

Emerging filmmakers discovering **Super 8**

It's no secret that the Super 8 format has a strong following of faithful aficionados whose ranks are being augmented by emerging filmmakers experimenting with the medium.

"Super 8 film is an incredible format in so many ways," says Norwood Cheek, who founded Flicker in 1994. The organization is dedicated to advancing the art and craft of moviemaking in Super 8 and Super 16 formats. "I continue to see many young filmmakers discovering its unique features."

Cheek also conducts Super 8 workshops around the world. His workshops typically enroll between a dozen to 50 participants. At a recent two hour session with 30 students at his alma mater, University of North Carolina (UNC) in Chapel Hill, he showed samples from past Attack of the 50-Foot Reels—a showcase whereby participants shoot one roll of Super 8mm and Flicker processes, transfers and adds the sound for a premiere, first-look screening. Cheek recalls that most of the UNC students who took part in the class only had digital video experience.

"They were blown away," he says. "Seeing these short films demonstrated what cool, different looks can be created with Super 8 film. It's unbelievable what people can do with one roll of film."

Students in the workshop had one main question for Cheek: why would filmmakers produce projects in Super 8 format? He says that the answer is multifaceted, ranging from the ability to record time-lapse images to the organic quality of a film look

that captures nuanced looks and evokes emotional responses.

"I don't enjoy having the film versus video argument," he says. "You can argue forever. My purpose in teaching about Super 8 film and cameras is based on my theory that future filmmakers need experience shooting everything from Super 8 to Super 16 and 35mm as well as digital video formats. That will give them a better understanding of the language of film, and will prepare them for choosing the format that best suits the story they are trying to tell."

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Cheek focuses his discussions on the art of storytelling, emphasizing that the idea for a short film usurps the technology being used. He notes that technology has made filmmaking a more efficient process, citing the ability to locate film processing facilities on the internet, transferring into a non-linear editing system, and the plethora of new distribution channels. But, Cheek cautions against worshipping technology and the latest gadgets on the market.

Experiment

He also cites the innovative nature of the Super 8 format for filmmakers. "For example, you can find an old Super 8 camera

for \$20, stick in some film, then execute a shot that calls for throwing your camera off a bridge, or into the ocean, or strapping it to a helium balloon and letting it go," he says. "Novice and student filmmakers don't have the budgets or leeway to experiment with those methods of filmmaking if they're using expensive, state-of-the-art cameras."

As a festival organizer, Cheek brings another perspective to his passion for Super 8. "Festivals everywhere are inundated with submissions," he notes. "In this highly competitive industry, you

need to make your work stand out. Shooting on Super 8 could be that unique look that differentiates you from the crowd."

Cheek also covers the history of Super 8 and the current stocks available today during his workshops. His ultimate goal for participants is a final screening of the work produced during the seminars. For more information about Flicker, visit www.flickerla.com. For more information about Super 8 film, visit the Kodak website at www.kodak.com/go/super8.

