

The Examiner

Reporting the real world

Discreet charm of the pocket cinema

Isabel Healy grasps a hand-held cinema

GO ON, don't miss it, it's a real interactive cinematographic experience, courtesy of the Cork Film Festival. Roll up and enjoy the Pocket Cinema concept at the Triskel Arts Centre on Saturday at 4 O'Clock.

The first showing was one of those times when you say: "I wish I had a camera." Here were fifty people sitting in the dark of the Triskel Arts Centre with a black patch over one eye, each holding up to the other a little green plastic viewer and then passing it on. But there wasn't a camera in the entire place, so the phenomenon will not be recorded for posterity. The audience — not to mind the show — looked like something out of a science fiction movie; necks craned, all intent, silent but for the whirring click of the finger on the viewer button and the sound of the gong when it was time to pass the viewer on.

German film maker Gustav Deutsch was there to explain all.

Pocket Cinema is a kind of musical chairs with the little plastic viewers containing half a minute's continuous loop of encased film, sourced in China, modelled on a box found in a porn shop in Germany, depicting a woman making the same repetitious movement when the viewer pressed 'play'.

For several years Deutsch mulled over this; not only its roots in the beginnings of the cinema, but also the endless repetitions in everyday life. Gustav Deutsch made one hundred 30-second films of these happenings, from the waves coming in on the beach, to playing cymbals to nose blowing, packaged them, and did a diagram of how the films would be seen.

After fifteen minutes we were engrossed as we automatically handed on our viewers to the person next to us when the gong sounded and took another viewer to watch another 30 seconds from the person on the other side.

It was fun.