

## “Senses of Cinema”

A film by John Hughes and Tom Zubrycki

### **Synopsis.**

In mid 60's in Australia and around the world artists and filmmakers organised filmmakers cooperatives supporting self-managed production, distribution and exhibition. The Co-ops nurtured Australia's cinema renaissance and created new markets for strikingly innovate Australian content. It was a time that was rich, reckless and rewarding.

Many of Australia's most celebrated filmmakers began their creative lives in the Sydney Filmmakers Co-op. Dedicated, energetic and young, filmmakers like Gillian Armstrong, Jan Chapman and Phillip Noyce acknowledge the formative influence of these experiences. Bruce Petty, was there from the beginning, as was Albie Thoms who started Ubu Films - the home of Sydney's 'underground' cinema. Martha Ansara, Richard Brennan, and Stephen Wallace all played their part in the work of the Sydney Co-op.

The Filmmakers' Co-ops (in particular the Sydney Co-op) brought together an extraordinary diversity of creative ambition. Underpinned by a ground swell of social change, the Co-ops became a forum and a vehicle for 'minority' voices denied expression in the mainstream media. Identity politics, feminism, gay and lesbian liberation, Aboriginal land rights, and the counter-culture all played their part in a lively, complex and contested environment of independent film and video.

This is an important and overlooked dimension of Australian cultural history. The Co-ops' stories and films are certainly entertaining, but also essential to a comprehensive appreciation of Australian cultural history.