The exhibition of original drawings also celebrates the recent publication of Alego, a children’s book written and illustrated by Ningeokuluk Teevee. Copies of Alego will be available for sale.
Ningeokuluk Teevee

Small Sculptures by Great Artists

The exhibition of original drawings also celebrates the recent publication of Alego, a children’s book written and illustrated by Ningeokuluk Teevee. Copies of Alego will be available for sale.

Opening December 5, 2009

Feheley Fine Arts

14 Hazelton Avenue, Toronto, Canada M5R 2E2 • 416-323-1373 • www.feheleyfinearts.com
Embracing and Resisting Change

Stepping through the past several issues of IAQ in their various pre-printing manifestations has been like rerunning film — forwards and backwards. To mark the 50th anniversary of artmaking in Cape Dorset, we have been focussing on the history and accomplishments of what has been dubbed Canada’s foremost art community. It has been a backwards look, yes, but at the same time we have also heralded the springing forth of new artistic vision from the likes of Annie Pootoogook, Suvinai Ashoona, and Ningeokuluk Teevee.

In her eulogy to Paatsi Sula, who needs no introduction here, Patricia Feheley remarks that his death reminds us that “the early stages of contemporary Inuit art... are coming to an end.” Paatsi’s funeral in Cape Dorset coincided with another ending, the retirement of arts advisor/administrator Terry Ryan and his longtime associate Jimmy Manning. Ryan’s letter to the editor in this issue is, however, a timely reminder that endings are also beginnings: “For fear that my departure is misinterpreted,” he writes, “I am anxious to dispel any rumour that the studios are somehow imperilled by my absence. The operation will continue to move ahead, as it has done for all these years, meeting whatever obstacles present themselves with the same resolve we have always had.”

Fortuitously, the critical reception of new work by Inuit is keeping pace with an altered consciousness on the part of the artists, who strikes me, are more self-conscious and more articulate about what they are doing. It is human nature to resist change, but perspectives often change before we can even appreciate what has happened. It is almost old hat now to read that Pootoogok’s work held its own in New York and that Suvinai Ashoona’s work is attracting attention that was not designed and could not be expected. Fortuitously, the critical reception of new work by Inuit is keeping pace with an altered consciousness on the part of the artists, who strikes me, are more self-conscious and more articulate about what they are doing.

Reflecting on the work of Teevee and others represented in the full image is shown above.

Seven Artists, the spring 2009 folio from Cape Dorset, Robert Kardosh referred to “their conscious reshaping of traditional motifs,” which results in “highly unconventional expressions of contemporary sensibilities.”

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In her eulogy to Pauta Saliu, who needs no introduction here, Patricia Feheley remarks that his death reminds us that “the early stages of contemporary Inuit art... are coming to an end.” Paata’s funeral in Cape Dorset coincided with another ending, the retirement of arts advisor/administrator Terry Ryan and his longtime associate Jimmy Manning. Ryan’s letter to the editor in this issue is, however, a timely reminder that endings are also beginnings: “For fear that my departure is misinterpreted,” he writes, “I am anxious to dispel any notions that the studios are somehow imperilled by my absence. The operation will continue to move ahead, as it has done for all these years, meeting whatever obstacles present themselves with the same resolve we have always had.”

Fortuitously, the critical reception of new work by Inuit is keeping pace with an altered consciousness on the part of the artists, who it strikes me, are more self-conscious and more articulate about what they are doing.

It is human nature to resist change, but perspectives often change before we can even appreciate what has happened. It is almost old hat now to read that Pootoogook’s work held its own in New York and that Suvini Ashoona’s work is attracting attention of a rather different kind in Toronto and elsewhere. Fortuitously, the critical reception of new work by Inuit is keeping pace with an altered consciousness on the part of the artists who, it strikes me, are more self-conscious and more articulate about what they are doing. Reflecting on the work of Tevee and others represented in Nine Works by Seven Artists, the spring 2009 folio from Cape Dorset, Robert Krookoh referred to “their conscious reshaping of traditional motifs,” which results in “highly unconventional expressions of contemporary sensibilities.”

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Public Galleries

Arctic Spirit: 50th Anniversary of Cape Dorset's Kinngait Studios, an exhibition of prints released in 1959, as well as some sculpture from the same period. It also includes sculptures and drawings from such up-and-coming artists as Jutai Toonoo and Tim Pitsiulak, and photographic works of Cape Dorset by John Reeves. At the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario until April 2010. Shown: Composition (Star Gazing), 2007–08, Jutai Toonoo, Cape Dorset (oil stick on paper; 47 x 50 in).

Uuturautit: Cape Dorset Celebrates 50 Years of Printmaking, at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, Ontario, pairs the inaugural 1959 Cape Dorset prints and drawings with recent and innovative graphic work by contemporary artists in the community. Until January 17, 2010. Shown: Arctic Appetizer, 2009, Ningeokuluk Teevee, Cape Dorset (lithograph; 16.3 x 20 in).

Vancouver 2010: Sports and Culture features sculpture, graphics, and other artwork from the Cerry Inuit Collection, presented in the context of “sustainability and Indigenous participation” in Canada’s Olympic Winter Games. At the Swiss House of Sports, Bern, Switzerland until March 21, 2010. Shown: Winter Games, 1976, Pudlo Pudlat, Cape Dorset (stonecut and stencil; 24 x 34 in).

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Commercial Galleries


New Views on Old Traditions features sculpture, prints, and drawings by a new generation of Inuit artists, including Annie Pootoogook, Kayavak Massonne, Isaci Etidloie, and Jutai Toonoo. At The Guild Shop, Toronto, Ontario until December 17, 2009. Shown: scissors inspired by his travels throughout Nunavut in 2009. At

Jutai Toonoo. At Cape Dorset (lithograph; 15 x 22.2 in).

Windswept Muskox, 2008, Johnny Pootoogook, Cape Dorset (serpentine stone; 13.8 x 6.7 x 9.8 in).

Masterworks VIII features works by Inuit sculptors, including Morris Aknut, Matt Tunnillie, Tuk Nuna, Ruben Komangapik, Robert Kuptana, and others. At The Canadian Arctic Gallery, Basel, Switzerland, from November 22 to December 24, 2009. Shown: Drumdancer, 2006, Morris Aknut, Igloolik (serpentine stone; 13.8 x 6.7 x 9.8 in). Telephone: (416) 979-6660

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Inuit Print, curated by Eugene A. Jerome, at the Doris Museum Center, at Northwestern Michigan College, 1701 E Front Street, Traverse City, Michigan, until January 3, 2010. Telephone: (231) 965-1055

Inuit Dolls from the Esther Sarick Collection, curated by Ingo Hessel, at the Museum of Inuit Art, Queen’s Quay West, Toronto, Ontario, until January 31, 2010. Telephone: (416) 640-1571

Nunanguuq: In the Likeness of the Earth, curated by Anna Stanisz, at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, until January 17, 2010. Telephone: (905) 893-1121

Small Is Beautiful: Small-Scale and Miniature Inuit Art, curated by Ingo Hessel, at the Museum of Inuit Art, Queen’s Quay West, Toronto, Ontario, until January 15, 2010. Telephone: (416) 640-1571

Miniatures and Masterworks, curated by Gerald McIlrath, at the Art Gallery of Ontario, 317 Dundas Street West, Toronto, Ontario, until April 2010. Telephone: (416) 979-6660

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Cape Dorset’s Inukjuak Studios, curated by Gerald McIlrath, at the Art Gallery of Ontario, 317 Dundas Street West, Toronto, Ontario, until April 2010. Telephone: (416) 979-6660

50 Years of Printmaking, co-curated by Christine Lakoide and Leslee Bood Ryan, at the National Gallery of Canada, 380 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, until January 17, 2010. Telephone: (613) 993-1985


TRAFFLING EXHIBITIONS


The Inuit Dolls of the Kivalliq, curated by Darrin Martin, at the Museum of Inuit Art, Toronto Harbourfront, 207 Queen’s Quay West, Toronto, Ontario, until December 31, 2009. Telephone: (416) 640-1571

PERMANENT EXHIBITIONS

Chichewa Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto)

Chedoke Hospital of Hamilton Health Sciences (Hamilton)

Macdonald Stewart Art Centre (Guelph)

McMichael Canadian Art Collection (Kleinburg)

Museum of Inuit Art (Toronto)

National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa)

Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto)

Toronto-Dominion Gallery of Inuit Art (Toronto)

Quebec

Canadian Guild of Crafts (Montreal)

Canadian Museum of Civilization (Gatineau)

McGill Museum of Canadian History (Montreal)

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (Montreal)

Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (Quebec City)

Manitoba

Crafts Museum, Crafts Guild of Manitoba (Winnipeg)

Esikimo Museum (Churchill)

Winipeg Art Gallery (Winnipeg)

Nunavut

Pingualuit National Park Visitor’s Centre (Kangiqsualujjuaq)

Nunaatut Nunatta Sunikkutaangit Museum (Iqaluit)

United States

Alaska Museum of History and Art (Anchorage, Alaska)

Denoqs Museum Center (Traverse City, Michigan)
New Views on Old Traditions features sculpture, prints, and drawings by a new generation of Inuit artists, including Annie Pootoogook, Kavalavaq Mannomee, Isaci Etidloie, and Jutai Tunnillie. At The Guild Shop, Toronto, Ontario until December 17, 2009. Shown: Drumdancer, 2006, Annie Pootoogook, Cape Dorset (lithograph; 15 x 22.2 in). Phone: (416) 640-1571

