

TOUGH GUY TASTE

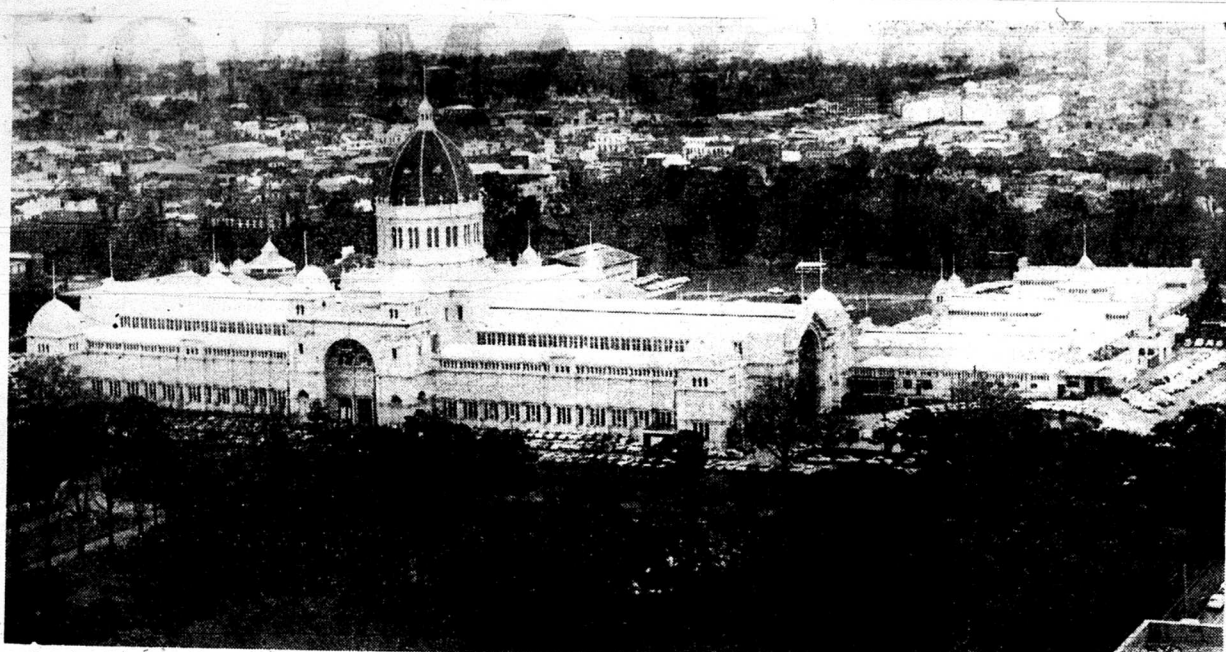
THEATRE ARTS
by
FRANCIS EVERS

THE MELBOURNE University Film Society's current programme of films as "violence in the cinema" as its central theme. The purpose, apparently, is to demonstrate that violence on the screen need not be an unsavory exercise in the neurotic nor a disruptor of social mores.

It is true that violence on the screen has frequently been explored here and abroad, though current attitudes in Australia seem more concerned with the suppression of sexual rather than violent scenes. "Whether we admit it or not," is a programme note. "Violence is an integral part of our life, and some moral attitudes can only be shown by the way they arise out of violence or in the face of violence."

This self-evident truth, however, is not of itself sufficient justification for devoting nearly a fortnight to films dealing exclusively with, as it were, man's animosity to his fellow man. Frankly, audiences here have dieted on crime and violence for so long are now little affected by these twin themes. It must be then that the Melbourne University Film Society's real intention is to make film art of a high order, that there are directors who have achieved this on various occasions. Among the films listed for viewing are works by such directors as Orson Welles, Wajda Poland, Bergman, Joseph Losey, Raoul Walsh and Fritz Lang. Film directors of most or film-producing countries represented. Violence is by means the monopoly of the mean Western or gangster film.

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An excellent example of which treat violence and nine it with true artisticity are *The Criminal* made in Britain about 1955 and directed by Joseph Losey, an ex-ate American, and *The Heat*, a Hollywood production of 1953 vintage, directed by Fritz Lang. The latter is a masterpiece of the criminal mind with penetrating intelligence and close attention to the nature of the individual, shot largely in a prison. Central character, Bannon, a viciously hardened criminal thief whose long terms in a have failed to convert Criminals together do not; out the best in one ter. sey's analytical presence of the real Bannon is of this criminal someone of a hero. Ironically his fall is brought about by very qualities we are led mire in him. There is no glorification of violence here. Yet this woman the fine film it is without a iota of violence. It is a much superior film *Big Heat* which seeks to dramatize the trials of Glenn as a police sergeant g his corrupt fellow officer. Some savage physical ences occurs here.



MELBOURNE'S EXHIBITION BUILDING—a difficult place in which to look different.

