that way as an actor.”

Everything in this corner of the Can­adian film belt, which has seemed to be unfolding as it should. Familiar Cronen­berg art director Carol Spier and director of photography Mark Irwin are on board once again. Shooting began in and around Toronto on Oct. 27, and wraps on Dec. 20.

Meanwhile, back on set, someone is telling James Woods that he looks like James Dean. He’s probably heard that one before, but only the audience of Videodrome will know for sure.

John P. McKinnon

VIDEODROME

Cronenberg’s newest film, Videodrome, is at­

tracting its fair share of attention from its real-life pro­

tagonists.

The little attention to the media circus is turgid, lanky, American actor James Woods (most recently in Ted Kotcheff’s Captured, and also The Onion Field, Eyewitness and Holocaust), as he stands in the stairwell entrance to the station, waiting for his cue. He’s remark­ably relaxed, typically sardonic. Some­

one asks him if he’s on his mark. Woods re­

plies that he tapes his mark to his shoe.”That way I never go wrong.”

Nothing much seems likely to go wrong on this latest Filmplan International production by executive producers Pierre David and Victor Solnicki. Budgeted at six million dollars, and bought by Universal (who put up 50% of the money) for worldwide distribution, the Videodrome set would appear to be the epitome of industry professionalism.

A case in point: just before the call to action on this latest shot, first assistant director John Board asks for half an hour to run over to change the paper under an extra’s arm from a Toronto Sun to a Toronto Star. One must remember, obviously, which newspaper building is the location for the evening.

Cronenberg himself is genuinely enthusiastic about the film. Rumors abound that the special effects being designed by industry wizard Rick Baker (American Werewolf in London) will be rather intriguing: a hand that takes the shape of a gun, a man who inserts a videocassette into his stomach, TV sets becoming fleshly, living things... But Cronenberg is quick to emphasize his enthusiasm for other areas of the project as well. “In terms of character, in terms of acting, I think it’s my strongest film to date.”

As for Debbie Harry, she says, “We just don’t think of her as having anything to do with rock music at all. She’s a gentle young woman acting in a big role for the first time, and doing quite well. The whole technology of film is not known to her. She’s learning a lot about the process...”

Videodrome

Insidious effects of high tech

Videodrome, directed by David Cronenberg and starring Jayne Eastwood and American actress Deborah Harry, has only recently made its feature film debut with a 90-minute documentary for best documentary and has already

Videodrome, directed by David Cronenberg and starring Jayne Eastwood and American actress Deborah Harry, has only recently made its feature film debut with a 90-minute documentary for best documentary and has already
been sold to television in England and Germany.

Ron Mann's latest project, which has taken over his kitchen table as well as the rest of his life, is a non-narrative, 90-minute documentary being shot under the working title Poetry in Motion. Mann explained, "Imagine the Sound, Ceci Taylor: how can music be everything you do. In a similar manner I'm trying in this film to show people that poetry is everywhere. It's not dead, boring, or static. It's very much alive, to dance and visual arts."

"It's been a real struggle financially," Mann said, "the economy is lousy. The change in the tax law has made it even more difficult and a lot of potential investors can't recognize poetry as a commercially viable subject. I've taken out a bank loan to cover some of our immediate costs. I'm determined to make this film despite the obstacles because I believe in the artistic, historic, and political importance of documenting this art form."

The principal photography was finished by the end of the year, while pick up shooting in New York and San Francisco is expected to be over by the end of January. Editing, which may take four to six months to complete, will take place in Toronto at Film House.

Instead of shooting one way, Ron Mann will have managed to get historically important footage of numerous major poets. What remains to be seen is whether or not the incredibly varied personal and artistic statements of these artists can be edited into a cohesive, informative, and entertaining 90-minute film.

Post-script: Ratch Wallace has joined the crew as production manager. The full ashes and half-full cups of cold coffee are still there, but the masses of paper have started to get sorted into neat piles and someone has even remembered to water the plants.

Camelia Frieberg


Freeloading

Shooting on a shoestring

The MTV studio on Toronto's Lakeshore Boulevard is alive with activity. A lighting man repositions an unwilling stand, the sound man renews tape, while other crew members and actors negotiate the particulars of the next scene to be shot. The details behind this scenario, however, are not quite so typical. It is late Sunday night, and the lines of exhaustion that trace the faces of those working do so on a crew who seem uncommonly young to be managing a professional shoot.

In fact, the film in progress is a professional student film, aptly entitled Freeloading, and judges that his financial position will not be terribly short of hand (mid-November). But he takes comfort in the proficiency of work done by the student crew, pointing to production reports, a rigorously enforced promptness, and a professionalism that might match a film set anywhere. Ian Dobson at City Hall, who handled the location permits, countered, saying that he had received only compliments on the condition work sites had been left in. (Those with professional experience working on the film include Chris Terry, director, Fraser McAulinn, producer and Derret Lee, publicist.)

To get the project to the shooting stage was with a miracle of sheer inventiveness, unmitigated gall or a combination of both. What little money there was, went instead for airfare and Panavision for equipment and buying up short ends of stock and 1/4 inch tape. There was no room for error with one-take-only allotted.

But Wertheimer points to the record of waste and extravagance that have recently marked the Canadian film industry's flirtation with independent production.

"How many thousands of dollars have been wasted in discussion?" he de­mands. "How many cameras are rolling?"

"How much profit is there?"

No question that Ron Mann, with his latest project, which has taken over his kitchen table as well as the rest of his life, is a non-narrative, 90-minute documentary being shot under the working title Poetry in Motion.