Masterworks VIII features works by Inuit sculptors, including Morris Akrun, Matt Tunnillie, Tuk Nuna, Ruben Komangapik, Robert Kuptana, and others. At the Canadian Arctic Gallery, Basel, Switzerland, from November 22 to December 24, 2009. Shown: Drumdancer, 2006, Morris Akrun, Igloolik (serpentine stone; 13.8 x 6.7 x 9.8 in). Phone: (416) 640-1571

Form and Vision, a two-gallery exhibition juxtaposing stone sculpture by Pifealik Niviaqsi, Johnny Pootoogook, Ashvak Tunillie, Kelly Qimirpik, and others, with Jamie Jarinde’s landscapes inspired by his travels throughout Nunavut in 2009. At The Inuit Gallery and the Jonathon Bancroft-Snell Gallery in London, Ontario, from November 19 to December 31, 2009. Phone: (416) 640-1571


Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Inuit Print. Curated by Eugene A. Jerums, at the Demmos Museum Center, at Northwestern Michigan College, 1701 E Front Street, Traverse City, Michigan, until January 3, 2010. Phone: (231) 995-1055

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Nunavnguaq: In the Likeness of the Earth, curated by Anna Stanisz, at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 10385 Islington Avenue, Kleinburg, Ontario, until January 17, 2010. Phone: (905) 893-1121

Small is Beautiful: Small-Scale and Miniature Inuit Art, curated by Ingo Hessel, at the Museum of Inuit Art, Queen’s Quay West, Toronto, Ontario, until January 15, 2010. Phone: (416) 640-1571

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Inuit Art Quarterly invites artists to submit proposals for the following Call for Artists:

Form and Vision: A landscape and figurative exhibition, curated by Jamie Jardine, with Jamie Jardine.

New Views on Old Traditions: A new generation of Inuit artists, curated by Jamie Jardine.

Masterworks VIII: An expanded exhibition of Masterworks, curated by Ingo Hessel.

Call for Artists: Form and Vision

Call for Artists: New Views on Old Traditions

Call for Artists: Masterworks VIII

Deadline for all submissions is September 1, 2010. Further information can be obtained by writing to:

The Inuit Art Quarterly
10365 Islington Avenue, Kleinburg, Ontario L9L 1A3
Telephone: (416) 640-1571
Telephone: (905) 893-1121
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THE INUIT ART QUARTERLY
Vol. 24, No. 4 Winter 2009
The Inuit Art Quarterly is published biannually by the National Museum of Ethnology, Expo Park, Osaka, Japan. Telephone: 81-6-6876-2151

PERMANENT EXHIBITIONS

Canada

The Inuit Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto)
Creaton Hospitat of Hamilton Health Sciences (Hamilton)
MacDonald Stewart Art Centre (Guelph)
McMichael Canadian Art Collection (Kleinburg)
Museum of Inuit Art (Toronto)
National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa)
Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto)
Toronto-Dominion Gallery of Inuit Art (Toronto)

Quebec

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

Manitoba

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

Nunavik

Pingualuit National Park Visitor’s Centre (Kangiqsualujjuaq)
Nanavut
Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum (Iqaluit)

United States

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

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TRADE AND TRAVEL EXHIBITIONS


Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Inuit Print. Curated by Eugene A. Jermans, at the Demmos Museum Center, at Northwestern Michigan College, 1701 E Front Street, Traverse City, Michigan, until January 3, 2010. Phone: (231) 995-1055

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BY LINDA GRUSSANI

An Interview with Heather Igloliorte

Curating an Exhibition about

INUIT RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS:

This year marked both the tenth anniversary of the formation of Nunavut, and the first anniversary of Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools. In acknowledgement of these key events, the Legacy of Hope Foundation, based in Ottawa, mounted an exhibition entitled: “We were so far away…”: The Inuit Experience of Residential Schools. Organized and curated by Heather Igloliorte, it profiles the recollections of several Inuit residential school survivors, and is illustrated with personal photographs and objects, along with historical images gathered from archives across Canada. Shown from January 29 to September 7, 2009 at the Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), a duplicate version of the exhibition will tour many communities across the North starting in November. IAQ invited Linda Grussani, Curatorial Assistant of Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Canada, to speak with Igloliorte, on August 14, 2009, about this exhibition, her interest in Inuit art, her plans, and her views on issues in the field.

Linda Grussani: Heather, to begin, please tell me about yourself and how you became involved in curatorial practice.

Heather Igloliorte: I am Labradoriniut on my father’s side and grew up in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. I studied painting and art history at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax before moving to Ottawa to complete a Masters degree in art history at Carleton University. I am now a doctoral candidate there, researching Inuit art and cultural history. When I began my studies at Carleton, I was very fortunate to be offered a number of opportunities that fostered my interest in pursuing a career as a curator and art historian. The first was a year-long internship as a curatorial assistant at the Canadian Museum of Civilization; the second was an invitation to join the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective, and the third was the opportunity to work at the Carleton University Art Gallery as the 2005–06 Curator of Inuit Art. It was inspiring to work in these institutions, to be exposed to contemporary and historic Inuit art collections, and to meet other people working in the field of Native North American art.

LG: Speaking of opportunities, you recently curated the exhibition “We were so far away…”: The Inuit Experience of Residential Schools. Can you tell me how you became involved in this project?

HI: The project was a follow-up to the exceptional exhibition curated by Iroquois artist Jeff Thomas entitled Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of Residential Schools, which has been on tour since 2002. Created and circulated by the Legacy of Hope Foundation, whose mandate is to promote awareness and understanding about the residential school system in Canada, that exhibition was intended to cover the experiences of all residential school survivors. However, several comments received by the foundation pointed out that, for Inuit, the experience of residential schools was very different from that of other Aboriginal peoples. As a result, the foundation invited me, as an Inuit curator, to create a new project addressing the Inuit perspective.

LG: One of the objectives behind Where are the Children? was self-empowerment, in the hope that, in some way, the historical photographs in the exhibition could contribute to the healing process for those who attended residential schools, as well...
Linda Grussani:

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Heather Igloliorte:

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One of the objectives behind Where are the Children? was self-empowerment, in the hope that, in some way, the historical photographs in the exhibition could contribute to the healing process for those who attended residential schools, as well as an invitation to join the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective, and the third was the opportunity to work at the Carleton University Art Gallery as the 2005–06 Curator of Inuit Art. It was inspiring to work in these institutions, to be exposed to contemporary and historic Inuit art collections, and to meet other people working in the field of Native North American art.

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As a foundation project, healing is at the forefront, but I also wanted to broach this sensitive issue from a thoroughly Inuit perspective…

That included trying to incorporate Inuit values and traditional practices

HI: As a foundation project, healing is at the forefront, but I also wanted to broach this sensitive issue from a thoroughly Inuit perspective, and to honour and demonstrate respect for the Inuit people affected by residential schools. That included trying to incorporate Inuit values and traditional practices into the exhibition.

LG: How did you go about this?

HI: We invited two Inuit survivors from each of the four Inuit geograph- ical regions — the Inuvialuit settlement region, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut — to Ottawa to partici- pate in filmed interviews in which they recounted the impact that resi- dential schools had on their lives before, during, and after their time as students. Individually, they described a number of localized and distinct circumstances, as they attended schools in different times, in different provinces, and experienced varying degrees of abuse, trauma, and long-term negative impact. Yet, read together, several common themes emerged that resonated with the sto- ries of many residential school sur- vivors, providing us with invaluable source material around which to build the exhibition. Their stories are featured prominently throughout the exhibition in print and film, making it possible to both read and hear the personal recollections of each Inuk.

LG: Can you tell me a little about the history of the Inuit residential schools system?

HI: In brief, the purpose of resi- dential schools was to assimilate Native peoples into the dominant society by removing children from their families and communities and placing them in institutions where they were taught Western ideologies and prohibited from speaking their language or practicing their culture. These federally funded, church-run schools had been operating since the 1830s, but there weren’t many northern schools until 1955. What makes the Inuit situation unique and deserving of separate consideration is that, for Inuit, the residential school system was but one facet of massive and rapid cultural changes during the first half of the 20th century, which included the settlement of communities, the rapidly developing economy, assimilation, andrés of the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit — the Inuit creation narrative — into your approach?

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HI: We invited two Inuit survivors from each of the four Inuit geograph- ical regions — the Inuvialuit settlement region, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut — to Ottawa to partici- pate in filmed interviews in which they recounted the impact that resi- dential schools had on their lives before, during, and after their time as students. Individually, they described a number of localized and distinct circumstances, as they attended schools in different times, in different provinces, and experienced varying degrees of abuse, trauma, and long-term negative impact. Yet, read together, several common themes emerged that resonated with the sto- ries of many residential school sur- vivors, providing us with invaluable source material around which to build the exhibition. Their stories are featured prominently throughout the exhibition in print and film, making it possible to both read and hear the personal recollections of each Inuk.

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HI: As a foundation project, healing is at the forefront, but I also wanted to broach this sensitive issue from a thoroughly Inuit perspective... That included trying to incorporate Inuit values and traditional practices into the exhibition.

LG: How do you go about this?

