

LFM Co-op

Newsletter

May/June 1991

42 GLOUCESTER AVENUE, LONDON NW1 8JD
WORKSHOP: 071 722 1728
ADMINISTRATION AND DISTRIBUTION: 071 586 4806
CINEMA: 071 586 8516

2 INSTALLATIONS

THE THREE AMIGOS
BY
JAMES HUTCHINSON

&

GLORY LIES
BY
HELENA SWATTON

MON 13th MAY-FRI 24th
PRIVATE VIEW
THURS 16th

IN

THE LONDON FILM MAKERS COOP

BASEMENT

42 GLOUCESTER AVE LONDON NW1

CAMDEN

6pm-9pm weekdays
10am-6pm weekends

About this newsletter:

Its purpose is to improve the communication between the members of the co-op, to be the bloodstream of vital information, the generation of ideas and projects, and a forum for discussions about the co-op's future and direction.

The newsletter is open to contributions from everybody, whether ideas, info, discussions, photos, drawings etc.

The opinions that are expressed are the writers own and not the Co-op's.

Next newsletter will come out in July. Deadline for contributions: June 30th.

If you would like to put your energy into this newsletter and make it better, then contact Grete Westlye or Louise Andreas via the Co-op.

Workshop report

The bad news:

The two Manfrotto tripods are still being repaired.

Nagra 3 has been broken; it was dropped while on location. Please take care of the equipment!!!!

The good news:

A substantial sum of money has been donated for the maintenance and purchase of equipment. Thanks.

The Optical Printer has got a new Bolex SBM camera with a 400 ft magazine. It is in excellent working condition.

ZDF Television has donated a 1/4" studio tape edit deck which has a 15fps facility.

There is now a new budget for this year's purchases and repairs. Do you have any suggestions for equipment that would improve the Co-op's standard? Possibilities that are being looked into at the moment are a Tracking Dolly and a Digital Lightmeter.

Film stock for sale from the Co-op

Fuji 8521, 16mm colour negative film, daylight spool, £ 10.00 per 100 ft roll. Just past sell by date but it has been checked and has good definition and colour rendition.

Eastman 7239, Colour 16mm, 100 ft daylight spools. £ 5.00

Ilford RX, black and white 16mm, 400ft rolls, recording film. Necessary to test. Price negotiable.

What sort of space and priority should skill sharing and training have at the Co-op? Is it possible to keep the profile of innovative and critical filmmaking while teaching basic skills? What do you think?

Some background information on the courses from Orlagh Mulcaghy.

I thought I would give you a little background information on how and why the LFMC youngest department came into being.

Over the years a number of initiatives were taken to encourage new members by offering them tuition on the co-op's equipment. Shanaz Hussain was instrumental in developing this idea and volunteered a great deal of time and effort to the project, as did Alnoor Dewshi when he took it over.

By 1990 it was believed necessary to develop a formal structure through which the LFMC could offer its members access to new techniques and equipment. The reasons were as follows:

During 1989/90 the workshop had a very large increase in membership. Many of these members came with a great deal of enthusiasm but with very little technical skill. This presented the workshop with a dilemma.

The workshop equipment was old and showing its wear, the funding climate gloomy and the likelihood of getting capital grant funding to replace equipment unlikely. Inexperienced hires are hard on equipment, so the rate of repair and renewal were increasing dramatically. Effectively this meant that more people were placing greater demands on less equipment, surely a recipe for disaster.

The LFMC is a n Open Access organisation to encourage and promote innovative use of film. The workshop did not want to stifle the enthusiasm of new members by restricting the hire of equipment and thereby falling in the aims and objectives of the Co-op.

Some of the funding for workshop staffing had been withdrawn (LBGS) so there would be no extra workshop staff to offer help to the membership on a one to one basis as in times gone by.

After a few hiccups the idea of offering formal tuition at the LFMC on an on-going basis was deemed necessary if the new membership was to have an equal opportunity to explore the LFMC's facilities.

In February 1990 I was asked if I could make the courses work on a self financing basis. I took up the challenge, working on the basis that the courses had to make money to cover the running costs, equipment/film hire, office facilities and wages including my own; if I did not make money I would not get paid.

