

INUIT ART QUARTERLY

IAQ

PUBLISHED BY THE INUIT ART FOUNDATION



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New Curatorial Appointment



Toronto, Ontario: The Museum of Inuit Art announces the appointment of Ingo Hessel as Curator, effective September 1, 2008.

"Ingo was the Museum's enthusiastic choice as permanent curator said MIA Director David Harris. "He comes with a wealth of curatorial experience as well as a passion for MIA's mission. Ingo's ability to communicate that passion to diverse audiences makes him a great asset for us." The curator oversees all aspects of the museum's exhibition and art acquisition programs.

Ingo Hessel has a degree in art history from Carleton University in Ottawa, and began working in the field of Inuit art in 1983. For 12 years he was Special Projects Officer then Coordinator of the Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre in the federal government's Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. He is the author of *Inuit Art: An Introduction* (1998), the definitive general book on Inuit art, and has taught courses in Inuit art at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa. Ingo has curated several exhibitions including the currently touring "Arctic Spirit" for the Heard Museum in Phoenix, where he serves as the Albrecht Adjunct Curator of Inuit Art.

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Three of Toronto's specialty museums – the Museum of Inuit Art, the Bata Shoe Museum and the Gardiner Museum have launched a reciprocal admissions partnership. Starting in the fall of 2008 visitors who visit one museum may, upon showing their admission receipt, enjoy a 2 for 1 admission at the other two participating museums within the same week. Whether interested in learning about Inuit art and culture, the history of footwear or unravelling the meaning behind ceramics, museum hopping has never been this easy and affordable in Toronto.

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IAQ

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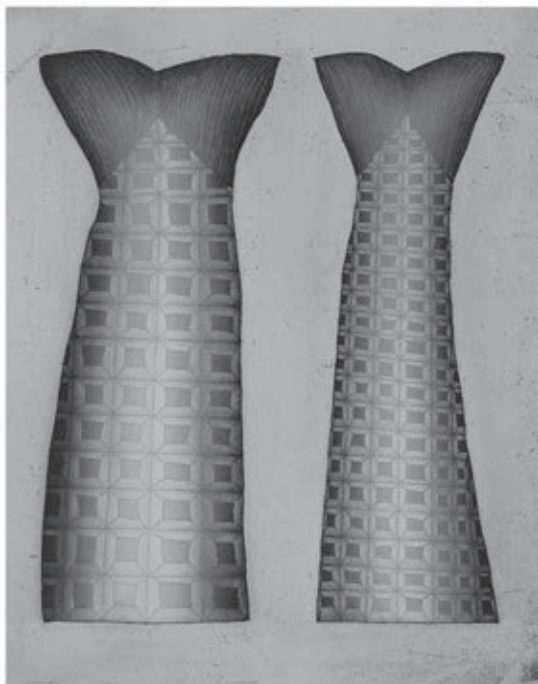
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IAQ is a publication of the Inuit Art Foundation, a non-profit organization governed by a board of Inuit artists. The Inuit Art Foundation exists to facilitate the creative expressions of Inuit artists and to foster a broader understanding of these expressions worldwide. The foundation is funded by contributions from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and other public and private agencies, as well as private donations by individuals. Wherever possible, it operates on a cost-recovery basis.



Cover Image:

Tattooed Women, 2008, Arnaqu Ashevak, Cape Dorset (etching and aquatint; 94.5 x 73.5 cm). Courtesy of Dorset Fine Arts, Toronto, Ontario.
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Kenojuak: From Drawing to Print includes 22 works (11 drawings and 11 prints), as well as a large drawing commissioned by private collectors in 2004. Also on display are archival photographs of Kenojuak, brief biographies, and photographs of some of the key artists who transformed Kenojuak's drawings into prints. The exhibit is at the **McMichael Canadian Art Collection**, Kleinburg, Ontario, until November 30, 2008. Shown: (Drawing) *Blue Owl*, 1966–1969. Shown: (Print) *Blue Owl*, 1969. ᑕᓴᑦᑕᑦ ᐅᓐᐱᓐᑕᑦ

Public Galleries



Contemporary Canadian Inuit Drawings/Chinese Drawings from Huxian, Jinshan, and Qijiang is a cross-cultural exhibition showing the common bonds between two seemingly disparate groups of artists. Thirty-two Chinese drawings and eighteen Inuit drawings (from Baker Lake and Cape Dorset) illustrate a shared connection in relation to nature, spirituality, and their social environments. It is at the **McMichael Canadian Art Collection**, Kleinburg, Ontario, until January 4, 2009. Shown: *White Man's Music*, 1990, Kananginak Pootoogook, Cape Dorset. ᐅᓐᐱᓐᑕᑦ ᑕᓴᑦᑕᑦ



Inuit: A Selection of Works from the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec is a collection of 110 sculptures, including 86 miniatures on loan from the Brousseau Inuit Art Collection. The exhibit runs until January 25, 2009, at the **Salle Alfred-Pellan** in Laval, Quebec. Shown: *Effets de l'alcool*, 2001, Kavavow Pee, Salluit, Nunavik. ᐅᓐᐱᓐᑕᑦ ᐅᓐᐱᓐᑕᑦ

Experimental Dorset: Cultivating Colour features new oil sticks on paper by contemporary graphic artists from Cape Dorset. The exhibit — at **Feheley Fine Arts** in Toronto, Ontario — presents work by such artists as Jutai Toonoo, Annie Pootoogook, Suvina Ashoona, Siassie Kenneally, Papiara Tukiki, and Kakulu Saggiaktok. Until November 22, 2008. Shown: *Carrying Groceries*, 2007, Suvina Ashoona, Cape Dorset. ᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ, ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ



Small Sculptures by Great Artists comprises 60 miniature and small-scale sculptures by artists who often work in large scale. At **Feheley Fine Arts**, Toronto, Ontario, from December 29, 2008 to January 31, 2009. Shown: *From the Earth*, 2008, Idris Moss-Davies, Ottawa. ᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ, ᐱᐱᐱ

Commercial Galleries



Cape Dorset Sculptures and Others is on display in Paris, France, at **Galerie Saint Merri** until December 2008. Shown: *Composition*, 2005, Tukuki Manomie, Cape Dorset. ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ, ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ

PUBLIC EXHIBITION DETAILS

Life in a Cold Place: Arctic Art from the Albrecht Collection, co-curated by Dr. Daniel Albrecht, Martha Albrecht and Dr. Ann Marshall, presents a selection of prints, drawings, and sculpture examining the ways that artists depict their lives and survive in a cold environment. At the Heard Museum, 2301 North Central Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona, until September 2009. Telephone: (602) 252-8848.

Polar Attractions, curated by Jane Winchell, presents creative responses to the polar environment and the science of climate change with reference to 47 works of contemporary art. At the Peabody Essex Museum's Art & Nature Center, East India Square, 11 Essex Street, Salem, Massachusetts, until June 2009. Telephone: (866) 745-1876.

Music and Dance in Inuit Art, curated by Darlene Coward Wight, explores music as a significant aspect of Inuit culture. At the Winnipeg Art Gallery, 300 Memorial Boulevard, Winnipeg, Manitoba, from September 27 to March 15, 2009. Telephone: (204) 789-1760.

Kenojuak: From Drawing to Print, curated by Shawna White, is comprised of 22 works, archival photographs, brief biographies, and photographs of key printmakers. It is at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 10365 Islington Avenue, Kleinburg, Ontario, until November 30, 2008. Telephone: (905) 893-1121 or toll-free, (888) 213-1121.

The Urge to Abstraction: The Graphic Art of Janet Kigusiuq, curated by Cynthia Waye, includes a selection of drawings and collages, as well as wall hangings tracing the artist's development from realism to pure abstraction. At the Museum of Inuit Art, 207 Queen's Quay West, Toronto, Ontario, until January 2009. Telephone: (416) 603-7591.

TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS

Inuit: A Selection of Works from the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, curated by Guislaine Lemay and on loan from the Brousseau Inuit Art Collection, is at the Salle Alfred-Pellan, 1395 boulevard de la Concorde, Laval, Quebec, until January 25, 2009. Telephone: (450) 662-4440. *Itinerary*: Centre d'exposition de Val-d'Or, Quebec, from March 6 to April 19, 2009. Telephone: (819) 825-0942.

Arctic Spirit: Inuit Art from the Albrecht Collection at the Heard Museum, curated by Ingo Hessel, at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum, 110 Pequot Trail, Mashantucket, Connecticut, from December 28, 2008, to March 1, 2009. Telephone: (800) 411-9671. *Itinerary*: Louisiana Art and Science Museum, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, from March 25 to May 31, 2009. Telephone: (225) 344-5272.

The Inuit Dolls of the Kivalliq, curated by Darrin Martens, features a selection of dolls from eight communities, representing diverse approaches and techniques of dollmaking. The exhibit will open at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, 300 Memorial Boulevard, Winnipeg, Manitoba, August 14, 2009. Telephone: (204) 789-1760.

First Peoples of Canada: Masterworks from the Canadian Museum of Civilization, organized by the CMC in collaboration with the National Museum of China. At the Beijing Art Museum of Imperial City, 16, East Chang'an Street, Dongcheng district, Beijing, China, until October 15, 2009. Telephone: 0086-10-8447-4914. *Itinerary*: Osaka, Japan, 2009.

Anthem: Perspectives on Home and Native Land, curated by Ryan Rice, will be at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, 101 Queen Street North, Kitchener, Ontario, from January 19 to March 22, 2009. Telephone: (519) 579-5860.

Culture on Cloth, curated by Judith Varney Burch and featuring wall hangings from Baker Lake, Nunavut, is at Les Muséales de Tourouvre, 15 rue Mondrel, 61 190, Tourouvre, France, until December 2008. Telephone: (02) 33 25 55 55. *Itinerary*: Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris, France, from February to March 2009.

Contemporary Canadian Inuit Drawings/Chinese Drawings from Huxian, Jinshan, and Qijiang, co-curated by Judith Nasby, director and curator of the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, and Feng Bin, director of the Chongqing Art Museum, is at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 10365 Islington Avenue, Kleinburg, Ontario, until January 4, 2009. Telephone: (905) 893-1121. *Itinerary*: Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, Guelph, Ontario, from January 15 to July 19, 2009. Telephone: (519) 837-0010.

PERMANENT EXHIBITIONS

Ontario

Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto)
Chedoke Hospital of Hamilton Health Sciences (Hamilton)
Macdonald Stewart Art Centre (Guelph)
McMichael Canadian Art Collection (Kleinburg)
National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa)
Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto)
Toronto-Dominion Gallery of Inuit Art (Toronto)
Museum of Inuit Art (Toronto)

Quebec

Canadian Guild of Crafts (Montreal)
Canadian Museum of Civilization (Gatineau)
McCord Museum of Canadian History (Montreal)
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (Montreal)
Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (Quebec)

Manitoba

Crafts Museum, Crafts Guild of Manitoba (Winnipeg)
Eskimo Museum (Churchill)
Winnipeg Art Gallery (Winnipeg)

Nunavik

Pingualuit National Park Visitor's Centre (Kangiqsujuaq)

Nunavut

Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum (Iqaluit)

United States

Dennos Museum Center (Traverse City, Michigan)
Alaska Museum of History and Art (Anchorage, Alaska)

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It Was Worth Doing

GUEST EDITORIAL BY LESLIE BOYD RYAN

The Kinngait Studios in Cape Dorset are poised to celebrate their 50th anniversary next year and people are already wondering what we have in mind. Without giving too much away, I can safely say that the annual fall collection will reflect, as much as possible, our illustrious history, and the spring collection will, once again, look to the future with work from the younger generation.