HI: We invited two Inuit survivors from each of the four Inuit geographic regions — the Inuvialuit settlement region, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut — to Ottawa to participate in filmed interviews in which they recounted the impact that residential schools had had on their lives before, during, and after their time as students. Individually, they described a number of localized and distinct circumstances, as they attended schools in different times, in different provinces, and experienced varying degrees of abuse, trauma, and long-term negative impact. Yet, read together, several common themes emerged: the impact that residential schools had had on their lives before, during, and after their time as students, and the emotional and psychological impact on their families and communities. We thought it was an apt title for an exhibition about the Inuit experience of residential schooling.

LG: Do you feel you tell me a little about the history of the Inuit residential school system?

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LG: Is this why the exhibition is entitled “We were so far away…”?

HI: Yes. The title of the exhibition was taken from my interview with Marius Tungilik, who described his experiences as a former student of Chesterfield Inlet’s Sir Joseph Tanner Federal Day School, which he attended between 1963 and 1969. He meant that Inuit were not just far away from their geographic homes when at school, but also separated spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically from their families and communities. We thought it was an apt title for an exhibition about returning these stories full circle, coming back to a holistic place of health and reconciliation.

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LG: In getting these stories out there, I understand the exhibition will travel to the North. What is the goal of having the exhibition go to northern communities?

HI: This exhibition is intended primarily for an Inuit audience. The greatest challenge was, therefore, to represent the survivors’ painful and often explicit recollections without precipitating trauma or distress in the viewers, many of whom would be residential school survivors themselves. This risk is exacerbated in many northern communities by a lack of access to professional counseling services to deal with the impact of the abuses they endured and a lack of resources or expertise to deal with the intergenerational impact that today affects up to three living generations of Inuit in the North.

LG: How has being a curator of Inuit descent influenced your approach to this exhibition? What has working on this project meant to you as a curator of Inuit art, and how does Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit fit do First Nations and Métis Qaujimajatuqangit?

HI: I thought with the Inuit, who don’t have the same long history of colonial photography as do First Nations and Métis, placing primary importance on the integration of Inuit philosophies and epistemologies into the exhibition, including the oral traditions — a cornerstone of our culture for thousands of years.

LG: How did you go about this?

HI: We invited two Inuit survivors from each of the four Inuit geographic regions — the Inuvialuit settlement region, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut — to Ottawa to participate in filmed interviews in which they recounted the impact that residential schools had had on their lives before, during, and after their time as students. Individually, they described a number of localized and distinct circumstances, as they attended schools in different times, in different provinces, and experienced varying degrees of abuse, trauma, and long-term negative impact. Yet, read together, several common themes emerged: the impact that residential schools had had on their lives before, during, and after their time as students, and the emotional and psychological impact on their families and communities. We thought it was an apt title for an exhibition about the Inuit experience of residential schooling.

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LG: From my own experience as a curator, I understand why it is so important for this exhibition to travel, and I identify with the challenges involved in disseminating a project of this magnitude and scale. What were some of the logistical issues you encountered in organizing an exhibition that can travel and be relevant to various audiences?

HI: There were several major technical issues that we had to address, everything from how we would crate and ship the exhibition through the North on tiny planes, to what kinds of materials would withstand a year or more of travel across the Arctic. But one of our biggest issues was how best to respectfully incorporate the many dialects of Inuitut used across the country into the exhibitions. After much deliberation and consultation, we chose to incorporate Inuitut as a language by printing everything in English, Inuktitut Syllabics, and French, assuming that the majority of visitors would be literate in one of the languages. Whenever the text was about an individual or specific region, however, we translated it into the most commonly written form in that region.

The other major challenge has been finding venues that can accommodate an exhibition. We knew there weren’t many formal gallery spaces across the North, which is why we made the exhibition so flexible and adaptable to a number of venues — community centres, schools, gymnasia — by using a variety of lightweight durable materials, easy installation mechanisms and sturdy packaging. The exhibition may look different at a community feast than it does in a gallery, but that doesn’t distract from the meaning; it enlivens it.

LG: In retrospect, is there anything that you would have wanted to add, but were unable to do so because of timeloggistical constraints?

HI: The comments left in the guest books at the LAC have been overwhelmingly positive and supportive, but I did have one person comment that, from his perspective (he was a Caucasian Canadian), he wished a section of the video component had been longer, so that he could understand more about the intergenerational impacts on the families and communities of Inuit residential school survivors. I’ve reflected on this for some time, and I now think that, if I were to do it again, I would have also brought in the voices of the children of survivors. While several of our participants were, themselves, the children of former residential school students, none of the people I interviewed were from the youngest members of the Inuit population, and I think it would be of great value to young people to hear their peers discuss their experiences as the recipients of the intergenerational impacts of the residential school system.

LG: What are your personal expectations for this project?

HI: I will consider this exhibition region to be a success if it facilitates and furthers the dialogue on residential schools in Canada. I think the exhibition is particularly timely, since it comes on the heels of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement, the federal apology, and the re-visionsing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I hope the exhibition fosters greater awareness and contributes to the national conversation, but, most importantly, that people in the North will go and see it and, hopefully, begin the conversation in their own homes and communities as well.

LG: Thank you for speaking with me about yourself and this very exciting project. Where can people learn more about the exhibition and the Inuit experience of residential schools in Canada?

HI: I encourage everyone to visit the exhibition and to pick up a free copy of the catalogue, which contains detailed historical information, all eight of the survivors’ complete transcripts, timelines, and the complete catalogue of photos. You can also visit www.legacyofhope.ca for more information on the Canadian residential school experience.

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Noise Ghost: Suvinai Ashoona and Shary Boyle

CURATED BY NANCY CAMPBELL

Was at the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Hart House, University of Toronto May 28 to August 23, 2009

Noise Ghost featured ten works on paper by Suvinai Ashoona, including an excerpt from a documentary (in post-production at the time of the exhibition) by Marcia Connolly and nine works on paper and two overhead projector installations by Shary Boyle.

Although her drawings reference the traditional Inuit style — using media like pencil crayon and fineliner — her distinct sensibility is unique in the North. Her work frequently depicts nature and landscape, but it has an unsettling quality, an otherworldliness. In this respect, Ashoona’s drawings remind me of the work of the Toronto artist Shary Boyle.

One of the challenges and pleasures of curating is making associations that provoke a new understanding of the work included in an exhibition. In my experience, the juxtaposition of work by different artists can redirect preconceived ideas about one artist or another. My recent investigations of the art of the Canadian Inuit have not only led me to see the work of living Inuit artists in a new context, but have also allowed me to reconceptualize some of the contemporary art I encounter in the South. This fresh perspective, especially as it applies to drawing, has reaped surprising results.

Suvinai Ashoona is an Inuit artist who lives in Cape Dorset. Born in 1961, she comes from a family of artists; her parents are Kiawak and Sorosiloota Ashoona, and her grandmother was Pitseolak Ashoona.

Suvinai’s drawings are a testament to the enduring strength of the Inuit style. Her use of traditional media, such as pencil crayon and fineliner, is masterful and evocative. The simplicity of her approach belies a profound understanding of the subjects she explores.

Shary Boyle, on the other hand, is a Toronto-based artist whose work often explores themes of identity and belonging. Her installations and drawings are a departure from the traditional Inuit style, yet they complement Ashoona’s work in interesting ways. Boyle’s use of light and space in her installations is particularly striking.

The juxtaposition of Ashoona’s drawings with Boyle’s installations in Noise Ghost was intentional. I wanted to create a dialogue between the two artists, highlighting their shared concerns while also emphasizing their unique approaches.

In the end, the exhibition was a celebration of the diversity and richness of contemporary Inuit art. It brought together works by living artists in a new context, allowing viewers to see these works in a fresh light. I hope that Noise Ghost will inspire others to explore the complex and fascinating world of contemporary Inuit art.
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Inuit art quarterly

Ashoona’s Untitled (Circle) has a similar composition. In this drawing, a group of figures, hand-in-hand, forms a ring around a central image. The human figures are primarily Inuit in traditional and contemporary dress, but alongside them is a winged dragon and the planet earth (with arms and hands) completely encircling the circle. In the centre of the circle is a brown bear, overlaid by a polar bear, overlaid by a seal, and finally a fish. This, too, can be read as a vignette from the artist’s imagination, perhaps a metaphor of nature. It is unexpected, and delightful, to recognize the symmetry in these two spectacular drawings by two seemingly dissimilar artists.

The deep connection between the sensibilities of these two women, each working in the isolation of their imagination, is intensely compelling.

Ashoona’s sources are her imagination, her environment, infused with a fascination with horror films, comic books, and television. Her drawings, like the projections and drawings of Shary Boyle, recall and articulate the anxieties of life. Boyle’s interest in exploring Inuit art, sculptor, painter, and filmmaker. Unlike Ashoona, Boyle does not come from a family of artists. Born in 1972, she was raised in Scarborough and educated at the Ontario College of Art and Design. She is very much an urban dweller, active in the contemporary art scenes as a performance artist, sculptor, painter, and filmmaker.

In her work, she uses deeply personal, psychologically moving imagery that recalls the complex and sometimes disquieting fantasy world of childhood. Boyle’s drawings have the same otherworldly quality I see in Ashoona’s work, and I am delighted to discover that she has a fascination with, and respect for, Inuit drawing.

