

Dossier de Press – Press Kit
G. Scott MacLeod BFA MA
Artist – Musician – Filmmaker



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SCOTT MACLEOD'S SAGA

G. Scott MacLeod might be the busiest man north of the border.

The Montreal-based painter, photographer and musician has a myriad of creative projects on the go at any given time; exhibits, sessions, salons and studios colour his landscape with creative commitments.

In 2009, the 40-something artist added filmmaker to his list of credits with the release of *After the War with Hannelore- A Berliner War Child's Testimony* from 1945 to 1989 – a series of visual vignettes recounting the life of one woman in the years following World War II.

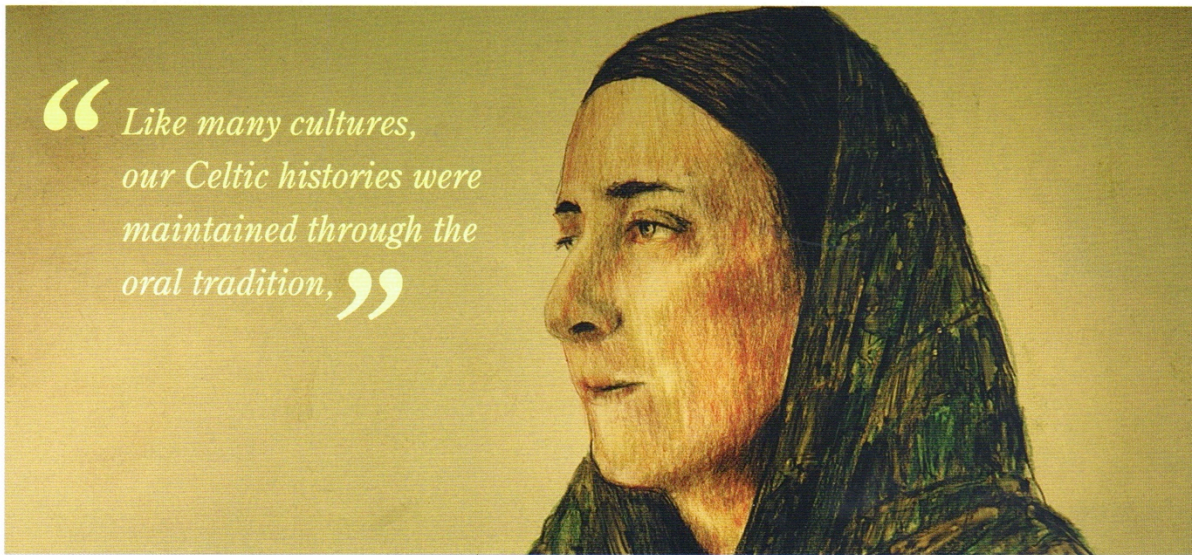
The success of that first film inspired MacLeod to undertake *The Saga of Murdo MacLeod*, an animated exploration of early Scottish settlement in the Eastern Townships region of Quebec.

The new work, a partnership with the National Film Board of Canada, is scheduled for release in 2012, and is the first of four planned collaborations on Canadian

– to illustrate their differences, as well as the strong symbolic similarities in their lore, history, language and music.

“The Saga of Murdo MacLeod is also one of the many untold European-First Nations first contact stories in Quebec,” he adds. “There is still more room for Canadian animators and filmmakers to explore this

“*Like many cultures, our Celtic histories were maintained through the oral tradition,*”



history with celebrated Montreal storyteller Mike Burns.

“Mike is a traditional Irish seanachie,” shares MacLeod. “He has maintained the storytelling tradition by cultivating his craft and committing hundreds of stories to memory over the years.”

His experiences with Burns pushed MacLeod to explore the oral and narrative traditions in film and animation.

“I have studied feature works from countries like Australia, Ireland, and New Zealand. I’ve also studied animated films from Israel, and similar efforts from Canada including *The Man Who Planted Trees* (1987) by Frédéric Back, *The Danish Poet* (2006) by Toril Kove and *Felix in Exile* (2007) by South African artist William Kentridge.”

With their cross-cultural references and allegorical themes, those cinematic gems had a profound influence on *The Saga of Murdo MacLeod*.

“It was my hope to experiment with the fusing of these two cultural groups – the Abenaki and the Scots

area of history, as these stories are unknown to many Canadians and the world at large. I am interested in these cross-cultural stories from our history as a result of growing up in the culturally diverse city of Montreal, coming from Scottish lineage, and working with Mohawk, Squamish and Cree Nations over my three-decade career in music and art.”

The project afforded the artist the opportunity to further examine his own lineage.

“My Celtic family names are MacLeod, MacIver, Gillespie and Watson.

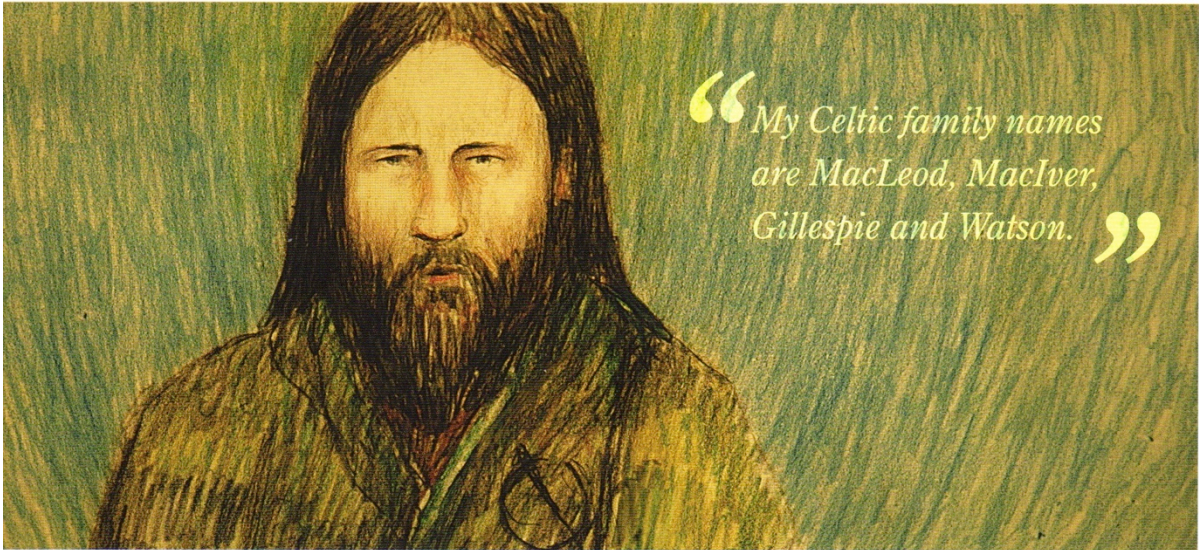
“My father’s lineage is from the Isle of Lewis in the Hebrides of Scotland,” he continues. “The MacLeods and the MacIvers came to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia and settled in Baddeck in the 1830s. My paternal ancestor, Annie MacIver, ran an inn called Mother Gaelic’s, which my grandfather Bert MacLeod bought back into our family line. For years it was a family cottage, and now my Aunt Joan MacLeod currently runs it as a B&B under the same name.

