

# Something Borrowed from the Past: Wedding Photography and Super 8mm

By Paul Gansky



**Figure 1 - (Odd Cinematic Bedfellows)**  
Image Source: [Jennifer Brown, Layer Cake Films](#)

In his diagnosis of retro culture, Christian Thorne defines a “desire, delusional and utopian in equal proportion, for a relationship to objects as something other than commodities.”<sup>1</sup> This longing for re-enanted authenticity often ironically seeks out the most mass-produced, obsolete objects – such as Super 8mm filmmaking gear and its unique visual look – a medium that is far from divorced of its commercial potential in the present. One of its most prominent recuperations glimmers from the realm of professional wedding photography, a sizable slice of the eighty-six billion dollar U.S. wedding industry.<sup>2</sup> Since the early 2000s, wedding advice magazines,

websites, and photography journals, including *The Knot*, *Weddings*, *Little Black Book* and *The British Journal of Photography*, have encouraged prospective newlyweds to hire photographers that can capture their ceremonies on Super 8, a form evoking a romanticized post-World War II era the bride and groom cannot otherwise experience.<sup>3</sup>

For their part, through websites that serve as their principal billboards and storefronts, Super 8 photographers professionalize, and historicize, the format's uses and meanings. Casting themselves as stewards of tradition, they construct online histories that characterize Super 8 as a stable technological and aesthetic repository for family memories. In this review, I investigate whether Super 8's evocative status either complicates or supports theories of nostalgia, often seen as an economic fetishization of the past.<sup>4</sup> I also consider how wedding companies remediate the format from a material into a digital entity, operating graphically, visually, and textually on their websites, often combined with references to mainstream film. It is additionally turned into a medium readily available for customers through expensive production packages, running anywhere from \$1,800 to \$12,500, that include transfers to DVD, Blu-ray, and personal web pages. Wedding sites, and the products they offer, make Super 8's imagistic, tactile qualities and sociohistorical importance appear comprehensible, accessible, and desirable in the present, while altering how the gauge is described and experienced.<sup>5</sup> Increasingly dominated by specialists, and rarely exhibited on film, this is a form that is written about and visualized more than it is used. In this case, wedding photographers have substantial leverage to redefine Super 8 solely as an archival, domestic, postwar device – situated in contradistinction to digital video. As Super 8 is remediated, I am concerned that its vibrant history – and possible future – of alternative, unconventional uses is being elided.

Unearthing obsolete objects makes Frederic Jameson nervous for slightly different reasons. In *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1990), he surveys a cultural terrain bereft of the grand technological narratives that distinguished between past, present, and future. Jameson consequently bewails an inability to comprehend an artifact like Super 8 as it was once utilized in any specific period. With the collapse of history into the marketplace of mass culture, a frenzied resuscitation and imitation of past aesthetic styles reigns supreme.<sup>6</sup> Thorne adds that this retrospective obsession is exacerbated by prolonged corporate interest, in which objects are never allowed to go obsolete, where they might be rediscovered and put to new and different use. They are merely waiting in the wings to be repackaged and resold.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps a similar distaste over the cheapening of history underwrites much home movie scholarship that avoids acknowledging Super 8's lucrative potential for the likes of wedding photographers. With the exception of Patricia Zimmermann's *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film* (1995), most research treats Super 8 as a dead rather than residual medium. The gauge is usually regarded through now-defunct amateur filmmaking clubs, or analysis of vernacular texts produced in the past on the format, as well as on other small gauges like 9.5mm and 16mm.<sup>8</sup> Super 8's contemporary use in weddings also illustrates that the format's technological, aesthetic, and cultural values are not wholly dictated by museums and historical societies. Such institutionalization is epitomized by the 1998 Museum of Modern Art exhibit, *Big as Life: An American History of 8mm Films*, which "emphasizes the variety of uses artists have made of small-gauge film",<sup>9</sup> usually as an "insignificant and despised medium" that slipped through the commercial cracks.<sup>10</sup> Yet as the proliferation of Super 8 wedding photography companies illustrate, small gauge filmmaking is highly profitable and fully engaged in the present. These activities have a significant impact on how Super 8's history is told and understood. It is also a technology that can no longer be examined apart from its imbrications into other, newer media forms, even as Super 8 is constructed as a premier conduit into the past.

