

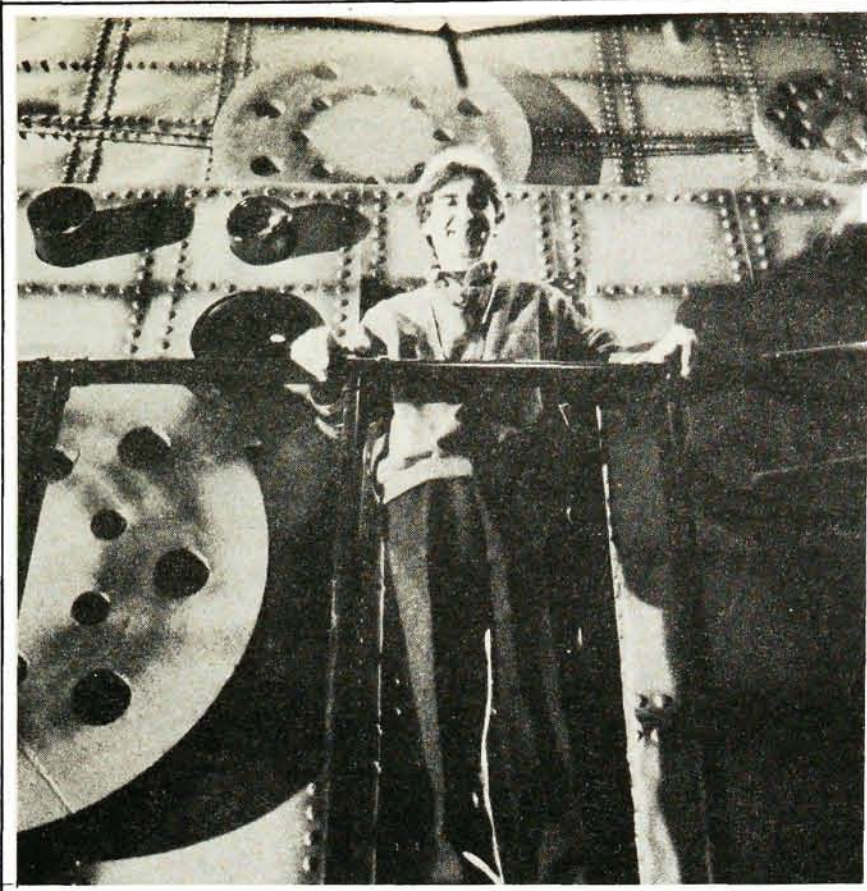
## Image par image's ghost in the machine

**T**wenty or so crew-members are milling around a huge wooden idol that belches fire and smoke as mighty gears grind noise and wheels flicker with an awesome light. The image is perhaps a fitting one that this crew, all National Film Board technicians and film people, should have as its 'god' an over-sized cinematic projector. Yet nothing so primitive is happening. The extraordinary set is simply part of a scene in filmmaker Jacques Giraldeau's current work, *Image par image*.

The story of how a young man's fascination with visual media takes him on a adventure beyond the real world and into one of animation fantasy and discovery, *Image par image* explores the visual imagination as represented by the NFB's *cinéma d'auteur* animation (as opposed to the more impersonal and standardized American and Japanese product). "This story is a metaphor for the process of creative animation" says Giraldeau, who directs, and who also wrote the highly storyboarded script, to which have been added short original scenes created especially for the film by such reputed NFB animators as Oscar winner Co Hoedeman, Jacques Drouin and others. The one-hour film, aimed especially at 18-25-year-olds, is tentatively set for release in the fall of 1986.

For now Giraldeau is concerned with more immediate problems. The mighty projector, over 20' high and 22' wide, is beset with minor glitches: smoke rises from the chimneys unevenly; the wheels aren't turning properly, and some of the coloured lights are melting from the heat. It is around noon, so finally the director dismisses everybody for lunch, and remains alone on set.