“The Gillespies came to the United States and Canada during the late 1800s early 1900s. My Great

Grandfather James Gillespie was a Scottish engineer from Motherwell and worked in Scotland, India, and the United States before settling in the steel town of Sydney, Cape Breton. My mother's people, the Watsons, were originally from Fife and crossed the Atlantic on a steamer in the mid 1800s. They landed in New York, traveled to the mid west, and then crossed the Great Plains with handcars and cover wagons for

In that regard, Canada is a good fit for MacLeod.

"We are a fusion or 'métissage' of many cultures," he notes, "and because of that our Celtic consciousness as our ancestors knew it has changed. I believe that this is a good thing, however, as many Celts left their homelands because of religious, linguistic and social divides. While Canada is certainly not perfect – and



“My Celtic family names are MacLeod, MacIver, Gillespie and Watson.”

their promised land in Provo City, Utah. They were Mormons and wrote down their life histories, as was the tradition. Incredibly, I have these very vividly written testimonies of their Exodus to America. They were very religious people and set up missions in the most difficult of circumstances. Life was difficult for these early Scottish settlers, much like the characters in *The Saga of Murdo MacLeod*.”

That heritage is at the heart of MacLeod's life-long fascination with, and passion for, Celtic culture.

“Any of us who are not First Nation share the immigrant story,” he explains. “Coming to this new/old land is embedded in our families' records and consciousness to varying degrees. I have perhaps been more interested in my roots than some, and I have explored these themes in the Celtic stories, songs and myths.”

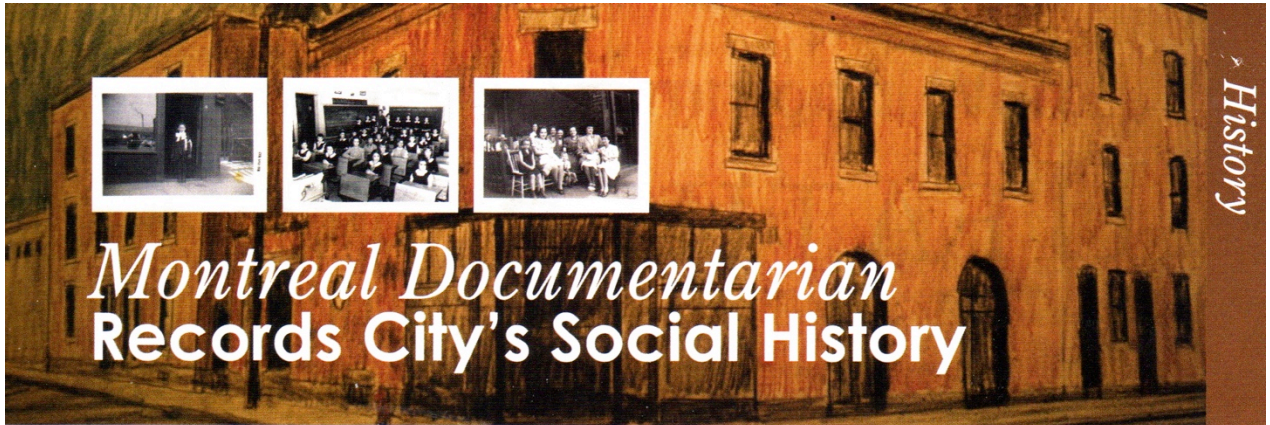
“That being said, I am not a nationalist. However, I see the value of holding onto the positive attributes of my Scottish roots. I am comfortable with maintaining that identity as long as I feel it is a part of the collective whole, amongst those who are willing to share and enjoy our differences.”

we have a difficult colonial past to reconcile – our new construct is a positive attempt at something that we have never seen before.”

Still, despite the distillation, MacLeod says that Celtic culture is alive and well, both here at home and abroad, thanks to a strong storytelling tradition.

“Like many cultures, our Celtic histories were maintained through the oral tradition, long before the written word, and it was customary for the bards to commit our stories to memory. Today, we are lucky to still have people such as Mike Burns in our communities and cultures, committing part of their lives to being master storytellers and relating our cultural Celtic wealth. Our western cultures should take more time to appreciate and honour our elders and artists, as history has proven this to be a worthwhile exercise. Wisdom, knowledge and experience are among us, but it up to us to cultivate, celebrate and share this wealth.”





Montreal Documentarian Records City's Social History

Montreal filmmaker Scott MacLeod has always been interested in the idea of self-enquiry and family heritage. "Where are you from? What are your roots? Why did your people come here?" MacLeod asks. "All of these big questions interest me."

As a first-generation Montrealer with family roots in Cape Breton on Canada's east coast, MacLeod considers his natural curiosity an inheritance from his grandfather. "He was a historian from Cape Breton and he was very interested in Scottish history in Canada because our ancestors came from the Hebrides Islands in Scotland."

MacLeod's done extensive work with both Scottish and Irish communities in Montreal, including a film called *The Great Hunger* about Irish immigrants arriving in Quebec at Grosse Isle, a quarantine station in the St. Lawrence River, during Ireland's Great Famine.

MacLeod also made a documentary film about a woman who lived in Berlin during the Cold War. The film features seven vignettes with stories elicited through photographs the woman holds to camera. "The photographs trigger a memory of the area, building or event that happened near where she's standing. That's a technique that I use to drum up people's life history. I use it as an entry point."

While doing a master's degree in Art Education at Montreal's Concordia University, MacLeod completed another life history documentary called *Dans L'Grif* or *In Griffintown*. In this film, he interviewed the Mercier family living in Griffintown, a post-industrial neighbourhood in south-west Montreal that is now experiencing a real estate boom.

The area was populated mainly by Irish immigrants and their descendants from the 1820s, but the community emigrated and moved on to other Montreal neighbourhoods, like Verdun, Notre-Dame-de-Grace and La Salle, after World War II.

"I tried to focus on the French Canadian community that moved into the area from rural Quebec after the Depression and World War II because not much had been written or documented about it," said MacLeod. "At that time, Griffintown was an industrial hub. There were all kinds of factories along the Lachine Canal, like tanneries, metalwork and machine shops, sugar and flour refineries – all kinds of things. Some of that remains."

The family-oriented neighbourhood that the Merciers knew when they were young had schools and churches. Most people lived in two- or three-storey apartment buildings. It was the kind of community where children played in the street, doors were left

open and women watched each other's kids. Griffintown had a strong sense of community.

But over the years, the neighbourhood became run-down as more and more people left. By the 1970s, it was largely abandoned save for the odd carwash or other light industrial facility.

Now, after years of being away, the Merciers have returned to live in Griffintown. "From the living room window on the 21st floor of their condominium building, you can still see the Five Roses Flour Refinery in the background behind the cranes," said MacLeod. "But with underground parking and rooftop pools, there's no street life anymore. It's a real contrast to what they remember."

As the new neighbourhood lacks community infrastructure like schools and green spaces, there has been much debate in the city over its long-term viability.

"I landed on a thesis topic that's being contested and talked about today," said MacLeod. "I was very lucky."

Although MacLeod had no scholarship money for this project, he used Indiegogo to raise funds online. With the \$8,000 he received, Concordia put the film together.

MacLeod did receive a small scholarship from the University of British Columbia to create an online element, www.ingriffintown.com, that includes all the data and information on how he put the film together and the individuals that participated in its creation. MacLeod also created a 21-site walking tour that can be downloaded from www.griffintowntour.com.

The video itself is available online for free viewing at <https://vimeo.com/57020055>.

People can use the film as a template to further their own expertise or enquire about their own communities, said MacLeod. "It's a platform that they can borrow ideas from to talk about their own social history and where their grandparents are from. You can apply this to any neighbourhood in Canada or the Old Country."

