

INTRODUCING...

lois siegel

overdosed on energy

Lois Siegel has more than her fair share of adrenalin. At 32 she has done more, is doing more, and has more projects and ideas jotted down in her many notebooks than most of us can even think about without running out of breath. She makes films, does photography, teaches Film Production at Concordia University and Film Production, European Cinema, Documentary Film, and Comparative Literature at John Abbott College; she writes — articles, scripts, stories; she sleeps occasionally, and always manages to find time for friends. She also reads voraciously, paints, plays piano, and... that's not all!

This past winter she completed her first play. In April, for three evenings, Lois presented a selection of her films at Montreal's Le Cinéma Parallèle, afterwards meeting with the public for discussion. This past summer she completed her twelfth film — *Dialogue of an Ancient Fog*, in both French and English. Most recently she completed a film vignette for the National Film Board's Canadian unity series, on Quebec's Fournier family, entitled *Stunt Family* or *Les Cascadeurs*, depending on your choice of tongue. In this she had the enviable opportunity to direct Donald Brittain, who did the English narration.

Born in Wisconsin, Lois became a Canadian citizen June 20, 1978. She has lived in Montreal since 1971 and loves the city's vitality.

She's always been a paragon. A star student in her younger days, and eager to learn new things, she bought a camera on a whim and taught herself photography (with a little help from her friends), working alone in the university darkroom from midnight 'til dawn. One year after that she was teaching a creative course in photography. Classes were held in salon-fashion in her home, with an improvised darkroom in the front closet. A few years later she talked her way into becoming Assis-

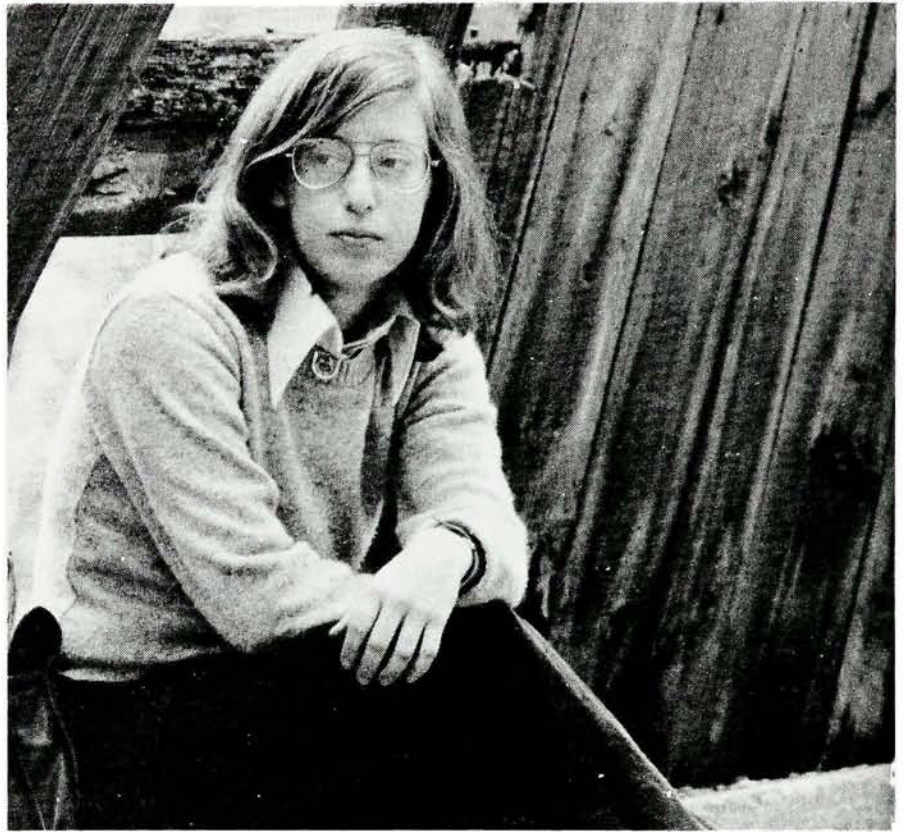


photo: Jane Dick

tant Director of the Choate Summer Film Institute in Connecticut, teaching the offspring of the very elite. Introduced to film via friends, she says, "A good way to learn about film is to teach it." Among other things, the lady has chutzpah.

Lois loves to teach. She has a genuine interest in her students and a talent for making the complex clear. She teaches because she likes it, because it gives her flexible hours so she can freelance, and it helps finance the making of her own experimental films, of which she has made a dozen so far. "Teaching helps me keep up with what's happening now and I love being around young people. It's been very good for me. It forces me to keep up with things and to become more articulate about what I'm looking at."

She learns about film wherever she can — by teaching it, by working at various jobs on many professional films — commercials, documentaries, and features. She put in an apprenticeship at the NFB's Studio 'D' and subsequently became 2nd Assistant Camera on several of their productions.

She regards everything she does as a learning process. Given the opportunity to do or try anything interesting, she is hard put to say no. So, she says yes. While working on Frank Vitale's *East End Hustle* and Alan 'Bozo' Moyle's *The Rubber Gun* "they'd say: well, we need this location in twenty-four hours. Can you get it for us...? And you say, 'sure.' You don't think about it... you just do it." Once, in the wee small hours, she negotiated the use of a factory in exchange for the use of two slide projectors. Resourceful, too.