Boyle’s interest in exploring Inuit themes is most evident in her whimsical and dynamic projection drawings that employ the obsolete overhead projector. In the work entitled Skirmish at Bloody Point, we see a delicately layered narrative, both real and imagined, that subtly reveals the struggles of Indigenous peoples to establish land claims. Based on the 1576 battle between the British (led by Martin Frobisher) and the Inuit that took place on Baffin Island, the drawings are an imaginative recreation of the scene. The Inuit hunters’ bows and arrows were no match for British muskets. Selecting an Inuit man, woman, and child, the English took them back to England, where they were studied as anthropological specimens and painted by the English watercolourist John White. His illustrations of the captives can still be seen in museums. In Boyle’s projection, the British solders are shown forcing the Inuit over a cliff.

On the surface, this subject matter appears to be the obvious link for the pairing of the two artists, but the synchronicity in their work is more subtly layered. Ashoona’s drawings are both personal and dreamlike, evoking altered states of mind and shifting perceptions. Her work ranges from closely observed naturalistic scenes of her arctic home to strange, monstrous, and fantastical visions. These vivid and often inexplicable images are disturbing depictions of man-eating beasts and monsters, as well as fantastical dark landscapes. Ashoona’s sources are her imagination and her environment, infused with a fascination with horror films, comic books, and television. Her drawings, like the projections and drawings of Shary Boyle, recall and articulate the anxieties of life.

Boyle’s Scotch Bonnet, 2007, is an ink and gouache drawing depicting a ring of seashells surrounding a central lake and moon. In the lake is what appears to be the Loch Ness monster and, in the bottom left corner, a young girl is attempting to bite or eat the snake-like creature with her bloody jaws. The drawing’s colours are spectacular: there are vibrant pinks and oranges in the shells, blues in the water, and a bright white and green moon. It appears, in part, because of its circular composition, like an expressive, disquieting vignette drawn from the artist’s imagination.

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NOTE

1 The title of the exhibition was taken from “Inuit Noise Ghost: 100% All-Canadian Halloween Monsters” by William Casselman. (2006, www.bccasselman.com) (accessed on 9 July 2009): “The Noise Ghost is an Inuit poltergeist, an arctic auditory phenomenon of incorporeal guise. This unseen, unbounded ghost noise may announce his haunting visitation by curling around a northern house on a cold quiet night and emitting a small, high-pitched hissing... The Noise Ghost circles the igloo and, always the constrictor, wraps the fragile ice in singing folds of death. The hiss susurrates, skitters about the room, seeping on the face of a screaming terrified child. Its high buzz mingles with gasping whispers and low, obscene, anticipatory garglings as of a meat-lusting animal in full slobber. Sometimes you can see the raw noise itself, curling unpleasantly in the cold air.”
scary dreams, aWhooona’s Untitled (Circle) has a similar composition. In this drawing, a group of figures, hand-in-hand, forms a ring around a central image. The human figures are primarily Inuit in traditional and contemporary dress, but alongside them a winged dragon and the planet earth (with arms and hands) completely encircle. In the centre of the circle is a brown bear, overlaid by a polar bear, overlaid by a seal, and finally a char. This, too, can be read as a vignette from the artist’s imagination, perhaps a metaphor of nature. It is unexpected, and delightful, to recognize the symmetry in these two spectacular drawings by two seemingly dissimilar artists.

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The narrative quality of drawing makes the conversation possible, but it is the expansion of pre-existing perceptions about Indigenous art that makes this pairing provocative. Although their work emerges from very different contexts and places, both Savina Ashoona and Shary Boyle explore subjects that unsettle and haunt us. After we leave the gallery, their drawings linger in our minds, conjuring up vivid images and uncanny, disturbing dreams.
In 1999, Napatchie Pootoogook said her niece, Shuvinai Ashoona, "doesn’t seem to draw like anyone else. I have never seen anyone draw like that before" (Blodgett 1999:78). Viewed against the backdrop of Kinngait artmaking over the last half-century, Ashoona’s work is uniquely protean, marked by a constant shift between, and intermingling of, past and present, actual and imagined, and interior and external worlds. Shuvinai Ashoona Drawings, the artist’s first solo exhibition in a public gallery, was comprised of 28 drawings that surveyed her work since 1994.

Part of what makes Ashoona’s drawings so absorbing is their intensity and compelling otherworldliness. By turns whimsical and opaque, they often resist straightforward interpretation. Jean Blodgett once asked the artist where the stairways in drawings such as Tent, Stairs and Cross (1997–98) led, to which she replied, “to another Cape Dorset and then another Cape Dorset and then another Cape Dorset” (ibid., 87).

Ashoona’s earliest drawings are subtle landscapes such as Low Tide (1994) and Landscape with Cross (1996), rendered with delicate, exacting touches of black felt-tip pen to ivory paper. They rarely depict the land in winter and never include the sun, moon, or shadows to denote the time of day (ibid.). Even when such silent, still images are inspired by particular places, they feel universal, even nostalgic, and seem born of the fundamental human desire for order and harmony.

In the late 1990s, Ashoona’s landscapes underwent a marked transformation, becoming dark, obsessive, and decidedly fantastical. Strange, often curvilinear shapes modelled with densely crosshatched strokes arise unexpectedly from rugged terrain; the forms sometimes appear menacingly claw-like. The artist has expressed her desire to interpret the “brain” of the land (Boyd 1999:28); these extraordinary works, in which human endeavour is nowhere evident, perhaps hint at the unseen and unpredictable forces she imagines roiling just below its surface.

Ashoona was making a collaborative landscape drawing with Saskatchewan artist John Noestheden in 2008, she said its terrain recalled the place where her family used to camp and fish in the summer (Tousley 2008). In Composition (Tent Surrounded by Rocks) (2004–05), one of many such depictions of summer tents anchored in rock-strewn settings, she adopts an aerial view and schematic style of line drawing that reduces the landscape to a dense, flat pattern. Wayne Baerwaldt has observed that the “studied perspectives” of such works may relate more to the optics of television than to the practice of observational drawing (2008). But, as we see in Tools inside a Tent and Composition (Kinngait Hotel), both from 2006-07, it is Ashoona’s disinclination to adhere explicitly to either or, indeed, one approach that gives her work its distinct edge.

Shuvinai Ashoona

Drawings

CURATED BY SANDRA DYCK

Was at the Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa, Ontario
April 27 to June 14, 2009
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"Drawing from life" is a fluid concept in Ashoona's work; her attention to the Nascoie, the Hudson's Bay Company supply ship, is a case in point. The ship's 1947 sinking looms large in Kinngait lore and, as Dorothy Eber wrote, came to mark the symbolic end of the "old way of life" for artists like Pitseolak Ashoona, Suvinai's grandmother (1980:16). Although Suvinai was born 14 years after the ship went down, it is a frequent subject in her work; she sometimes portrays it as a single, iconic object dominating the picture plane or as part of a seascape such as Composition (Camp Scene, Nascoie Approaching Harbour) (2003–04).

Like Napatchie Pootoogook, whose 1978 drawing inscribed "Suvinai from long long ago seeing a policeman for the first time" was made into a print entitled The First Policeman I Saw (Blodgett 1991:44), Ashoona conjures up momentous events from her community's past and imagines them in a personal, utopic present. Jean Fisher has written of the great chasm separating the object of a drawing from the notations that constitute it: drawings belong to the realm of invention, not mimicry; they inscribe rather than describe (2003:217). Ashoona's captivating Pictures of My Drawings (2007) reads like a compendium of her favoured subjects: the Nascoie, tools, architecture, Kinngait streetscapes, and eggs. Four egg drawings are superimposed over a close-cropped, wintry view of the printmaking studio in Egg Themes (2006–07), a playful, vividly coloured composition that demonstrates her affinity for conflating invention, not mimesis; they inscribe impulses, or desires: Ashoona calls them "ghost noise." As Bryson observes (2003:156–57), such works resist aesthetic convention and social conditioning — and, I would add, market pressures. What they afford us are revelatory points of contact between the artist's interior and exterior worlds. The raw immediacy of drawings makes those encounters particularly powerful.

Norma D'Rosario

For vessels that rest in the icy waters, for generations the ship’s presence is a symbol of the end of the "old way of life," of change, and yet also of the constancy of the past. The old ways of life are still present in our community, in the stories we tell, the music we sing, and the objects we make. For some young people, the nascoie serves as a symbol of a time before their time, and a time that is not forgotten. This is an important part of the narrative of the nascoie, and it is a narrative that is still being told.

Sandra D'Rosario

While Ashoona's work is often about the present, her work also reflects the past. She often includes symbols of the past in her work, such as the Nascoie, which was a supply ship that was used by the Hudson's Bay Company. The Nascoie was a symbol of the end of the "old way of life," and it is still a symbol of the past for many people in the community. Ashoona's work is a reflection of both the present and the past, and it is an important part of the narrative of the community.

Sandra D'Rosario

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Erica D’Rosario

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“Drawing from life” is a fluid concept in Ashoona’s work; her attention to the Nascopie, the Hudson’s Bay Company supply ship, is a case in point. The ship’s 1947 sinking looms large in Kinngait lore and, as Dorothy Eber wrote, came to mark the symbolic end of the “old way of life” (1980:16). Suvinai’s grandmother (2003:156–57), such works resist aesthetic convention and social conditioning — and, I would add, market pressures. What they afford us are revelatory points of contact between the artist’s interior and exterior worlds. The raw immediacy of drawings makes those encounters particularly powerful.

Sandra Dyck is the curator at the Carleton University Art Gallery in Ottawa, Ontario.

