



second sight

A FILM BY ALISON McALPINE





synopsis

**A cinematic, non-fiction ghost story.
An evocative personal tale featuring the
last generation of Gaelic storytellers on
Scotland's Isle of Skye.**

Film info:

2008

51 minutes

Scotland/Canada

English and Gaelic

16mm and Digital

5.1 Surround Sound

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51 minutes. Scotland/Canada, 2008

Documentary; 16mm and digital,
multiple format delivery.

In English and Gaelic,
with subtitles.

5.1 Surround Sound

"Imagine a film where time crosses over. Imagine a film populated by wise old taletellers who can call the dead to life. Imagine Bergman meeting Beckett on some ghostly, fog-bound track on the Isle of Skye, Scotland. Imagine a film which has everything to do with the sudden, quick passages of our lives."

—Peter Wintonick, *Executive Producer*

Handsome and gallant, with a ready smile, eighty-year-old Donald Angus MacLean invites us to discover the truth about ghosts. A man of the church and a lover of women, he takes us on a cinematic journey full of spectres, ghost cars, premonitions and the "second sight." We hear of death foretold and explanations of the small mysteries abounding in an isolated community swirling with mists and fitful sunshine, battered waves upon the shore, pathways winding over the rough green hills.

second sight is anchored by the charismatic Don Angie MacLean's investigation of ghosts and the "second sight." It is also a personal, humourous story of his daily rituals: writing up his notes by the fire, scrambling through crazy cabinets filled with research, walking the seashore with his faithful dog. His poetic, human musings on life and death reveal his love for his late wife, Nina. When asked, "Do you believe in ghosts?" Don Angie avoids a direct answer. "There are things around us, lights and visions..."



Cinematically, this is non-fiction noir with a Scottish twist. Travelling with Don Angie on a wild and windy isle, our camera is confidant and witness. He visits other elderly friends and storytellers. The tale collects in fragments, personal experiences coming together to portray a country life about to disappear. As he well knows, "Seeing somebody well today, that he's going to be well tomorrow, doesn't necessarily happen."

second sight features the last generation of a Scottish Gaelic oral tradition, a community growing up without TV and electricity. Rich in humour, the film is a reflection on life and mortality. It is a celebration of extraordinary characters we come to know, many of them no longer with us. Haunting landscapes and soundscapes as pure as nature reveal a magic, real isle full of spine-tingling ghost stories and unforgettable islanders.

Imagine a cinematic ghost story, a mystery and an evocative personal tale.

Directed, produced and edited by first-time filmmaker Alison McAlpine. Shot by McAlpine, John Walker and Kim Derko. Original music composed by John Gzowski with the Madawaska String Quartet. Executive Producers Peter Wintonick and John Walker.



reviews

Second Sight ★★★★

JOHN GRIFFIN, MONTREAL GAZETTE

Alison McAlpine's glorious hour-long tribute to the great characters and laid-back way of life on the remote Scottish Isle of Skye has a misty-twisty Gaelic quality uniquely appropriate to the subject of ghosts...

An intimate documentary... a grand tale, told with restraint and love, and set against some of the most rugged, awesome and phenomena-friendly landscape on Earth.

Second Sight (TOOntario, Human Edge)

JOHN DOYLE, GLOBE AND MAIL

...a gloriously good, gorgeous documentary...It's about storytellers, ghosts, apparitions and the haunting, haunted landscape... it's stunningly good.

The Ghostman of Skye, BBC Two

DAMIEN LOVE, GLASGOW HERALD

...a memorable, genuinely haunting film...Alison McAlpine weaves an extraordinary spell... (BBC2 Wonderland commissioned a 40 minute version of Second Sight, The Ghostman of Skye, which was Pick of the Day or Critics Choice in every major U.K. newspaper.)

Very Hot Docs: The Hot Docs Festival's Excellent Film Experiences

BEN KEMPAS, DOX, EUROPEAN DOCUMENTARY FILM MAGAZINE

Second Sight is a film about loss and death... it's magical... a beautifully crafted visual layer of landscapes and journeys...



Mill Valley Film Festival: 'Second Sight'

WALTER ADDIEGO, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

For residents of the remote Isle of Skye, seeing dead people isn't all that extraordinary. At least that's the implication of this delightful documentary by Canadian Alison McAlpine...

The filmmaker mixes footage of the gorgeous and haunted Skye landscape with supernatural lore gleefully recounted by the island's older inhabitants, such as the octogenarian ex-preacher Donald Angus MacLean, who introduces us to some of his equally idiosyncratic friends...

Second Sight, Rating 9/10

BROOKE SMITH, TORONTO SCREEN SHOTS

Through the wit and charm of near-80 Donald Angus MacLean, filmmaker Alison McAlpine explores the oral tradition in northern Scotland on the Isle of Skye. Donald "Angie" is quite a character, an entertaining rogue with an eye for the ladies and an ear for a good story...

Documentaries: Second Sight

HENRIETTA WALMARK, GLOBE AND MAIL

Alison McAlpine's gorgeously introspective film, as wispy yet persistent as the mists hugging glens and moors... is a story of ghosts, longing and leave-taking that is as potent as the primordial Isle of Skye...