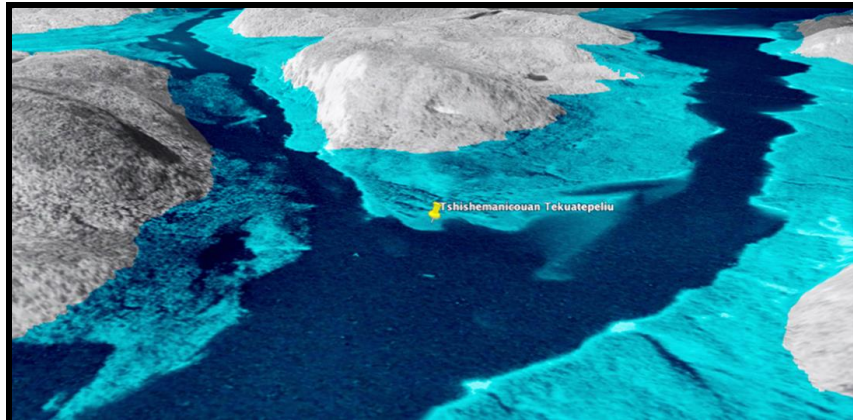




University
of Victoria

ANTHROPOLOGY COLLOQUIUM

The Pessamiulnuats' memory of flooded landscapes: a journey through cultural continuity



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11:30 am – 12:50 pm

Cornett Building: B107

Beginning in the 1950s, the Innu community of Pessamit saw its ancestral land radically transformed by the intrusion of the hydroelectric industry on several of its major rivers. Culminating with the erection of the well-known Manic-5 dam on the Manicouagan River in the late 1960s, this flourishing period for Québec's economy and its political affirmation contributed to the highly symbolic character to these infrastructures. However, for the Pessamiulnuat (the Innus of Pessamit), this industrial endeavor has first and foremost brought about the end of a way of life relying largely on navigation, along with the disappearance of vast hunting grounds, cultural sites, portage trails, etc. In the absence of any archaeological surveys preceding the floods, what remains of this geocultural heritage are the memories of those who navigated the rivers before their transformation. Drawing upon my PhD research, this colloquium will address two key aspects of this collaborative project: (1) the recollection of geographical memories through cultural mapping and (2) the re-enactment of Innu lived geographies in the midst of hydrocolonialism's most powerful tool of erasure – the reservoir. The flooded landscapes, this research has demonstrated, are part of a historical narrative, not only of rupture and disappearance, but also of continuity.

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