NOTE
1 Suvinai is also often spelled Shuvanai, as in the title of the exhibition at Carleton University. While we have not altered the title, we have altered the spelling throughout the text in order to conform to IAQ practice.
2 Email from Norman Vorano to the author, 22 October 2008.

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Ningeokuluk Teevee:

FOCUS on IAQ Portfolio

Ningeokuluk Teevee: “A VERY FINE GRAPHIC SENSIBILITY”

ROOTS Born May 27, 1963 in Cape Dorset, Ningeokuluk Teevee is the daughter of Joanasie (deceased) and Kanajuk Solomonie. Her husband, Simeonie Teevee, is a musician.

STARTED DRAWING as a teenager. “I had nothing to do, so I stole paper and pencils from my dad and drew.” While working for the school in Cape Dorset in the early 1990s, a colleague asked her to illustrate a story for a children’s book. Entitled, Have You Ever Imagined?, the story is about a little girl who is just beginning to learn about the world. “She swallows a seed and believes that it will start growing inside her. Or she wishes she could turn off the sun when it is too warm, but if she does, it will be too dark.” After the book was published by the Baffin Divisional Board of Education, Teevee heard a radio interview with Jimmy Manning, studio manager of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative, who was encouraging people to come to the co-op and draw. “At first, I wasn’t very good, but I continued to practice,” she says.

SHE FIRST CAME TO ATTENTION five or seven years ago, when she took some drawings to Jimmy Manning. Leslie Boyd Ryan, Director of Dorset Fine Arts in Toronto, recalls: “He was intrigued and encouraged her to do more.” Since 2004, Teevee’s prints have been featured in five of Cape Dorset’s annual print collections. “I think the reason her work has become visible so fast is that she has a very fine graphic sensibility — almost like Kenojuak Ashevak. She really understands the page she is working on, she understands how to place elements on it in a very graphic way. And for printmaking, you can’t ask for more,” says Boyd Ryan.

WHAT OTHER PEOPLE SAY In Cape Dorset Prints: A Retrospective, John Westren wrote: “Of all the young new artists [from Cape Dorset], Ningeokuluk creates simple and objective imagery that is the most compatible with the current methods of printmaking in place, and I expect that she might well be the next emerging star of the Cape Dorset collection” (2007:270). Robert Kardosh, Assistant Director of the Marion Scott Gallery in Vancouver says “she 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” (2008:26).

Left: The First Owl, 2008, Ningeokuluk Teevee, Cape Dorset (stonecut and stencil; 29.1 x 24.4 in).

Right: Shaman Revealed, 2007, Ningeokuluk Teevee, Cape Dorset (lithograph; 20.3 x 18.1 in).

Unless otherwise noted all images courtesy of Dorset Fine Arts.
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Although she has made a few carvings in the past (mostly during the early 1980s), she says she prefers drawing: “When I carved, my hands got dry and it was a lot of hard work to make a shape in the stone. I wasn’t very good.” She would like to learn how to paint using watercolours, like her father, and oil. She would also like to make her own stencils and print them.

FAVOURITE MEDIA
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FAVOURITE SUBJECT
is nature’s designs. John Westren: “She is fascinated by the interplay of patterns in nature. Her print, Cross Current (2005), shows a school of fish in high definition — merging, swirling, and converging to create wonderful dimensions of forms in motion” (2007:270).

THEMES
Much of her work contains stories told to her by Mialia Jaw, an elder. Boyd Ryan says: “Impressed and moved, she started to incorporate those well-known stories into her artwork. She never wrote them down; they are from her memory. She tends to interpret those stories in interesting ways. The one that comes to mind is a print called Shaman Revealed (2007), in which a woman reveals herself as a fox by unzipping her coat. This was fascinating to me because it was such an interesting device for showing that transformation. When I asked Ning about it, she said that she just thought it would be a good idea.” Boyd Ryan thinks that Teevee is capable of being very contemporary, showing the best and worst of community life as she sees it. “She has a nice sense of humour and can be quite caustic at times.” Presently, Teevee says she is inspired to draw polar bears and walruses because she likes to imagine how they move and pose in their own worlds.

INFLUENCES
Teevee says that she is particularly inspired by Napachie Pootoogook’s drawings. “Whenever I am asked this question, I always say Napachie. She also tells stories, and I like the way she draws people moving or how their hair is flowing. I like to think that my own work expresses movement as well.” In an interview with Boyd Ryan in June in Cape Dorset, she said she was very impressed by Napachie’s work because she was so honest in her presentation of all aspects of her life; she didn’t gloss over the bad parts. She told Boyd Ryan that she was also influenced by Mialia Jaw, who was a graphic artist as well as a storyteller.

UNIQUENESS
With reference to her work in the Cape Dorset Annual Print Collection 2007, Dorothy Speak wrote that it “demonstrates a remarkable range of image, style, subject matter, and technique. Graphically, she touches on all of Cape Dorset’s pictorial traditions” (2008:29). Comparing Teevee to Kenojuak Ashevak, Speak adds: “Two Loons Nesting rivals some of Kenojuak’s finest compositions for its rhythms, balance of form, and exquisite textures” (ibid.). About her and other’s work represented in Nine Works by Seven Artists, a supplemental folio to the spring/summer Cape Dorset Annual Print Collection 2008, Kardosh wrote: “The images are highly unconventional expressions of contemporary sensibilities. 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 the northern art that see it as merely traditional, and those that see tradition as having no relevance at all for contemporary art production” (2008:30).

ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT
Having had no formal training, “She has developed by encouragement because she has seen the studios pick up her work,” says Leslie Boyd Ryan.

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENT
Although it was written and illustrated several years ago, Alego, Teevee’s autobiographical story about a young Inuit girl who goes to the shore with her grandmother to collect clams for supper and discovers tide pools brimming with life, was published in the fall of 2009 by Toronto’s Groundwood Books.

WHAT SHE THINKS ABOUT HER ART
“In the beginning I was very shy about my work being shown, but, right now, I am very happy and I enjoy what I am doing.”

REFERENCES
Although she has made a few carvings in the past (mostly during the early 1980s), she says she prefers drawing. "When I carved, my hands got dry and it was a lot of hard work to make a shape in the stone. I wasn’t very good." She would like to learn how to paint using watercolours, like her father, and oil. She would also like to make her own stonecuts and print them.

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(Top left) Angjuajtag (The Dress), 2008, Ningeokuluk Teevee, Cape Dorset (etching and aquatint; 37.8 x 30.1 in).

(Top right) Flight Pattern, 2006, Ningeokuluk Teevee, Cape Dorset (lithograph; 22 x 18 in).


(Right) Snow Geese Return, 2008, Ningeokuluk Teevee, Cape Dorset (etching and aquatint; 39 x 28.1 in).
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(Top left) Angjuqtaq (The Dress), 2008, Ningeokuluk Teevee, Cape Dorset (etching and aquatint; 37.8 x 30.1 cm).

(Top right) Flight Pattern, 2006, Ningeokuluk Teevee, Cape Dorset (lithograph; 22 x 18 in).

(Above) Bed of Kelp, 2004, Ningeokuluk Teevee, Cape Dorset (lithograph; 14.1 x 21.5 cm).

(Right) Snow Geese Return, 2008, Ningeokuluk Teevee, Cape Dorset (etching and aquatint; 39 x 28.1 in).
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Cross Current, 2005, Ningeokuluk Teevee, Cape Dorset (lithograph; 22.2 x 26.3 in).

This Little Guy, 2007, Ningeokuluk Teevee, Cape Dorset (stonecut; 16 x 16 in).

Rainbow Reflection, 2006, Ningeokuluk Teevee, Cape Dorset (stonecut and stencil; 24.4 x 26 in).

Arnak Anmalu Avvik (The Woman and the Caterpillar), 2006, Ningeokuluk Teevee, Cape Dorset (stonecut and stencil; 24.4 x 19.5 in).

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Mary Pudlat, “Unmakatuk,” etching and aquatint, 15” x 20”

Mary Pudlat

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Tukiliit: An Introduction to Inuksuit and other Stone Figures of the North

Stone structures, their forms, meanings, and functions are the main themes of Norman Hallendy’s curious, but beautifully illustrated book. Hallendy’s earlier, highly successful, and generally well-reviewed volume, Inuksuit. Silent Messengers of the Arctic (Douglas and McIntyre, 2000) was, literally and figuratively, a landmark publication, apparently selling over 30,000 copies and bringing to an extremely wide public more on Inuit stone figures than hitherto had been generally available. We could not have asked for a better introduction to the topic. It comes, therefore, as a surprise to us all. Having done so, he promptly ignores his own recommendation.

In truth, most inuksuk — other than those with obvious function — carry no explicit meaning or message beyond that attributed to them in preserved local knowledge. Without this knowledge, along with Rachel Ujarasuk of Igloolik, all we can say with certainty about any inuksuk we encounter is “imagining its meaning” — “So ... there have been people here before” (2002:1). Tukiliit has a peppering of factual errors that careful vetting might have avoided. Arctic “sun dogs” (p. 14) are “parhelia,” not “perihelia”; Rasmussen did not document Manelaq’s story (p. 55) in 1930, but in 1923; Inuquitaq (pl. inuqautaq), far from being an archaic word used by “a few remaining Inuit elders” (p. 74) is, in fact, the current Inuktut term used for stone carvings in the North Baffin region, and, finally, a number of Inuktut terms, particularly place names — Qimanittuaq and Pangnirtuq, for instance (p. 123) — are incorrectly or poorly glossed.

