

## Brian Jungen and Duane Linklater

WALTER PHILLIPS GALLERY

The Banff Centre, 107 Tunnel Mountain Drive

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Can hunting be hypnotic? Does silence return a sound? What are the political stakes in modalities of landscape and tradition? These are questions posed by *Modest Livelihood* (2012), a film by Brian Jungen and Duane Linklater premiering at the Walter Phillips Gallery as part of the section of Documenta 13 taking place in Banff. The film's title references the 1999 Marshall decision by the Supreme Court of Canada, which upheld an over two-hundred-year-old treaty that allowed First Nations peoples to fish and hunt on traditional territories so as to make a "moderate livelihood" but pointedly restricted them from accumulating wealth.

The silent film in many respects recalls the work of Andrei Tarkovsky, with its slow-as-molasses cinematic pacing—though perhaps *Modest Livelihood* is even more obdurate. As with Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (1979), the action of following constitutes a principal element of much of Jungen and Linklater's work. In the case of *Modest Livelihood*: one generation following another, hunters following an animal, and ultimately viewers following the artists.

Over the course of its fifty minutes, the film lulls its viewers into a productive state of boredom. After a half an hour watching figures moving through the landscape of northern British Columbia, it's easy to miss "the kill" of a large moose. Indeed, the footage is all so understated that even the otherwise grisly work of field dressing the animal doesn't feel overly grave or sensational; rather, it has that meditative quality so often associated with being absorbed in labor. In this sense, the film doesn't fit easily into conventional filmic genres, but is perhaps something akin to an instructional video: a lesson for a way of being in the world that seeks a link to tradition and the land, unvexed by the continual demands of the speed and noise of so-called contemporary life.

— Zachary Cahill



Brian Jungen and Duane Linklater, *Modest Livelihood*, 2012, color film in Super 16 mm transferred to Blu-ray, 50 minutes.