Film and Video in South Africa April 91

Television was only introduced in South Africa as recently as 1976. Video followed a few years later. South African friends of my generation remember regular home movie shows projected on 8 or 16mm. Consequently I imagined that South African 2nd hand and pawn shops would be crammed with old movie making equipment. I did find an abundance of Super 8 gear; it was available in modern photographic shops, selling off old stock at comparatively cheap rates, as well as in 2nd hand shops.

Yet there seems to be very little low budget experimental film practice. Film is seen as the domain of the rich - leave it to Richard Attenborough - and video is considered to be more accessible for the majority of people. While community video equipment hire workshops do exist, public transport is poor so people have no physical access to these centres, and neither television, let alone video are a commonplace feature in most South African homes. It is easy though to see why reservations about film exist. Super 8 film can be bought in South Africa, it cost about 10 a roll, the same as here, but the average wage is less than U.K. supplementary benefit, and the film can't be processed in South Africa. As for 16mm, Agfa supply colour stock but no b & w. Kodak pulled out of South Africa. There is only one processing lab which is Government subsidised, so the lab can censor if it pleases.....

I remained convinced that if some energy was channelled into researching possibilities for low budget film, this could become a more accessible tool of expression than video. I attempted to hunt down some b & w stock and a Russian Tank or some other means of hand processing. And I was interested to see what was available in the way of found footage, leader, etc. I had success with the latter. There are several video rental shops which also hire out 16mm movies - most of them mainstream. At 'Cine Place' a bloke who worked there told me that he would give me a bag of old found footage for a couple of quid. I asked him where he got leader - he makes it himself by cleaning the emulsion off the celluloid. 16mm and 8 projectors were available for hire for less than a fiver a night. At least enough to run a found footage workshop.

I visited the Young Film-maker's School hoping to find out more about availability of b & w stock and alternative processing methods, but I was put off by the exclusive look and feel of the school, the glossy posters advertising expensive films and the man outside waiting for his son to finish school who told me that South Africa was a good country for film-making because the sun was always shining. Film was not part of the curriculum at Cape Town Art School; students there told me it was too expensive.

I had a chance meeting with 'Neil' who was the assistant director of Mapantsula. He asked me if I'd seen the film and did I remember his name from the titles - not what I thought of the film.

I was directed to Community Video Education Trust in Cape Town. For 7 years CVET has been involved in the acquisition, production and distribution of video for community organisations and Trade Unions around Cape Town with the philosophy of using video as an educational and organisational tool against apartheid. Funded largely by Canadian anti-apartheid organisations, a source which is currently drying up, the workers at CVET have mixed feelings about the future of the organisation. Most people who use CVET tend to see video as an afterthought - as a visual record of a conference or demonstration. CVET are asked to record the events and are left at the end with an armful of videos and the organisers have no idea of how they want it edited. Now CVET are insisting that all users of the organisation arrange beforehand with CVET staff a clear idea of exactly what they require.

Although CVET has current funding problems, they have drawn up a very clear outline of their future direction and areas in need of financial assistance.

I was told that there used to be a flourishing underground film movement in South Africa. Even though many films were banned for blacks in South Africa, several illicit movie houses existed. That was before the Group Areas Act (when blacks were forcibly uprooted from their homes and moved to remote areas, consequently destroying whole communities and cultures).

Staff at CVET are interested in the model of the LFM and are keen to keep up links, as are Film and Allied Workers Organisation and The Free Film-makers Co-op. I heard about these two organisations towards the end of my stay and so information about them is scanty, but FAWO has already contacted LFM Distribution in connection with hiring films for a Film Festival in Johannesburg. I also heard that a man who is involved in the Free Film-makers Co-op is currently working on film projects with kids in Alexandra Township.

I hope by the next edition of the LFM's newsletter I'll have more to report.

Addresses:

FAWO
P.O. Box 16939
Doornfontein
2028 Johannesburg
Tel: Jo'burg 4024570/1

CVET
Tel: 0102721 - 417 4024

Cine Place
230 Victoria Road
Cape Town

Written by Vicky Smith

LONDON FILMMAKERS CO-OP
42 GLOUCESTER AVE.
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"FRAMING DESIRE"

Films by SANDRA DAVIS

Sandra Davis will be
present to discuss her work.