### **Nostalgia online: making Super 8's history accessible**

Constituted online, the wedding media market reveals that Super 8's cultural and commercial status also extends beyond its exchange on eBay. The consumer-to-consumer corporation is an undeniable force in circulating Super 8 equipment internationally, and a center stage for determining its market value. Part and parcel of numerous remaindered artifacts being traded, listings regularly provide anecdotes that further the gauge's nostalgic draw.<sup>11</sup> Yet eBay is not the only, nor the primary, site where the medium's retrospective resonances and uses are being formulated and sold. A majority of eBay's listings are composed for customers with extensive technical and historical knowledge of cameras, splicers, projectors, lenses, batteries, and motors.

Wedding photography sites are, by contrast, designed to educate prospective brides and grooms who may have no prior knowledge of the gauge's existence. Super 8 is boiled down to simple graphic representations of cameras, as well as explanations and frame analyses of available types of film. Based in Brooklyn, Los Angeles, and London, Hello Super 8, for example, provides screen captures of three Kodak stocks, detailing their pertinence in certain kinds of shooting conditions. "Classic" color negative stocks are ideal for underlit spaces and situations, as well as for softening skin tones, accompanied by close up shots of a blissful bride. Under sunlight, "retro" reversal color stocks provide a boldly saturated patina to wedding bouquets. The "timeless" high contrast of black and white matches equally everlasting seaside and forest meadow settings.<sup>12</sup> Each stock is infallible in its capacity to summon the past. Super 8's evocative potency harmonizes with the stated aims of many wedding photographers, promising to capture "moments you'll want to remember and share forever",<sup>13</sup> and create films marked by an "instant transcendence of time".<sup>14</sup> By employing – and thereby historically salvaging – obsolescent technology, photographers insinuate that their work, and their customer's weddings, will remain relevant.

Super 8's rekindling of a "classic," "retro," or "timeless" era might appear unsupported by Hello Super 8's vague visual examples. Yet photographers are hardly haphazard in their reach towards bygone times. This is not an affectless or arbitrary recycling of past forms, as Jameson believes is characteristic of nostalgia.<sup>15</sup> Their online sites festooned with textual and visual descriptions of the gauge's genealogy, photographers yoke the medium to the 1950s, a construct encompassing anywhere from 1950 to 1969. Hello Super 8's introductory film to their site begins by announcing, "Say hello to the nostalgia," followed by a grainy shot of a bride atop a 1957 Pontiac Bonneville, its tailfins in the foreground.



**Figure 2 - (Tailfins and Film Grain)**

**Video Source:** [Hello Super 8](#)

The company is not alone for conflating Populuxe design with the medium. Online, New York's Layer Cake Films links their production packages to dye-transfer prints of desserts culled from early 1950s Betty Crocker cookbooks, the color meant to approximate that of reversal film stocks. Another site, London's Mark Brown Films, weds clips of its Super 8 footage to Buddy Holly's jangly cut from 1964, "Ummm, Oh Yeah (Dearest)." Most unambiguously, the Birmingham, Alabama outfit A Bryan Photo tags Super 8 as a popular American technological innovation of the 1960s.<sup>16</sup> Through the organization of elements upon these sites, the medium orbits within a constellation of well-known, if unrelated, multimedia materials that ensure it is brought into customers' lives and placed online from an easily apprehended, sanguine, and recognizable past. Although each of these companies serves an international clientele, Thorne might opine that the past they tie to Super 8 is part of an "unabashedly nationalist project" etched in a "distinctively U.S. idiom."<sup>17</sup> No mention is made of Super 8's profound global presence, ongoing for nearly half a century.<sup>18</sup>