A number of public institutions are eager to join the party, with exhibitions focussed on the printmaking tradition in Cape Dorset. We will also host a documentary film crew from Site Media Inc., and producers of the 2006 film, *Annie Pootoogook*, who will track the production of the 50th collection as a way of illuminating the past, present, and future of this remarkable place and enterprise. Stay tuned to BRAVO!, TVO, and the Knowledge Network in the fall of 2009.

In light both of the changes that have engulfed the North in the past 50 years and the present reality, it is not surprising that the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative and its studios are experiencing something of a mid-life crisis. As in most critical junctures, the times call for a new path to be laid; this can be arduous and lonely work.

It is becoming especially challenging to maintain the printmaking program in the face of rising costs and a shrinking stable of artists willing and able to contribute memorable images to the annual collections. For the carvers, too, Cape Dorset has become a magnet for anyone and everyone looking for everything from souvenirs to “masterworks.” Predictably, we are seeing too much of the former and not enough of the

Magazine featured more than 20 prints and drawings by Cape Dorset graphic artists in a Special Arctic Issue (November 2007). Initial skepticism gave way to something like amazement after I invited their staff to the Toronto showroom to see some of the work currently being done.

The Winnipeg-based arts magazine, *Border Crossings*, followed suit with a profile of Cape Dorset artists Suvina Ashoona, Kavavaow Mannomee, and

For those of us who strive to keep the bar high, these are trying times

latter. There is still some fine work being done, but the buying environment is so competitive that efforts to encourage innovation inevitably fall flat. For those of us who strive to keep the bar high, these are trying times.

That being said, there are a number among the Cape Dorset artists who are clearly on the cusp of something new and exciting. Annie Pootoogook’s crossover success showed us that the contemporary art audience in the South is eager for a connection with the “new North.” Annie’s work was the direct flight.

The ensuing interest in contemporary Inuit art and artists is unprecedented in recent times. *Walrus*

Nick Sikkuark of Gjoa Haven. Several major public museums and galleries are on a quest to catch up and keep current with developments in contemporary Inuit art.

This renewed interest is fuelled and driven by a few forward-looking commercial galleries. The majority of Inuit art galleries, however, are content to rely on a more traditional collector base, and, for the moment, there is enough diversity in the work being done to satisfy both. This is a brief moment, however; if Inuit art is to remain a vital expression of a changing culture, it must keep pace with the times.

Cape Dorset's recent release of the folio, *Nine Works by Seven Artists*, was a deliberate attempt to show the changing face of Inuit graphic art and to showcase those individuals who are doing the most interesting work. It took a couple of years to build the collection and we did not assume that it would meet with immediate commercial success. Nevertheless, we feel strongly that this is our role and that these artists (and hopefully more who will join their ranks) represent the future of Inuit graphic art. As predicted, the collection garnered rave critical

and professional artists who will sustain the studios into the foreseeable future. How to approach this is the vexing question.

Paper and drawing materials are always available at the studios, but few take advantage of this and stop by to pick them up. There is now little incentive to become a visual artist in the North. When arts advisor Bill Ritchie is in town animating the lithography studio, more are inclined to participate and try new approaches, such as the renewed experimentation in large-format works in oil stick and pastel. Other recent forays into

That cry has fallen on deaf ears for a long time. The Government of Nunavut has only recently begun to address the whole area of arts policy and programs, and it remains to be seen whether its recent strategy paper, focussing on "brand recognition" and "market share," will effectively address some of the critical and longstanding local concerns.

To name one: the stone sites have been neglected for years and the old guard — those individuals who have taken it upon themselves to travel and transport stone back to the community — are tired of the backbreaking and dangerous work and uncertain remuneration. The co-op has always bought stone to supply to carvers at a nominal mark-up, but the cost and the quality have become issues, not to mention the whole question of whether or not we will even see the finished work, given the options available. Young carvers are neither equipped — with suitable boat, motor, and staff — nor *interested* in the pursuit of raw material. I'm told that it might be a quiet winter for carving in Cape Dorset.

It will *not* be a quiet winter in the studios; that much we know. In October, work will begin on the 50th annual print collection. The success and longevity of the studios was never predicted nor predictable. We're here because, as Terry Ryan, longtime general manager of the co-op, once said, "It was worth doing, so we did it." 🐻

Leslie Boyd Ryan has been employed by the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative for close to 30 years. She has lived and worked in Cape Dorset. She now resides in Toronto, where she is director of the co-op's marketing division, Dorset Fine Arts.

We join in the *cri de cœur* of the broader arts community in the call for funding to support infrastructure, experimentation, and development in all spheres of artistic development in the North

reviews, but only a limited number of commercial galleries got behind it.

This is not sustainable either, for obvious financial reasons. The arts division of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-op has been fortunate, indeed, to be self-sustaining and not dependent on outside sources of funding. This, too, is changing. The harsh reality of maintaining the infrastructure built up over the years is a given, but the greatest challenge, I believe, is in building a new stable of creative

community outreach involved Paul Machnik of Studio PM (Montreal) who distributed etching plates to just about every household in town. Over 200 images resulted, most by young people and most experimental in nature and amateur in execution. This is to be expected. It will take time and persistence to nurture professional results. In the meantime, we join in the *cri de cœur* of the broader arts community in the call for funding to support infrastructure, experimentation, and development in all spheres of artistic development in the North.

Inuit Artists and Tuberculosis Patients in Hamilton

BY SUSAN GUSTAVISON

Through a most improbable set of circumstances, the Inuit of the Eastern Arctic, their art, and the people of Hamilton came together in the 1950s through the auspices of the Mountain Sanatorium. During the 1930s, the few medical officers in the Arctic began calling attention to the high incidence of tuberculosis among the Inuit. In the early 1940s, the chorus was joined by doctors attached to American military bases in the North who reported on the shocking condition of Inuit health and medical care. In 1945, responsibility for northern health needs was transferred to the newly created Department of National Health and Welfare. With doctors now in the driver's seat, and the incidence of tuberculosis among the Inuit at the alarmingly high rate of one in seven people, a methodical campaign against tuberculosis began. The annual supply ships were used as floating medical bases to survey and x-ray the population (Grygier 1994:58–67).

By the time the tuberculosis epidemic was brought under control, it is estimated that half of all Inuit had spent some time in sanatoriums in southern Canada, often



for two and a half years or more at a stretch (Tester, McNicoll, and Irniq 2001:124). And, of course, there were those who did not survive to return north (*Inuktitut Magazine* 1990; Wilson 1995).

However well-meaning and medically necessary these stays in the sanatorium were, the hardships on patients and family alike, caused by removing the afflicted from their homes, communities, and cultural milieu, can hardly be imagined. The forced evacuation was startlingly abrupt, especially in the early years.

Inuit patients working on soapstone carvings, 1955. ᐃᓄᐃᓕ ᐱᓐᓄᐱᓕᐱᓕᐱᓕᐱᓕᐱᓕᐱᓕᐱᓕᐱᓕᐱᓕ 1955 Hᐱᓕᓕ

All photos are courtesy of Health Sciences Library, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario

Minnie Aodla Freeman, from Cape Hope Island in James Bay, described her experience as a patient in the hospital at Moose Factory: "The doctors would bring with them a translator and tell the patient that he or she had to go south to Hamilton. No preparation, no warning, no

An Inuk patient working on a soapstone carving.
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 ᑲᓄᑦᑦᑦᑦ ᑲᐱᑦᑦ



choice, and no reason given why they had to go so far away to be cured. One afternoon we boarded the train to Hamilton” (Freeman 1978:174; d’Argencourt 1988).

Inuit patients arrived at the Mountain Sanatorium with limited or no possessions beyond the clothing on their backs, often beautiful caribou skin parkas, far too warm for Hamilton’s climate. Most had an Inuktitut-language Bible tucked into their parkas; despite the lack of schools across the North, 80 per cent of the population were literate in their own language.

decade 1953–63. Since the records prior to 1953 do not identify patients as Inuit, the actual total must have been higher, as there were significant numbers of Inuit patients in those preceding years.¹

At the end of 1956, the height of the epidemic, there were 319 Inuit patients in the Mountain Sanatorium.

Enter Inuit Art

At the same time, Inuit art was just beginning to be seen on the national cultural scene. It was not as widely available, neither in Canada nor abroad, as it is today. The first major sale of Inuit sculpture was held as recently as 1949 at the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in Montreal. In 1952, an exhibition of Cape Dorset sculpture was shown at the National Gallery in Ottawa. That same year, sales were held in New York, Winnipeg, Quebec City, and Montreal (Wight 1990:72). Gimpel Fils Gallery in London, England, also organized an important exhibition of Inuit sculpture to mark the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

Prints arrived in southern Canada even later. A small exhibition of experimental work from Cape Dorset was shown in Winnipeg in December 1958, and another in Stratford during the 1959 summer theatre season. Annual print collections from other communities did not appear until the 1960s.

Also of interest, in light of the significant and continuing Inuit presence in Hamilton during the 1950s, is the fact that Inuit sculpture arrived in the South only at the end of each

It is staggering to realize that the Inuit patients in Hamilton constituted, in effect, the largest Inuit “settlement” in all of Canada

Other items might include bobby pins, chewing gum, cigarettes, and a portable sewing machine (Croft 1958:22).

As the designated treatment centre for the Eastern Arctic, the Mountain Sanatorium in Hamilton eventually received 1,274 Inuit children and adults during the

To put this number in perspective, we can compare it with the then-population of fewer than 100 at Cape Dorset, one of the larger hamlets in the Eastern Arctic. It is staggering to realize that the Inuit patients in Hamilton constituted, in effect, the largest Inuit “settlement” in all of Canada. During the same period, the Charles Camsell Hospital in Edmonton was the treatment centre for the Mackenzie River basin and the Western Arctic (Staples and McConnell 1993).

summer, when the northern supply and medical ship, the *C.D. Howe*, docked in Quebec City. The subsequent arrival of Inuit sculpture in a few retail outlets was widely anticipated by fledgling collectors. This is quite different, of course, from today's practice of regularly shipping stone sculpture south by air freight, sometimes as often as each week. It is also quite a different scenario from the steady sale of Inuit art and handicrafts happening at the Mountain Sanatorium and the Charles Camsell Hospital during the 1950s.

Art as Occupational Therapy

As their health progressed, Inuit patients joined in the many well-organized occupational therapy activities and school programs run by 30 full-time teachers assisted by part-timers. Within the Hamilton school system, the Mountain Sanatorium was a discrete school board. As former patient Minnie Aodla Freeman describes it: "Teachers came around, each trying to find out who would like to take up something. But permission had to be granted by the doctors if a patient wanted to take on an extra project" (1978:177).

