

Inuit Art: An Introduction



Power Family Program
for Inuit Art:
Tillirnanngittuq



S Peter Brant and Curt in the Skin Stencil 301 2007. Cape Dorset Ruffus Isaksen June 2010 Niviatkialak



UMMA Inuit Exhibition

Power Family Program for Inuit Art

Tillirnanngittuq
(teed-lee-nann-gee-tuk)

Who: Co-Curated by Marion (Mame) Jackson and Pat Feheley.

What: Gift of Inuit Art from Phil and Kathy Power.
Programming including music, art making, storytelling

When: Phase 1 = March 16 - November 2019

Where: Second floor balcony

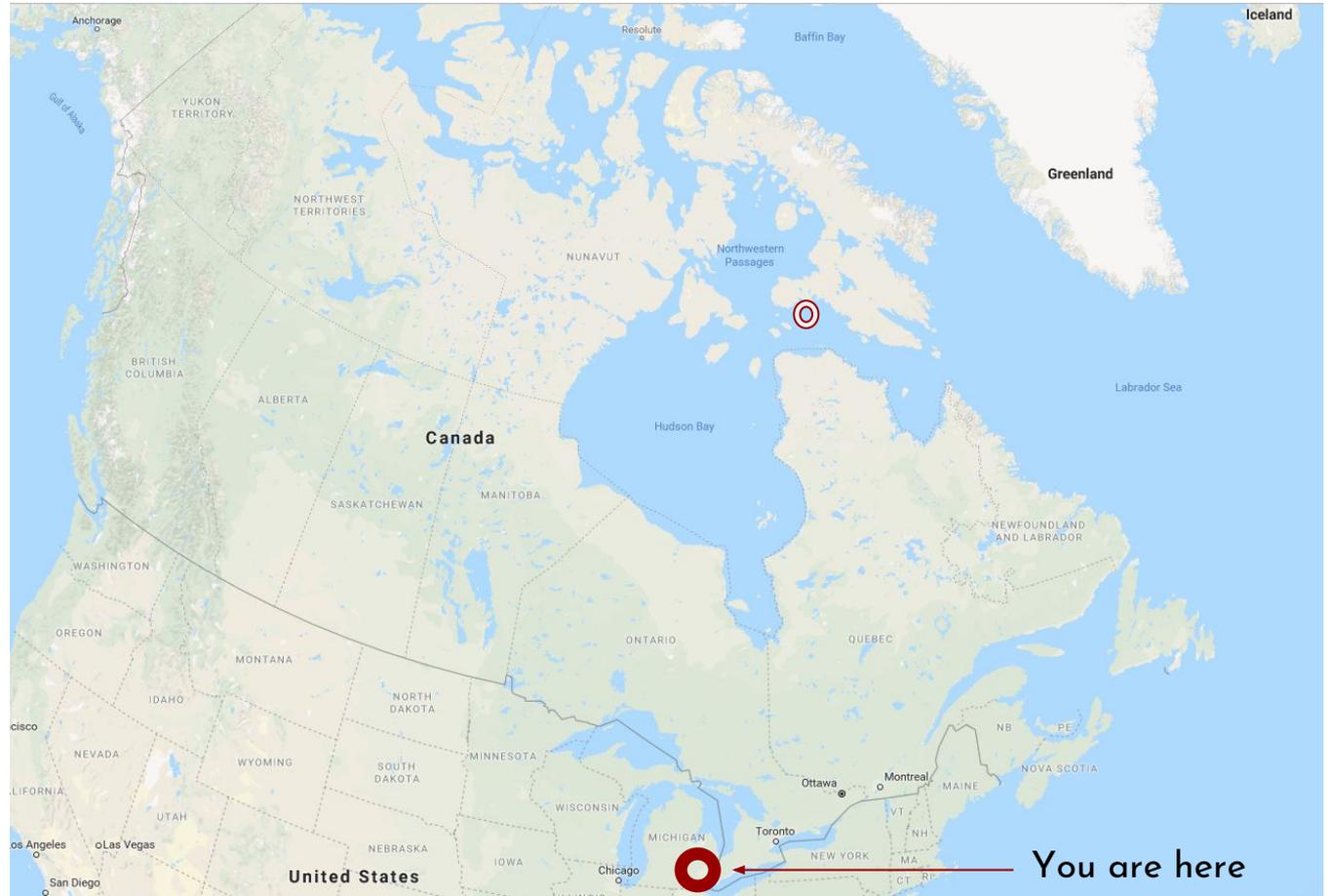


Geography:

Nunavut

Baffin Island

Cape Dorset



Glossary

Inuit: people (in Inuktitut)

Inuk: person

Inuktitut: Inuit native language

Eskimo: historic Canadian word for Inuit: "raw meat eater"

Ulu: mezzaluna tool used by females to scrape skins

Umiak: boat

Kayak: small boat

Kamiks: boots

Sinew: connective tissue used as thread

Igloo: house

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Prehistoric Period (BCE - 1770)

Key Concepts:

- Migration and exchange between Greenland and Alaska.
- Economy driven by hunting and trade

Style:

- Graphic incision. Dot patterns, geometric schematized figures, symbolic vocabulary.