Not only are significant parts of Super 8's cultural influence left off the table. The medium's renovation for weddings eschews its history of uses and complex technological genealogy. Besides the experimental work undertaken by the postwar filmmakers seen in the *Big As Life* exhibit, Super 8's history includes its use in security cameras for small businesses beginning in 1971, to a peculiar fusion with early videotape in 1978 in the Polaroid company's Polavision system.<sup>19</sup> The sense of postwar desire fermented by wedding photographers through their sites illustrates that nostalgia works through subjugation and incompleteness. Though Super 8 may be linked online to artifacts that provide the illusion of a complex and far ranging historical phenomenon, its past is streamlined to spark a narrow range of imaginative projections that can be commercially predicted.

Welding Super 8 to the 1950s, rather than another era, additionally illuminates how the postwar period set the stage for Super 8 to be sold exclusively to capture innocuous, accessible memories. Companies including Kodak and Bell and Howell marketed the medium to middle- and upper-middle class families in the United States to spend their leisure time filming weddings, birthdays, and vacations.<sup>20</sup> Manufacturers offered voluminous advice to amateurs about cross-pollinating an unselfconscious candidness with Hollywood narrative and visual continuity.<sup>21</sup> Upsetting, embarrassing, or awkward moments were to be edited out. These corporations thereby substantially influenced the selection and shaping of experiences to be recollected as memories in the future.<sup>22</sup> The resuscitation of Super 8 by wedding photographers is, as a result, not the first time that the gauge has been sold as an ignition for reminiscence and nostalgia. The yearning that Jameson and Thorne express for a prelapsarian period unsullied by mass-produced and marketable meanings simply does not exist from which to regenerate this format. Financial imperatives remained a consistent, guiding force in its discursive construction, and it never possessed a style native to any given time, no matter if it was categorized as new or retrograde.

### From *The Wonder Years* to *Psycho*: the Super 8 wedding as cinematic event

Though mainstream filmmaking pressed an indelible imprint into the home movie mold from the postwar period on, its presence remains unremarked in wedding photography circles. Still, it conspicuously contours their historical understandings of *Super 8*. On a blog designed to explain the technology to customers, Branden Lower, the *Super 8* specialist for A Bryan Photo, states that it was the cost of small-gauge film that dictated the “story-driven” nature of “our parents’ films.”<sup>23</sup> He erroneously implies that anything other than a tightly plotted structure was absolutely nonexistent in amateur cinema. In order to prove his point, and without a drop of irony, Lower states that in lieu of exhibiting actual amateur *Super 8* weddings, he shows prospective customers the title sequence from the ABC television show *The Wonder Years* (1988 – 1993), a minute-long *Super 8* montage replicating one backyard afternoon for a fictional 1960s suburbanite clan. The fabricated tenor of *The Wonder Years* slips by Lower, who in his writing misidentifies the family in the show as real, deeming the title sequence “a perfect snapshot into what life was like for them on a daily basis.”<sup>24</sup> That a simulation is more reverberant than a genuine home movie is revealing. Both wedding photographers and their customers may be more familiar with *Super 8* through mass mediated, internationally broadcast replications, rather than from their own family’s recordings. Such an acquaintanceship is not made through film projection but through television – or, in the case of A Bryan Photo, as a streaming, pixilated video seen by customers through the company’s site. Lower’s *Wonder Years* tactic also suggests that home movies are additionally understood through their frequent imitations in mainstream films, including Martin Scorsese’s wedding-inflected opening credits sequence in *Mean Streets* (1973), or JJ Abrams’ more recent *Super 8* (2011).