An internal radio station, available at each bedside, broadcast Anglican and Roman Catholic services daily. Both in Hamilton and Edmonton, the women were industrious, spending most of their time sewing clothing and dolls, knitting, crocheting, and embroidering. The men carved wood, stone, or other materials if they were available. Apparently, when some of the men first indicated their desire for carving



An Inuk carving over newspaper. Δε⁶ Ḡε⁶ᐅᐅᐅ⁶ ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ

material — through the use of pantomime due to the language barrier — the nurses brought them wood, a material that, apart from occasional driftwood, was outside their experience in the Arctic (Croft 1958:28).

By all accounts, the late Dr. Hugo T. Ewart, medical superintendent at the Mountain Sanatorium from 1947–70, was very sympathetic to the plight of Inuit patients. At numerous meetings and in the press, he commented on their intelligence and cooperation, including their ability to adapt to the southern hospital experience, an ability that was a thousand times better than southerners would ever display in adapting to Baffin Island (*Hamilton Spectator*, March 10, 1995). It appears to have been his idea to have carvingstone shipped from Pamour Mines (now owned by Kinross Gold Corporation) near Timmins, in northern Ontario, to the sanatorium for the patients' use (*Hamilton Spectator*, July 4, 1992).



An Inuk patient. Δε⁶ ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ

Where There is Production, There are Sales

In September 1953, a shop was opened on the premises of the Mountain Sanatorium, staffed by volunteers under the direction of Thelma Poag. Among the items for sale, Inuit handicrafts and sculptures were a big attraction. To cover costs, the shop added 10 per cent to items selling for less than \$3, and 5 per cent



The annual income derived from the sale of Inuit art and handicrafts from the Mountain Sanatorium was astonishing, in some years greater than that of most Eastern Arctic communities

to those retailing for more. Patients received the rest. Apparently, no patient ever realized more than \$500 per year, as rest and treatment were the first priority in the daily schedule (*Globe and Mail*, December 1, 1956).

Patients spent their modest earnings on their own needs, including materials and tools to make more art, as well as such items as watches, cameras, and fabric. A few were able to send money home to their families in the North.

While some of the patients were accomplished artists, others were new to carving stone. Consequently, some sculptures were priced as high as \$40 to \$50, while others were more modestly priced, anywhere from \$1.50 to \$20. In the peak years of the 1950s, six tons of stone arrived at the sanatorium and were carved into about 200 sculptures per month (Ayre 1999). Highest annual sales reached \$16,000. In 1960, as the numbers of Inuit patients dwindled, a shipment of two tons of carving stone eventually realized \$11,000.

Inuit buying craft supplies supervised by nurse Miss Yasunaka, 1955. $\Delta\Delta\Delta^{\circ}$ $\sigma\tau\delta\lambda^{\circ}\zeta$ $\text{ካዲኒላቅጠኑካሪጎጎ} 1955$ $H\Delta J C^{\circ}$

It can be deduced from photographs that patients sometimes worked in bed with newspapers spread out on the covers to catch the dust. Other photographs show carvers using their rolling patient bedside table as a work surface. Masks were worn as protection against the dust, at least while pictures were being taken. Interestingly, the stone available was sawn blocks — squares or rectangles — of five different sizes (Croft 1958:28). In their own communities, the stone used by artists would have been irregularly shaped. Indeed, the stone's shape often sparked the creative process.

The tools used in the sanatorium were the usual variety of woodworking tools: hacksaws, heavy rasps, a series of graduated files, and pocket

knives. A final application of boiled linseed oil was rubbed in with a polishing cloth to finish the surface (*Hamilton Health Sciences Bulletin*, 1961).

In 1960, a selection of Inuit sculpture from the National Gallery of Canada collection was displayed at the Mountain Sanatorium for the benefit of the patients. A photograph accompanying the press coverage showed Paulosee Akiterk from Igloolik inspecting the exhibition (*Hamilton Spectator*, January 26, 1960). The display was described as an attempt to bring some of their own culture to the patients. However, since the initiative was organized by the federal Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, which was always anxious to maintain the quality of Inuit art in the marketplace, it can be surmised that the real objective was to inspire the patients by showing them examples of sculpture deemed to have passed the test of “quality.”

Quantity and/or Quality

The whole question of quality and quantity provides a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at the art produced by the Inuit patients at the Mountain Sanatorium. In Canada, a Handicrafts Committee, established in the mid-1950s, orchestrated the marketing of Inuit art. This committee had three-way representation from the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, and the Hudson’s Bay Company (Paci 1996). It seems, however, to have operated without any representation from Inuit.

As late as 1961, a Hudson’s Bay Company executive complained to the federal government that sales from the Mountain Sanatorium were unfair competition and injurious to his northern business

The annual income derived from the sale of Inuit art and handicrafts from the Mountain Sanatorium was astonishing, in some years greater than that of most Eastern Arctic communities (Ayre 1999). Sculpture produced and sold at the sanatorium turned up on the shelves of the Hudson’s Bay Company, as well as in department stores in Toronto (Simpson’s) and Vancouver (Woodward’s).

With the burgeoning success of Inuit art during the 1950s, cheap imitations started to appear. To ensure that nothing would demean Inuit fine art or affect its marketability, the Handicrafts Committee created the “igloo symbol” tag of authenticity that is still in use today. Use of this tag was strictly limited to art that was non-functional in nature, made by Inuit living in the Arctic, and for which the artist had received more than \$2 (Paci 1996:52).

Where the Inuk artist was living was an important criterion determining who could use the igloo tag. Since Inuit living in the sanatorium did not meet the definition of “Inuit living in the Arctic,” their sculptures could not have the igloo tag attached

(Paci 1996:52).² By 1961, the federal government resolved this dilemma by creating a special tag for items made by Inuit while in southern hospitals. A white card was printed with a red silhouette of a bird, whose stylized feet evoked the design of the double-bar-cross symbol so familiar from years of fundraising campaigns conducted by the Canadian Tuberculosis Association (Snowdon 1962).

A Northern Passion

In addition to their financial successes, sales of Inuit arts and crafts from the Hamilton Mountain Sanatorium provided welcome occupational therapy for Inuit. As late as 1961, a Hudson’s Bay Company executive complained to the federal government that sales from the Mountain Sanatorium were unfair competition and injurious to his northern business.³ Beyond the sanatorium, Inuit were a catalyst in creating a passion for Inuit art within Hamilton and the surrounding communities.

In 2003, I curated an exhibition of Inuit art entitled *A Northern Passion: Hamilton Collects Inuit Art* for the

Art Gallery of Hamilton. The selection process was a happy challenge; for, the collectors were eager to lend and there were many outstanding drawings, prints, and sculptures available. Eventually, the choices were whittled down to 45 drawings, prints, or wall hangings, and 32 sculptures.

A number of the lenders to this exhibition traced their first experience with Inuit people and their art to the Hamilton Mountain Sanatorium. The late Jordan Livingston was, for example, president of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, which had spearheaded the mass x-ray survey of the area population for tuberculosis during 1950 and 1951. He met often with Dr. Ewart at the sanatorium and saw many Inuit patients. He told me with some emotion about how heart-rending it was for the Inuit to be in the hospital for months and years without family or income.⁴ He took to handing out dollar bills to the Inuit patients who had no money for gum, candy, cigarettes, or other needs. In time, the Inuit returned his favours by presenting him with small sculptures that they had made. These sculptures from the Livingston collection, along with others belonging to Dr. Ewart, form the nucleus of the 54 sculptures on permanent display in the Wilcox and Ewart buildings of the Chedoke Hospital site of the Hamilton Health Sciences network (*Inuit Art Quarterly*, fall, 1992).

Similarly, the late Julius Lebow was introduced to the power of Inuit art through his part-time work teaching art at the sanatorium. This interest prompted him to open Westdale Gallery in 1959, which is still in business under a new owner.⁵ In time, other galleries have been established in Hamilton — the Beckett Gallery, Petteplace Gallery, and, more recently, the Arctic

Experience Gallery. At its most fundamental level, the *A Northern Passion* exhibition celebrated the importance of the creative impulse that precedes the act of collection. Creativity played an important role in patients' therapy during their lengthy stays at the Mountain Sanatorium, called *ighluyuak* by the Inuit. At that "big, fake igloo," creativity was a bridge between the cultures of the North and the South, and art was the stuff of dialogue between peoples. 🐻

Susan Gustavison is an independent curator living in Toronto, Ontario.

NOTES

- ¹ Telephone conversation with the late Jordan Livingston, March 31, 2003. Mr. Livingston was a frequent visitor to the Mountain Sanatorium in 1950 and 1951.
- ² Paci cites one Edmonton buyer who was exporting both authentic Inuit art and Japanese imitations of Inuit art to the New York market. See also Ayre 1999.
- ³ Letter from H.W. Sutherland to R.A.J. Phillips, February 15, 1961. Cited by Ayre 1999.
- ⁴ Interview with Jordan Livingston (now deceased) in Hamilton on November 28, 2002.
- ⁵ Interview with Miriam Lebow in Hamilton on January 23, 2003.

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Bird Head, c.1957, unknown artist, area of Spence Bay, Nunavut (whalebone).

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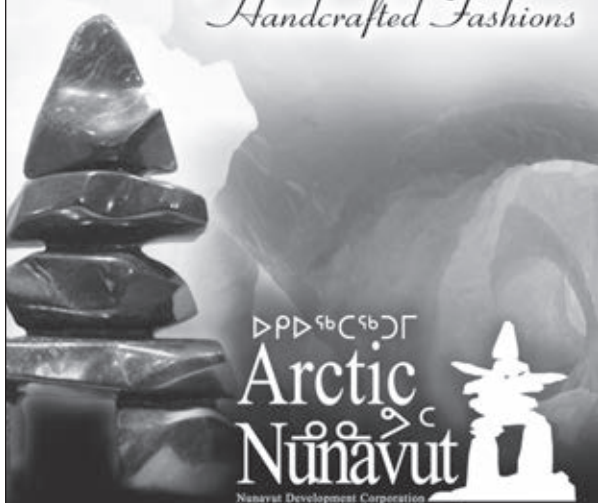
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THE NEW GENERATION:

A Radical Defiance

BY ROBERT KARDOSH

All photos courtesy of Dorset Fine Arts, Toronto, Ontario

Fifty years after the first experiments with Inuit printmaking got underway, a new generation of northern artists is taking the Cape Dorset graphic tradition into some different and challenging directions, confronting old stereotypes in the process. A recent portfolio of prints showcases, for the first time, their unique and unconventional visions.

The past year has been an unusually eventful period in the life of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative, the body that has overseen the production of Cape Dorset's graphics almost since its inception five decades ago. It began with the fall 2007 publication and launch of *Cape Dorset Prints: A Retrospective*, a major new book that analyzes and celebrates 50 years of printmaking in this remote Baffin Island community. With contributions from several of the printmaking program's key participants (including members of its southern Canadian marketing division, Dorset Fine Arts), this

impressive publication has justly been welcomed as both a timely tribute to Canada's longest continuously running print studio, and a useful addition to the literature on 20th-century Canadian art.

