ON (EXPERIMENTAL) FILM
by B. Sternberg

As experimental film co-ordinator at an artist-run distribution coop, I'm all too aware of the lack of regular coverage of this genre of film. The intention of this monthly column is to touch on some of the ideas, issues and concerns of experimental filmmakers and in general talk about current developments, and who's making what films.

When I say that I make experimental films, why am I asked to justify it? Does an artist have to justify Art - or just his/ her own art? I get asked: Why have to justify Art - or just his/ her own art? I get asked: Why can't you say what you want to say? You speak English and say "I'm in Germany". Why do you speak a language besides German? Would we be right in asking which affects perceptions for us all. I know my aim in making experimental film is not elitist. Connotations of beauty, style? Or parallel intellectual exclusiveness, a translation of an idea that can be understood. But it is true that not everything has "mass appeal". If I were a philosopher not to philosophize because it is not popular? In making my films I am not trying to not be understood. But I am not trying to be understood either. I am making films.

A recent conversation I had brings up another thorny question - that of the name "experimental." Often that's such an unfortunate term. It sounds like the films are complete or just attempts. It's really unfair to the films and to you. Maybe you're asking why am I asked to say that - that label makes them not interested to begin with. Or people assume it's a student work or what's made while you're learning how to make films or features. There are other terms: avant-garde, underground. But I am not trying to not be understood. But I am not trying to be understood either. I am making films.

The film's broadcaster is Radio-Canada.

Arcand shoots on closed set

Budgeted at $1.9 million, Le Déclin de l'empire Américain, the latest feature film by veteran Quebec filmmaker Denys Arcand, is being co-produced by René Malo of Corporation Images M & Lée, and Roger Frappier for the National Film Board. The film's supervising producer is Pierre Gendron. The film stars Pierre Carzi, Reni Girard, Yves Jacques, Daniel Brée, Dominique Michel, Louise Portal, Dorothee Belleau, Genevieve Brouillette and Gabriel Arcand and is expected for release in the Spring. The film's broadcaster is Radio-Canada.