by Marilyn Jull, Guest Columnist for Barbara Sternberg

In her last column, Barbara Sternberg reported on her investigation into the role of experimental film in university Film Departments and questioned the role of academia in the decline of experimental film as an art movement. It is certainly true that most university Film Departments give far more attention to narrative and documentary forms than to experimental film. This is not to say that experimental film is not included, associate film with temporary art, which is certainly in the role of academia in the decline of experimental film as an art movement. It is not uncommon to hear certain programmers (for example, some programmers of women’s film festivals) say that they are not interested in in-

**ON (EXPERIMENTAL) FILM**

by B. Sternberg

context of the History of the Plastic Arts.

What this means, more specifically, is dissociating film as a recording device — whether it be for the recording of acting and storytelling for illusionistic entertainment, or for the supposedly “objective” recording of some external event in the real world for educational purposes — from explorations of the film medium, which depend upon the relationship between the individual artist and his or her muse in the creation of something entirely new. It also demands, however, a questioning of what is included under the rubric of experimental film within the filmmaking community itself. For “experimental film”, it seems, has come to mean practically anything that is not a traditional narrative or documentary. But surely we must be able to make distinctions between filmic art and “anything made by any independent individual which incorporates the use of film”. This is certainly a question that arts councils should be asking when looking at who they are funding. Should arts councils be providing money for independent work, made by individuals, which incorporates the use of film, or should they be providing money for the making, promotion and distribution of film art?

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### SPOTLIGHT ’87

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cluding any films that are “too formalist or painterly”, and it is commonplace for film students these days to move away from film more and more as they use video instead, giving the fact of its lower cost as a reason for their choice, seemingly without any consideration to aesthetic difference. Fewer and fewer people, it seems, have any appreciation or concern for the potentials of the film medium as art. Social issues and political comment have replaced visionary insight and revelation, social movements have replaced individual expression, content alone has replaced any sense of necessity regarding the form of the content and the importance of the integrity of the form/content relationship regardless of what the “content” is. And large numbers of films are being made in which considerations of colour, texture and quality of light are almost totally disregarded. Too many people, it seems, feel that they have something important to say, and that they can use the film medium to say it. Most of these people are not artists. It might be fine if they all continued to go out and make their films, so long as they weren’t confusing the issue by calling it art. As they are permitted, and even encouraged, to do so, it is no wonder that experimental film is given less and less serious consideration.

Tricker travels around world

MONTREAL – The lead players in Michael Rubbo’s Tommy Tricker and the Stamp Traveller, produced by Rock Demers, have been cast following an extensive talent search and promotional tour through elementary schools across Canada.

Shooting began in Montreal on July 14 for six weeks followed by two weeks in Hangzhou, China and a final week in Sydney, Australia. Tommy Tricker is the seventh feature film in the Tales For All Series of family-oriented films produced by Les Productions la Fête.

Anthony Rogers, age 12, of Ottawa will play Tommy while Jill Stanley and Andrew Whitehead have been cast as Nancy and Albert. Lucas Evans of Montreal will play Ralph and Paul Popowich of Hamilton will be featured as Cass. The screenplay is written and directed by Michael Rubbo.

Two earlier films in the Tales for All Series, Bach and Broccoli and The Young Magician, directed by André Melançon and Waldemar Dziki respectively, have been awarded silver medals at the Moscow International Film Festival. Bach and Broccoli won two other citations from the children’s jury.

Daily Soap for TV Quatre Saisons

MONTREAL – Canada's first daily soap opera is in the new season program line-up at Television Quatre Saisons, the Montreal-based French-language television network.

La Maison Deschenes, a 30-minute dramatic series, will air week-nights at 6:30 p.m. starting August 31. Produced independently by Prisma Productions, La Maison Deschenes will cost close to $6 million for 250 initial episodes through the fall season.

The story centres on the intrigues involving the powerful Deschenes family. The head writer is Leopold St-Pierre.

Taping began in mid-June at the Quatre Saison studios in Montreal.