A second, no less momentous, occasion was the announcement in early 2008 that Kenojuak Ashevak, one of the cooperative's first participants and now its reigning elder, had won the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts. Although this is not the first time that Ashevak has been honoured with a prestigious award — she received a National Aboriginal Award for Lifetime Achievement in 1996, and she holds honorary degrees from two Canadian universities — the "GG" award is nevertheless special, since it is the highest distinction that a visual artist can receive in Canada. Ashevak's medal, the first for an Inuit artist, is a well-deserved recognition for both her and the artform with which she has so long been identified.

For a community of artists and printmakers living and working far from the centres of contemporary art, both events — Ashevak's award and the general retrospective — testify to the success of their collective endeavours. Fifty years of work is a milestone in any field, artistic or other.

A New Project

At the same time as the history of the workshop was being celebrated, a new project was also reaching its final form. Initially planned for release in spring 2007, *Nine Works by Seven Artists* was presented to the public earlier this year as a supplemental print folio for spring/summer 2008. This small and diverse collection of prints is the first to be devoted in its entirety to a younger generation of Dorset graphic artists, most of them the children and grandchildren of the artform's early pioneers.

(Right) *Angel in Town*, 2008, Suvinaí Ashoona, Cape Dorset (etching and aquatint; 75.7 x 57 cm). ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ



Instead of the classic (and at times idealizing) depictions of hunting scenes, domestic life, and shamanism, the new generation may be just as likely to picture airplanes, hockey players, and modern interiors equipped with television sets and kitchen appliances

Since the artists represented in the collection range in age from 38 to 52, their experience of northern life has been different from that of their parents and grandparents. Few of them experienced first-hand the tradition of semi-nomadism, a lifestyle that, even by the mid-1960s, was a memory for most Inuit. Furthermore, these younger artists are products of a southern-style educational system introduced to the North by the federal government in the 1960s. For this reason, all of the artists are bilingual, and their ability to speak English has inevitably made their experience of modernity and southern culture different from that of the older generations. Given that such changes in the North continue at an ever-accelerating rate, it is no surprise to find in these young artists new forms of artistic expression. Instead of the classic (and at times idealizing) depictions of hunting scenes, domestic life, and shamanism, the new generation may be just as likely to picture airplanes, hockey players, and modern interiors equipped with television sets and kitchen appliances.

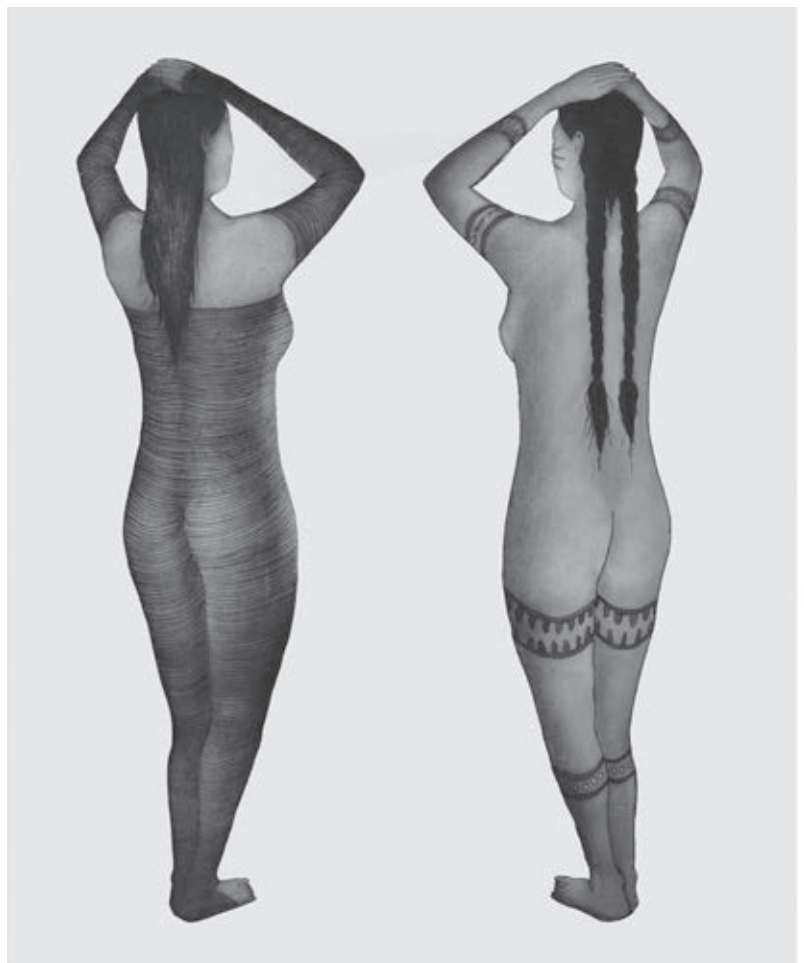
Some members of this group have already had commercial and critical

success with their drawings. Most notable here is Annie Pootoogook, the first Inuit artist to win the prestigious Sobey Prize, and the first to have her drawings exhibited at *Documenta*, an international show of contemporary art that takes place every five years in Kassel, Germany. Having caught the attention of curators and collectors of contemporary art generally, Pootoogook's gritty, unsentimental depictions of modern

Cape Dorset life have earned her a significant reputation far beyond the specialized field of Inuit art.

Pootoogook's breakthrough is exceptional, but she is not the only artist of her generation to make new waves in the art world. The equally unconventional drawings of Pootoogook's older cousin, Suvina Ashoona, have similarly piqued the curiosity of the wider art world, not least because, like Pootoogook's work, they refuse to offer exoticized or conventional ethnographic images for southern consumption. Made with different priorities and different objectives, this work constitutes what Amy Karlinsky describes as a radical defiance of commercial expectations (2008:66–68).

Tattooed Women, 2008, Arnaq Ashevak, Cape Dorset (etching and aquatint; 94.5 x 73.5 cm).
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Until now, the exciting new developments in drawing have not been much reflected in the community's annual fall print releases. These have continued to focus on traditional imagery, notwithstanding the introduction of new and more sophisticated printmaking techniques over the years. It could be that the new, more narrative drawing styles do not easily lend themselves to Dorset printmaking. As John Westren puts it, "a good drawing does not necessarily make a good print" (2007:271).

Another factor, of course, is the influence of the market for Inuit prints, which has generally been more conservative in its tastes than has the audience for drawings. Traditional ethnographic subject matter and decorative appeal remain popular with the print-buying public, and it is notable that Pootoogook's few prints have not been big sellers, in spite of the impressive success of her drawings within the wider art world. Given the economics of printmaking, and especially the need to find multiple buyers for each editioned image, it is perhaps not surprising that the studios have tended, as it were, to play it safe.

The new Dorset folio can be seen, then, as an attempt to address the discrepancy that has recently emerged between drawing and printmaking. In fact, according to Leslie Boyd Ryan, director of the cooperative's Toronto-based marketing division, the images were selected specifically with an eye to contemporary subject matter rather than the more traditional. As a result, the whole collection emphasizes the sensibilities of a new generation and, in this way, challenges any notion that printmaking might be disappearing as a viable artform in the North.¹

For the most part, the images avoid socially controversial or strongly political subject matter. There is nothing in the collection

comparable to Pootoogook's disturbing depictions of spousal abuse and the destructive effects of alcohol. (Pootoogook, who no longer lives in Cape Dorset, is not herself represented in the collection.) But the prints are by no means tame. By registering a series of reflections on the changing and increasingly hybrid

in Town, one of two prints by her in the new collection. Here, Ashoona pictures a section of the Cape Dorset townsite from above; instead of igloos and skin tents, we are shown an unexceptional group of clapboard buildings resting on blocks to keep the structures above the snow. Icicles hang from the edges of the roofs,

... the whole collection emphasizes the sensibilities of a new generation and, in this way, challenges any notion that printmaking might be disappearing as a viable artform in the North

nature of contemporary northern society, these unconventional images challenge us to re-examine our assumptions about the North and the South's relation to it. The aesthetic success of the portfolio amply demonstrates that the most vital art is that which most dynamically reflects its time and place.

Confronting Stereotypes

Of all the artists represented in the collection, none exemplifies Karlinsky's notion of radical defiance better than Suvina Ashoona. The granddaughter of graphic artist Pitseolak Ashoona (1904–1983) and daughter of sculptor Kiawak Ashoona, Suvina began making drawings for the cooperative in the early 1990s. Perhaps best known for her series of dense, obsessively drawn, cavernous landscapes, her strange imagery possesses a psychological complexity and tension unique not just to Inuit art but, also, to contemporary Canadian art generally.

Ashoona, now 47, is often deliberately modern in her subject matter. Her commitment to providing a contemporary representation of northern society is powerfully evident in *Angel*

telling of cold. The emphatic ordinariness of the scene — represented, for example, by the footprints in the snow between the buildings — is interrupted only by the appearance in the street of a large angel, complete with wings and a white gown. Anxious faces appear at the windows of some of the buildings. The incongruous angel is wearing sandals, hardly appropriate for the Arctic winter. Full of gentle humour, Ashoona's image reflects obliquely on the play of outsider and insider, native and foreign influences, in today's North.

Along with five others in the collection, this print is an etching and aquatint, a combination of techniques first introduced to the Dorset printmakers in the mid-1990s by Paul Machnik who runs Montreal's Studio PM. The introduction of this method to northern printmaking has had a revolutionary impact, giving even traditional prints released in the regular portfolios a more contemporary look. To judge by the five prints in *Nine Works by Seven Artists* (all of them also produced in collaboration with Studio