In summary, the disappointing text stands in stark contrast to the overall excellence of the accompanying photographs, clearly Hallendy’s particular forte. On this score, Tukiliit stands as a fitting companion to his earlier volume, Inuksuit, but one wishes it had been produced in the same large, vista-enhancing format as the latter and issued in hardcover.

For the past two decades, John MacDonald has been closely involved in the collection and documentation of Inuit oral history in the Igloolik area. He is author of The Arctic Sky (1980), a study of Inuit astronomy and star lore.

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Mitchell, Eric

Ujarasuk, Rachel
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Apart from some superficial glances at stone cairns in other parts of the world, including India, Mongolia, Iceland, and the Furse Islands, pictorially and textually, Tukiliit travels much the same expanse of tundra as that covered by Inuksuit. Readers of the latter, depending upon their viewpoint, will either welcome another excursion through largely familiar territory, or be disappointed that covered by Tukiliit’s far-flung travels, including India, Mongolia, and the Faroe Islands, pictorially and textually, Tukiliit introduces the term “tukilik” as a “better general word” for Inuit stone figures — indeed, stone figures everywhere — than the “inuksuk” familiar to us all. Having done so, he promptly ignores his own recommendation.

In truth, most inuksuit — other than those with obvious function — carry no explicit meaning or message beyond that attributed to them in preserved local knowledge. Without this knowledge, along with Rachel Ujajruk of Igloolik, all we can say with certainty about any inuksuk we encounter is “iniqtatigiit?” (p. 15) are “parhelia,” not “perihelion.” Rasmussen did not document Manelaq’s story (p. 55) in 1930, but in 1923; inukaq as (pl. inukaqas), far from being an archaic word used by “a few remaining elders” (p. 74) is, in fact, the current Inuktut term used for stone cairns in the North Baffin region, and, finally, a number of Inuktut terms, particularly place names — Qumingguataq and Pangiraataq, for instance (p. 123) — are incorrectly or poorly glossed.

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REFERENCES
Inuit Dolls of the Kivalliq

Darrin Martens
Burnaby Art Gallery, British Columbia, 2009
47 pages, including 67 colour photographs, paperback
$21.95

Reviewed by Susan Gustavison

Inuit Dolls of the Kivalliq is a handsomely designed catalogue published by the Burnaby Art Gallery to accompany an exhibition of the same title, which was held there during the summer of 2009. Following its showing at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in the summer of 2009, Inuit Dolls of the Kivalliq will be exhibited by the Inuit Art Museum at Toronto’s Harbourfront Centre. There are hopes that the exhibition will return to the Vancouver area during the 2010 Winter Olympics. The catalogue illustrates 65 dolls — all dated 2007 — handmade by 29 women from seven different communities in the Kivalliq region.

It is notable that the Burnaby Art Gallery has published a catalogue and toured an exhibition of Inuit art, its showing at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in the summer of 2008. Following the same title, which was held there in 2005 in Rankin Inlet, but incorporated in 2007. Their first doll project, entitled Inuit Prints, A Collector’s Choice, was produced by the Burnaby Art Gallery in 1994. The catalogue was followed by a minimal description of Nunavut and the seven communities represented in the catalogue and project. Scattered throughout are thumbnail quotes gathered by Darlene Wight from her interviews with some of the artists during the 2007 festival.

In the end, however, the reader is not given any sense of the artists, either as people or as practitioners of the art of doll making. Also lacking is any attempt to reveal the history of doll making in Inuit culture and to situate these contemporary dolls into that history, which is believed to date back some thousand years. And finally, there is no information in the catalogue that develops any discussion of themes and dress are all highly commendable. Ultimately, I have to wonder if the catalogue was compromised by a desire to satisfy the dualities of artistic aspirations and the economic objectives of creating a worldwide market for these and other Inuit-made dolls.

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

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Greer, Darrell 2009 “Kivalliq dolls celebrated in prints,” Northern News Service, 1 June.


Galerie Elca London

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It is notable that the Burnaby Art Gallery has published a catalogue and toured an exhibition of Inuit art, while the Canadian Museum of Civilization, published in 1986, and in 1994 the gallery produced a pamphlet and exhibition entitled Inuit Prints, A Collector’s Choice.

Inuit Dolls of the Kivalliq represents the culmination of a project that began some five years ago within the community of Rankin Inlet, which is located on the western shore of Hudson’s Bay. Led by artist and project coordinator Helen Ahernkneya, a group of women — including Lizzie Itrimsar, Helen Iqagutak, Therese Tungilik, and Charlotte Hickes (an Economic Development officer) — decided to undertake a “doll project” to further develop traditional and contemporary art skills. With the support of the local Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre, they formed an umbrella organization known as the Tarralikitaaq Arts Society, which was incorporated in 2007. Their first doll workshop, for about 15 artists, was held in 2005 in Rankin Inlet, but the community-driven project didn’t stop there.

In September 2007, a seven-day festival, K.I.D.F.E.S.T., or Kivalliq Inuit Doll Festival, Exhibition and Story-Telling Traditions, attracted participants from Arviat, Baker Lake, Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbour, Rankin Inlet, Repulse Bay, and Whale Cove for workshops, storytelling, music-making, creating, and visiting. Both modern and traditional materials and methods were used to create more than 250 dolls. From these, Darlene Wight and Darrin Martens, curators at the Winnipeg Art Gallery and Burnaby Art Gallery respectively, chose 65 dolls for the exhibition and catalogue.

The catalogue illustrates each of these dolls. Twenty are shown in full-page plates. The others appear in small plates, depicting multiple views, which run across the bottom of each page of text, almost like a film strip. It is a very effective design as it lends an animated quality to doll making in Inuit culture and to situate these contemporary dolls into that history, which is believed to date back some thousand years. And finally, there is no information in the catalogue that develops any discussion around what is traditional and what is modern in the materials, techniques, and subject matter.

While Inuit Dolls of the Kivalliq disappoints on some levels, it is exciting to see a project of this magnitude driven by the women of Rankin Inlet and their supporters. The quality of the workmanship, the effective introduction of polymer clay for faces and hands, the variety of themes and dress are all highly commendable. Ultimately, I have to wonder if the catalogue was compromised by a desire to satisfy the dualities of artistic aspirations and the economic objectives of creating a worldwide market for these and other Inuit-made dolls.

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Tel: (514) 282-1173 • Fax: (514) 282-1229
E-mail: info@elcalondon.com
http://www.elcalondon.com
A Week of Celebration in Cape Dorset

BY PATRICIA FEHELEY

The photos accompanying this essay are from several different sources. I would like to thank Annette Marguerite, Barry Appleton, and Leslie Boyd Ryan for sharing their images with me and with IAQ.

In many ways, the weather patterns over southern Baffin Island during the week of June 15, 2009 mirrored the impact of the events taking place in Cape Dorset. On arrival in Iqaluit, we were greeted with news that Dorset had been shrouded in fog for five days. This same fog delayed our departure the following day. We then enjoyed five wonderful days of sunny and bright weather in Cape Dorset before fog and clouds appeared to herald our departure. The highs and lows of the weather echoed the emotional swings of this amazing week.

We were travelling north for a week of local celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative (WBEC) and the Kinngait Studios. Many such anniversary celebrations were being held, but this week in Cape Dorset was particularly significant. Terry Ryan and his family were returning to the village for a series of tributes to mark his retirement after almost fifty years of working for the co-op.

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The funeral was held in the community hall. Terry Ryan, Kananginak Pootoogook, and their large extended family.

Several hours later, in the same venue, people gathered again, this time in celebration and tribute to Terry Ryan. Many months had gone into the planning for this event. The formal program was presented by Simoqo Siora, past president of the WBEC Board. Leslie Boyd Ryan had created a superb slide show, which captured the life of Terry, both in the South and in the North. For many watching, it evoked a range of emotions: laughter, fond memories, and sadness for departed friends and times. Entertainment was provided by throat-singing, first by two elders, who have performed at community gatherings for years, followed by two beautiful young singers, who have mastered this skill to pass on to future generations. As always, the music was haunting, evocative, and so fitting for this occasion.

Terry Ryan in formal dress because Jimmy Manning had always told him to dress more formally for co-op meetings. (WBEC board, speaking at length of the contributions made by Terry and the conviction of the board that, without his able guidance over the years, the co-op and the studios would not have thrived. Several Elders attended, including Kananginak, Pitaloosie Saila, Kokolu Saggatuk, and Oqutaq Mikkigak. They stood side by side with the new guard who are carrying the studio forward: Ningokuluk Teree, Tim Pitsiulak, Surinai Ashoona, Kavanawat Mannemoo, Sam Toonoo, and Itee Pootoogook. Simiga chose this moment to announce the imminent retirement of Jimmy Manning, Ryan’s long-time assistant and successor as studio manager. Once again, we were reminded that this year of celebrations will also mark a new era for Kinngait Studios and WBEC.

Perhaps the most touching moment came at the end of the presentations. Kananginak Pootoogook, a friend who had worked with Terry from the time of his arrival in 1960, stood to speak. He talked of their long collaboration and of his admiration and sincere gratitude for all that Terry had done. He presented a drawing he had made of Terry and himself when they were both young, saying, “We are old now but we were young once.” This moment captured the essence, not only of this occasion but, also, of all the significant events of the week, reminding us again of the strong ties and close friendships between Terry and this community.