**Figure 3 - (*The Wonder Years*: Super 8 as collective memory)**

Image Source: [A Bryan Photo](#)

Though they do not explicitly acknowledge the influence of such productions upon their own creative work, A Bryan Photo’s *Super 8* pieces, like that of nearly every other photography company, adheres to a basic narrative model that is surprisingly short. In their production packages, A Bryan Photo, Hello *Super 8*, and Layer Cake Films offer twenty to forty-five-minute master edits “ideal for close friends and family,” and three to four minute reels for less patient acquaintances that are meant to be easily shared as transfers onto discs, or uploaded to the Internet.<sup>25</sup> The consistency in the films’ composition is notable. Whether in timeless black and white or retro color, *Super 8* weddings begin with a sequence detailing the bride and groom’s respective preparations for the ceremony, a brief recap of the vows spiced with reverse shots of weeping guests, a subsequent tasting of the cake, and several shots of the newlyweds and their friends dancing and laughing into the evening. Perhaps as an oblique nod to the editing style seen in *The Wonder Years* credit sequence, A Bryan Photo continually relies upon the orange and yellow exposed ends, or flares, of the film rolls to punctuate each cut, though they are careful not to disturb spatial or temporal continuity.

Mirroring comments made by other photographers on their own sites, A Bryan Photo also states that *Super 8* does not record sync sound.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, pop songs chosen by customers fill the audio track. The musical selections, in addition to the settings and attire

worn by wedding participants, are strikingly contemporary, though, suggesting that customers do not desire to meticulously recreate, or inhabit, the tightly bounded 1950s scenario laid out by photographers. They may simply be attracted to the visual look the small gauge provides. As the films seen on A Bryan Photo's site illustrate, the finished productions rarely match the highly cathected past Super 8 is so neatly advertised as evoking.

In fact, wedding films from companies besides A Bryan Photo can sometimes be much more complicated intertextual beings. They are the meeting grounds for private life to take on the visual and performative aspects of a cinematic event cut from a kaleidoscope of eras. Bridal gowns run the gamut from *Jezebel*-red (1938) to funereal black, and Dead Kennedys soundtracks match prominently displayed Bettie Page tattoos. Not everyone follows A Bryan Photo's repeatedly voiced adherence to "classical" home movie aesthetics. Disorienting editing and bleach-bypass and push-processing reminiscent of *Delicatessen* (1991) and *Seven* (1995) mark many pieces made for clients, implying an affinity for formally pyrotechnic art house cinema rather than an imitation of amateur techniques. The Midlands, UK-based company Shutterbox, for example, boasts a spectacular Super 8 wedding piece that melds jittery handheld shots and flares redolent of *The Wonder Years* with Steadicam-induced citations from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948), the Saul Bass credit sequence from *Psycho* (1960), and Stanley Kubrick's *Lolita* (1962), a confection that is ultimately exhibited in a 2.35:1 widescreen format. Not every postwar citation is punctuated by a benign yelp from Buddy Holly. Customer choices plunge the gauge into a much messier historical milieu, revealing that there is nothing natural about Super 8's relationship to the production of whitewashed home movies, weddings in particular. The format is instead open to redefinition through cultural practices that diverge from the patterns of use constructed by film manufacturers, and currently reinforced by wedding photographers.



