



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR
SUSTAINABLE MINING
& EXPLORATION

Free Public Lecture



Presents Guest Speaker

Dr. Rachel Jekanowski

Banting Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of English at Memorial University

Visual Culture and the Mining Industry: Popular Earth Science, Extraction, and Sustainability

As early as the 1940s, the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) produced industrial, scientific, and educational films about natural resource management, mining, and exploratory drilling. Many of these films were co-sponsored by government ministries with an interest in promoting the profitable development of Canada's natural resources. In this talk, I focus on a collection of popular science films produced by the NFB between the 1950s and the 1970s about geology, deep time, and the mining industry. Films like *Know Your Resources* (dir. David A. Smith, 1950), *The Face of the High Arctic* (dir. Dalton Muir, 1958), *Riches of the Earth (Revised)* (dir. Colin Low, 1966), and *The North Has Changed* (director uncredited, produced by David Bairstow, 1967) focused on the social dimensions of mining, alongside scientific narratives about Canada's physical geography and geological history. They were also created with different contexts and audiences in mind, from high school classrooms to Canada's centennial celebration in 1967. Turning to discourse analysis and archival research, I show how these films, as cultural responses to industrial development, express ideas of sustainability and extraction as economic and ecological practices. For contemporary viewers, these films also offer fertile grounds for reexamining the ways that science have been used to frame changing social attitudes towards environmental conservation and consultation with communities facing mining development.

Biography:

Dr. Rachel W. Jekanowski is an interdisciplinary scholar of Film and Media and the Environmental Humanities. Her research focuses on entanglements of visual culture, industry, and environments in North America, historically and in the times-to-come. Dr. Jekanowski is currently a Banting Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of English at Memorial University, on the ancestral lands of the Mi'kmaq, Beothuk, Innu, and Inuit. Website: <http://rjekanowski.ca/>

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