In Griffintown will be shown June 13 through August 29 at the Maison de la Culture Marie-Uguay on 6052 boulevard Monk, Montreal.

By Melanie Furlong



Présentation des RVCQ 2016

par Jean-Marie Lanlo

16 février 2016

Comme tous les ans depuis plus de trente ans, les *Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois* invitent les spectateurs à la rencontre de leur cinéma. Les retardataires auront ainsi l'occasion de voir sur grand écran des films restés parfois trop peu de temps dans nos salles lors des sorties régulières.

Ainsi, en plus des incontournables comme *Guibord s'en va-t-en guerre*, *Félix et Meira* ou *Les démons*, le spectateur pourra donner une dernière chance à de "petits" films comme *Antoine et Marie*.

En plus des séances de rattrapage, il y aura également des avant-premières (la plus attendue est bien évidemment celle du film de **Denis Côté**, *Boris sans Béatrice*, actuellement en compétition au festival de Berlin), mais également de nombreux films qui ne connaîtront peut-être jamais les honneurs d'une sortie en salle.

Parmi ces derniers, dans la catégorie Long Métrage de fiction, les RVCQ ont sélectionné moins de films que lors des deux années précédentes, ce qui est une bonne nouvelle pour les cinéphiles curieux qui se souviennent encore douloureusement de films comme *Marche avec moi* (le pire de la programmation 2015... mais d'autres n'en étaient pas loin). Les RVCQ semblent avoir opté cette année pour une plus grande exigence puisqu'ils proposeront un agréable conte illustré (*L'eau de la vie*, **G. Scott MacLeod**), un film intéressant mais qui en déstabilisera cependant plus d'un (*Ana*, **Frédéric Maheux**) ainsi qu'un troisième que nous n'avons pas vu à ce jour (*Toujours encore* de **Jean-François Boisvenue**), mais que nous espérons autant digne de sa sélection que les deux autres.

Signalons pour terminer qu'il y aura également une multitude d'événements comme les leçons de cinéma (avec notamment **Philippe Falardeau**), des rencontres avec les créateurs (comme le maintenant habituel 5 à 7 consacré au *Prix collégial du cinéma québécois*) ou des tables rondes (dont l'une est consacrée à la diversité culturelle à l'écran).

Pour en savoir plus sur la programmation et sur les différentes activités proposées, rendez-vous sur [le site internet des Rendez-vous](#).

Film

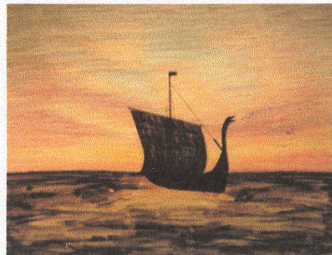
First Contact

By G.Scott MacLeod

From the east, a small expedition of Norse looking for productive farmland. From the west, a proto-Beothuk hunting party at the turn of the first millennium on the island now called Newfoundland. Their meeting goes smoothly at first, but turns hostile. Two women, Bobodish and Gudrid Thorbjarnardottir, tell the story of this short-lived historical contact from perspectives that are sometimes contradictory, sometimes converging, while foreshadowing certain tragic outcomes of subsequent relations between Canada's settlers and its first peoples.

My aim with *First Contact* was to direct a story that would illustrate the differences – as well as the points of similarity – between the mythologies, history and music of the proto-Beothuk and Norse peoples. In doing so, it would show the richness and diversity of human cultures on the one hand, and the underlying commonalities that can ideally provide gateways to understanding and exchange – as the script's writer Samantha Rideout states – “the moral danger, the creative challenge and the rich potential of encountering the other.”

First Contact is inspired in part by two Icelandic sagas: Eirik the Red's Saga and Saga of the Greenlanders. These texts describe Norse encounters with Aboriginal North Americans. Samantha Rideout encountered these texts while working on her Master's degree at the



Bios www.firstcontactthefilm.com/#/creators
G.Scott MacLeod – Director and Animator
Samantha Rideout – Scriptwriter

University of Iceland in Reykjavik. When I was initially discussing this project with Samantha, I presented her materials detailing the few facts we know about the Beothuk and their predecessors, along with a novel titled *The Beothuk Saga* by the First Nations author Bernard Assiniwi. This was to help her craft a script that would explore the encounter between two worlds as told through the voice of two women.

Samantha adapted certain episodes from the sagas and combined them with the imagined perspectives of the proto-Beothuk characters to create an educational work of historical-fiction.

I went to Newfoundland to shoot live-action video of the story's setting. The footage was later fused with my animation drawings during the editing process. I went to The Rooms in St John's to draw and photograph artefacts from proto-Beothuk (“Recent Indian”) and Beothuk culture, such as arrowheads, clothing, bone pendants, birch-bark canoes and baskets.

We recorded the English version of *First Contact* with, Anik Matern (*My Goldfish is Evil*) and Heather White (*Mohawk Girls*). I fused Aboriginal drumming by Robert Seven Crows Bourdon with a capella arrangements of “Strong Women's Song” and “Santu's Song,” the only purportedly Beothukan-language song to have survived into the present day. Icelandic singer Stína Ágústsdóttir recorded traditional Norse folk tunes; Krummi svaf í Klettagjá, Bíum Bíum Bambaló and Liljulag. The production was financed by, The Canada Council for the Arts and at the National Film Board of Canada on the Filmmaker's Assistance program.

First Contact is just one of many untold European and First Nations stories in Canada. I believe there is still more room for Canadian animators and filmmakers to explore this unique aspect of our history, as these stories are unknown to many Canadians and the world at large.

Filmmaker MacLeod makes a long story short in his ode to historic Griffintown



KEVIN TIERNEY

Since Glenn Gould was given 32 short films by François Girard, then I suppose by some standard or other, Griffintown should be pleased to get 21 short films made by Montreal filmmaker Scott MacLeod.

The Death and Life of Griffintown: 21 Stories is MacLeod's visualization of the stories written and told by Irish historian Matthew Barlow. They were inspired by historic sites, some of which are no longer, in the southwestern area of the city still known as Griffintown, though now more famous for upscale restaurants and condos than the working class.

Unlike Girard's award-winning 1993 feature film, MacLeod's project is an online, self-guided tour of this historic neighbourhood, blending archival photos, MacLeod's own animation and Barlow's stories.

Not a bad present for Montreal's 375th and I would think a very Happy St. Patrick's Day, too, given that to many, the Griffintown of yore was considered the heart of the Irish community.

My family's roots were in Park Extension, and then in the urban diaspora of the early 1960s, the South Shore. As Irish Catholics, a.k.a. English speakers, we went to Sunday mass in the francophone church basement in St. Roch's in Park Ex and the elementary school basement in an area that would become St. Hubert, neither satisfactory environments for my parents.

Of course, there was St. Patrick's Basilica on what was then Dorchester, but that was for weddings, including my parents', funerals and the odd baptism. For regular Sunday mass, it seemed a little too white lace for blue collars.

When my church-going parents wanted a hit of a real church, to say nothing of being able to say hello to old pals, they drove all the way across the Victoria Bridge to St. Ann's parish on the corner of Wellington and Mountain,

featured in one of the 21 films in MacLeod's tour.

It would be a few more years before I would fully understand why Catholics built elaborate churches and how those hallowed halls were of such comfort to believers. At the time, I confess to hating every second of being forced to sit smelling burning incense in a place with horrible acoustics.

