

THE LABRADOR INSTITUTE OF MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY
& THE LABRADOR FILM FOUNDATION

present

LABRADOR/IANS ON FILM

2012-13 SEASON

SCREENING #1: CRAFT MAKING TRADITIONS

Welcome to the first screening of the 2012-13 season! During the summer we rethought our approach to delivering *Labrador/ians on Film* and decided to move it to a bi-monthly format. Working with the idea that less is more, our hope is to make these screenings even more of an event, but also to allow us some room to develop another screening series to be delivered by the Labrador Film Foundation. We will have more to tell you about that in the near future.

-- Mark & Jon

To kick off this year's series we turn our attentions to the range of craft making practices that occur here in Labrador with a particular emphasis on the traditions of grass work. Indeed, it may be best to think of this screening in two parts. The first half consists of *Visions of Labrador*, a short produced by the Labrador Craft Producers Association (LCPA); the second is made up of two episodes of *Land & Sea* focussing on grass work traditions. Notice the different emphases in all three pieces, particularly with respect to who was responsible for their production. Obviously, the LCPA has a vested interest in representing a broad view of Labrador craft production. But why is it that grass work proves to be such a popular subject for *Land & Sea*? Is there something that captivates our visual imagination in the craft? Or is it perhaps simply an issue of exposure?

1. *Visions of Labrador* (Labrador Craft Producers Association, 30min 13sec 1991). Produced by Tony Dawson and Herb Brown. In this short film that we assume to have been a promotional item for the LCPA, Mr. Dawson and Mr. Brown paint a comprehensive portrait of the historical development of craft production in Labrador. It is the only document of its kind and as such serves as our way in to the theme. Notice, in particular, the brief section on rug hooking in the Straits as demonstrated by Ms. Stella Fowler of Capstan Island. While the practice has enjoyed a long history in that region, it is seldom documented, the organization responsible for its proliferation (the Women's Institute) even less so.

2. *Land & Sea: Baskets of Grass* (25min 41sec, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1983). Directed by Dave Quinton. As the first of two pieces focusing on the practice of grass weaving, this early episode of *Land & Sea* stands out because of its unbridled enthusiasm for the practice. If you were to watch this piece by itself, you might be forgiven for thinking that the grass weaving has taken off and currently thrives throughout Labrador.

But alongside this enthusiasm there is a particular emphasis on the *locations* of this practice: that is by the Ricks and the Baikies with materials from Mulliauk. Brief as it is, the section shot at Mulliauk stands out here. Please bear with us through the one commercial break in the middle of the piece; it is unintended but is at the same time peculiarly nostalgic.

3. *Land & Sea: Grass Women of Labrador* (27min 17sec, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1994). At the opposite end of the spectrum, this episode produced a little over a decade later seems to make the case that the tradition of grass work has all but died out in Labrador. Garmel Rich, the subject of the piece, is presented as its last champion. What had changed within the span of a decade? Could it be that neither episode really captures the current status of the craft, that the truth is somewhere in between? Much like the preceding piece, this episode places particular attention to the practice of grass weaving as it arose in a particular place: this time, Bluff Head Cove.

Coordinated by Jon Beale

Curated by Mark Turner

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