

# HOUSEWATCH

**IAN BOURN** on your next door neighbours as art . . .

The potential viability of this project was first realised earlier this year, when Chris White and myself ran a series of tests using one projector and a simple back-projection screen over a window at the front of my house. We both live and work in Acme Housing premises and our houses are situated on opposite sides of the same street. Seen from the large bay window of Chris's top floor studio space, the projected 8mm film test appeared surprisingly surreal, at the same time subversively 'real', in its given context as just another lit window in the street of terraced houses at night.

We discussed the possibility of using all the windows and the door (which has glass panels), realising that a film could be made, using more projectors and separate sequences of footage, to illuminate and run through the entire house facade. These filmed sequences could be made to appear in opposition or unity by virtue of film in adjacent collage and its relationship to the real linkage of inter-connecting rooms in the house. An obvious example of this would be that of a figure, filmed and projected on separate footage in all the windows, being made to appear to walk from room to room all over the house.

These first thoughts were, in essence, the beginning of my own plans for a house film drama. In terms of my work to date, the film would follow on from the autobiographic concerns of *Lenny's Documentary* and domestic rituals that form *Making Yourself at Home* and *The End of the World*. Chris White's role in the venture was to help with the filming and to adapt his upstairs studio into an indoor viewing space. My house would be the screen and his house the auditorium.

As discussions on the setting up of the project got underway the full scale of possibilities began to emerge. There seemed many ways that the house could be used other than the limited scope of my personal interpretation. We were, after all, talking about

changing, visually, the nature of what went on inside my house — a house similar to so many other terraced houses on streets everywhere. And Chris was beginning to come up with quite different ideas of his own.

We then decided to open the project up, making the house available to a group of artist/film-makers who would each produce purpose-made film/slide-work to fit the screening arrangement. This would encourage a variety of personal interpretation and also provide the number needed to crew so complex a projection facility. The individual interpretations, we decided, must take into account the nature of the 'house' concept and not result in

the mere showing of irrelevant footage on an arrangement of odd-sized screens.

There are now six artists working on the project. These are George Saxon, Lulu Quinn, Tony Sinden, Alison Winckle, Chris White and myself. Each has taken to working on quite different aspects of the concept; from the obvious voyeurism derived from 'watching the neighbours' and connotations of a literal street-theatre to the more structural concerns of film flowing through architecture. ●

*Housewatch takes place at 8 Claremont Rd, London E11 on October 26 1985, at 8.30 pm.*

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**8 CLAREMONT ROAD LONDON E11 ☉ LEYTON**  
**8-30 OCTOBER 26**