

# NATIONAL FILM BOARD



## DOCUMENTARIES SCHEDULE: MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

### **October 9** *From Ashes to Forest (1984) 52 minutes*

### **October 16** *The Vaccine According to Bill Gates (2012) 52 minutes*

To combat the devastating toll of malaria - which leads to 250 million cases and nearly one million deaths per year - scientists all over the world have been working for over 50 years to develop a vaccine. But the malarial parasite is of a formidable and elusive complexity. Today however, four main candidate vaccines are competing to be the world's first malaria vaccine.

Among them, the vaccine developed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in partnership with the global company GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) is nearing approval for widespread use. Its code name: RTS,S. The trials are immense: more than 15 000 children tested in 7 African countries.

But the RTS,S is also at the heart of a fierce political and scientific debate, fueled by researchers from rival teams who are critical of the antigen selected. They predict it will be inefficient in the short- or medium-term and suspect that GSK and Bill Gates, who invested USD 500 million, are lobbying for their vaccine to be the first on the market regardless of its efficacy. From the plateaux of the Dogon country to the bush of Burkina Faso and laboratories in Europe, like in a scientific thriller, we will follow the fascinating chronicles of the development of this first vaccine and the fierce debates it will provoke in the months to come.

### **October 23** *The Road to Patriation (1982) 93 minutes*

This feature documentary retraces the century of haggling by successive federal and provincial governments to agree on a formula to bring home the Canadian Constitution from England. This film concentrates on the politicking and lobbying that finally led to its patriation in 1982. Five prime ministers had failed before Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau took up the challenge in the early 1970s. Principal players in this documentary are federal Minister of Justice Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister Trudeau, 10 provincial premiers and a host of journalists, politicians, lawyers, and diplomats on both sides of the Atlantic.

### **November 6** *WAR: Front Lines 2008, 34 min.*

A tribute to the combatants in the First World War, this film traces the conflict through the war diary and private letters of five Canadian soldiers and a nurse. Hearing them, the listener detects between the lines an unspoken horror censored by war and propriety.

The film mingles war footage, historical photos and readings of excerpts from the diary and letters. The directorial talent of Claude Guilmain breathes life into these 90-year-old documents and accompanying archival images so that we experience the human face and heart of the conflict.

For the educational sector, five documentary vignettes have been drawn from the film: Nurses at the Front, The Officer's Role, The Life of the Soldier, Faith and Hope and The Trenches, each with further information on its particular subject.

### ***John McCrae's War: In Flanders Fields 1988 46 min***

This documentary profiles poet John McCrae, from his childhood in Ontario to his years in medicine at McGill University and the WWI battlefields of Belgium, where he cared for wounded soldiers. Generations of schoolchildren have recited McCrae's iconic

poem "In Flanders Fields," but McCrae and Alexis Helmer—the young man whose death inspired the poem—have faded from memory. This film seeks to revive their stories through a vivid portrait of a great man in Canadian history.

**November 27**      ***Passage (2008) 113 min***

It was news that shook the English-speaking world. Celebrated British explorer Sir John Franklin and his crew of 128 men had perished in the Arctic ice during an ill-fated attempt to discover the Northwest Passage. More shocking, they had descended into madness and cannibalism.

The report came in 1851, from John Rae, a Scottish doctor working for the Hudson's Bay Company. Travelling thousands of miles on foot and in small craft, Rae had done what six years of searching by the British, Americans, French and Russians had failed to do - discover the fate of Franklin and unlock the final link in the Passage - a 300-year-old dream.

But Rae's horrific news did not sit well with Sir John's widow, Lady Franklin, nor with many others in British society, including Charles Dickens. They waged a bitter public campaign that would discredit Rae's version of events, banish him to the margins of history and mark an entire nation of northern Inuit with the horrifying label of murderous cannibals.

