

Project Session: Northern Traveling Film Festival

Report by Colleen M. Davison

PhD Candidate and Research Assistant
Department of Community Health Sciences
University of Calgary

Film is international, it crosses borders and it crosses barriers. The camera is a tool; it is used to construct portraits and stories, to document and to establish archival records. Film also has a place in research. Eleven films were screened as part of the Northern Traveling Film Festival held in conjunction with the 3rd Northern Research Forum in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada. In addition to five films that were directed by Canadian film makers, there were three Russian, two Finish and a Norwegian film also screened, some as world premiers. The screenings took place at the Prince of Wales Heritage Centre Auditorium in Yellowknife, and were very well attended by conference participants and the general public. There was great variety among the films presented in the Festival both in terms of their length and country of origin as well as in their topics and styles. The films included:

The Muskox Patrol (54', 2004)
Ole Gjerstad, Canada

Fear of the People Without Borders (28', 2002)
Johs Kalvemo and Hilde Korsæth, Norway

Tiny Katerina (24', 2004)
Ivan Golovnev, Russia

The Hunt (60', 2003)
Dennis Allen, Canada

Arctic Dreamer: The lonely quest of Viljalmur Stefansson (70', 2004)
Peter Ramont, Canada

Shaman's Children (26', 2004)

Nikolai Pluzhnikov and Nikita Khokhlov,
Russia

Henna's Leudd (25', 2001)
Heikki Huttu-Hiltunen, Finland

Medial Day (26', 2004)
Nikolai Pluzhnikov and Nikita Khokhlov,
Russia

Sila Alangotok: Inuit observations on climate change (42', 2000)
Bonnie Dickie and Terry Woolf, Canada

The King Crab – Threat or treasure of the Barents Sea (30', 2003)
Helena Sahavirta and Juha Koivisto, Finland

The Walk (60', 2003)
Dennis Allen, Canada

Anna Hakinan from the Arts Council of Finland began the project session with a review of the Arctic Documentary Films at Risk in the Barents Region (AFBARE) Project. The aim of this project (now in its second phase) is to survey, protect and screen archival films from the Barents Region of Northwest Russia.

Following Ms. Hakinan's presentation a discussion ensued among session participants regarding the challenge of maintaining useable film archives in light of the rapid evolution of multi-media technologies. Access to historic footage may be better facilitated over the Internet or on DVD (at present) and the session participants wondered whether there might be a place for the University of the Arctic to lead or partner in such an endeavor.

Other challenges mentioned in the session were those of finding adequate funding to undertake film projects, the limited current use of film in research, and the competing interests of filmmakers with those of potential audiences or funding agencies of film projects.

There were a number of suggestions or recommendations that came from the project session. First it was felt that the Northern Traveling Film Festival was a very valuable part of the Northern Research Forum and its inclusion in the Forum should continue. It is essential however that there is a thorough review of the schedules of the two events so to ensure that activities do not overlap (thus en-

couraging maximum attendance at film screenings by conference participants as well as the general public). Second, it was felt that having the film screenings open to the public this year was a great addition to the event, the films were very well received. And third, session participants felt that discussion panels with film-makers or question and answer sessions might add significantly to each film screening, this might mean that the number of films screened would have to be reduced.

Overall, the project session and entire film festival were great successes and were valuable contributions to the Northern Research Forum in Yellowknife.