Among the other stops on the MacLeod's Griffintown tour are the Darling Brothers foundry and the former Dow Brewery. As my father drove a beer truck for Molson's in those years, my siblings and I always enjoyed ribbing him that Dow was wow, way better than Molson's, not that we had ever tasted either.

Filmmaker MacLeod is a fascinating guy: a singer/songwriter, photographer, painter, animator and at heart, a storyteller. He is also that rare combination of entrepreneur and artist.

When he makes his DVDs, often in collaboration with the NFB, they are in both English and French, and they all come with teachers' guides. Just before Christmas 2016, he hooked up with an online sales company to sell tote bags with prints of his paintings of some of the iconic stops on the tour, including Farine Five Roses.

Born in Red Deer, Alta., MacLeod lived in Cape Breton before moving to Montreal. His lanky cowboy demeanour reminds one of Ian Tyson, just off the range. He is personable, charismatic and perfectly bilingual, which could make him the ideal candidate for the Conservative Party leadership, but I suspect his heart lies elsewhere.

What is inspiring about MacLeod's work is its dedication to preservation and memory.

His art is a celebration of the past without being needlessly nostalgic or politically angry. Which is not to say that he is unengaged. He tries to educate and engage through his art, and Griffintown lovers, historians or just rapidly aging sentimentalists like me are all the better for it.

On a cold winter day, what better way to take a walking tour than from the comfort of your own home on a handy device: griffintowntour.com. You don't even have to say I sent you.



G. Scott MacLeod's *Vik Beach II* (oil on masonite, 12 by 16). Right: MacLeod's *Hafrahvanmagljufur Canyon Dam Project* (oil on canvas, 12 by 16).



Reykjavík meets Helsinki – an art exhibition

David Franklin and G. Scott MacLeod Montreal, QC

One night was not enough to enjoy the works of G. Scott MacLeod and Joe Donohue.

But such was the case at the Café de Mercanti gallery in Montreal where I met MacLeod, a painter, photographer, film director and

producer whose production company has collaborated on seven films with the National Film Board of Canada.

The Reykjavík Meets Helsinki exhibition features oil paintings and drawings of Iceland by G. Scott MacLeod and photographs of Helsinki by Joe Donohue. The oil paintings and charcoal drawings are based on MacLeod's 2017 art residency in Reykjavík,

Iceland, and the photographs are based on Donohue's recent trip to Helsinki, Finland. Both MacLeod and Donohue were inspired by the light and design in both Iceland and Finland.

MacLeod was wearing an Icelandic sweater when I interviewed him, which was apt as he attended the SIM Art Residency in Reykjavík during the month of June 2017. The SIM Art Residency website states that, "the main objective of the SIM Residency is to function as a direct link between visual artists, both nationally and internationally, by bringing them together from different parts of the world to work in close company with each other."

This residency was a very suitable environment for MacLeod to further develop his interests in Nordic culture and Iceland specifically. During his stay in Iceland, he presented his award-winning short, *First Contact: The Film*, a work of historical fiction, at the University of Iceland. The

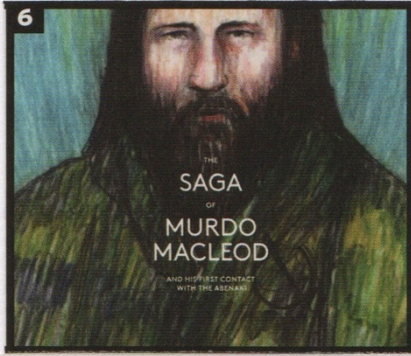
script was written by Canadian journalist Samantha Rideout, a former MA student of medieval Icelandic studies from the university. *First Contact* tells the story of early encounters between Viking settlers and the proto-Beothuk, the ancestors of one of Canada's First Nations. Their meeting goes smoothly at first, but turns hostile within the year because of misunderstood intentions. When a chance to return to good relations presents itself, both sides must weigh the risks. Told from a women's perspective, the fictionalized tale foreshadows certain tragic outcomes of subsequent relations between Canada's settlers and its First Peoples while also exploring the moral danger, the creative challenge, and the rich potential of encountering the "other." The animations incorporate authentic visual motifs from both of the featured cultures into a vivid, pencil-and-watercolour style. The Icelandic screening was opened by the Canadian ambassador to Iceland, Anne-

Tamara Lorre, and hosted by Samantha's former professor, Torfi Tulinius, a professor of medieval Icelandic studies at the University of Iceland and recent Beck Lecturer at the University of Victoria, BC.

During MacLeod's stay in Iceland, he discovered that the Icelandic and Scottish peoples have a genetic connection, primarily through the Settlement Age women. When he was at the National Museum of Iceland, he saw a fascinating exhibit with research that stated 63 percent of Icelandic women have Celtic DNA, whereas Icelandic men have 80 percent Nordic DNA (primarily Norwegian). This suggests that, during the settlement period of Iceland, Norse men were stopping off in Scotland and Ireland and taking women for the promise of a new life in Iceland, either by marriage or perhaps by force, as was the case when not all people were free and could be stolen as slaves. The findings of this study were further shown two years ago by the exhibit, "Bundled Up in Blue," also at the National Museum of Iceland. As *Iceland Magazine* reported, "The exhibition is based on new research on bones and grave goods found in a settlement-era grave discovered in East Iceland in 1938. The grave was that of a young woman, most likely in her twenties, who was believed to have moved to Iceland from Scotland at the age of five or ten."

MacLeod's aim is to return to Reykjavík in July 2018 and further explore the theme of settlement by shooting three short videos in various coastal locations Icelandic with performance artist Asdis Sif Gunnarsdóttir and Icelandic singer Stína Agústs dóttir.

MacLeod's work can be seen at www.macleod9.com.



6 G. Scott MacLeod, BFA (studio arts) 03, MA (art ed.) 13, illustrated *The Saga of Murdo MacLeod and His First Contact With the Abenaki* by Mike Burns. The graphic novel and four illustrations were included in the group exhibition “Tionnehkwén: Seeds of Life” at Métèque atelier d’art in Montreal from September 30 to October 14, 2018. The exhibition featured Indigenous and immigrant artists. macleod9.com 6) *The Saga of Murdo MacLeod and His First Contact With the Abenaki*



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3 Deanna Fogstrom, MA 96, presented a solo show of paintings and photographs at the Britannia Art Gallery in Vancouver, British Columbia. Her work, inspired by study and travel, is called *Paris: Love and Protest*, and was shown from July 24 to August 28. 3) “Cadmium Yellow Paris,” oil on canvas (2019).

4 G. Scott MacLeod, BFA 03, MA 13, presented his *After the War with Hannelore* exhibition – which included a documentary, animation drawings and graphic novel – at Maison de la culture Notre-Dame-de-Grâce from September 11 to November 8. The exhibition traced Hannelore Scheiber’s experience of the Cold War on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany. 4) “People on the Berlin Wall 1989,” graphite animation on Mylar (2008).



Amultitalented storyteller, G. Scott MacLeod has been using a myriad of mediums - including film, music and visual arts - for decades. Born in Alberta, he was raised in Montreal, Quebec, where he currently resides.

MacLeod first became acquainted with fellow storyteller Mike Burns when he heard Burns speak at an event at Hurley's Irish Pub in downtown Montreal.