The following day began with the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the contributions of James Hoatson. During his years in Cape Dorset between 1956 and 1961, the co-op directors had organized a formal community celebration, while the artists and printmakers, several of whom have worked with Ryan since his arrival in 1960, planned a separate tribute in the studios. Many such anniversary celebrations were being held, but this week in Cape Dorset was particularly significant. Terry Ryan and his family were returning to the village for a series of tributes to mark his retirement after almost fifty years of working for the co-op.

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The tribute from the artists and printmakers took place the next day. The official part of the event happened in what was the original printmaking studio, now serving as the coffee room for the greatly expanded facility. Again, Simiga played the role of host, speaking at length of the contributions made by Terry and the conviction of the board that, without his able guidance over the years, the co-op and the studios would not have thrived. Several Elders attended, including Kananginak, Pitaloosie Saila, Kokolu Saggittok, and Osupaq Mikikpak. They stood side by side with the new guard who are carrying the studio forward:

Jutai Tooqoo, and Itee Pootoogook. Simiga chose this moment to announce the imminent retirement of Jimmy Manning, Ryan’s long-time assistant and successor as studio manager. Once again, we were reminded that this year of celebrations will also mark a new era for Kinngait Studios and WBEC.

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memories are perhaps of the intimate, quiet Aboriginal Day. Throughout the afternoon, the RCMP to commemorate National followed by an outdoor picnic hosted by was unveiled by Ashevak Ezekiel. This was outside the Lithography Studio, where it Nuna mounted the plaque on a stone cairn started Kinngait Studios on its path. Taqialuq sizk3 ttC3 tsE Cwx8j5

Sun and cloud, elders and youth, art stu dios and the community hall — my strongest memories are perhaps of the intimate, quiet moments: Kanganginak and Shoiroya at the airport to greet the Ryans on their arrival; the many who stopped Terry in the street to shake his hand or hug him in welcome; Terry giving comfort to Piradoose, being kissed by Kenjuak; and sharing jokes with the printers; the day the helga appeared — sparkling an exodus of what seemed like the whole town to join in the hunt; the celebrations that evening as the women gathered for whale tail parties, reminding us that the traditional culture is as vibrant as the ever-present light that made going for walks at two in the morning seem like a fine idea; the machinations of the film crew to capture as much as possible while not intruding on events, and the printers; the day the beluga appeared — respresenting in a vintage tuque, Order of Canada prominent — created a stir. Once again, here was the quiet and reserved man who had gone before. arrival among the resting place of so many — sparking an exodus of what seemed the quiet and reserved man who had gone before. — sparking an exodus of what seemed to be — sparking an exodus of what seemed

On our final evening in Cape Dorset, we gathered in the home of Jimmy and Pimeto Manning for a feast of wild geese. The film crew were catching up with last-minute interviews and capturing images of the ice fishermen in the harbour. Terry’s arrival — respectful and reserved — as the success of the new generation of artists, signals that future generations will carry forward the promise of the last half century. It is clear that Terry, and also Jimmy, have added immeasurably to the richness of the fabric of Canadian culture. Terry’s performance as the quiet, straightforward, first American venue — independent and straightforward. Terry and the co-operative had put behind them the first half century: 50 successful, exuberant, and fulfilling years, which have added immeasurably to the richness of the fabric of Canadian culture. Terry’s performance as the quiet, straightforward, first American venue — independent and straightforward. The weavers working on the tapestry are the most experienced tapestry weavers we have

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The installation is very clean, spread over several rooms so that each drawing commands its own space. The impact of these works was evident the evening of the opening as viewers made their way through the exhibition, often returning several times to view them again. As always, her drawings have a variety of effects on different audiences. Cotter raises the concern that, unlike at documenta where Pootoogook’s work was presented simply as international contemporary art, the presence of this exhibition in a museum dedicated to Aboriginal art will imply an “ethnic” context. In the case of Pootoogook, however, this seems a small con cern. Perhaps this is just the kind of space where her work is even more significant, one in which it can directly challenge the outdated idea of what constitutes the previ ous generation’s artistic context. The New York Times of the American Indian, June 11, 2009. Photo: courtesy of Patricia Feheley
Vol. 24, no. 4 Winter 2009

NOTE

1 Behind the Scenes at Kig工匠 Studio, a one-hour documentary for television, will be broadcast on BRAVO! and APTN (date to be determined). Produced by Site Media Inc. Director, Annette Manguad. Cinematography, Marissa Connolly and John Price. Producer, David Craig and Katherine Knight.

Annie Pootoogook in New York

BY PATRICIA FEHELEY

The New York showing of Annie Pootoogook is the final stop of a three-year travelling exhibition, curated by Nancy Campbell for the Bilbao Kuri Gallery and organized by the Alberta College of Art and Design. Many of the drawings on view at the George Gustave Heye Center at the National Museum of the American Indian were featured in the 2006 exhibition of Pootoogook's work at Toronto's Power Plant Gallery. A number of works were also included in documenta 2007, an international contemporary art exhibition held once every five years in Kassel, Germany.

Soon after the opening on June 11, 2009 the solo exhibition was reviewed in The New York Times by the eminent art writer Holland Cotter. In a resoundingly positive review, he made the following observation: "The cumulative effect of the Heye Center show ... is of a single extended vision that crosses documentary with diary, by an artist who is both a scrawny record of a specific 21st Century reality and an imaginative but unromanticizing editor of that reality" (2009).

Cotter was already aware of Pootoogook's work, as he had seen it in Germany during the documenta exhibition. The majority of the viewers who attend the New York exhibition will be aware neither of the context of the artist's style, nor of her growing international reputation. In the exhibition itself, there is little interpretive material, either about the artist or the current trend in contemporary art from Arctic Canada. There could be no better way for Pootoogook's work to arrive in her first American venue — independent and straightforward.

The drawings are left to speak for themselves; the only voice is that of the artist, speaking in her own words. In the review of the 2006 film Annie Pootoogook, directed by Marcia Connolly and produced by Katherine Knight for Site Media Inc. in the clip from the documentary, Pootoogook talks about the central role that making art takes in her life, her influences, and her artistic process. Without the filter of external interpretation, these images and her words are even more direct. The simplicity, honesty, and direct approach noted and admired since Pootoogook's work is even more significant, one in which it can directly challenge the outdated idea of what constitutes the prevailing art history of Indian art.

On until January 10, 2010, the exhibition in New York will be the last opportunity to see this important group of drawings together.

REFERENCES

Connolly, Marisa and Katherine Knight 2010b Annie Pootoogook (documentary). Toronto: Site Media Inc.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Baker Lake’s New Website

In this July issue, Baker Lake launched a new website (www.bakerlakearts.com). The site was developed by Tania Marsh, former Arts Coordinator for Akubliriit Arts Society. “I was leaving the community in my role as Arts Coordinator,” she said, “and it felt it was important to have some online information on the community and its arts. The community used to have a website, but it was dropped due to lack of funding. This one is more for the Arts Society opposed to tourism.” Akubliriit Arts Society dissolved in June.

The site features information about the community’s art history and a list of more than 100 artists, as well as many photographs and a few examples of artwork from Tony Anguhalluq, William Noah, and Irene Avaluqaaq, and others. Locals contributed to the project, checking the content and providing copyright permissions for photographs and images. Due to costs associated with obtaining copyright permission, Marsh was not able to upload as many photographs and artworks as she would have liked.

As the website is not yet available in the North, the Internet is increasingly being seen as a low-cost way for communities to market their art as well as to document their own art histories.

Kenjuak Ashevak’s First Solo Exhibition in Nunavut

Although she is one of the most acclaimed of Inuit artists, Kenjuak Ashevak had never had a solo exhibition in her home territory until June 20, 2009. To celebrate the Nunatu Sakkumaktangi Museum’s 40th anniversary, a retrospective of her work was on display until September 2009. Curated by Brian Mathew, Kenjuak included some of the artist’s most well-known work, including Enchanted Owl (1960), which was featured on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tikiniq (The Arrival) on a Canadian stamp commemorating the artist’s most well-known work, including Tic...
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The site features information about the community’s art history and a list of more than 100 artists, as well as many photographs and a few examples of artwork from Tony Abdullah, William Noah, and Irene Aulalaaq and others. Locals contributed to the project, checking the content and providing copyright permissions for photographs and images. Due to costs associated with obtaining copyright permission, Marsh was not able to use as many photographs and artwork as she would have liked.

Art Galleries

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A LETTER TO THE EDITOR FROM TERRY RYAN

This letter is in reference to the recent article by Patricia Feheley ("Terry Ryan: A Visionary with a Pragmatic Edge," IAQ, vol. 24, no. 2, p. 14–23) outlining the growth of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Ltd. at Cape Dorset. Needless to say, given the complimentary tone of the article with respect to my efforts in assisting in the growth of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative, I am grateful — if a little embarrassed. Given your long-time involvement and study of cooperative development in the North, you will appreciate that one’s rewards are found in the doing; waiting for acclaim by your members would be naive indeed. Sadly, in retrospect, I feel my method of management saw far too few outward expressions of appreciation.

I shall ever be in the debt of those many individuals, Inuit and non-Inuit, who aided in the growth of the co-operative and, in particular, those long-gone friends among the Inuit elders, who by their expressed support and involvement, not only kept me on the straight and narrow but, more importantly, stood by when projects did not always prove successful. As for the creative assumptions that took me north in the first instance, I am at a loss to fully express my appreciation for the unique opportunity to witness firsthand the amazing originality and creativity of the Inuit. I feel this country has yet to fully appreciate the Inuit cultural expression.