**Figure 4 - (Hitchcock at the wedding)**

**Image Source:** [Shutterbox Films](#)

### The importance of family

It is intriguing that as they remediate Super 8, wedding media sites do not more often embrace, or showcase, the *Lolita*-tinged idiosyncrasies of customer choices. Photographers are highly selective about how they naturalize this residual technology. Links to the 1950s are combined with depictions of Super 8's intimate relationship to family. Layer Cake Films renders the medium indistinguishable from a kind of universal domestic lineage. In their online site's history page, "What is Super 8mm Film?" they inform consumers that the format serves as *the* sole container for childhood footage of one's parents or grandparents.<sup>27</sup> The video introduction for their site follows suit. An early 1960s Keystone K-12 camera fades into the visitor's view. Through its lens, a montage of 1950s-era marriage and home movie footage found by the company plays on a loop, suggesting that the device not only records but literally houses a familial narrative, from wedding vows to the purchasing of the first Ford sedan and rancher home. On their webpage about the format's background, A Bryan Photo similarly delineates Super 8's "original intent" to be the recording of "the everyday lives of families and friends."<sup>28</sup> The function and emotional import of the gauge apparently does not depend upon the age or nationality of consumers, whose kin might have been born after home video superseded film, or whose lives may not be housed on either format. Super 8 is the de facto prosthetic memory for anyone to locate cherished genealogical images, with "family" floating as an inherently attractive, if totally ersatz, 1950s construct, a point underscored by Lower's reliance upon *The Wonder Years*. A domestic aura, "reduced to a pure commodity consumed with measured abandon," is implanted in the technology, which infuses the "timeless" representation of each new

wedding.<sup>29</sup> Super 8's new status as a commercial format is occluded as it is descriptively transformed into a social instrument with a single purpose.

Re-familiarizing the medium is also based upon how photographers propose to practice Super 8 during a ceremony, which is described in detail online if not actually borne out with examples from their productions. On photographers' sites, the potentially distracting novelty of the technology is textually subdued while visually accentuated. Despite charting each film stock's technical specifics, Hello Super 8 promises that their "cool vintage cameras" are "invisible guests," never blocking the view of those invited with "big, bulky equipment."<sup>30</sup> Equally unobtrusive filmmakers make sure that the gear maintains a low profile. In his online clarification of how A Bryan Photo approaches each wedding production, Lower states that the company's photographers "shoot like the uncle" to mitigate Super 8's presence.<sup>31</sup> It is not uncommon for wedding photographers to profess a relationship of trust and closeness with customers, but it is unique to practitioners of this medium to operate as family members. Lower believes that a photographer who has embedded themselves successfully into a marriage can encourage their subjects to break the fourth wall and stare directly into the lens, as though the camera has evaporated and they are responding to a relative.<sup>32</sup>



**Figure 5 - (Shoot like the uncle)**

**Image Source:** [A Bryan Photo](#)

In the process, the intrusion of media professionals, their instruments, their several thousand dollar fees, and the time it takes to create the footage are bracketed out from the innately nostalgic "home movie" of the matrimonial scene. Consequently, the production of Super 8 films moves out of domesticity, even as they are continually portrayed as being within the family's financial and technical grasp. Historically speaking, Super 8's long-running identity as an amateur implement appears unperturbed. However, by casting themselves as part of the nuclear unit, wedding photographers place Super 8's uses under their purview. The format's long lineage of nonprofessional accessibility is discursively curbed.

### **Technological and aesthetic stability**

Idyllic connections to postwar domesticity are not the only ways that Super 8 is remediated and historicized as a container for tradition – a warp and woof of meaning that Jameson, emphasizing the incomprehensibility of stylistic citations, overlooks in his thesis of nostalgia.<sup>33</sup> Nor does Jameson consider that nostalgia, pining after irrecoverable absences and lost time, might coagulate around objects that can physically persist across multiple eras, and therefore maintain contemporary allure. Thorne surmises that for an artifact to be fetched from obsolescence, it must be considered worthy of care for an extended period, its life tightly interwoven with our own – and not only through its proximity to family.<sup>34</sup> In this case, and somewhat against Thorne's claims about the operations of retro culture, a renewed relationship to Super 8 unpolluted by commodification matters less than whether the medium can evidence technological stability.

Wedding companies insist it has such stamina. Graphically presenting only single types of Super 8 cameras upon their sites, they refrain from hinting at any mechanical evolutions. The medium is given a pleasing constancy. Their online historical sections do not mention that Super 8 derived from a standard version, first appearing in 1932, or that the gauge's equipment has been periodically amended to provide sound capabilities, variable frame rates, enhanced image quality, and frame registration. Layer Cake Films uses only a certain

model of a camera to signify the entire medium. Many other companies follow an analogous strategy, like A Bryan Photo, which organizes information about the gauge around one clickable camera icon. They also describe the medium's only technical alteration to be the ability to change different film stock cartridges mid-shoot – a breakthrough they state was made in the 1960s.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, the company feels that Super 8 in its technical form has not changed an iota from that era.