"I was captivated by Mike's presentation of the storytelling art form and his Co. Kerry accent," MacLeod says of his friend and co-creator, who was born in Ireland but now resides in Wilton, Maine.

"As I got to know him, I discovered that he had learned the ancient art of the seanachie (storyteller/historian) tradition of Ireland as a child from his grandmother. Mike has maintained the custom by performing extensively for more than 40 years in Canada, the U.S. and Europe. Through this work, he has committed hundreds of traditional Irish stories to memory."

MacLeod himself has explored the topic of the Irish diaspora during the Great Famine through his own paintings: his 1995 exhibition *The Starving Can't Eat Stone* and, in 1999, *The Great Hunger*. As he developed a friendship with Burns, a collaboration became inevitable, and MacLeod aimed to adapt Burns' stories to the screen.

"I got the opportunity to produce, direct and animate his untold histories of Canada when we received support from the Filmmakers Assistant Program at the National Film Board of Canada from 2012 to 2015," explains MacLeod. "This funding enabled us to produce four short animated films based on his 2009 book of stories entitled *The Water of Life* (Chemin des Cantons). When we recorded Mike telling his stories from *The Water of Life* series, he was able to give us the stories in two flawless takes, one in English and one in French, with no script."

Burns and MacLeod have teamed up on graphic novels as well, the second of which is

the recently-released *The Irishman - Child of the Gael*. MacLeod's illustrations have been adapted from the animated film of the same story for the graphic novel. In *The Irishman* (not to be confused with the Martin Scorsese film of the same name), protagonist Sean recounts the tale of how his ancestors immigrated to Canada and continued to struggle settling into their new home.

"It has been an interesting journey because usually I tell traditional stories," says Burns. "But as an immigrant myself, and seeing the huge movements of people driven by war or need of recent times, the parallels are striking. Scott is taking up of the challenge of animating them, and now to recreate them again in another medium has been a true gift."

From MacLeod's perspective, Canadians know very little about the Irish contribution to the country's history. He believes Burns' stories could help change that.

"Specifically, they may help the public understand the impact that forced evictions and mass immigration have on people, their countries and economies."

"The *Irishman - Child of the Gael* is somewhat foreboding, especially given the current COVID-19 pandemic, as the story touches on the Irish suffering from ship fever on their crossing, and the quarantine station and mass gravesite on Grosse Île in the St. Lawrence River."

During the Great Famine, Irish people were crammed into ships for the 3,000-mile trip to Canada. According to Library and Archives Canada, many of these ships arrived in Quebec. They were made to stop at Grosse Île, where



passengers were quarantined. Almost 5,000 Irish people died of "ship fever" (epidemic typhus) while in quarantine and many Irish orphans were adopted by French-Canadian families. Grosse Île remains the largest known Irish burial ground outside of Ireland itself.

"For the graphic novel, I had the privilege in December of 2019 to photograph and film the mass Irish grave site beside the Irish Commemorative Stone (Black Rock) and Victoria Bridge that the Irish help build," notes MacLeod. "Both are featured in the film and graphic novel."

"Despite the brutal forced immigration and ship fever on the coffin ships, against all odds the Irish flowered into the fabric of Montreal, Quebec, Canada and further," he continues. "The graphic novel is a testament to our Irish ancestors' resilience and their place in the Canadian experience. It was a privilege and honour to do this work and I am grateful for the opportunity."

The *Irishman - Child of the Gael* graphic novel was published in March, but the launch was postponed due to COVID-19. A launch will take place at Hurley's Irish Pub in Montreal at a later date. In the meantime, the adaptation of the fifth story in *The Water of Life* series is in development.

"It is essential that future generations know this story," says MacLeod.

www.macleod.com

G. Scott MacLeod Canadian Multi-Media Celtic Artist



Iona, colour pencil on Mylar, 8.5 x 11, G Scott MacLeod

by John K Grande

G. Scott MacLeod was born in Canada and is of Norse, Irish and Scottish lineage. Scott is a multimedia artist and filmmaker. He received a D.E.C. in Fine Arts at John Abbott College, a B.F.A. and M.A. from Concordia University. Scott attended The Banff Centre on the Tevie and Arliss Miller scholarship, studied masterworks at The Uffizi Gallery in Florence on the Elizabeth T. Greenfields Scholarship. He is a fellow at The Helene Wurlitzer Foundation of New Mexico and a recipient of the William Blair Bruce European Travel Fine Arts Scholarship, and an affiliate at the COIDS at Concordia University. His work has shown in Canada, Ireland, U.K., Germany, Netherlands, France, Italy, Iceland, Mexico and the United States. MacLeod's Productions has collaborated on seven documentary

and animated film projects with Canada's National Film Board. Scott's award-winning films and web content are used as teaching tools in schools and sold to libraries, museums, Parks Canada and the public. Corporations and museums have collected his artwork. Scott teaches privately, consults and lectures on better business and creative art practices.

Grande: When I look at your work as a totality, I think of it as an ongoing fusion of an inner search for meaning, understanding intercultural pathways over time. I find that it is continually evolving. More recently, your projects deal with where you are, your identity and place. Let's start with Quebec and your exhibition. The

Starving Can't Eat Stone' at Bishop's University in 1999. Can you tell me about that work?

MacLeod:

What has been constant in my work is the process of asking Who? What? Why? When? and Where? on a given body of work. These basic human fundamental questions are the entry points into my creative enquiries. You mentioned this particular body of work. 'The Starving Can't Eat Stone' was formed after reading Eyewitness Grosse Isle 1847 by Marianna O'Gallagher. I studied the Scottish and Irish famine years of the 1840s because my ancestors left their homelands for Canada. I visited the Grosse Isle Quarantine Station and Parks Canada heritage site and have seen the mass grave site and memorial for the Irish famine victims of the 1840s.

This work later became The Great Hunger <http://www.macleodg.com/the-great-hunger.html#the-starving-cant-eat-stone> where I drew on the parallels between the so-called potato famine and indigenous people from the plains, who suffered a famine from the decimation of the plains buffalo. I compared the experience between the Irish and indigenous of the great plains, whose food source was attacked. In the case of the Irish cottiers, forced off their lands when at their most vulnerable, the plains buffalo extinction was done to weaken the indigenous peoples and force them into a reservation system. Incredibly some of the Irish that survived the passage on coffin ships were used to fight Britain's colonial war against the indigenous groups in the newly formed Canada. They also used them as cheap labour to build the railways and the canals, to extract the land's wealth and bring it back to Britain.

Grande:

Your film projects explore Celtic and Scandinavian, and other Indo-European cultures. You made this jump from painting into various new media in your art.

MacLeod:

It made sense to explore filmmaking because I was fascinated with history, mythology, painting, drawing and music. Film is one of those high art forms where you can encompass all these mediums. Another key factor was meeting Mike Burns from the West of Ireland, who emigrated to Canada some thirty years ago. The opportunity to work together came after I saw him tell The Saga of Murdo MacLeod and his first contact with the Abenaki. It was made possible by the National Film Board of Canada. It became part of The Water of Life <http://thewateroflife.ca> series. With funding and team in place, we were able to produce four of Mike's stories: The Abenaki - People of the Dawn (2013), The Saga of Murdo MacLeod and his first contact with the Abenaki (2012), The Irishman - Child of

the Gael (2014) and The French Canadian (2015). These films deal with Canada's untold stories, a dark colonial period when these immigrant groups contributed to Canada's creation. Mike and I felt it was important to tell these stories of Canada to reflect and understand that we have collectively become a métissage of all these indigenous and immigrant cultures. I do not believe that Canadians can claim to be a pure race. We are and have always been a blend of cultures. Fortunately, we are now seeing a significant shift in Canada regarding indigenous rights and awareness.