Form:

- Small scale ivory pendants, figures, dolls, amulets, harpoon covers.

Content:

- Animals and human figures



Images: Canadian Museum of Civilization

Historic Period (1770-1940s)



Key Concepts:

- European contact brought different technology (metal)
- Function changed from traditional toy or tool to a trade commodity: new audience

Style:

- Naturalistic, detailed.

Form:

- Now freestanding or on base: "tabletop" display

Content:

- Camp scenes, animals, Christian imagery.



Peter Pitseolak (1902-1973)
The Eskimo Will Talk Like the White Man, 1940-1942
Watercolour and collage on paper, 78.0x68.5
Canadian Museum of Civilization

Beginning of Contemporary (1940s-1950s)

Key Concepts:

- Historical Context: Distant Early Warning Line / Cold War
- Continued production for Southern market
- Formation of artist co-operative

Style:

- Naturalistic, smooth finish, prints were linear and textural

Form:

- Larger scale, soapstone

Content:

- Animals, hunting, daily life



Factors in Shift to Art Production

1. Migration patterns changed
2. Market for fox pelts tanked
3. Disease (tuberculosis)



Timeline

- BCE - 1940: Prehistoric / Historic
Small portable carvings
Not conceived for art market
- 1948: James Houston visits Kinngait (Cape Dorset)
- 1949: First exhibition of Inuit carvings in Montreal
- 1959: Printmaking begins
First collection exhibited
- Every October: New collection of prints released

Exchange of Inuit Art

James Houston

- Summer 1948: traded his paintings for carvings
- Returned to Quebec and made a deal with Hudson's Bay Company to exchange art for store credit

Terry Ryan

- West Baffin Eskimo Co-Op hires him as advisor. Begins long relationship.
- [Video about Kinngait West Baffin Eskimo Co-Operative](#)





Japanese Influence

- Houston traveled to Japan in 1958 to study ukiyo-e tradition of printmaking (translating drawings into prints)
- Un-ichi Hiratsuka was his teacher
- Chops are the personal stamp / signature
- Printmaking Processes: stonecut, stencil, serigraph, etching / engraving, lithograph



Peter Pitseolak
Drawing for print *My Wife and I* (1974)
Felt-tip pen, graphite, acrylic



Peter Pitseolak
My Wife and I (1974)
Printed by Sagiatak Sagiatak
Stonecut



Themes

Animals

Daily Life

Supernatural

Legends &
Stories

Family
Mother &
child



Daily Life: hunting and
moving to summer camps



Sedna the Sea Goddess

Kiviuk the transforming trickster

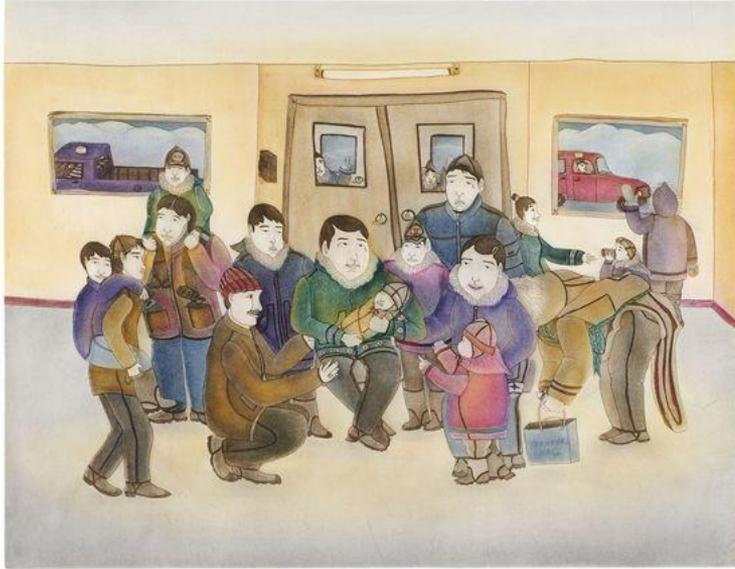
Lumaaq the blind boy

[Taqralik Partridge's Stories](#)



Family: Mother and Child

Contemporary Artists



Annie Pootoogook



Pitseolak Ooshootsiak

Peter Pitseolak
Pudlo Pudlat
Kenojuak Ashevak
Pitaloosie Saila
Luke Anguhadluq
Jessie Oonark



Tim Pitsiulak

Eskimo Art, Inc.

