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Laurier free film series focuses on Aboriginal cinema

WATERLOO – The Laurier Free Film series presents *Tracking Shots 2: Aboriginal Cinema*. The six-part series will be held in **Room 101** of the **Bricker Academic Building** on Wilfrid Laurier University's Waterloo campus on select **Fridays at 7 p.m.**, beginning **Jan. 16**.

The series is free and open to everyone in the community.

Tracking Shots 2 is a follow-up to the very successful *Tracking Shots* series screened last winter. The Aboriginal Cinema film series presents an eclectic mix of short films, acclaimed documentaries, and fascinating feature films representing the variety of cinematic perspectives on Aboriginal issues and identities.

Schedule:

Jan. 16: *Experimental Eskimos* (2009). Guest speaker: Peter Ittinuar.

Peter Ittinuar is the first Inuk MP and author of *Teach an Eskimo How to Read*. He is also one of the three young boys featured in *Experimental Eskimos* who were selected as part of a federal government experiment to assimilate Inuit into mainstream Canadian society by having them live with white families and educated in white schools.

Jan. 30: *Mohawk Girls* (2005). Guest speaker: Kandice Baptiste.

Directed by Tracey Deer, *Mohawk Girls* is an award-winning documentary about the experiences of adolescent girls growing up on a Mohawk reserve and which has inspired a recent TV series described as "Sex and the City for the native set." Kandice Baptiste, from Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, is a Laurier Young Alumni Award winner. She will discuss the representation of life on the "rez" and 21st century Mohawk identity and culture.

Feb 6: *Walkabout* (1971) in Room 102 of Bricker Academic. Guest speaker: Philippa Gates.

In celebration of Laurier's Global Engagement Week, we look beyond Canada in our exploration of how Aboriginal issues are represented in film. Philippa Gates, a professor of Film Studies at Laurier, will discuss the strategies of representation of Aboriginal peoples in the acclaimed, yet controversial, Australian film *Walkabout* and compare it to more recent films that have attempted to represent Australia's Aboriginal history in different ways.

Feb 27: *Hi-Ho Mistahey!* (2013). Guest speaker: Aboriginal Student Leadership team

Directed by Alanis Obomsawin, *Hi-Ho Mistahey!* is an NFB documentary profiling the activist campaign launched by Shannen Koostachin, a Cree teenager lobbying for improved educational opportunities for First Nations youth. Members of the Aboriginal Student Leadership team will discuss the film in relation to the state of Aboriginal Education in Canada today.

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March 13: *Buffalo Calling* (2013) and *Lament for the Land* (2014). Guest speaker: Jenny Kerber and Q&A with Ashlee Cunsolo Willox.

Jenny Kerber, assistant professor in Canadian and Indigenous literature, will introduce the two films. *Buffalo Calling* is an experimental animated work (12 minutes) about the last free herd of buffalo, directed by award-winning filmmaker Tasha Hubbard (Nehiyaw/Nakawe/Metis). *Lament for the Land* (36 minutes) is a collaboration between researcher Ashlee Cunsolo Willox and the five communities of Nunatsiavut, with the aim of drawing attention to the pressing environmental issues of our time.

March 27: *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (2013).

Directed by Jeff Barnaby, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* is a fable-like tale that uses the tragic history of the residential school system as a backdrop for a dark coming-of-age film. The film explores the history of abuse of the First Nations people by government agents, including the large number of reported cases of the mental and physical abuse of residential school children.

The Tracking Shots 2 series is presented by Laurier's Department of English and Film Studies, in partnership with the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives at Laurier, the WLU Film Society, Laurier's Sustainability Office, and the Dean of Arts Office. Each screening in the series will include an introduction by a Laurier faculty member, student, or special guest.

"Laurier's Office of Aboriginal Initiatives seeks not only to create an inclusive, welcoming environment for Aboriginal students, but it also seeks to provide all Laurier students with opportunities to enhance their understanding of Canada by providing Aboriginal education," said Jean Becker, Senior Advisor of the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives. "This film series furthers this education by reflecting the place of Indigenous peoples in the history and landscape of our country."

Organizers of the Tracking Shots 2 series acknowledge that they are on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnawbe and Haudenosaunee peoples.