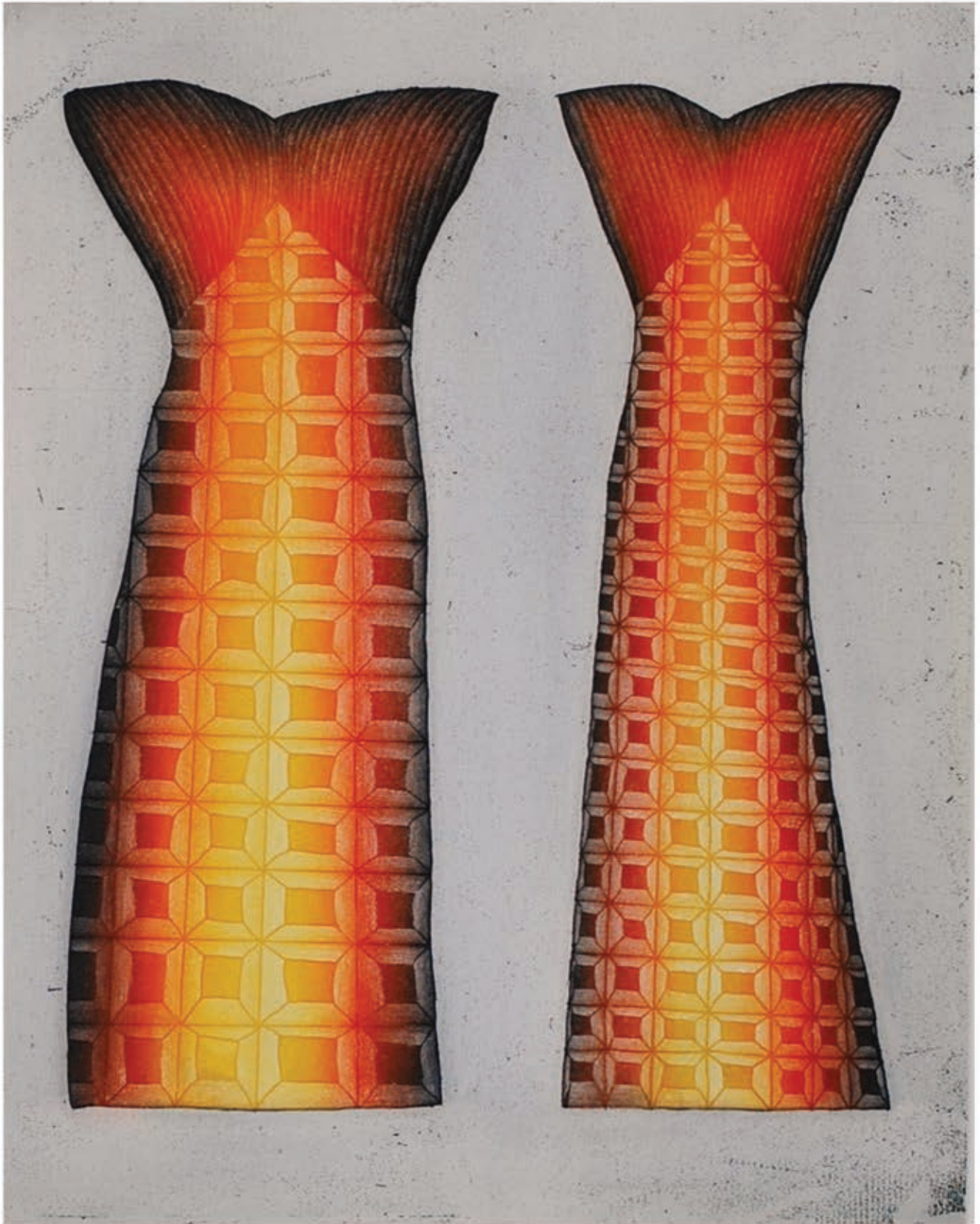
Angijutaq (Dress), 2008,
Ningeokuluk Teevee,
Cape Dorset (etching and
aquatint; 96 x 76.5 cm).
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THE NEW
GENERATION:
A Radical Defiance

Looking South, 2008,
Itee Pootoogook, Cape Dorset
(lithograph; 30.7 x 40.8 cm).
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Fish Tails, 2008, Siassie Kenneally,
Cape Dorset (etching and aquatint; 63.5 x 50 cm).
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These are prints that, from an authentic contemporary perspective, challenge both those accounts of northern art that see it as merely traditional, and those that see tradition as having no relevance at all for contemporary art production

PM), the medium's ability to create graduated tonal areas is especially well suited to the expressive needs of the current generation. In *Angel in Town*, for example, areas of shifting luminous white and grey nicely suggest the uneven surfaces of snow-covered streets and rooftops.

Like Ashoona, Arnaqu Ashevak, 52, comes from an artistic family. The adopted son of the great graphic artist Kenojuak Ashevak and her late husband Jonniebo, also an artist, Ashevak has evolved a style of expression entirely his own. A sculptor as well as a printmaker-technician, he produces relatively little graphic work, but all of it is exceptional.

Tattooed Women is one of his strongest images to date. In this large etching and aquatint, Ashevak presents two standing unclothed women from behind, each with her hands placed over her head in an identical pose. Although the figures are portrayed with skilful realism and dimensionality, their symmetry and isolation on the page also give the image a strong graphic presence, almost as though the figures have been manually cropped and removed from a once-visible naturalistic setting. If there is an abstract force to the form, the image plays, as well, with the idea of Inuit subject matter. One of the women has been tattooed

in the traditional Inuit manner, and her long, braided hair is also traditional. The other woman's hair is modern, as is the full-body tattoo that leaves only a small area around her shoulder blades exposed. The play of symmetry and asymmetry turns Ashevak's mysterious image into a powerful metaphor for the relationship between continuity and discontinuity, traditional and contemporary life.

Ningeokuluk Teevee, in her mid-40s, is an artist who is already well known for her traditional imagery, having contributed several works based on wildlife and Inuit folklore to the community's annual fall collections. Her contemporary work, however, deserves even more attention. In *Angijutaaq*, Teevee shows a modern dress suspended from a metal coat hanger. On the dress's shimmering deep-blue surface are undulating schools of fish threading across the garment in both directions. The pattern reflects the artist's interest in nature, as does the gently swaying bed of kelp at the bottom of the dress. But this image of printed cloth would seem equally to be a self-referential meditation on artistic production. Teevee's use of the aquatint technique to represent water shows great understanding of the medium. It also makes for a thoroughly contemporary take on the classic Inuit graphic convention of a single object isolated on the page.

Fish appear as well in Siassie Kenneally's small and elegantly simple print, another etching with aquatint. Showing parts of two orange and yellow fish in isolation against a textured grayish ground, *Fish Tails* references time-honoured activities such as the harvesting and consumption of fish that continue in northern domestic life. Kenneally's fish are not purely representational, however, since the glowing forms are not covered in scales, but in a more abstract, modern grid of small squares. At 38, Kenneally, a newcomer to the printmaking and drawing programs, is the youngest artist represented in the collection. If her debut print is any indication, she will soon emerge as another strong artistic voice in the North.

Inventive Perspectives and Unconventional Framing Devices

Many of the new prints make use of inventive perspectives and unconventional framing devices that give the works a contemporary, almost filmic feel. Suvina Ashoona is the artist whose practice most consciously extends and explores the medium in this way. If *Angel in Town* shows a northern town from an aerial viewpoint, her second print, *String of Pearls*, makes use of another favourite



String of Pearls, 2008, Suvina Ashoona, Cape Dorset (etching and aquatint; 57.5 x 80 cm). ᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ

formal device: the magnified close-up. In this work, a pair of bony hands is shown at close range, prying open an oyster shell. There is an almost surreal physicality at work here. Each joint is strongly emphasized, and the thickly outlined nails mirror the shell, itself, in their hard and resistant greyish surfaces. Echoing the exaggerated mode of representation is the inexplicable, comic presence of a group of pearls, just visible through the shell's opening, already joined on a string. This is, perhaps, an image, of art's reliance on, but simultaneous distance from, nature.

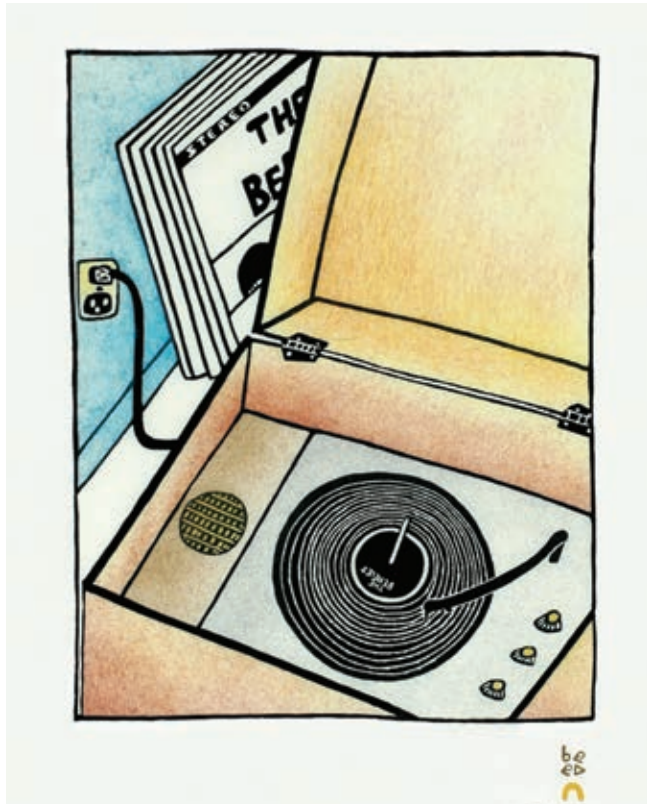
Itee Pootoogook, now in his 50s and another newcomer to print-making, enjoys drawing the treeless northern landscape, which he typically reduces to more or less featureless horizontal bands representing land, sky, and sometimes sea. His small lithograph, *Looking South*, revolves formally around a pair of northern-style boots viewed at close range against a minimalist green and blue horizon. The radical cropping of the form prevents us from seeing the wearer's body. The boots evoke

a whole history of movement on the land, and, in that context, the title clarifies the image, transforming it into a reflection on contemporary northern culture's unavoidable, and now historical, orientation towards the South.

A similar use of cropping characterizes Ningeokuluk Teevee's second image in the collection, a portrait of a 1970s-era record player whose hinged lid is open to reveal a Beatles LP spinning on the turntable inside. Behind the record player, a stack of album covers leans against the wall. The sharply angled perspective and seemingly accidental framing of this intimate still life fit well with a subject matter that speaks to the influence of popular culture in today's North. At the same time, Teevee's image manages to ignore the rules of illusionistic perspective in favour of expressionism. Some of the graphic clarity here derives from the medium: this is the sole stonecut in the collection, with some additional stencilling providing the light blue and caramel colouring. The play between the traditional effects of relief printing and the contemporary thematic