Besides arguing that Super 8 has reached a reassuring technological plateau, the gauge's lack of corrosion is highlighted on photographers' websites. Deeming the format the only "archival" option available that "will last through the ages," Hello Super 8 includes the original film reels in their packages for customers so that couples have a durable, perpetually readable artifact to transfer onto future formats as they arise.<sup>36</sup> Like almost every other company in the business, however, they also place the finished film for customers onto personal web pages, DVD and Blu-ray discs, mobile phone-friendly formats and raw data files. Their packages evidence an unresolved tension between the hallowed material specificity of Super 8 as a "final format," designed to be exhibited in domestic spaces for families, and the wild proliferation of contemporary ways that the media will actually be circulated and seen.<sup>37</sup> As A Bryan Photo's introductory online description of Super 8 explains, neither a projector nor a film screen are necessary for customers to watch recordings of their ceremonies.<sup>38</sup> In this paradoxical practical reality, the physicality of Super 8 is collapsed into the imagery of the finished digitized product, which the company still refers to as a "film" viewing experience.

Adding a further twist to the proceedings, the issue of a final format remains unresolved as wedding media companies conceive of a deeply desirable, if wholly imagined, sense of permanency by selling Super 8 over digital videography. A Bryan Photo sets Super 8's technological, material constancy into relief by casting contemporary video as mechanically and stylistically fleeting, generating an overwhelming amount of footage. During his discussion of *The Wonder Years*, Lower believes that the short three-minute length of each cartridge ensures that the small gauge incisively captures only a few key moments, unlike devices such as iPhones or Flip cameras, whose comparatively low recording cost and expanded storage capacity leads to "overshooting," in which "we have no discernment of which life events deserve special documentation."<sup>39</sup> Digital video is characterized as inherently and problematically perfect in its ability to "show exactly what happened, what people said and what everything looked like," yet unable to carry any historical or personal resonance.<sup>40</sup> Why? Lower contends that besides lacking any perceptible consistency in its rapidly changing visual qualities, video takes none of the time, and finely honed skill set required by Super 8 that gives it the weight of tradition, and makes it a prime medium for private memories to be preserved upon.<sup>41</sup>

These protestations aside, few companies are willing to place samples of Super 8 against video for customers' consideration, making the argument purely discursive rather than practical. They continue to transform Super 8 into a textual entity online, a form with a rich aesthetic history. Contemporary digital formats, according to wedding photographers, are missing a recognizable artistic canon that has defined the strengths of the newer medium both in style and content. Lower argues that shooting Super 8, by contrast, serves as "a tipping of the cap to master tradesmen whose images still stand the test of time."<sup>42</sup> They include the famed photojournalist Henri Cartier-Bresson, whose arresting black and white World War II images are described on A Bryan Photo's site as informing their similarly candid documentation of weddings. How exactly "tradesmen" such as these – working with 35mm still cameras on radically different subject matter in Cartier-Bresson's case – relate to small-gauge wedding work remains unparsed. Equally inexplicable are the actual social and technological forces that ensure Super 8's aesthetic applications have been and continue to be unchanging.



**Figure 6 - (A Bryan Photo's Artisanal Studio)>**

**Image Source: [A Bryan Photo](#)**

Online, the gauge's identity is permeable, where a discussion of the form may be studded with imagery that is not actually shot on the medium, a perplexing contamination that may elude customers unfamiliar with Super 8's qualities. Rather than present the gauge on its own merits, nostalgia for wedding media companies manifests itself as a conservative desire to build a past marked by stability from other sources, including figures like Cartier-Bresson, whose career has remained critically well-regarded for decades. For photographers working the marriage circuit, whose craft is based upon representing sacred unions and the beginning of family, such associations, however tenuous, allow them to suggest that each new wedding will be preserved on a format that bespeaks a safe, coherent, and completely inclusive past.