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"Fascinated with working with form" she has been relatively lucky as an independent experimental filmmaker. Her films have had lots of international exposure, she gets invited to festivals and symposiums, and her fifth film, **Painting with Light**, was commissioned especially for the Fifth International Experimental Film Competition in Belgium, 1974. Some of her other films include **Faces**, **Boredom**, **Recipe to Cook a Clown**, and **Solitude** — a film designed to make "people contemplate their own solitude," and judging by audience responses it succeeds admirably. "I learn a lot from people's reactions. Not that I make my films with an audience in mind..."

If you can believe her she swears she's "a slow learner — especially at technical things. It took me three films to learn how to use a light meter. I used to invite friends to come and take the light readings." But like a true adventurer she'll try things "just to try them."

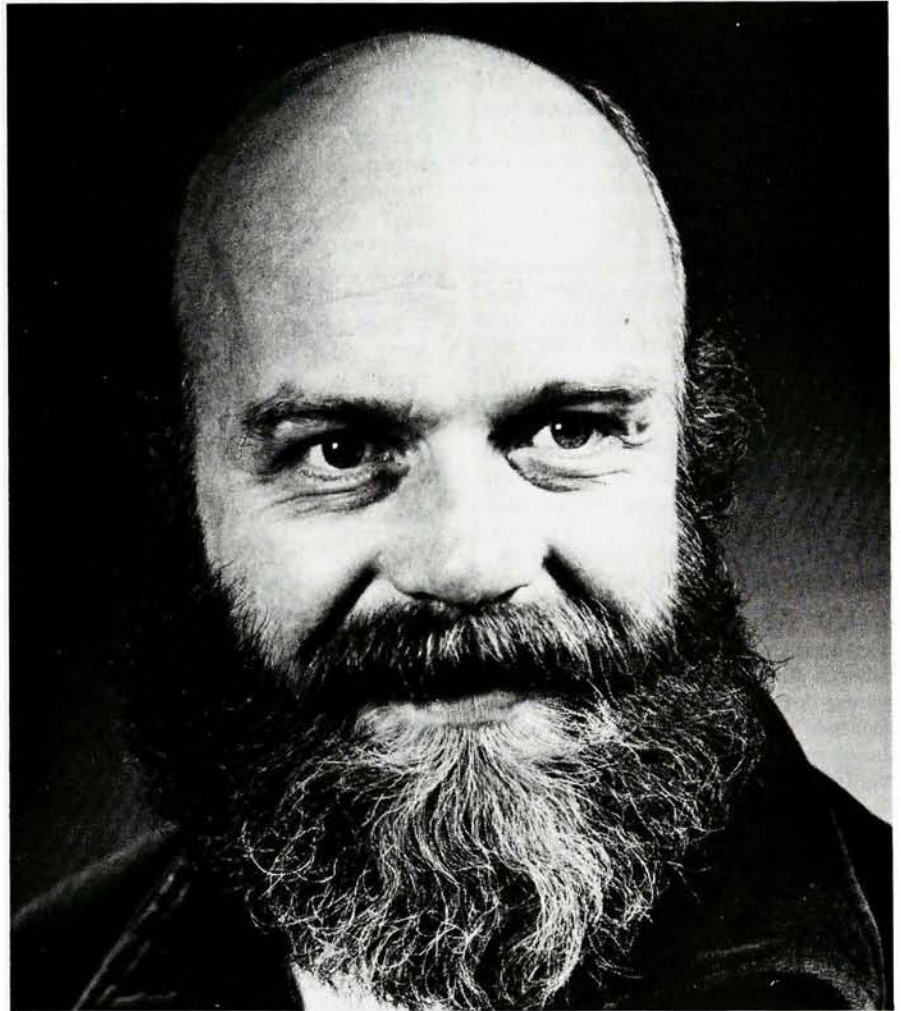
In addition to a million other current involvements, in December Lois will be shooting a 35mm theatrical short for Productions de la Chouette, with the aid of the Institute du Cinéma de Québec. In her spare (!) time she's working on a "no-budget feature," **A 20th Century Chocolate Cake**. It will be a docu-drama and an experiment with structure. It is being made with the collaboration of Greg Van Riel, star of **Recipe to Cook a Clown**.

She has just published a book of photographs, **Faces**, accompanied by a bilingual poetic text, and representing ten years of her work.

Lois Siegel does things. As she says, "You have to be completely self-dependent because nothing is guaranteed in this world. Absolutely nothing... you're thrown back on yourself." But she gratefully acknowledges the enormous support she has received from others. Her friends, students, and some of her audience members frequently volunteer to help with her films. Other independent filmmakers in the city are generous with their talent, equipment, and whatever else they have that may be needed. And a big influence in her life has been "people having concern about what you're doing and giving you a chance to try what you have to... People have put up with a lot of my mistakes and boy, do I appreciate that."

So do the rest of us, Lois.

jim long



Communication Is The Theme

No one was more surprised than Jim Long when the Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association (AMPPIA) voted him in as President at that group's last annual general meeting in October — he wasn't even there. Jim was tied up with other business when the membership voted him in an absentia, replacing former President, Ron Brown.

The film industry in Alberta is still relatively new, undergoing what Jim

describes as "growing pains," and he himself is not untypical of the cross-section of up and coming Alberta producers — people who have left the sheltering wings of large corporations such as CBC or ACCESS to venture out on their own. Jim began his media involvement in 1961 as a telecine operator at CHCA-TV in Red Deer, Alberta, where he ended up as Director of Client Services. After moving to CBC TV in Edmonton, he became a writer in the promotion department for five years, then went on to the position of Production Assistant for another five years, a role which brought