



cover

Super Great

Lovable film festival wallows in smug, unedited magnificence

ONE TAKE SUPER 8 FESTIVAL

RPL FILM THEATRE
THURSDAY 6, 8:00 PM

by Carle Steel

In Gerald Saul's entry from last year's One Take Super 8 event, a child's voice narrates the simple visual of a man making a cake.

"Every event is different," says the tiny voice as the cake is tapped out of the pan, ready for icing. "Today it's whoop-cream. Tomorrow it might be sugar. Or icing. Or nothing!"

You could pretty much say that about the One Take Super 8 event itself. Each of the 30 participants in this fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants film festival risks ending up with something completely different from what they'd planned. Or nothing!

"Even though I generally know what I'm doing, there's at least a one third chance that what I do doesn't turn out," says Saul, adding the odds are probably more like about 50-50.

"What I find interesting about the One Take Super 8 project is how much risk you take," says Saul, something technology has pretty much eliminated in today's filmmaking. Directors like George Lucas, Saul says, can take characters right out of a film; in high definition video, almost everything can be added later.

It's kind of fun at first to watch a shoot-em-up filmed with no bullets (we'll assume he means blanks and bullet holes, since it's unlikely ACTRA would let their people onto a set with a director using live

ammo), he says, but mostly because the technology is still so new.

The One Take Super 8 is exactly the opposite. "With work like this you have one shot. And the odds are it won't work out and you just have to live with it," says Saul.

Sometimes it just doesn't work out; that unhappy result can happen to veteran filmmakers and newbies alike. The film gets shown whether it's there on the reel or not.

The One Take Super 8 event has very few guidelines, but they are strict: make a film with one cartridge of Super 8, and show the resulting 3:20 minute short film as is, faults and all, with no cuts or splices.

The event is open to anyone, whether they've made films before or not.

The results can be amazing, says festival founder Alex Rogalski. "Really it's a miracle that any film works out," he says.

Now in its eighth year, the festival runs in several other cities and has produced over 300 short films, some flops, others tiny marvels.

Last year's crop of speedy shorts ran the gamut from trippy experiments to straight up narratives. One shows three minutes of someone falling down the stairs, over and over again. "Obey Gravity", reads the text at the end. "It's the Law."

Through the lens of a Super 8 camera, simple city images of pedways, ferry terminals and walking malls take on a Soviet-era bleakness. Three minutes of a child eating toast can send the viewer into a rapture of ready-made memories. The films are

alternately dreamy, silly, thoughtful and vague.

Rogalski says he's always surprised by the variety of, and depth of, imagination that has come across in past films.

"Some of them are these flights of fancy where you can't even imagine where the person came up with the idea," he says. "It's always exciting when someone sees something in a new way, or captures something they weren't intending to."

The real risk is in not capturing what you intended to. "You have to move forward," says Rogalski. "You have to have the faith that what you shot is what you wanted."

Because they haven't seen the films beforehand, filmmakers wait anxiously for their developing masterpieces, something that filmmakers almost never have to do anymore.

"There's something about delayed satisfaction, about making something you can't consume right away," says Rogalski.

For some filmmakers, the event isn't much of a departure from the films they usually make.

Almost all of Dianne Ouellette's works incorporate Super 8 film, a format she says evokes a feeling nostalgia she wants to capture in her films. Her entry explores the murder of her grandmother, a family secret she knew nothing about until recently. "My grandfather tells the story that my grandmother ran off with a movie star on a jet plane. Really, she was murdered and found on the street."

Committing something so person-

al and emotional to film has been a challenging experience. "You learn about family when you start to research," she says. "This film is kind of an expressway into a whole different world."

The world of memories, true and false, that she hopes will resonate with the OTS8 audience.

"Home movies work with this idea, 'because this is my memory'. But memories can be lies, too," says Ouellette. "I think a lot of people will contemplate their own history, who they are, their identity."

For Ouellette, the OTS8 is also a way to get back to why people make films in the first place. The festival cuts away at the stress, pressure and

MYSTERY MOVIES

Where else can you catch 30 premieres in one night? Here are a few of the selections that may - or may not - make it onto the big screen at the One Take Super 8 event for their maiden voyage.

PROFESSOR DELUSIA JR.-William Bessai-Saul stars as the son of the elusive Professor Delusia, master of cinema magic. Will the young apprentice maintain control of the tricks, or will he conjure up more than he can handle?

MY BROKEN CAMERA'S UNDEREXPOSED FOOTAGE OF ANTIQUE SHOPPING-Filmmaker Eric Hill's camera sounded like it was grinding its gears or something, and the light meter didn't seem to register light. What will the resulting film look like? That's anyone's guess.

BILL SEATON'S C.L.E.A.N. FILMMAKING GUIDE-A spoof on the thank-God now

competition of film, an achievement in itself.

"If you do it, do it to express yourself because it feels good, then you've done something," she says. "I make don't make films for other people. I do it because it's a catharsis."

"I make them because it makes me feels good. That's what everybody should do in any art form: do it because you want to."

In the end, even with all the gag and apertures and frame rates involved in making a film, it still comes down to a creative act, like in any other artistic discipline, she says. "Picking up a pencil can be complicated too." ^{PD}

dead Bill C-10. Terry Mialkowsky and Shannon Jardine guide young filmmakers through the gauntlet of public funding for independent film. Spoiler alert: May feature old people fucking llamas.

I'M NOT HERE-In this short tribute to Bob Dylan, Jade Duckett and Matt Polsfut pay homage to Samuel Becket's *Waiting for Godot*. Spoiler alert: Bob won't be showing up.

ZOMBIE MILK RUN-In this film by Jennifer Sparrowhawk, Larry and Dorion watch TV in a zombie-like trance, oblivious to a real zombie infestation in their neighbourhood until a routine milk-run sends Larry out into the heart of it. Spoiler alert: Due to a miscalculation in the making of the film, the story will not end with the scene where Dorion bites Larry and they go back to watching TV, only they really are zombies now. Oh, well. /Carle Steel