For fear that my departure is misinterpreted, I am anxious to dispel any rumours that the studios are somehow imperilled by my absence. The operation will continue to move ahead, as it has done for all these years, meeting whatever obstacles present themselves with the same resolve we have always had.

While we have, on other occasions, acknowledged the staff of the studios, it should be noted once again that, without their dedication, the operation would not exist today. Jimmy Manning has now followed me out the studio door, having made a singular contribution himself for more than 30 years. I would be remiss indeed, were I not to note the many occasions over the years when he quietly reinforced and complimented my efforts by his fuller awareness of the circumstances.

There have been a number of southern artists as well whose contributions to the growth of the studios are only partially known. Fortunately, among their number have been several who have maintained their constant belief in supporting young talent by returning on a regular basis to Baffin Island. Having retired recently and being no longer a resident of Cape Dorset, I shall, nevertheless, hope to remain a citizen of that place, and am aware of the circumstances.

I am at a loss to fully express my appreciation for the unique opportunity to witness firsthand the amazing originality and creativity of the Inuit. I feel this country has yet to fully appreciate the Inuit cultural expression.

Terrence Ryan
August 29, 2009

Clarifying Nunatsiavut
In IAQ Portfolio, Billy Gauthier: Magnetic & Energetic (vol. 24, no. 2, p. 257), you referred to Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River as being in Nunatsiavut. While Nunatsiavut is in Labrador, The Land Claims Agreement clearly defines Nunatsiavut as the Inuit communities of Rigolet, Makkovik, Postville, Hopeadena, and Nain, and the settlement area, which does not include Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River.

James Lyull, President, Nunatsiavut Government Nain, Nunatsiavut

CORRECTIONS & ADDITIONS

The Summer 2009 issue of IAQ (vol. 24, no. 2) featured a photograph of Kenojuak Ashevak and Paul Murchak (p. 23) by Bill Ritchie. It was taken at the Kinngait Studios in Cape Dorset and not, as attributed, at Studio PM in Montreal. We regret this error.

The photographer who took the picture of Charles Gimpel, Terry Ryan, and Peter Pinzelok, published in the Summer issue (p. 17), has been identified as Nelson Graham, who writes that he probably took the photograph in April 1968.
A LETTER TO THE EDITOR FROM TERRY RYAN

This letter is in reference to the recent article by Patricia Feheley (“Terry Ryan: A Visionary with a Pragmatic Edge,” IAQ, vol. 24, no. 2, p. 14–23) outlining the growth of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Ltd. at Cape Dorset. Needless to say, given the complimentary tone of the article with respect to my efforts in assisting in the growth of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative, I am grateful — if a little embarrassed. Given your long-time involvement and study of cooperative development in the North, you will appreciate that one’s rewards are found in the doing; waiting for acclaim by your members would be naïve indeed. Sadly, in retrospect, I feel my method of management saw far too few outward expressions of appreciation.

I shall ever be in the debt of those many individuals, Inuit and non-Inuit, who aided in the growth of the co-operative and, in particular, those long-gone friends among the Inuit elders, who by their expressed support and involvement, not only kept me on the straight and narrow but, more importantly, stood by when projects did not always prove successful. As for the creative assumptions that took me north in the first instance, I am at a loss to fully express my appreciation for the unique opportunity to witness firsthand the amazing originality and creativity of the Inuit. I feel this country has yet to fully appreciate the contribution Inuit have made to the artistic wealth of Canada. Having retired recently and being no more a resident of Cape Dorset, I shall, nevertheless, hope to remain a citizen of that place, and am hopeful that the present negative circumstances will bring much needed peace and strengthening of the Inuit that will bring much needed peace and strengthening of the Inuit.

For fear that my departure is misinterpreted, I am anxious to dispel any rumours that the studios are somehow imperilled by my absence. The operation will continue to move ahead, as it has done for all these years, meeting whatever obstacles present themselves with the same resolve we have always had.

While we have, on other occasions, acknowledged the staff of the studios, it should be noted once again that, without their dedication, the operation would not exist today. Jimmy Manning has now followed me out the studio door, having made a singular contribution himself for more than 30 years. I would be remiss indeed, were I not to note the many occasions over the years when he quietly reinforced and complemented my efforts by his fuller awareness of the circumstances. There have been a number of southern artists as well whose contributions to the growth of the studios are only partially known. Fortunately, among their number have been several who have maintained their constant belief in supporting young talent by returning on a regular basis to Baffin Island. Perhaps even less acknowledged have been the marketing staff, past and present, of Dorset Fine Arts in Toronto. Without their commitment to the promotion and marketing of Dorset arts, there would be little to address. Leslie Boyd Ryan has now taken on the task of directing the operation with its many and varied responsibilities, north and south. Since her arrival in Cape Dorset in 1980, she has grown familiar with the operation would not exist today.

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Pauta Saila (1916–2009)

Pauta Saila died in Ottawa in June, 2009 from pneumonia following surgery. He was 93. His passing reminds us in many ways that the early era of contemporary Inuit art — the decades of discovery for Inuit who were able, for the first time, to choose to become artists — is coming to an end. The altered lifestyle and infrastructure that began fifty years ago have allowed these individuals to devote their time and energy to making art as a means of living. The sheer delight of the freedom to explore and create is inherent in their work.

And in Cape Dorset, where the network for support and encouragement was in place by 1960, Inuit were able to make a conscious decision to commit themselves to making works of art as a means of support, as they moved into the settlement. Pauta Saila — along with others such as Kenojuak Ashevak, Ossokut Ipeelee, and Paalu Pualat — chose to devote his time to artistic pursuits and developed, almost immediately, a distinctive style.

Born in 1916 in a camp on southern Baffin Island near Nuwata, Pauta Saila was the son of the camp leader. He always acknowledged the importance of the hunting and survival skills he learned from his father, who was also a skilled carver. The father’s ability to create detailed and lifelike animals was passed on to his son. Pauta lived on the land with his first wife until her death in the late 1950s when he moved to Iqaluit to work on the DEW line. He moved into the settlement. Pauta was an active graphic artist since the early stages of contemporary Inuit art. His skill as a sculptor of animals. As in his sculpture, humour is often included in these depictions.

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While his drawings and prints tend to be more varied in subject matter and style, his engravings capture the same combination of technique and composition found in his sculpture. Working directly onto the engraving plate, he would often use an axe instead of the normal engraving tool to make the distinctive marks found in his abstracted images of animals. And in his sculpture, humour is often included in these depictions. Pauta’s mastery of his chosen material combined effortlessly with his sensitivity to these animals to create some of the most vital and compelling works of the last fifty years.
In Memoriam

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Pauta lived on the land with his first wife until her death in the late 1950s when he moved to Iqaluit to work on the DEW line. He moved to Cape Dorset after his marriage in 1960 to Patlaosie, the well-known graphic artist. Soon after his arrival, Pauta decided to leave his job with the co-op in order to devote his time to artistic pursuits and developed, almost immediately, a distinctive style.

From this time, Pauta’s distinctive, abstracted style emerged. Focusing the co-op in order to devote his time to artistic pursuits and developed, almost immediately, a distinctive style.

In his hands, bears could be playful or powerful, and his bears are often depicted just at the moment of spreading their wings. His bears are portrayed in movement, so that their figures created by John Tiktaq.

An intensely private man, Pauta, the oldest member of the Cape Dorset community, was respected not just as an eminent artist, but also as a hunter, advisor, and good man. Exhibitions featuring his work have been held continuously since the early 1960s. He was a member of the Royal Canadian Academy and was selected to take part in the 1967 International Sculpture Symposium held in Toronto. His oversize sculpture of a bear created for this symposium is now on view at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario. He is represented in the collections of major museums across Canada and internationally, and his work is featured in numerous publications.

Pauta Salea's funeral was held in Cape Dorset on June 19. He is survived by his wife Patlaosie and many children and grandchildren.

NOTES

1 For a full biography of Pauta Salea, see Kyna Vladyslifer, Fowler, Guide to Cape Dorset Artists (Municipality of Cape Dorset, 2008).

REFERENCES

Eber, Dorothy 1993 “Talking with the Artists,” in In the Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Inuit Art, Gatineau: Canadian Museum of Civilization.


There is an infinite variety to be found in Pauta's dancing bears. Although this became his signature subject, each had a particular personality. His work was never repetitive. He once stated that the bears were not dancing, but playing and balancing as if they had often seen them on the ice field while hunting (Tiwogood 1978:66–67).

Regardless of the intent, this body of work takes its place alongside such icons of early contemporary Inuit art as the owls of Kenojuak Ashevak, the migration umiaks of Joe Talirunili, the repeated human silhouettes of Jesse Oonark, and the minimalist figures created by John Tiktaq.

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Jewellery
ivory | antler | precious metals
18K Gold Ring with Emerald, 2007
Ross Kayotak
Inukjuak, NU

Textiles
wall hanging | tapestries | clothing
Winter Game, 2004
E. Ishulutak/K. Kahee
Pangnirtung, NU

Crafts
folk art | handicrafts | fine craft
Polar Bear Packing Doll
Takuq Designs Ltd.
Takotn, NU

Sculpture
stone | bone | antler | ivory
Beluga Whale, 2006
Salla Koonor
Iqaluit, NU

Prints
painting | drawing
Bird People, 2008
Irene Availasaaq
Baker Lake, NU