For many minutes he remains seated before the creature, seemingly deep in



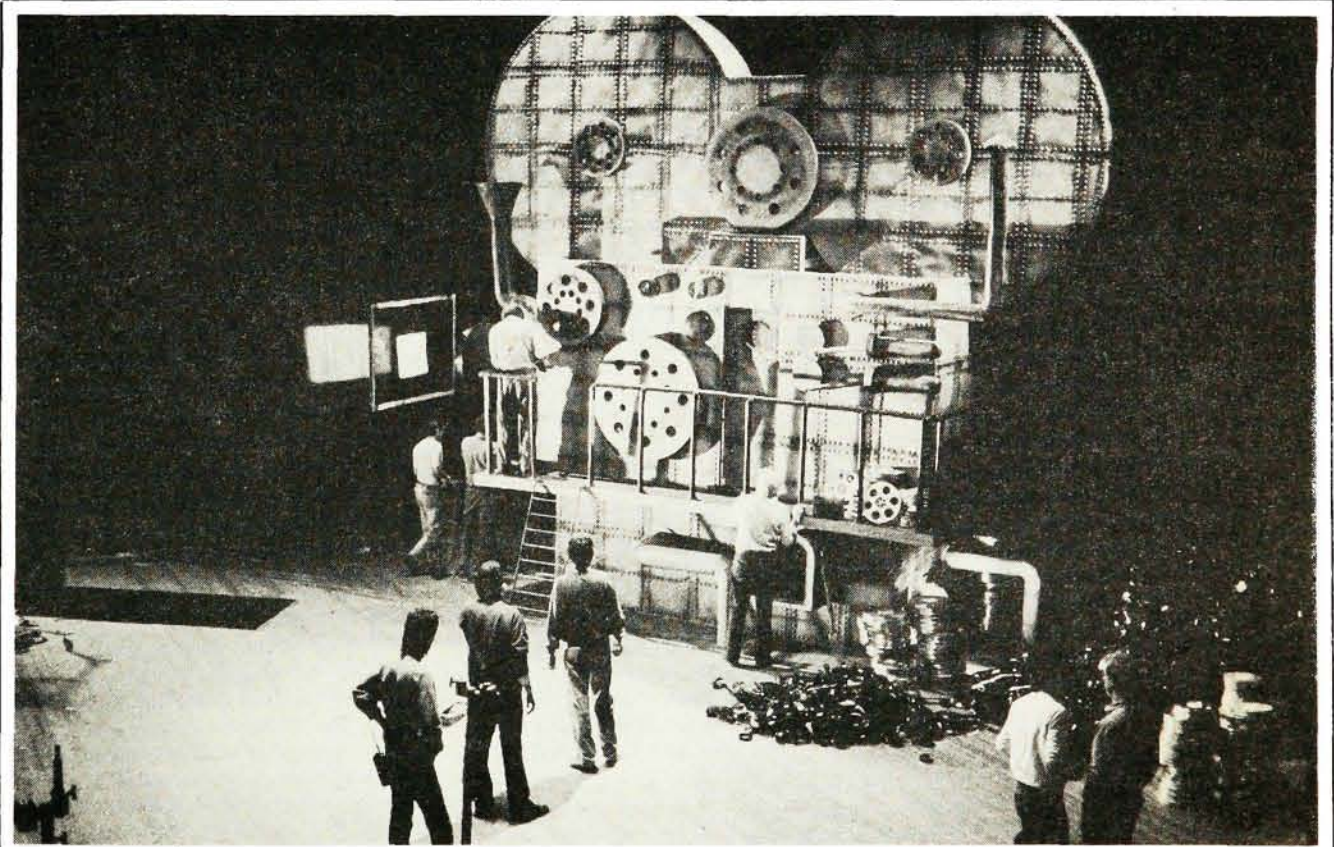
photos: A. G. Arseneault

thought. This morning set designer Vianney Gauthier attempted to start a flame in the beast's specially designed hearth. The creature belched an awful blast, and set Gauthier's hair on fire. Luckily the flame was put out quickly and he was led away to first-aid, relatively unscathed. But the accident had a sobering effect on everybody present as work continued warily around the machine.

Now the creature, its maw extinguished, lies squatting under the artificial lights that give it an eerie look. Giraldeau cautiously goes up to the creature and feels its gray roughness; beside its massive frame, he's a small figure.

This creating of fantasy is serious business.

**André Guy Arseneault** •



• Cinema as technology's 'god': Jacques Giraldeau, above, on the set of *Image par image*

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