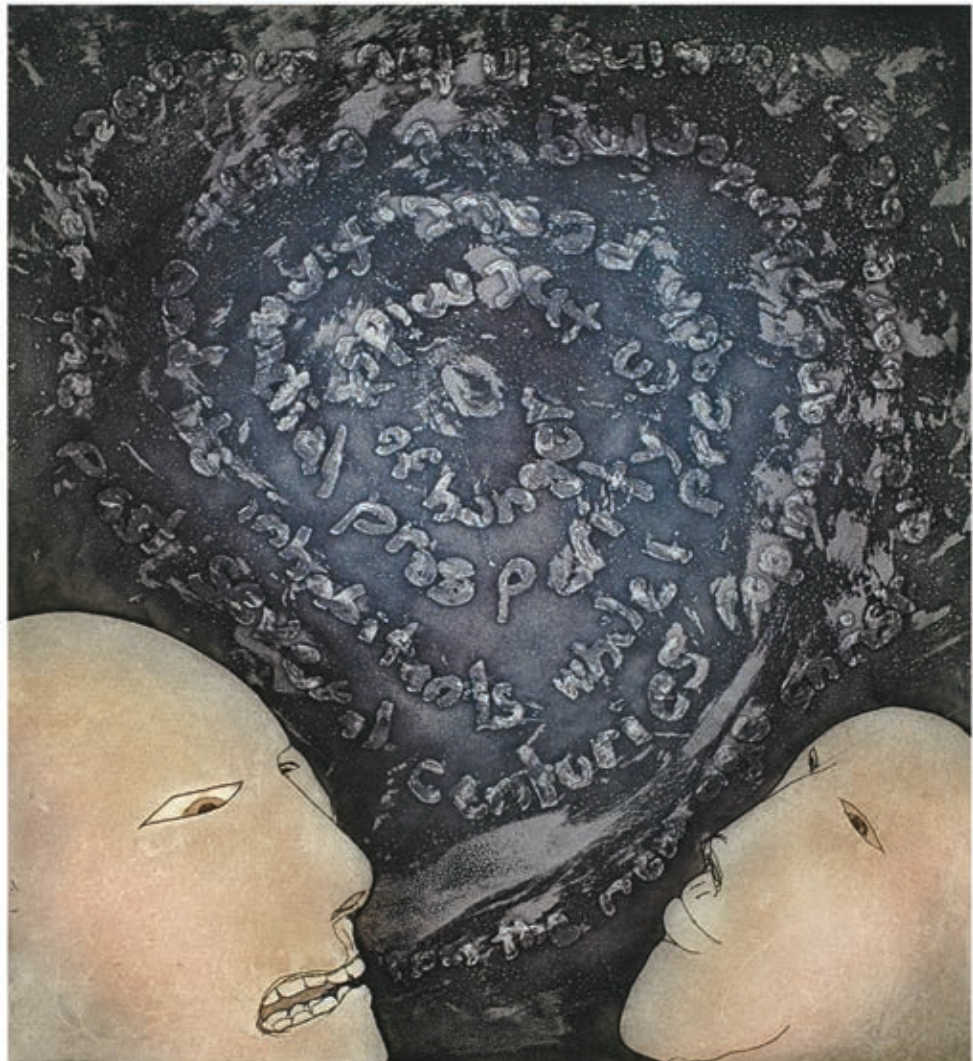
material makes this one of the most appealing images in the collection. But the image is also about the non-contemporary. *Yesterday* (a title taken from the Beatles' song) is tinged with nostalgia, since vinyl LPs are as rare in Nunavut as they are elsewhere.

Kavavaow Mannomee's colourful and whimsical lithograph, *Wild World*, also makes use of conscious framing, but not, this time, through cropping. The elements of Mannomee's explosive composition instead push beyond the frame: humans with lifeless puppet-like hands and feet, traditional hunting implements and tools, strands of kelp from the sea, stick figures reminiscent of prehistoric petroglyphs, formless yellow and blue-green shapes. All these are pictured as a floating jumble, turning round a centre in some chaotic maelstrom or cosmic spin. A series of thin lines suggest overlapping, uncoloured shapes, which, on closer inspection, emerge as birds. At the centre of the composition is a large human eye with a yellow cross emblazoned on its dark blue pupil. Here, in extreme



Yesterday, 2008,
 Ningeokuluk Teevee,
 Cape Dorset
 (stonecut and stencil;
 45.5 x 33 cm).
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New Age Christ, 2008,
 Jutai Toonoo, Cape Dorset
 (etching and aquatint;
 62 x 57 cm).
 ᓴᓴᓴ ᓴᓴᓴ, ᓴᓐᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴ



THE NEW GENERATION:

A Radical Defiance



Wild World, 2008, Kavavaow Mannomee,
Cape Dorset (lithograph; 51.2 x 66.7 cm).
ᖃ<<ᐅᖅ ᐱᐅᐱ, ᐱᖅᐱᐅᐅ

close-up, is a rectangular frame within the frame, the eye that sees and makes the world. The title is apt, underlining both the wild flow in today's rapidly changing world and the wild pleasure a viewer might take in its unpredictability.

The aesthetic success of the portfolio amply demonstrates that the most vital art is that which most dynamically reflects its time and place

At 50, Mannomee has worked for many years as a printer, translating the drawings and designs of other artists into stonecuts and lithographs. He has also contributed several of his own images to Dorset's annual fall collections, many of which have reflected his strong environmental concerns. With *Wild World*, he is now emerging as an artist with a whimsical and powerful vision that is simultaneously rooted in the North and fully contemporary.

The most political or socially controversial print in the collection is undoubtedly Jutai Toonoo's *New Age Christ*, an etching and aquatint that renders two bald human heads, both apparently male, in an almost cartoon style. A spiral of English text emerges from the open mouth of one man, whose angry expression is in contrast to the more serene attitude of the listener. The text reads as follows: "I am the New Age Christ and I have been lurking in the shadows for the past several centuries raping and plundering the earth and its inhabitants while I preach peace and financial prosperity in the midst of hunger."

Strong words. Inuit art has rarely been the vehicle for the expression of this kind of political and moral rage. But Toonoo is an unusual Inuit artist. In his stone sculptures, as in this print, he often combines written text and image, typically by

engraving directly onto the sculpture surface. Alongside this juxtaposition of image and text as modes of signification, Toonoo's use of English also evidences a highly contemporary attitude. However, even more than these formal aspects, what most gives *New Age Christ* its power is the textual *content*. Toonoo's writing spares nothing and no one in its denunciation of hypocrisy.

Innovation within Tradition

Within the long history of contemporary Inuit art, the images in *Nine Works by Seven Artists* are highly unconventional expressions of seven different, yet related, contemporary sensibilities. At the same time, they remain firmly connected to and rooted in the Cape Dorset graphic tradition in terms of technique and studio environment, and in terms of their conscious reshaping of traditional motifs. These are prints that, from an authentic contemporary perspective, challenge both those accounts of northern art that see it as merely traditional, and those that see tradition as having no relevance at all for contemporary art production. With these images, Ashevak, Ashoona, Kenneally, Mannomee,

Pootoogook, Teevee, and Toonoo have managed to bring vitality and a powerful sense of contemporary purpose to an artistic tradition that is now half a century old.

Prior to the official release of the new Dorset folio, Leslie Boyd Ryan said she was unsure whether or not the cooperative would issue a second collection of contemporary work as a follow-up to the current folio. Ryan and her colleagues at the cooperative were, presumably, waiting to measure the reception of this first collection before deciding on the future. Such caution is understandable. Fortunately, the initial response from curators, critics, dealers, and collectors has been strong enough that plans are now firmly in place for the release of a second installment, tentatively scheduled for spring 2009. The future of Inuit printmaking has never seemed so bright. ▀

Robert Kardosh is the Assistant Director of the Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia.

NOTES

¹ E-mail interview with Leslie Boyd Ryan, June 16, 2008.

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SCULPTURE: Mattiusi Iyaituk PHOTO: Ronald Labelle



In the **Shadow** of the **Midnight Sun:**

Sámi and Inuit Art 2000–2005

Was at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, May 23–August 17, 2008

REVIEWED BY DOROTHY SPEAK

This is a disappointing exhibition of often spectacular works that are robbed of potentially rich associations through weak presentation. While Canadian museumgoers may be expected to be reasonably familiar with the influences that shaped contemporary Inuit art, they will undoubtedly know next to nothing of the Sámi, about whom we learn little in this exhibition.

There is a lamentable absence of information on the cultural and political history of the Sámi, their experiences of acculturation, their current geographic locale and way of life, nor how the artists selected for this show represent or address any of these concerns. As a result, the ability of the viewer to appreciate the works on anything but a visceral level is severely impaired.

(Left), *Untitled (On the Land)*, 2005, Janet Nungnik, Baker Lake (wool, felt, printed cotton, beads, embroidery floss, and thread; 146 x 93 cm). *ᐱᓂᐅᓄᓐᓂᐅᓄᓐ* (ᐱᐅᓄᓐᓂᐅᓄᓐ), 2005. ᓂᓄᓐ ᐅᓄᓐᓂᐅᓄᓐ, ᓂᓄᓐᓂᐅᓄᓐ

All images courtesy of The Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario

In this exhibition, there is next to no attempt by the curators to group the works in a way that invites comparisons; to draw, through labels, thematic or stylistic parallels between them; to explain iconography, or to enlighten the visitor as to the

an aesthetic that has been carried into contemporary forms; also that drums were used by Sámi elders to voyage to the realm of the spirit, that they were hung with talismans to make them more powerful or decorated with holy signs and symbols

Blodgett, in assembling the Inuit works, has gone out of her way to find unusual pieces reflecting experimentation with new media

meaning of individual pieces or the motives of their creators. For example, the mythological source of Floyd Kuptana's powerful *Abductor of Souls* is touched on in Blodgett's catalogue essay, but not explained in an exhibition label. Similarly, it would have been helpful if the viewer had known that Hilde Skancke Pedersen's group of photographs entitled *Sign of Life* incorporates the colours of the Sámi flag. Further reading of the catalogue tells us that, because the Sámi were traditionally a nomadic society, historic objects were always blunt and rounded, to make them easy to pack,

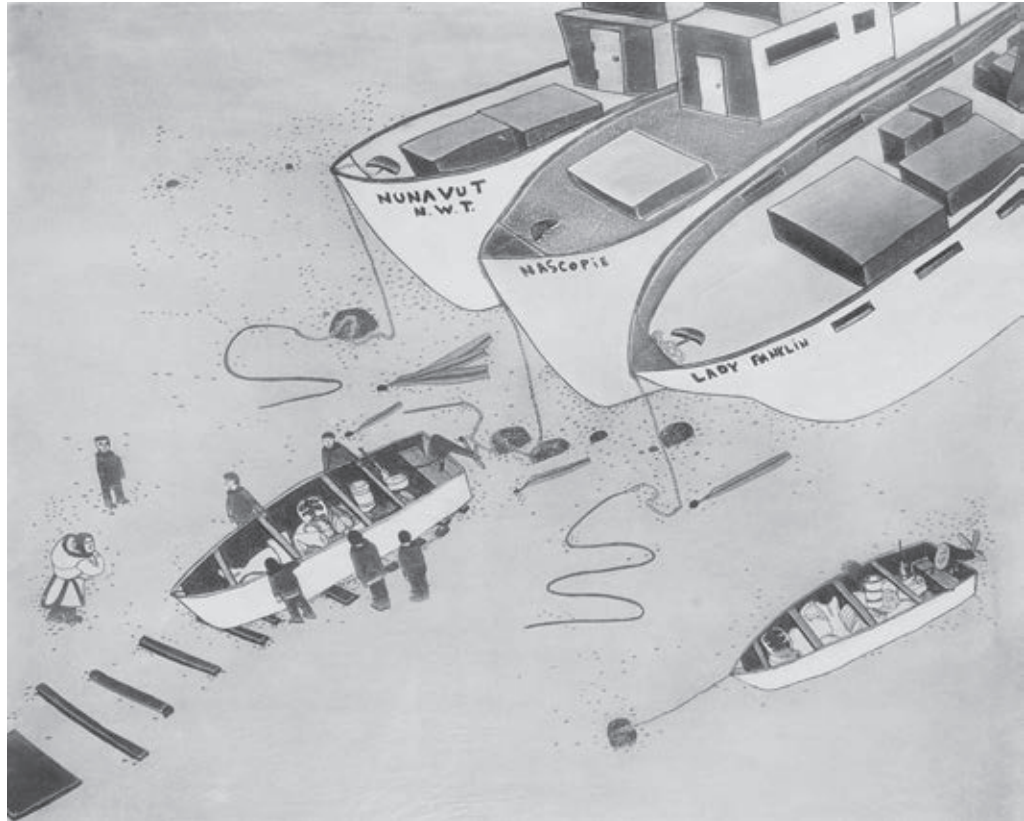
from Sámi mythology, and that they were embellished with a reddish paint made from elder bark and spit. None of this information is provided to the exhibition visitor.