MATERNAL FILIGREE (1980)
MATTER OF CLARITY (1985)
AN ARCHITECTURE OF DESIRE
(1988)

WEDNESDAY 22nd MAY at 7.30pm

By the end of last summer the courses were obviously doing well and were very popular with new and potential members. The executive at that time felt the courses did indeed have a valid and vital role to play in the development of the co-op, and I was encouraged to explore the wider possibilities of access that the courses could offer. This led to the Birkbeck series of Critical Theory lectures and a seminar on funding, integrating the activities of distribution and cinema into courses.

By the end of the financial year 1990/91 the courses had made a profit.

In the light of the courses self financing basis the present executive decided to have the courses finances transferred into the LFMC main books following the advice of Sandy, our administrator. It was also decided to formally ratify the post of courses administrator on a three year tenure naming me as first person in post and asked me to prepare my own job description. This decision followed several votes of confidence at the general meeting.

LFMC - March 91.

Executive Committee:

Gina Czarnecki
James Hutchinson
Emina Kurtagic
Martin Lugg
Paul Rogers
Mark Sheehan
Karen Smith
Tanya Syed
Anna Thew

Staff:

Tom Heslop - distribution
Orlagh Mulcaghy - courses
Vicky Smith - workshop
John Tappenden - workshop
Sandy Welland - administration
Tony Warcus - distribution



The Building Situation

Summary by Sandy Welland from
the administrative report to the
executive meeting 9th May 1991.

Four possible buildings are being considered: at Dagmar Terrace, in Portabello Road, and two in Camden. The potential building will be bought and refurbished by a Developer/Family Trust that RPM (our relocation consultants) have found. The BFI will then lease the building from the developer, and have committed £90,000 for possible rent for the LFMC and LVA. The BFI will also have some office space in any building to house their new Film and Video Development Agency which will be formed in the autumn.

The Weber Douglas Theatre Academy has pulled out of the Dagmar Terrace option, however the developer/trust may still purchase the site and find other tenants himself. Both the Portabello building and the Dagmar Terrace have other parties interested in acquiring them. The developer and the BFI seem to want to move fast on this, particularly now that the BFI want a home for their FVDA, and I am cautiously confident that we will move by the end of 1991.

TIMETIMETIMETIME

Is it age - or is it the impending closure of a century? I don't know, but one thing is certain: **TIME** is imprinted on the horizon in big letters. Transfixed, like a rabbit caught by lights of a passing car on a dark road, I stare at it.

The way we think about time is an expression of how we feel about our space in the world. Are we positioned in a linear time concept; one straight line with a beginning and an end. Birth and death. Time perceived almost as a solid thing moving along the line.

American script-writing manuals all stipulate: establish your goal as soon as possible. Hook your audience into the quest of the Holy Grail. Trapped inside a web of goal-directed intentions; we have all ridden on the horse and enjoyed it. Mainstream cinema.

But we do different things at the Co-op, don't we? Co-op members, where is time in your practice? Has it gone underground, hiding in a burrow with no eyes, in a subconscious existence, or is it roaming the surface? How can we convey the past in our films except for in flash-backs?

Maya Deren's view on poetry in film is worth considering. Film, she says, usually run along a horizontal axis, a development of events happening chronologically. One thing leads to another; cause and effect of everyday life. But when this unravelling of events is halted, and 'the moment investigated', a vertical structure is created - which is poetry. Time is stopped and space given dominance.

Space and time is the life-blood of a film.

In modern physics space and time cannot be separated, we can only understand time by measuring the distance between objects in space. If we have no objects or space, time ceases to exist.

But time itself is not simply time, it is also a manifestation of our culture, mental tools we use in order to orientate ourselves in the world; it is not necessarily an objective notion.

Consider these views:

Cyclical time: where everything repeats itself. Hinduism.

Backward time: looking at objects in space. Astronomers always look at the object's past because of the time it takes for light to travel. Looking at galaxies that existed millions of years ago.