Australian-made — good and bad

IN ONE SENSE the Third Australian Industries Fair at Melbourne's Exhibition Building (until March 20) looks much the same as any other exhibition. It is difficult for any show to look different under that great grey dome with its paintings of disrobed Victorian ladies and gentlemen struggling with torn sheets among the clouds.

But this one, organised by the Victorian Chambers of Manufactures, looks different because we are a little older than last time. Nowadays we are looking at our industry in a different way. And all the pride and concern, doubt and hope for our industry seem to be displayed here among the fairy floss and kangaroo paw bottle-opener souvenirs.

Here, under one roof, it can be Truly Said—to borrow the style of the official catalogue—that Australian Industry is "On Parade" in one magnificent Shop Window.

Everything from massive die-casting and moulding and stamping machinery to precision measuring instruments to mirrors sandblasted with ballet girls and yachts in full sail.

Only a year or so ago there were some people—"knockers," "ratbags" and other assorted trouble-makers—who complained that the growth of Australian industry was really the growth of foreign industry in Australia.



A fair for schoolchildren and businessmen.

presented originally and well. And, even foreign-designed goods made under licence here started below par in the international market while Australian goods as a whole had an uncouth image.

Today some respectable people have joined these ranks and are concerned about both these aspects of industry. Many industrial leaders have made clear that they recognise the necessity of good design. But there are others who still have not budged from innocent practices and amateurish habits picked up in the backyard days of Australian manufacture.

The Third Australian Industries Fair reflects the dichotomy as in a double exposure. Here are the two industrial Australias crowding one on top of the other, the old and the new, the worldly-wise and the backyarders. The difference between good and bad design is not the only issue. The most violent contrasts here are between design on one hand and thoughtless, unawakened lack of design on the other.

It all begins with the poster for the fair which is on display in the streets. In the international tradition, posters for

ROBIN BOYD GOES TO THE INDUSTRIES FAIR AND SEES HOPE FOR THE NATION'S IMAGE

industrial fairs are simple, strong, dynamic

The poster for this fair, even if judged on a far lower standard—even on the most important local standard—is an uninspiring thing. It lacks the essential quality of an idea. It is unsigned and seems to have been a group effort. Perhaps it was designed in committee, each member contributing a new color and a different type face. It gives no indication that anyone responsible was aware of the new revolution in design.

And yet, inside the show, it is clear that the revolution is here. Not at first glance. Scattered over the vast exhibition floor are all the old familiar trellises and tangles of signs and colors and those madly incongruous notes. What, for instance, is a stand for that estimable club, the Diners, doing at an Australian industrial show?

But in the middle of it all, standing solid as Avers Rock, are the displays of some of the heavy exhibitors: AMP, BHP, ACI, the Gas Corporation and the Victorian Railways. And every one of them is designed.

Nothing to set the Yarra on fire, perhaps, but consciously, professionally, expertly designed. Some keen mind devised each one on the basis of an original and imaginative idea. And this

is Australia's industry's greatest need: more important ultimately than foreign capital or imported know-how.

The ACI stand reflects perfectly with almost equal strength both sides of the picture. As we know from its television commercials and newspaper advertisements this company has some stylish advice in design. The stand itself is a striking sort of commercial cathedral of archways. One half of the products shown are those beautiful, sensible, useful containers in which good things come: Milk bottles, jars, scientific and industrial flasks. All this is first-rate.

Another section of the stand displays consumer glassware, nice things for the home, stemware and such. Almost invariably these attempt to be pretty, and are merely fussy with ladylike curves, and too many ornaments and lashings of gilt.

I doubt if even their own mothers at ACI would take their party dress seriously in comparison with the simple dignity of the better household glassware from Scandinavia or the U.S. Indeed, it is not this gimmicky, ingratiating glassware that ACI chooses to illustrate on the front of its smart hand-out pamphlet. Rightly it chooses the more serious, solid, and yet humble bottles and flasks.

How can Australian industry present two such different faces? Why do so many of the better-

looking products that proudly wear the made-in-Australia boomerang label have that confession of colonialism in small type underneath: "Under licence . . . from John Doe Inc, Seattle or Birmingham".

It is partly because our industrialists do not make sufficient use of our trained industrial designers. And it is partly because we have not enough trained industrial designers.

But then, upstairs at the Exhibition Building, hope rises again.

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution."

Albert Einstein wrote those words, and they are reproduced large and clear on numerous placards in an exhibit called "Art and Design—Education for Industry," presented by Victoria's senior technical schools and designed and erected by the Industrial Design Students at the Royal Melbourne Technical College.

Tucked away on a side gallery, it could not be called the most heavily patronised exhibit. But it shows fresh and delightful design in a wide range of small products: fabrics, packages, labels, ceramics; all done with style and ideas and brilliant—in both senses—color. This, we must believe, is Australian industry tomorrow.

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