Grande:

Were you in Iceland for a couple of residencies? Have you been working on a film and graphic novel about Iceland?

MacLeod:

Yes, I first did a film a short film called First Contact <http://www.firstcontactthefilm.com> that addressed the Norse meeting the Proto Beothuk peoples in what is now present-day Newfoundland, and it aired at the University of Iceland. The scriptwriter Samantha Rideout did her M.A. on the saga literature. I was determined to do a film that addressed the cross-cultural encounter between one proto-Beothuk woman named Bobodish and one Norse character from the sagas, Gudhildur Thorbjarnardóttir. The film is a shared story between our peoples and was well received.

Grande:

In 2013, you had a show called Women Waiting by the Sea and Iceland's settlement at the Centre Culturelle N.D.G. in Montreal on this Icelandic settlement theme.

MacLeod:

Yes, it was the culmination of the work I did during my 2017 SIM art residency in Reykjavik. It was preparatory work for my current film and graphic novel project, The Indigo Iona Saga and the Settlement of Iceland <http://www.theindigoionasaga.com>, which focuses on women being taken from Scotland to Iceland during the settlement period. The drawings of women settlers and the landscape helped shape the script in my head before I wrote it. I wrote a three-act narrative that addresses emigration, slavery and freedom.

I discovered that my Hebridean ancestors connect through the Icelandic women's genetic makeup. At the National Museum of Iceland, their research states that 64% of Icelandic women have Scottish and Irish DNA, whereas Icelandic men have 80% Scandinavian DNA. Confirming that Norse men stopped off in the Norse colonies during Iceland's settlement period and took women to promise a new life in Iceland, either by marriage or more likely by force as slaves.

G. Scott MacLeod at <http://www.macleodg.com>
<http://www.johnkgrande.com>



WESTMOUNT MAGAZINE
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Cine Gael hosts two
unique documentaries

Description

The Irish film series presents movies on Griffintown and the Irish in Canada

By Byron Toben

April 28, 2022

The **Cine Gael Irish Film series** continued its pandemic-abbreviated 2022 program on April 22 with the showing of two unique documentaries at Concordia's **Cinema de Séve**. They both featured the exquisitely drawn pencilled backdrops of Montreal buildings of olden days by **G. Scott MacLeod**.



Griffintown in 1896 – Image: [Wm. Notman & Son](#), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

The first, called **Griffintown: A People's History – Episode One**, is a reworking of the original 21 stories into a new four-part series, **Indigenous Lands, First Settlers and Irish Immigration**. It is narrated by **Dr. Matthew Barlow**, who appears live on-screen against the backdrops as he relates tales about the origins of the area where many **Irish famine refugees** were dumped and became cheap labour for the nearby industrial area created with the construction of the **Lachine Canal**. (The juxtaposition of a live human against a richly drawn backdrop reminded me ever so slightly of the 1945 movie *Anchors Aweigh* where film dancer Gene Kelly interacted with the cartoon Jerry Mouse of Tom and Jerry fame.)

In 1796, while he [McCord] was attending to other business affairs in England, his business partners illegally sold the land lease to Mrs. Mary Griffin... [McCord] eventually won a lawsuit to return the land to him. However, the name of Griffintown stuck on the parcel.

In 2002, the late photographer and director **Richard Burman** produced an hour-long television documentary, *Ghosts of Griffintown*, supplemented by a book, *20th Century Griffintown in Pictures*. I am fortunate to have a copy of the book and reread it the next day, inspired by this MacLeod/ Barlow update.

In 1791, this land was controlled by **Thomas McCord** who had secured it on a 99-year lease from the nuns of Hôtel Dieu. In 1796, while he was attending to other business affairs in England, his business partners illegally sold the land lease to **Mrs. Mary Griffin**. It was she who registered the tract into streets and individual lots.

In 1805, McCord returned and eventually won a lawsuit to return the land to him. However, the name of **Griffintown** stuck on the parcel.



From A People's History – Episode One, the building of the Lachine canal as depicted in a sketch by G. Scott MacLeod

In 1825, the long-awaited **Lachine Canal** was finally built, and expanded in 1840.

In 1859, Irish labourers working on the **Victoria bridge** uncovered a **mass grave** of 6000 who had perished from "ship fever" in 1847-48 at **Windmill Point**, across the canal from Griffintown, and hauled up a **huge black rock** from the St-Lawrence river to place over that "cemetery" to preserve those remains from desecration.

'In 1859, Irish labourers working on the Victoria bridge uncovered a mass grave of 6000 who had perished from "ship fever" in 1847-48 at Windmill Point, across the canal from Griffintown...'

The second documentary shown was **The Irishman – Child of the Gael**. Again, rich pencilled drawings by Mac Leod and again triggered by a canal, this one in Ontario, the **Rideau canal**, and written and narrated by former Montrealer **Mike Burns**, now living in Maine.

How wonderful for me to hear Mike's deep voice and Irish inflections. I was a regular at his monthly Sunday evening fireside telling of traditional Irish stories at **Hurley's pub** and even arranged for him and musician Toby to appear at one of the early Fringes held on the McGill campus. In this documentary, dealing in part with exploited Irish immigrants building the Rideau canal and imbibing too much beer to soften their trials, sometimes having to "reconsider their relationship with the Perpendicular."



Sketch from *The Irishman – Child of the Gael* by G. Scott MacLeod

The **Irish Famine** (1845-1849), like the **Nazi Holocaust** (1939- 1944) and the Stalin-induced **Ukrainian famine** (1932-33), was one of the great catastrophes of human history. Evicted from their farms, a third of the population was forced to leave the country. Many travelled on “coffin ships” to North America, acquiring typhus and cholera en route.

Large numbers were quarantined at **Grosse-Île** near Quebec City and died there. Others continued to Montreal. Between May and November of 1847, 75,000 Irish refugees landed in Montreal, which then had a population of only 50,000.

Thus, a preamble to the evening on the planned **Montreal Irish Monument Park** by activist and Cine Gael regular **Fergus Keyes** was apt at this time. A bilingual pamphlet was available to all attendees.



Black Rock in Griffintown – Image: [Coastal Elite from Halifax, Canada, CC BY-SA 2.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons

The planned site, where the “black rock” now stands, has the cooperation of both the city of Montreal and Hydro



Quebec. Toronto has a riverside park also commemorating the role of Irish immigrants – Montreal deserves one too.

Mr. Keyes stressed that the plight of the sick Irish deposited at Montreal's edge attracted aid from all levels of Montreal society, Catholics, Protestants and others, even at their own peril. In fact, the mayor at that time, **John Easton Mills**, also tended to the victims, contracted disease himself and died.

To help on this project, visit montrealirishmonument.com

Cine Gael concludes its 2022 series on **May 6** with its ever-popular **short films** that attendees can vote on for the best three.

Feature image: From The Irishman – Child of the Gael, illustration by G. Scott MacLeod

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Byron Toben, a past president of *The Montreal Press Club*, has been *WestmountMag.ca's* theatre reviewer since July 2015. Previously, he wrote for since terminated web sites *Rover Arts* and *Charlebois Post*, print weekly *The Downtowner* and print monthly *The Senior Times*. He also is an expert consultant on U.S. work permits for Canadians.