Non-profit
organization founded
by Eugene Power 1953

Philip & Kathy Power

Dennos Museum
(Traverse City)
donation: 1995

[UMMA Announcement](#)

[Michigan Radio
Interview: Phil Power](#)

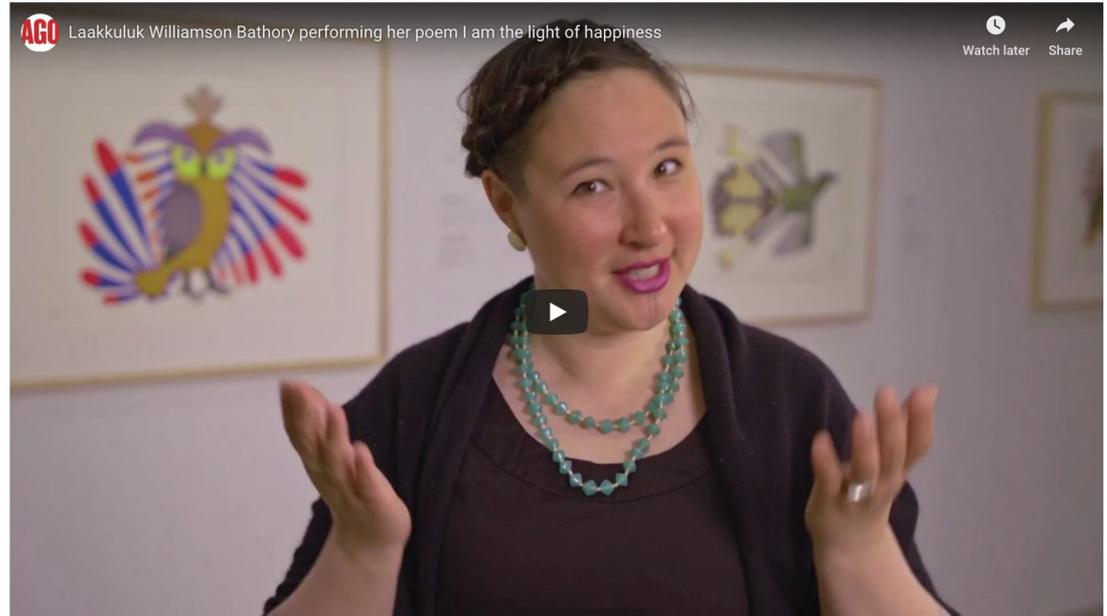


Kenojuiak Ashevak

A Poem, performed by
Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory,
Inuit artist and storyteller

VIDEO: *I am the light of happiness*

Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory performing her poem *I am the light of happiness*. Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory is an uajaerneq (Greenlandic mask dance) performer, an Inuk artist and a co-curator of *Tunirrusiangit: Kenojuak Ashevak and Tim Pitsiulak* at the Art Gallery of Ontario





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Sedna Expedition

The Sedna Epic is comprised of a team of women ocean explorers, scientists, artists, educators, adventurers, and medical and scuba diving professionals from Canada, the USA and Mexico. Sedna's sea women aim to create citizen scientists in Nunavut, empowering youth, girls and young women to become the next generation of Inuit leaders to tackle climate change, ocean change and societal change in the Arctic.

Galleries and Museums

Dorset Fine Arts: <http://www.dorsetfinearts.com/>

Pat Feheley Gallery: <https://feheleyfinearts.com/>

Inuit Art Center at Winnipeg Art Gallery: <http://inuit.wag.ca/>

Dennos Museum: <http://www.dennosmuseum.org/>

Art Gallery of Ontario: <https://ago.ca/>

Resources

Canada's History: <https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/politics-law/the-creation-of-nunavut>

Blodgett, Jean. *In Cape Dorset We Do It This Way: Three Decades of Inuit Printmaking*. 1991: McMichael Canadian Art Collection

Hessel, Ingo. *Inuit Art*. 1998: Douglas and McIntyre.

Jackson, Marion. *Inuit Women Artist: Voices from Cape Dorset*. 1994

Verano, Norman. *Inuit Prints: Japanese Inspiration. Early Printmaking in the Canadian Arctic*. 2011: Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation.

The Threads that Connect Us: Washi Makers Meet Cape Dorset Artists (2003/2010): film about Osaki family who visited Cape Dorset to teach papermaking (washi = Japanese paper)

Connected North: <http://www.connectednorth.org/en/>

Native Knowledge 360 (Smithsonian): <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360>