

THE LABRADOR INSTITUTE OF MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY  
& THE COLLEGE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC

present

## LABRADOR/ANS ON FILM

2016-17 SEASON

### QNS&L

Time changes the way we tell stories. In film, this is most obvious at the level of style. A film made a decade ago does not look like a film made today. The visual media we consume daily shapes this syntax. Think, for instance, about the introduction of drone technology into filmmaking. What is sometimes less obvious, though, is change at the level of content. Of course, the development of style has something to do with this change. It is difficult to imagine that a musical like *Singin' in the Rain* could be made today. But the strange relationship between style and content reveals something about our understanding of the world we inhabit and the circumstances that have led us to the moment we inhabit. In documentary film that relationship is even more pronounced. Ostensibly, this type of film is meant to be a closer representation of what is real. In this month's program we screen two short films on the same subject the Quebec North Shore & Labrador Railway. These films are separated by sixty-three years. They could not look more dissimilar. But what of their content?

1. *Up the Line in '53* (25mins, *Cinécraft*, c. 1953). Originally screened during our first season, we are interested in re-visiting this film precisely because of its style and content. The style, as we originally remarked, is of its time. But pay close attention to the content. The QNS&L is represented as a product of Canadian (sometime Quebec and sometime Newfoundland) labour. Its development is part of a constellation of technological achievements coming out of the development of the Labrador Trough. And it is being constructed in supposedly desolate and hostile land. These are the three foundations of the story.

2. *Tshiuetin* (11mins, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and DESC Images, 2016). Directed by Caroline Monnet. While this film is consciously operating in a different tradition from *Up the Line in '53*, note where the story begins: with the recognition of Innu ownership of the railway. There is no reference to the labour that constructed it, no mention of iron ore, and the land itself is represented as both untouched and welcoming. What has changed in the intervening sixty-three years that allows Monnet to tell this story in this way?

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**CBC**