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Category

1. Cinema | Video

Tags

1. Byron Toben
2. Cine Gael Irish Film Series
3. G. Scott Macleod
4. Griffintown
5. Irish famine refugees
6. Lachine Canal
7. Montreal Irish Monument Park
8. Victoria bridge

Date Created

April 2022

GRIFFINTOWN - A PEOPLE'S HISTORY: FROM SETTLEMENT TO INDUSTRIALIZATION AND GENTRIFICATION

BY G. SCOTT MACLEOD



St. Anne's Church
Source: MacLeod

Griffintown: A People's History from Settlement to Industrialization and Gentrification is a five part documentary series on the history of Griffintown presented by historian Dr. Matthew Barlow, author of *Griffintown: Identity & Memory in an Irish Diaspora*

Neighbourhood. With support from St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, The National Film Board of Canada's Filmmakers Assistance (ACIC Program) and a GoFundMe campaign, Episode 1. *Indigenous Lands, First Settler and Irish Immigration* was completed in January 2022, at the new National Film Board of Canada Îlot Balmoral, in Quartier des spectacles, Montreal.

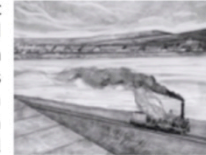
In this series, Dr. Barlow recounts the fascinating social history of Griffintown, a former industrial neighborhood just south of downtown Montreal. With only a handful of original civic, residential and industrial sites remaining, this once thriving community of predominantly working class Irish and French Canadians has all but disappeared. New constructions and gentrification are well underway and have brought a condo boom, but this community endures in memory, via recent books, films and community art projects and through Barlow's stories.

In Episode 1 of the documentary series, we address the Irish contribution to the creation of Griffintown in Montreal, and cover a broad range of Montreal histories in the Griffintown area, including Indigenous Iroquoian History, The First European French Settlers, the fur trade and The North West Company, The Creation of Griffintown, English Colonial Street Names, the construction of The Lachine Canal, Police Station No.7, Irish Immigration, Fires and Floods in Griffintown, The Gavazzi Riot, St Anne's Church, the Victoria Bridge, as well as the Black Rock Memorial and mass grave site.

With funding from St Patrick's Society of Montreal, we were able to pay for archival photo rights from the McCord Museum, extra animation work, my editor Rachelle Hamilton, sound engineer William Le Gallee, music licenses for songs from Ruth Moodie and Rob Lutes for the film's soundtrack and finally French subtitling with Sette Inc.

The documentary series will be a valuable and timeless contribution to our untold Irish-Canadian histories. This work will be presented to local and foreign TV markets

through MUSE Entertainment to complete the series and attain greater visibility. The film will be available to St. Patrick's Society of Montreal and the Irish community of Montreal at a public screening with Ciné Gael when the Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted. Date to be determined.



Fever Sheds
Source: MacLeod

MacLeod 9 Productions creates two different types of educational resources for each of our films. Based on the NFB model, we create Learning Guides that are designed to encourage the public, teachers and students to have discussion before and after each film, and provide a selection of follow-up projects for further study. We also develop a second resource, Production Notes and Education Guide, which provides an in-depth look at my filmmaking process from conception to release. Examples are here: <http://thewateroflife.ca/educational-resources.html> I have also made myself available for presentations and lectures to encourage young people to come to the art of storytelling and filmmaking. I believe this component is important to the advancement of our Irish history in Montreal and beyond. I am interested in inspiring the next generation to make documentaries, animations, graphic novels, comicbooks and zines that focus on social political issues and life histories.



R: Scott MacLeod

Dr. Matthew Barlow (historian and film presenter)

A Montreal native, and descendant of Griffintowners, Matthew Barlow holds a PhD in Public and Irish History from Concordia University. He has appeared in a number of documentaries relating to the history and memory of Montreal. He is a former member of the Board of the Griffintown Horse Palace Foundation, and has been involved in a number of initiatives drawing attention to the history and culture of Griffintown and Pointe-Saint-Charles. His first book, *Griffintown: Identity & Memory in an Irish Diaspora Neighbourhood*, was published by the UBC Press in 2017 and won the Canadian Historical Association's CLIO Award for Best Book in Québec History in 2018. He is currently Dean of Humanities at Greenfield Community College, Greenfield, MA.



Dans « Expédition Groenland », Scott Macloed s'intéresse à ses racines scandinaves

3 juin 2025, 02h00 | Article rédigé par Sophie Bernard

Après des études en beaux-arts au cégep et à l'université, Scott Macloed a oeuvré dans le milieu de la peinture et de la musique pendant une vingtaine d'années. En 2006, il est « tombé » dans le cinéma et réalise le documentaire « After the War with Hannelore », à propos d'une femme qui a vécu la guerre froide à Berlin, produit avec le soutien du programme Aide au cinéma indépendant du Canada (ACIC) de l'ONF. Passionné d'histoire et toujours en quête de ses racines, il a entrepris une trilogie sur le nord de l'Europe, dont le deuxième volet, « Expédition Groenland », a été présenté au Festival de films d'auteur de Val-Morin.

Cet intérêt pour l'histoire lui vient de son grand-père, historien au Cap-Breton de descendance écossaise, qui l'a beaucoup influencé. « Dans ma jeunesse, je voulais vraiment comprendre d'où l'on vient et pourquoi, mais aussi comment nous sommes arrivés au Canada, au Québec, raconte Scott Macloed. Je suis Hibernois-Norrois par mes racines, mais aussi Scandinave, Écossais et Celte. C'est un métissage de plusieurs cultures. »

Comme artiste visuel, il a commencé à réaliser des investigations sur la famine irlandaise de 1847, au moment où les Irlandais sont venus vivre à Grosse-Île et à Montréal. Un jour, il rencontre Mike Burns, un conteur d'origine irlandaise qui a, entre autres, travaillé avec Michel Faubert. Ils se rencontraient dans un pub irlandais le dernier dimanche de chaque mois, alors que Mike Burns, avec un musicien de Dublin, racontait des histoires moins connues sur le Québec, telles que celles des premiers colons écossais et de leur premier contact avec les Abénakis. « J'ai adoré ses contes, particulièrement celui sur la saga de Murdo MacLeod, explique le réalisateur. Comme il avait le même nom de famille que moi, ça m'a vraiment touché. » Avec le conteur, il commence la série « L'eau de la vie ».

Lorsqu'il était enfant, Scott Macloed adorait les bandes dessinées et, particulièrement, « Astrérix et Obélix », « Spirou et Fantasio ». En sixième année, grâce à un enseignant plutôt progressiste, il a écrit sa première bande dessinée. Puis, avec Mike Burns, il commence à en réaliser d'autres sur les colons écossais, français et irlandais. Il s'est intéressé à la saga Vinland, en référence à deux textes islandais anciens, la « Saga des Groenlandais » et la « Saga d'Érik le Rouge », qui décrivent les explorations vikings en Amérique du Nord autour de l'an 1000. Il a donc développé deux scénarios : « Premier contact », sur les premiers colons qui ont quitté la Norvège pour l'Islande et le second, « Expédition Groenland », au sujet des Islandais qui sont allés s'installer au Groenland. « J'ai pris la même approche que pour la série que j'avais montée avec Mike, mais avec de l'animation », explique-t-il.

