

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

present

LABRADOR/ANS ON FILM

2015-16 SEASON

SCREENING #1: UPPER LAKE MELVILLE

Our first program for the 2015-16 season serves as a study in the hazards of the documentary form. Good documentaries always conceal the labours that led to their creation. This is to our detriment as audiences as we can only come to learn of those difficulties by means other than the film itself. Flawed documentaries work in the opposite way. The labours that led to their creation, in one way or another, are immediately obvious. The balance between filmmaker, subject and the manner of representation is interrupted. It is a disruption that occurs when a filmmaker either underestimates the complexity of her subject or mis-judges the means by which to approach that subject. This month's program provides us with a clear example of each. Ultimately, neither of these pieces even begins to approach the complexity of Upper Lake Melville: an area, and an idea, that may well transcend the limits of documentary (at least as it is practiced by those from elsewhere).

Sketches of Our Town: Happy Valley-Goose Bay & North West River (24 mins, 1993) Dir. Conad Beaubin. Allowing for the fact that 24 minutes of airtime is only a fraction of what is actually needed to tell the story of Upper Lake Melville, this program makes the peculiar move of attempting to shoehorn North West River and Happy Valley-Goose Bay into the same moment. It is an approach that does a disservice to both communities, providing us with only a superficial glance at each. To their credit, it is the strength of the subjects that carry this piece, particularly Doris Saunders and Carol Brice-Bennett. Their commentary greatly expands upon the Base-centric narrative.

Exploring Horizons: Where Time Stands Still (46 mins, Arctic Jungle Films, 2000) As Morgon has quite rightly suggested, this piece (from the first season of the *Exploring Horizons* television program), was created before the template for current reality television programming. There is a clear, and at times overbearing emphasis on the production team's role in the story. This unfortunate tendency obscures what otherwise has the potential to be a novel look at Central Labrador, a view that proceeds from the base. As you watch this, pay less attention to the host/s and more to the visuals, particularly of Crystal Falls, the Churchill River and even Mud Lake, a community seldom seen on screen.

Coordinated by Morgon Mills

Curation and program notes by Mark Turner

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