With *Passage*, filmmaker John Walker employs an innovative approach to structuring the incredible multilayered story of John Rae and brings it to vibrant life. Using a unique blend of dramatic action, and behind-the-scenes documentary footage, Walker pulls back the curtain on his own research into Rae's life and that of his actors, as they determine how to portray the characters and scenes in the film. The line between real and dramatic begins to blur as we move closer and closer to the film's climax, a stunning face-to-face meeting between Charles Dickens's great-great grandson and Tagak Curley, an honoured Inuit statesman who challenges the fraudulent history. In one moment, Walker vaults the story from the past into the present and we are witness to history in the making.

Set in the actual locations of Rae's journey, from his boyhood home in the remote Orkney Islands off Scotland's north coast to the epic landscape of his Arctic expeditions to the boardroom of the British Royal Navy - the centre of power of the British Empire, *Passage* is a story of incredible sacrifice, stunning distortion of the truth and single-minded obsession. It challenges the way we look at history.

**December 4**      ***Reel Injun (2009) 88 min***

Cree filmmaker Neil Diamond takes an entertaining and insightful look at the Hollywood Indian, exploring the portrayal of North American Natives through a century of cinema.

Traveling through the heartland of America, and into the Canadian North, Diamond looks at how the myth of "the Injun" has influenced the world's understanding – and misunderstanding – of Natives.

*Reel Injun* traces the evolution of cinema's depiction of Native people from the silent film era to today, with clips from hundreds of classic and recent Hollywood movies, and candid interviews with celebrated Native and non-Native film celebrities, activists, film critics and historians.

Diamond meets with Clint Eastwood (*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, *A Fistful of Dollars*, *Unforgiven*) at his studios in Burbank, California, where the film legend discusses the evolution of the image of Indians in Westerns and what cowboy-and-Indian myths mean to America. *Reel Injun* also hears from legendary Native American activists John Trudell, Russell Means and Sacheen Littlefeather.

Celebrities featured in *Reel Injun* include Robbie Robertson, the half-Jewish, half-Mohawk musician and soundtrack composer (*Raging Bull*, *Casino*, *Gangs of New York*), Cherokee actor Wes Studi (*Last of the Mohicans*, *Geronimo*), filmmakers Jim Jarmusch (*Dead Man*) and Chris Eyre (*Smoke Signals*) and acclaimed Native actors Graham Greene (*Dances with Wolves*, *Thunderheart*) and Adam Beach (*Smoke Signals*, *Clint Eastwood's Flags of our Fathers*). Diamond also travels North to the remote Nunavut town of Igloolik (population: 1500) to interview Zacharias Kunuk, director of the *Caméra d'or*-winning *The Fast Runner*.

Reel Injun's humour and star power is balanced with insightful commentary from film critics and historians, including CBC film critic Jesse Wentz, Angela Aleiss, author and scholar of American Indian Studies, and Melinda Micco, associate professor of ethnic studies at Mills College in California.

In Reel Injun, Diamond takes the audience on a journey across America to some of cinema's most iconic landscapes, including Monument Valley, the setting for Hollywood's greatest Westerns, and the Black Hills of South Dakota, home to Crazy Horse and countless movie legends. Was Crazy Horse the inspiration for the mystical warrior stereotype? In search of answers, we meet his descendants on the desperately poor Pine Ridge Indian reservation in South Dakota.

Reel Injun traces the evolution of cinema's depiction of Native people from the silent film era to today, only to find the future of Native cinema in the unlikeliest of places – Canada's North.

It's a loving look at cinema through the eyes of the people who appeared in its very first flickering images and have survived to tell their stories their own way.

**December 12**      ***Paris 1919 (2008) 94 minutes***

The last shots had been fired in the First World War — but peace had yet to be made. Inspired by Margaret MacMillan's acclaimed work of popular history, Paris 1919 takes us inside the most ambitious peace talks in history, revisiting the event with a vivid sense of narrative. Evoking a pivotal moment when peace seemed possible, director Paul Cowan reflects upon the hard-learned lessons of history.