Lorsqu'il était enfant, Scott Macloed a été très touché par « L'Homme qui plantait des arbres », de Frédéric Back, qu'il avait vu à l'école. Puis, il a découvert le travail de Martine Chartrand (« À me noire » et « MacPherson »). La réalisatrice utilise la peinture sur verre pour ses films et Scott Macloed s'en est inspiré en dessinant et en transformant ses dessins en JPEG. « Quand je dessine, je prends des photos, je dessine encore un peu, je prends une autre photo et lorsque j'ai 24 photos, je les mets dans QuickTime pour effectuer le montage. »

Le court métrage « Expédition Groenland » ne serait pas ce qu'il est sans les chansons qui le ponctuent. En 2000, lors de l'exposition « Premier contact », au Musée McCord, sur les Norrois arrivés à Terre-Neuve, il découvre un groupe de femmes qui chantaient de la musique suédoise médiévale. Parmi ces femmes se trouvait la Suédoise d'origine islandaise Stina Ágústsdóttir, qui avait étudié le jazz à l'Université Concordia à l'époque et qui était retournée en Suède quelques années plus tard. « Je l'ai contactée pour lui demander si c'était elle qui avait chanté au Musée McCord et lorsqu'elle a confirmé, je lui ai demandé si elle voulait chanter pour mon film, raconte Scott Macloed. Elle a dit oui. Stina est incroyable, elle est savante et peu chanter toutes les anciennes chansons médiévales. J'adore travailler avec elle. »

Outre les festivals, les films de Scott Macloed connaissent une belle vie dans le milieu de l'éducation. Il fait affaire avec le distributeur ontarien McIntyre Media à Markham qui diffuse ses oeuvres dans les écoles francophones et anglophones à travers le pays. « Je veux encourager les enfants à rentrer dans les histoires comme je l'ai fait quand j'étais petit, dit-il. Nous proposons même un guide pour qu'ils puissent créer leurs propres films d'animation. »

Le réalisateur travaille maintenant sur la troisième partie de sa trilogie, « La saga d'Indigo Iona », qui racontera l'histoire des premiers colons islandais qui ont quitté la Norvège, s'arrêtant en Écosse et en Irlande pour prendre des esclaves pour aller vers cette grande île vierge qu'était l'Islande. « Ce film sera vraiment axé sur les femmes, sur ce qu'elles ont vécu, précise-t-il enfin. Sans elles, il n'y aurait pas d'Islande ni de Groenland. Malheureusement, il y avait aussi l'esclavage et les mariages forcés. »

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03-2025-04-06

Technicien, maintenance informatique au Centre de données

03-2025-04-06

Chargé / Chargée de projet, trafic et image de marque

03-2025-05-15

Productrice Éducative | Producteur Éducatif, Unité documentaire de l'Inuq

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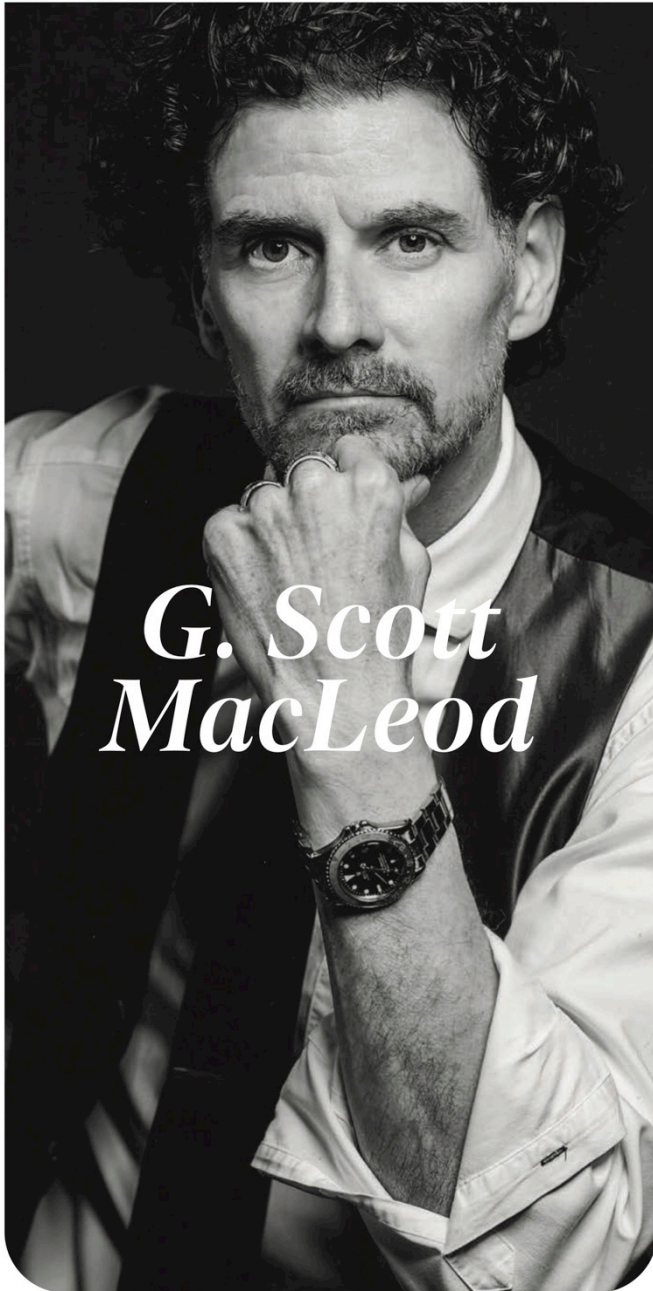


JUN 2025

Guide de la production

Voici les titres et liens des fiches du Guide quotidien de la production Qui fait Quoi pour lesquelles des mises à jour ont été récemment effectuées.

AJOUTS ET MODIFICATIONS



G. Scott MacLeod

G. Scott MacLeod is Montreal-based painter, photographer and musician who has a myriad of creative projects on the go at any given time.

My Celtic family names are MacLeod, MacIver, Gillespie and Watson. My father's lineage is from the Isle of Lewis in the Hebrides of Scotland. The MacLeods and the MacIvers came to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and settled in Baddeck in the 1830s. The Gillespies came to the United States and Canada during the late 1800s, early 1900s. My mother's people, the Watsons, were originally from Fife and crossed the Atlantic on a steamer in the mid 1800s.

I have perhaps been more interested in my roots than some, and I have explored these themes in the Celtic stories, songs, and myths.

I see the value of holding onto the positive attributes of my Scottish roots. I am comfortable with maintaining that identity as long as I feel it is a part of the collective whole, amongst those who are willing to share and enjoy our differences.

Montreal is a fusion or 'métissage' of many cultures, and because of that our Celtic consciousness as our ancestors knew it has changed. I believe that this is a good thing, however, as many Celts left their homelands because of religious, linguistic, and social divides. While Canada is certainly not perfect, and we have a difficult colonial past to reconcile, our new construct is a positive attempt at something that we have never seen before.

Like many cultures, our Celtic histories were maintained through the oral tradition, long before the written word, and it was customary for the bards to commit our stories to memory. Today, we are lucky to still have people in our communities and cultures, committing part of their lives to being master storytellers and relating our cultural Celtic wealth. Our western cultures should take more time to appreciate and honour our elders and artists, as history has proven this to be a worthwhile exercise. Wisdom, knowledge, and experience are among us, but it's up to us to cultivate, celebrate, and share this wealth.

www.macleod9.com
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COVER STORY - SIGHTS