

# Energating Super 8

**Amy Taubin**

**Artists' Super 8 Film Exposition  
Artists' Space; May 11 - June 4**

On the whole it was depressing. More exactly, the first week I was angry, the second depressed, the third enervated, and by the fourth—just dismissive.

Artists' Space presented four weeks of programs entitled "Artists Super 8 Film Exposition." Over 50 people who, I guess, call themselves artists, showed what, I guess, they call films, for about three hours on each program.

On the positive side, there was one interesting film, **White Man Has Clean Hands** by Ericka Beckman, which combined a highly complex structure with a sensuous relationship to the individual images. Beckman understands the potentialities and limitations of Super 8 as material (that it is grainy, that depth and spacial relations tend to be ambiguous or flattened by it) and she builds her images out of that inherent material.

I also liked Laurie Anderson's installation piece (something about the size of the image in relation to the quality of her recorded voice, and the wispieness of her story made it work better than a lot of her recent performance work) and parts of

Marcia Hafif's Notes on Bob and Nancy.

I might have responded more favorably to Katy Martin's film and Paul McMahon's two small studies if I had seen them in better circumstances (meaning that they need to be viewed with sensitivity and alertness which was impossible when one's eyes and mind had been dulled by the junk that preceded them). Though I have reservations about it, Carolee Schneemann's **Kitch's Last Meal** is, in all its versions, very moving in its desperate attempt to hold to some continuity of existence. Peter Grass's films are primarily interesting for their editing, and Michael Harvey and Dennis Oppenheim showed respectable work.

But in general what was shown was shoddy and stupid; made with a minimum of effort, craft, intelligence, or strategy; and showed a contempt and ignorance of the whole history of film (and I mean whole—that takes in commercial cinema, documentary, avant-garde). Particularly offensive were those (I refuse to call them "films" or "works") by so-called political filmmakers, which were as ignorant of politics as they were of filmmaking.

Apologies to those on the last two-thirds of Program III. I didn't see those films. I was worn out and left. ●