Blodgett, in assembling the Inuit works, has gone out of her way to find unusual pieces reflecting experimentation with new media (for instance, Nick Sikkuark's drawings on black paper), exploration of unconventional subject matter (Suvinai Ashoona's frank drawings of contemporary life and Arnaqu

Patriotic Shaman, 2002, Floyd Kuptana, Paulatuk and Toronto (stone, antler, metal, and inlay; 31 x 39.5 cm). ᐱᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ. 2002. ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ



Throat Singers, 2003, Silas Kayakjuak, Hall Beach and Ottawa (ivory and stone; 5 x 6.5 cm). ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ. 2003, ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ, ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ



Low Tide, 2003, Suvina Ashoona, Cape Dorset (etching and aquatint; 60.6 x 76 cm). ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ, 2003. ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ, ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ

Blodgett's inspired decision to confine the show to works from the years 2000 to 2005 results in a rich and rewarding concentration of bold new directions by younger artists

exhibit moved, sometime after 1970, to the Norwegian village of Masi and became known as the Masi Group. "What they had in common," writes Snarby, "was that they were certain of their Sámi identity, and they worked actively to promote Sámi culture." According to her, their materials and subjects are inspired in part by their own culture and origins.

This group's efforts led to the formation, in 1979, of the Sámi Artists' Union, which now has 70 members across Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Given this solidarity, it would be surprising if the works of some of these artists did not, to a degree, reflect their common history and the acculturative forces that altered their



destiny. How difficult would it have been for the organizers to interview these Sámi artists (some of them conveniently grouped in one village) in order to inform the visitor, a methodology widely practised today by curators who see the value in inviting artists to reflect on their own work, and one enthusiastically applauded by museumgoers?

Many of the acculturative experiences of the Sámi — the burning by missionaries of the drums that connected the Sámi to the spirit world, the destruction of sacred sculptures, the repression of the Sámi language, and assimilation campaigns that persisted into the middle of the 20th century — parallel the experience of the Canadian Inuit, yet no effort is made by the curators in the exhibition or in the catalogue to draw comparisons, though this is precisely what they tell us they set out to do.

The inspiration for the exhibition was the 2002 visit of Norway's royalty to Canada. Eventually, the concept was expanded to include Sámi artists from Sweden and Finland. The project was taken up by The Art Gallery of Hamilton

Gollegiisa, 2002, Inga Nordsletta Pedersen, Karasjok, Norway (wool; 100 x 125 cm).
 ԼԵՆԻՆ, 2002, ԱՆԵ ԲՆԳՐՆԵՐ, ԵՐԿՐԵՆ, ԵՐԿՐԵՆ

in order to, as stated in the catalogue's foreword, "identify cultural threads of connection that unite and distinguish the art of the Canadian Inuit and Scandinavian Sámi," that would "reflect on the shared social, historical and topographical conditions that influence the work of these artists."

Would that this worthy objective had been achieved. Though the exhibit was at least five years in the making, it lacks a solid premise and has the feeling of something hastily assembled and thinly researched. ❧

Dorothy Speak is a fiction writer and art reviewer.

A catalogue of *In the Shadow of the Midnight Sun: Sámi and Inuit Art 2000–2005* can be purchased at the following: ABC Art Books Canada: (877) 871-0606; Art Gallery of Hamilton Shop: (905) 527-6610; or National Gallery of Canada Bookstore: (613) 990-0962.



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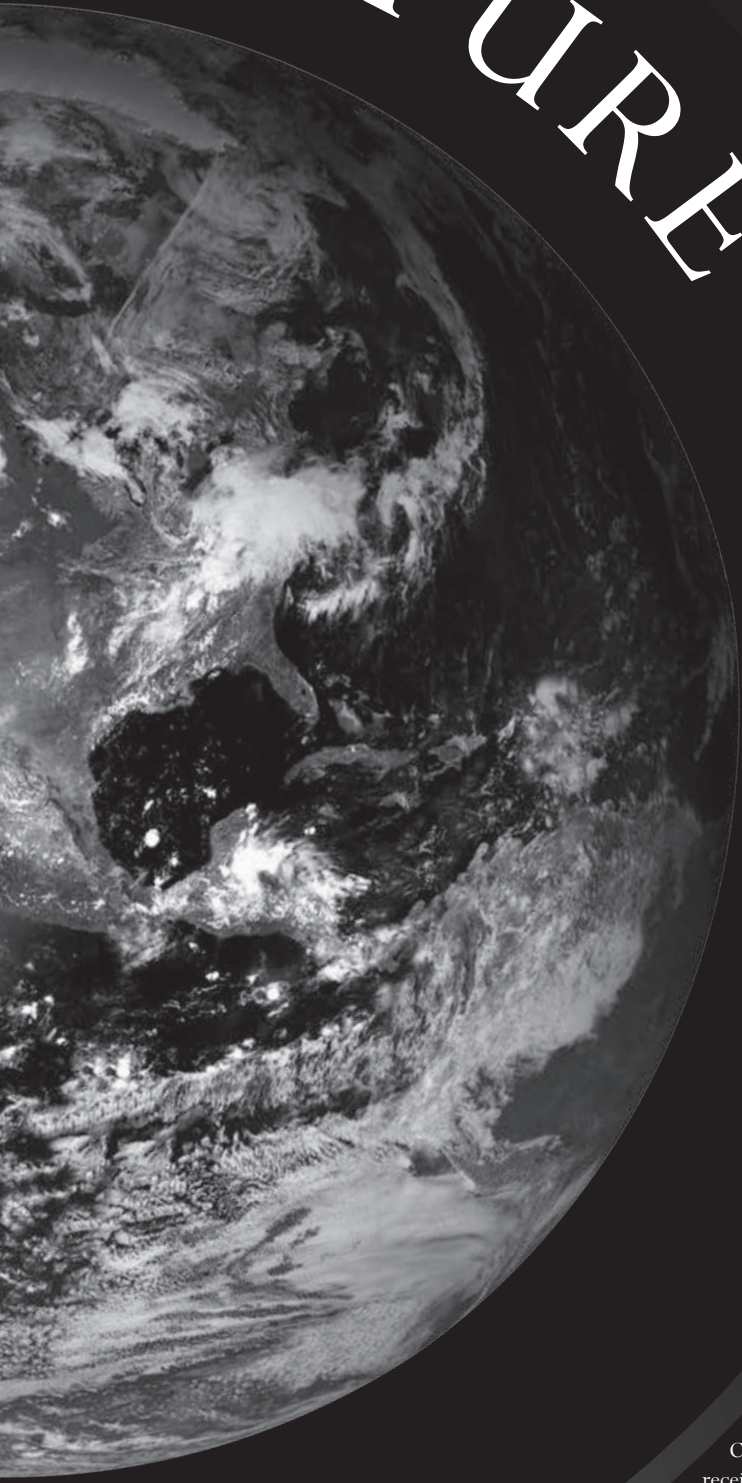
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Orchestre symphonique de Montréal Goes to Nunavik

BY JIM BELL

Photos by Jim Bell, *Nunatsiq News*

Residents of three Nunavik communities were treated to a musical feast earlier this fall, when the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM) teamed up with the Avataq Cultural Institute for a unique northern tour. The tour, from September 11 to 14, 2008, stopped in Kuujuaq, Inukjuak, and Kangiqsujuaq and saw the OSM share the spotlight with well-known Nunavik throatsingers Evie Mark and Taqralik Partridge. The pair performed an original work written for them by Alexina Louie, one of Canada’s most successful composers of modern concert music.

For Nunavik audiences, Louie’s new composition proved to be a highlight. “I integrate the instruments with the throatsingers so that they’re not a separate entity but really a part of a musical unit,” Louie said. She said the composition, commissioned by Kent Nagano, musical director of the OSM, comprises a series of short movements inspired by Inuit culture and the North. “Each one paints its own picture. One of them



is called *The River* and that’s one of their [throat] songs. The orchestra bubbles behind them so that I’m painting a picture of a musical river,” Louie said.

Louie first visited northern Canada in August 2000 with Adrienne Clarkson, then Governor General, on a tour of the Northwest Territories. After being moved by the beauty of the Western Arctic, Louie wanted to compose a northern-themed piece. “When I saw the Mackenzie River delta, I had tears in my eyes,” she said. When Nagano asked Louie to write a piece for the OSM’s upcoming Nunavik tour, she jumped at the opportunity.

Nunavik throat singers Evie Mark (left) and Taqralik Partridge performed at an event held May 25 at Montreal’s McCord Museum. This fall, they toured Kuujuaq, Inukjuak, and Kangiqsujuaq with Kent Nagano and seven members of Nagano’s Orchestre symphonique Montréal.

The composer, who now lives in Toronto, has created numerous pieces for orchestra and solo piano. She was named Canadian composer of the year in 1986 and won Juno awards in 1988 and 1998. In 2005, she was named an officer of the Order of Canada.

Her new piece is not the only acknowledgment of Inuit culture that Nunavik residents heard during the OSM tour. The musicians also adapted a piece by the Russian composer Igor Stravinsky, *Soldier’s Tale*, which includes spoken text originally written in French. An Inuk actor recited an Inuktitut version of the text prepared by Zebedee Nungak.

Nunavik audiences also heard an old favourite, *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. “One of the things that musicians all over the world share is the idea that music becomes much more meaningful when we share our music with others,” Nagano said. In a gesture of friendship at the tour announcement at Montreal’s McCord Museum last spring, Nagano and Avataq president Charlie Arngak exchanged a conductor’s baton and a traditional woven basket with a sealskin carving mounted on the handle.



This fall, Evie Mark (left), one of two Nunavik throat singers performed a composition written by composer Alexina Louie, with Charlie Arngak (centre), president of the Avataq Cultural Institute, and Kent Nagano, musical director of the Orchestre symphonique Montréal.



Kent Nagano (left) with composer Alexina Louie at a press event held May 25 at the McCord Museum in Montreal.

During the tour, the OSM musicians held workshops with students at local elementary and high schools.

Nagano, who was named musical director of the OSM in 2006, is a much-admired conductor who has worked with numerous orchestras and opera companies.

The article, which first appeared in Nunatsiaq News, has been reprinted with permission from Jim Bell, editor.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Annie Pootoogook Print Included in Touring Exhibition

Annie Pootoogook’s 2005 print, Pitseolak’s Glasses, has embarked on a two-year, seven-city tour of China, South Korea, the United States, and Canada as part of the One World International Printmaking Exhibition.

