Street, Birmingham B7
Roger Shannon. Telephone: 021359 4192

Brighton Film & Video Workshop
c/o The Watts Building, Brighton Polytechnic,
Mouselcoomb, Brighton
Pete Remington. Telephone: 0273 693655, Ext.2183

Bristol Film Makers' Co-op
37-39 Jamaica Street, Bristol
Telephone: 0272 426199

Chapter Workshop (Film & Video)
Market Street, Canton, Cardiff
Roland Denning. Telephone: 0222 39606

Cinema Action
27 Winchester Road, London NW3
Ann Lamche. Telephone: 01-586 7512

East Anglian Film Makers' Co-op
c/o Cinema City, St. Andrews Street, Norwich
Digby Rumsey. Telephone: 0985 218156

Exeter Film Workshop
c/o Chris Garrett, Kintor, Poughill,
Crediton, Devon

Film Work Group
79/89 Lots Road, London SW10

Frontroom
79 Wardour Street, London W1
Telephone: 01-734 4603

Four Corners
113 Roman Road, London E2
Jo Davis/Mary Pat Leece. Telephone: 01-981 4243

Leeds Animation Workshop
4 Oak Road, Leeds 7
Gillian Lacey. Telephone: 0532 620467

London Film Makers' Co-op
42 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1
Tim Norris. Telephone: 01-586 4806

Lusia Films
7/9 Earlham Street, London WC2
Mark Karlin. Telephone: 01-240 2350

Luton Film Workshop
Screen 33, 33 Guildford Street, Luton
Tim Powell.

Manchester Film & Video Workshop
5 James Leigh Street, Oxford Road, Manchester M60
Ingrid Sinclair. Telephone: 061 236 6953

New Cinema Film Workshop, Midland Group
24/32 Carlton Street, Nottingham
Steve Neale/Frank Abbott. Telephone: 0602 583489

Newsreel Collective
2 Boscombe Road, London W12

Northeast Films
Hollin Bush, Dale Head, Rosedale, W. Yorks
Peter Bell. Telephone: 07515 269

Open Eye Film Workshop
90 Whitechapel, Liverpool 2
Doug Howden/Chris Malone. Telephone: 051 709 9460

Oxford Film Makers Workshop
Bury Knowle Estate, North Place, Heddington,
Oxford
Lynne Fredland. Telephone: 0865 60074

Portsmouth Film & Video Workshop
John Pounds Centre, St. James Street, Portsmouth
David Baker. Telephone: 753366 Ext.38

St. Edmunds Workshop
St. Edmunds Arts Centre, Bedwin Street, Salisbury
Peter Wright. Telephone: 20379

Sheffield Film Co-op
Sheffield Independent Film Group
25 Barkers Road, Sheffield 7
Debbie Smith. Telephone: 336429

Southill Park Arts Centre Film & Video Workshop
Birch Hill, Bracknell
Barrie Gibson. Telephone: 0344 27272

Thamesdown Film Workshop
Old Market Arts Centre, Devizes Road, Swindon
Martin Parry. Telephone: 0793 26161

Trade Films
130 Dilston Road, Fenham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE4
Stewart Mackinnon. Telephone: 0632 770085

Workers Film Association
York Independent Film
Hagg Farm Cottage, Intake Lane, Dunnington, York
Jean Stewart. Telephone: 0904 489067

YAA Communications Centre
21 Chapel Street, Bradford BD1
Alf Bower

Film-Makers' Organisations

Independent Film Makers Association
79 Wardour Street, London W1V 3PH
Telephone: 01-439 0460

Association of Cinematographic & Television
Technicians
2 Soho Square, London W1V 6DD
Telephone: 01-437 8506

Distributors

Cinema of Women
27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1
Telephone: 01-251 4978

Circles
113 Roman Road, London E2 0HU
Telephone: 01-981 6828

Concord Films
201 Felixstone Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9BF

London Film Makers Co-op
42 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1
Telephone: 01-586 4806

Resistance Films
66 Prince George Road, London N16
Telephone: 01-254 3940

The Other Cinema
79 Wardour Street, London W1V 3PH
Telephone: 01-734 8508

Journals

Aferimage
1 Birnam Road, London N4
Telephone: 01-272 7434

Framework
c/o TOC, 79 Wardour Street, London W1V 3PH
Screen
29 Old Compton Street, London W1V 5PL
Telephone: 01-734 5455

Undercut
c/o London Film Makers Co-op,
42 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1
Telephone: 01-586 4806

Funding Bodies

British Film Institute
Production Division (Head of Production:
Peter Sainsbury) 29 Rathbone Street, London W1
Telephone: 01-636 4734

Regional Production Fund (Barrie Ellis Jones)
127 Charing Cross Road, London W1
Telephone: 01-437 4355

Arts Council
105 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AV
Film Department: Rodney Wilson/David Curtis
Telephone: 01-629 9495

Regional Arts Associations and Films Officers

Eastern Arts Association
8/9 Bridge Street, Cambridge CB2 1UA
Telephone: 0223 67707
Film Officer: John Cannon

East Midlands Arts Association
Mountfields House, Forest Road, Loughborough,
Leicestershire LE11 3HU
Telephone: 0509 218292
Film Officer: Malcolm Allen

Greater London Arts Association
25/31 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SG
Telephone: 01-388 2211
Film Officer: Maureen McCue

Lincolnshire and Humberside Arts
St Hugh's, Newport, Lincoln LN1 3ON
Telephone: 0522 33555

Community Film Advisor: Tim Pinhay, c/o Hull Officer,
North Humberside Area Centre, 6 Posterngate Hull HU1 2JN
Telephone: 0482 24813

Merseyside Arts Trust
6 Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool L1 3BX
Film Officer: Ann Grey Telephone: 051 709 0671

Northern Arts Association
10 Osborne Terrace, Jesmond, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE2 1NZ
Film Officer: John Bradshaw Telephone: 0632 816334

North West Arts Association
12 Harter Street, Manchester M1 6HY
Film Officer: Paul Habbeshon Telephone: 061 228 3062

Southern Arts Association
19 Southgate Street, Law Courts, Winchester, Hants
Film Officer: David Altshul Telephone: 0962 55099

South East Arts Association
9/10 Crescent Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2LU
Film Officer: Tim Cornish Telephone: 0892 41666



CHANNEL FOUR TELEVISION

60 Charlotte Street, London W1P 2AX. Telephone: 01-631 4444
Independent Film & Video: Alan Fountain, Geraldine McKeown