

Interview with Reuben Irving of Gorilla Cinema

Harvey Thompson
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Reuben Irving, along with Eleni Christopoulou, has been responsible for the works exhibited at Showcomotion 2004. These are a small part of the work of Gorilla Cinema with various schools throughout the Sheffield, England, region. Last year Gorilla Cinema worked with children at Abbeydale Grange Secondary school to help produce the documentary film *2be*.

WSWS: Could you tell our readers of some of the work that you've been involved in over the past few years?

Reuben: Well, before *2be* we did some independent production, including some European co-productions. We were developing the Mobile Cinema and produced a couple of short films. Then (in 2002/2003) we did *2be* which really got us involved in the whole educational aspect of our present work. Doing this work has been really satisfying. We have worked in various schools and some of that work was screened at this year's Showcomotion.

WSWS: What would you say have been some of the most positive aspects of working with the children?

Reuben: I think, the sense of empowerment. The kids all had different backgrounds. Through the work we did many were able to find their voice.

WSWS: In terms of the importance of children developing their own appreciation of art, how do you think the Blake project worked?

Reuben: Without sounding too grand, our mission with the educational work we're doing is to democratise the medium of film. It's going to happen anyway, with the advent of digital technology. We see our work as part of that process.

WSWS: A recent highly significant event in the lives of millions of school children was the war in Iraq, as witnessed in school students on the antiwar

demonstrations. How has this affected your work?

Reuben: It is noticeable since the war that there seems to be much more awareness and interest in politics. It has definitely shaken the apathy that was around previously.

WSWS: What work are you planning for the future?

Reuben: There is the "First Light" project planned with Abbeydale Grange school, which is to be a short documentary about a restoration project on a local picture house that opened in the 1920s and shut down in 1979.

We would also like to develop the Mobile Cinema and to have regular screenings at a variety of different locations (cinema halls, schools, parks, etc.)—anywhere it's possible to set up.

Also we are planning to make links internationally, to link projects in schools around the world. The idea would be for students to eventually collaborate on a global scale.

Lastly some of our material is to be screened on the satellite Community Channel.
www.gorillacinema.co.uk



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