

***“Cultural Industry and Political Expression:
the Rise of Canadian Inuit Film-Making”***

Friday–Saturday, April 22–23, 2011

Participant biographies:

Lena Ellsworth, a native of Iqaluit, worked at the Aboriginal Healing Foundation for eight years and was the Community Support Coordinator for all Inuit communities across Canada. AHF's mission was to address the legacy of physical and sexual abuse in the residential school system, including intergenerational impacts. She now works with the Government of Nunavut, in the Department of Economic Development & Transportation, as the Executive Secretary to the Deputy Minister and as Manager of Corporate Administrative Services. She appears in the movie *Ullumi*, made in conjunction with film maker Qajaq Ellsworth. She also collaborated in the making of the film *Qallunaanik Piusiqsiuriniq--Why Whitemen are Funny*.

Mini Aodla Freeman has been an editor, playwright, filmmaker, and translator of Inuktitut and Cree for the Canadian government. She is a native of the Cape Hope Islands and the granddaughter influential Inuit leader, Weetaltuk. Between 1973 and 1979 she was Native cultural adviser and narrator for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and since then she has served as Assistant Editor of *Inuit Today* magazine, Executive Secretary of the Land Claims Secretariat of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, and a founder and producer for the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation. She is a prolific author, famous for her remarkable *Life Among the Qallunaat* (1978, French version 2005), as well as *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset* (1994; 2006).

Nelson Graburn is Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Canadian Studies Program at the University of California at Berkeley. He was educated in Natural Sciences and Anthropology at Cambridge, McGill, and the University of Chicago, and has carried out ethnographic research with the Inuit (and Naskapi) of Canada (and Alaska and Greenland) since 1959, and in Japan (and East and Southeast Asia) since 1974. He is currently working with the Canadian Inuit cultural organization Avataq in Nouveau Québec, and with Inuit institutions in Iqaluit, Nunavut, on aspects of cultural preservation and autonomy. He is continuing his research on contemporary Inuit arts including, “urban Inuit arts” and Inuit film, TV and video productions, as well as the growth of Inuit involvement in tourism since the late 1950s.

John Houston was raised in Cape Dorset, Baffin Island, Nunavut, and currently lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He has directed two experimental documentaries about Inuit cultural beliefs, *Diet of Souls* and *Nuliajuk: Mother of the Sea Beasts*, which won the award for Outstanding Achievement in a Documentary at the 2002 Directors Guild of Canada Awards. Houston has also directed *Songs in Stone: An Arctic Journey Home*, about the

Inuit artists of Cape Dorset and his parents, Alma and James Houston, who are widely recognized for their work in developing the art market for Inuit sculpture and prints. Following his father's footsteps, he trained in Paris and became a well known print-maker who has worked with artists in the Canadian Maritimes as well as with Inuit artists in Pangnirtung. He was past President of Ajjit Nunavut Media Association and helped organize the first Nunavut Film Festival in Iqaluit in 2005. He received his BA from Yale University, and currently is the owner of the Houston North Gallery in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia.

Jobie Weetaluktuk, a Montréal-based writer, editor, broadcaster, and filmmaker, hails originally from Inukjuak, Québec. His first documentary film, *Urban Inuk*, follows the spiritual and practical struggles of three Inuit who have left their ancestral homeland in the Arctic for the concrete jungle of Montréal. *Urban Inuk* aired on Aboriginal People's Television Network in 2005 and played in over twenty festivals and venues across Canada, the USA and Europe. In 2006 the documentary won the Grand Prix, Rigoberta Menchu Community Award at the Land-in-Sights First People's Festival in Montréal, and toured various Maisons de la Culture in that city as part of the Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montréal (RIDM)'s *Coups de Coeur* programming. His film *Umiaq Skin Boat* was awarded the Material Culture and Archaeology Prize at the 11th RAI International Festival of Ethnographic Film, in Leeds, 2009.