Heather Anderson of the National Gallery of Canada, Gail Tuttle of Newfoundland’s Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, and Laurie Dalton of Acadia University chose the 12 Canadian artists to appear in the show.

Similarly, Anderson noted the “particular, unique perspective” brought to the exhibition by Pootoogook’s depiction of her grandmother Pitseolak Ashoona’s distinctive black-rimmed glasses.

Supported partly by the Canadian Embassy in China and Heritage Canada, the One World exhibition received significant attention in Beijing as a feature of the 2008 Cultural Olympiad.

The appearance of Pootoogook’s work in the exhibition coincided with a heightened Chinese interest in Inuit artefacts that had been sparked by First Peoples of Canada: Masterworks from the Canadian Museum of Civilization, an exhibit that opened in Beijing last summer.

featured such items as a fur dance parka, a pair of ivory snow goggles, and an ivory and whale baleen whaler’s pail, will travel to Osaka, Japan, in 2009.

As IAQ went to press, One World International Printmaking Exhibition had moved on to Hanyang University in Seoul, South Korea.

Zacharias Kunuk Awarded Honorary Degree



Courtesy of Trent University.

Igloolik filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk receiving an honorary degree from Roberta Bondar, Chancellor of Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario.

Trent University has awarded an honorary degree to Igloolik filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk in recognition of his efforts to preserve and represent Inuit culture.

An officer of the Order of Canada and winner of the 2001 Camera d’Or at Cannes International Film Festival for his work on Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner, Kunuk has been capturing Inuit culture on film since 1981.

Inuit Art Rediscovered in Toronto...

A new Inuit art study centre at the recently redesigned Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) in Toronto aims to reveal the depth and origin of the gallery's extensive Inuit art collection. The study centre, which includes a glass-fronted storage area for approximately 500 sculptures, also allows visitors a behind-the-scenes look into the gallery's daily curatorial, conservation, and collections management work. In addition, computer terminals are available for public research. According to the curator of Canadian Art, Gerald McMaster, this kind of presentation mirrors a trend in a number of North American galleries and museums. Given its distinct variations in style by community, Inuit art presents an ideal subject for such a display.

Launched in November as part of the AGO's \$276 million redesign, the centre will also feature regular thematic displays, beginning with an exhibit on representations of the Sedna myth in Inuit sculpture.

In addition to the study centre, the AGO has reinstalled the Sarick Gallery, a dedicated Inuit art exhibition space capable of displaying up to 50 artworks. Although relatively small, McMaster said the gallery occupies a prime location on a "main thoroughfare" within the overall Canadian art gallery. The space will host new exhibits at least annually. "This will provide us with the opportunity to show new works, old works, and new ideas, and also give the public a better sense of the depth of our collection," McMaster said. The AGO's extensive holdings comprise over 5,000 pieces of Inuit sculpture, works on paper, and wall hangings.

A new installation, *Ancient Memory*, is located in the Canadian wing. A chronological display — from the ancient art of the Thule to Inuit works of the historic and post-contact era — it ends with the contemporary films of Zacharias Kunuk. McMaster says that Kunuk has been singled out for his

work in resurrecting Inuit culture and traditions that were suppressed or forgotten during the course of the 20th century.

Other highlights of the redesigned AGO include works by artists such as Manasie Akpaliapik, David Ruben Piqtoukun, and Suvina Ashoona in various Canadian and contemporary galleries, as well as a large, six-panel print by Kenojuak Ashevak and Harold Klunder. Annie Pootoogook's monumental 4 x 8 foot work, *Drawing My Grandmother's Glasses*, is also on display for the first time since its purchase by the gallery at the 2007 Toronto International Art Fair. "We're very well represented historically with Inuit works from the 1950s to the 1980s, but we need to be much more vigilant in collecting pieces from the last decade and a half," says McMaster.

... and in the U.K.

After decades on the margins of the British art world, Inuit artworks will soon once again have a permanent dedicated gallery space in the United Kingdom. Slated to open in 2010, the new gallery will form one wing of the Scott Polar Research Institute's (SPRI) redeveloped Polar Museum in Cambridge, England. A £200,000 (\$400,000 Cdn) grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Collecting Cultures program will fund the acquisition of an estimated 250 Inuit artworks created from 1950 to 1990. According to SPRI Curator of Art, Huw Lewis-Jones, approximately 80 per cent of those pieces will come from the Canadian Arctic.

A UK-based advisory committee will work with representatives from Dorset Fine Arts, the Museum of Inuit Art in Toronto,



Eskimo hunter, pre-1955, Kopeekolik, Puvirnituq, a sculpture in Scott Polar Research Institute's growing collection. ᐃᓃᓃ ᐱᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ, 1955, ᐃᓐᓂᓐ ᐱᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ

Courtesy of Scott Polar Research Institute

Cultivating Colour

Jutai Toonoo • Arnaqu Ashevak • Shuvina Ashoona
Siassie Kenneally • Papiara Tukiki • Kakulu Saggiaktok



Jutai Toonoo, oil stick on paper, 2008, 45 x 45"

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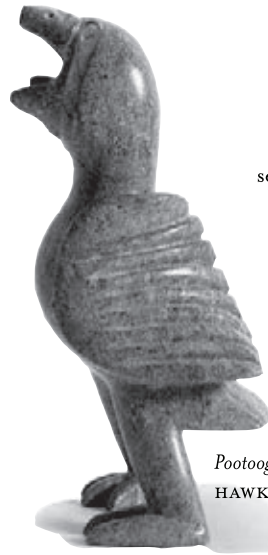
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Kananginak Pootoogook, "Swimming Bears", stencil, 19" x 30"

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Pootoogook Qjatsug,
HAWK, ca. 2001

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Disappointing and Overly Critical

I am writing to comment on the review of the book, *Arctic Spirit*, which focuses on the Albrecht Collection of the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona (summer 2008). I found the review disappointing and overly critical.

My wife and I have spent over 40 years in the passionate collection of Inuit art, which was completely influenced by our own personal taste. With this background, I would, therefore, like to present another perspective. I shall not take issue with the fact that the current collection and book represent mainly one man's taste, Dan Albrecht's. But what is collecting by an individual except about taste? And several people's perceptions of "richness and diversity" (Hessel and Albrecht) are, in my opinion, worthy of more thoughtful consideration in Jessica Newton's review — for the same reason.

The Heard Museum is home to what many consider to be the largest and finest collection of southwestern American art in the world. The

simple fact that it has embraced Inuit art as a legitimate and worthy component of North American Aboriginal art is, in itself, somewhat remarkable and should be widely applauded in the Inuit art world. I have spent a considerable time in frustrating arguments with American museums and curators debating this point, usually to no avail.

That a world-renowned museum in the United States has embraced Inuit art to this extent (and one must personally see the attention it receives in its exhibition space to fully appreciate this fact) should be cause for great celebration in the Inuit art world. This remarkable accomplishment would never have occurred without Albrecht's absolute devotion and his donation of a vast amount of time and personal income to this end. In my opinion, the assistance and advice of Ingo Hessel has been of considerable help as well. It is a seminal and disruptive occurrence that, I am convinced, will have far-reaching and positive effects on all of Inuit art.

Also, keep in mind that this all has occurred in a very short period of time, compared to museums in Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, etc., and must, therefore, be viewed as a work in progress.

I do not know whether Newton has visited the Heard Museum recently and compared it to other permanent museum exhibits or books describing them in the United States. If, indeed, she is focused on "the southern reception and perception" of Inuit art in any of its varied forms, I think her essay should have recognized this portrayal of Inuit art in a larger perspective, one that is, indeed, a most positive and salutatory event.

The book, the Albrecht collection, and the Heard Museum are deserving of far more comprehensive attention and congratulation by IAQ.

Lawrence L. Michaelis, M.D.
Carefree, Arizona

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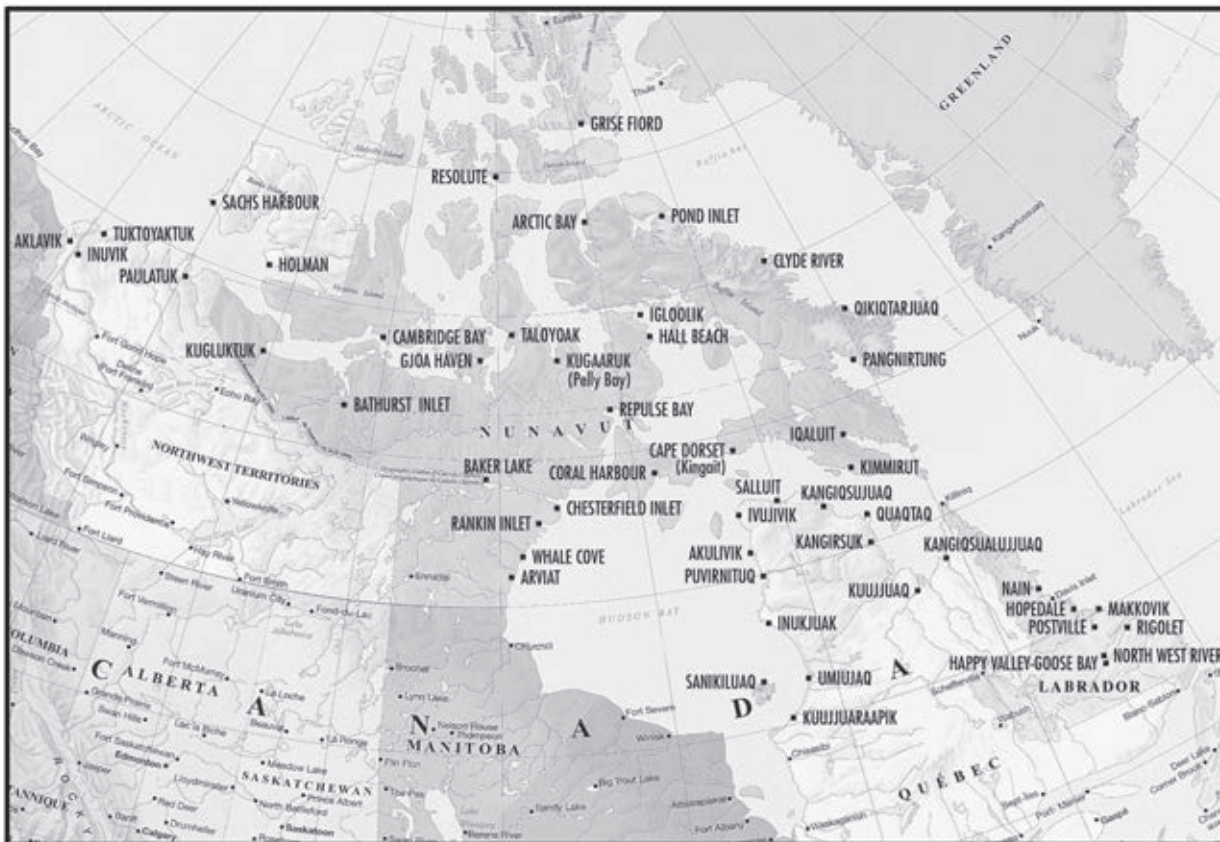


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