### **Out of the past, but to what ends?**

Approaching Super 8 as something other than amateur, marginal, or superseded offers a marked contrast to much preexisting work on home movies. Wedding photography as a business and an online operation recasts the medium as an expensive, professionalized conjurer of the past. As Super 8 is reorganized into a sensual, graphic and textual online entity, its history is not necessarily enriched through remediation, but winnowed. It is only partially recovered from obsolescence. It is worth questioning whether Super 8's new historicization leaves room for unheralded uses to be imagined. Jameson would remain convinced wedding photographers' articulation of the gauge is based upon "stereotypes" and flimsy "pop images and simulacra," whose resulting pastiche harbors little socially transformative spark since it lacks a "binding referent."<sup>43</sup> However, Barbara Creed persuasively counters that nostalgia stems from a longing for a past that has never been anything other than imaginary.<sup>54</sup> What counts is whether Super 8's resurgence builds upon rather than mimics its idealized postwar image, providing "a glimpse of other possible worlds" of use and representation, incremental though they may be.<sup>55</sup> Affixing an exchange value onto the obsolete does not preclude an artifact like Super 8 to offer unconventional media experiences.

Historically, such potential "revolutionary energies" for the medium have been affixed to certain modes of labor and aesthetic tinkering consciously counterpoised against industry filmmaking.<sup>56</sup> Wedding photographers' recuperation of Super 8, by contrast, illustrates that

the technical and stylistic choices they make, and the cultural and memorial values they historically attach to Super 8, are largely financially dictated. Their work barely echoes experimental filmmaker George Kuchar's famous trumpeting of Super 8 as the cheap and "puny tool of defense" of choice to create noncommercial, "personally meaningful" cinema.<sup>57</sup> There is little resonance with Maya Deren's similar call to forge a unique film aesthetic through Super 8 unencumbered by mainstream systems of technical specialization.<sup>58</sup> Kuchar's work on the medium, for instance, is rarely exposed or edited in a way that Kodak or Bell and Howell might have approved of in their instruction manuals.

I am not convinced that Super 8's appearance in wedding media offers much more than a distinguished option for wealthy customers to express the singularity of their weddings through cinematic bricolages not created, but purchased. A marriage lensed on the medium is a rarified experience, certainly more so than during the gauge's active production in the past century, when the tiered pricing and relative inexpensiveness of equipment made the format available to a variety of individuals.<sup>59</sup> Experts quietly overtake the increasingly unaffordable gauge, and its practices are codified. In this case, the true concern may not be whether we can escape impersonating certain eras in Super 8's past, but whether we can historicize this technology in a fashion that does not disavow its strong lineage of noncommercial experimentation. Perhaps the greatest avenue for new uses might therefore be found by participating in its online constitution, arranging a variety of media to better express its many histories, and envision future applications.

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49. Ibid. 130.
50. Ibid. 118. Purchasing a single three-minute roll of Super 8 through Pro8mm, one of the final remaining film manufacturers in the U.S., is priced at thirty-five dollars. Refurbished cameras often run several hundred dollars at the lower end of the spectrum on eBay. At these prices, nonprofessionals need not apply. See Fuoco, Dante Anthony. "Good old Super 8: Hit movie revives nostalgia for the quirky '70s film format." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. 6 July 2011. B17



#### Author bio:

Paul Gansky spends his days tacking through the vapor of doctoral work at the University of Texas at Austin. His evenings are given to dreaming about Bakelite telephones, the effects of bad weather both human and natural upon media, obsolescence, haptics, insanity, and *CHiPs*. He is the co-editor of *Flow*, an online journal of media studies, and co-director of The Mad Stork Cinema.



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