Spiral time: combining cyclical and linear time concepts. Minimalism? Time as a 'multiplicity of subtly distinguished events'. The Hopi Indians.

The Western time concept is based on the material world. We only believe in matter. And because we see the time-span of living things in the world is limited, we can see no further than the end. The fatality of this view becomes unbearable so death is made taboo. The fear of the end; this is what drives main-stream goal-oriented cinema. Will the heroine/hero make it or not? We become chained to linear life full of causality.

One would think that this places us in the present, the here and now, but it is not so. The present eludes us because we are too busy peeping into the future or looking over our shoulders at the past. Yet both past and future are fictionalised; the past we have already censored, suppressed the uncomfortable into oblivion, and the future is a projection of unfulfilled needs.

It is not a question of being more in one tense or the other, but rather trying to step out of time altogether. To recondition the way we think about time, to have a simultaneous view of past/present/future. If it is at all possible.

And the question remains; how to translate this into film? Any thoughts or suggestions on this subject? The next newsletter will print your contribution however small.

Grete Westlye

Calender

May

- 18th Tracklaying course; 10.30
- 19th Projection course; 10.30
- 19th Negative cutting course; 10.30
- 25th Script-writing course; 10.30
- 28th Members meeting, 19.00 and Open Screening, 20.00

June

- 2nd Extraordinary General Meeting, 12.00
- 13th Executive meeting; 19.00
- 25th Members meeting; 19.00 and Open Screening; 20.00
- 29th Basic 16mm and 88 course; 10.30
- 30th Sync sound camera course; 10.30

Summer Courses

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Summer Schools | 8th-13th July |
| & | 22nd-27th July |
| Animation Summer School | 5th-9th August |
| Found Footage Editing | 18th August |
| Sync Rushes Editing | 1st September |

For further information and leaflet contact Orlagh on wednesdays at the Co-op.

BP expo 92

The Fourth British and International festival of new short film and video

31st January - 7th February 1992

This festival is now open to all film-makers and not just for students as in previous years.

Deadline for submission is 16th September 1991

All eligible work will have been completed in the last year.

For guidelines contact:

BP expo '92,
Riverside Studios
Crisp Road
London W6 9RL
Tel: 081 741 2251

LESBIAN AND GAY MULTI MEDIA SHOW

1st - 29th June 1991

Swiss Cottage Library
Exhibition Hall
88 Avenue Road
London NW3
Tel: 071 860 5870

East London Independent Film Makers Festival

30th June 1991

Open to all film makers and students. Films should be no longer than 25-30 mins. Any number of films may be entered by each film maker. Applications in the form of a statement must be in by 3rd June 1991 to:

John Dyke
Tom Allen Arts Centre
Grove Crescent Road
Stratford
London E15 1BJ
Tel: 081 555 7289

The Seventh International Audio-Visual Experimental Festival in Arnhem, Holland

16th - 23rd November 1991

A special scout-team will visit artschools, artists and art organisations in Great Britain in June.

For more information contact:

Caro Delsing
AVE
P.O. Box 307
6800 AH Arnhem
Tel: 085 420571
Fax: 085 435166



The editors want the newsletter to be a place for shared ideas, methods and theories from film-makers about projects in progress. Take the word, if you dare!

This edition's contribution is from John Cant

I suspect I'm the oldest workshop member, well past retirement age, and I sometimes wonder if it's absurd of me to get involved in film-making. However, for what it's worth, here's what I've been up to:

I've been trying to put some of the work of Guy de Maupassant on to the screen. This French Short Story writer died at the age of 42 nearly 100 years ago, but his work is still to be found in any book shop in France and on any paper-back stall. His view of life was decidedly down to earth, often cynical, but he hated war and was aware of social injustice.

I showed one film at an open screening, concerning a man-about-town who picks up a girl in a cemetery: it deals with a practice common in Parisian cemeteries at the time.

Among his obsessions were death, insanity and the supernatural. I am currently working on another graveyard theme; a man in a sort of nightmare sees the dead arise to deface their own tombstones. I've not yet decided how to tackle this. Any ideas out there?