



Installation view, *Ilippunga: I Have Learned*, 2016, Brousseau Inuit Art Collection, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (photograph by Daniel Drouin provided by MNBAQ)

It is not only to make money that we carve. Nor do we carve make believe things. What we show in our carvings is the life we have lived in the past right up to today. We show the truth. . . . We carve the animals because they are important to us as food. We carve Inuit figures because in that way we can show ourselves to the world as we were in the past and as we are now.

—Pauloosie Kasadluak, Inukjuak, 1976

Although there exists a vast literature on Inuit art in Canada—including hundreds of exhibition catalogues and scholarly texts, edited volumes, journal articles,

and publications in the popular media—very little of it has been produced by Inuit. Despite the critical and commercial success of Inuit art, which has flourished since the beginning of the modern Inuit art movement in the mid-twentieth century into an internationally recognized art form and multimillion-dollar industry, the research, study, and dissemination of Inuit art has largely been the work of Qallunaat (non-Inuit) scholars, curators, critics, and museum staff.¹ Few Inuit authors have ever been published in art-historical texts. Notable exceptions include Alootook Ipellie, the political cartoonist and graphic artist who wrote the seminal article “The Colonization of the Arctic,” featured in

Gerald McMaster’s groundbreaking *Reservation X* (1998) exhibition catalogue; the filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk, who through interviews and other writings has significantly augmented our understanding of Inuit aesthetics;² and Minnie Aodla Freeman, an author who contributed to the 1996 *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset* exhibition catalogue. Yet I am, for example, the only Inuk in Canada to hold a PhD in art history, one of only two or three Inuit to ever teach an Inuit art class at the university level, and one of the few curators of circumpolar art from our country to date. While artists such as Barry Pottle and Heather Campbell have occasionally held curatorial positions in art institutions, and recently an emerging curator and graduate of the BA film studies program at Carleton University, Jocelyn Piirainen, participated in a curatorial residency at SAW Gallery in Ottawa, Ontario, there is yet to be a single full-time Inuit museum employee at any of our major national or provincial institutions, and few have ever been employed in the many Inuit and Indigenous private art galleries or in auction houses, as freelance authors, research assistants, critics, or film or exhibition reviewers.

The impact of this is that Inuit art—including everything from the earliest archeological findings to contemporary works—has been almost entirely interpreted by Qallunaat. Therefore, despite the rich literature, often written by those who have worked closely with Inuit artists over the last seven decades of the modern and contemporary arts industry (since 1948), the existing scholarship still represents a deep imbalance between who is being written about and who is writing. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the lack of Inuit scholars has meant that Inuit perspectives and knowledge have been conspicuously absent from much of the research and writing on Inuit art as well.

In this short essay, I outline some new directions in my own research and curatorial practice, including an exhibition I recently curated, which may offer a new model for curating and thinking about Inuit art. I begin by introducing the exhibition, which represents some of my thinking through this issue to date, and expand the discussion to include artworks that are not featured in the exhibition

Heather Igloliorte

Curating Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit: Inuit Knowledge in the Qallunaat Art Museum

The epigraph is from Pauloosie Kasadluak, “Nothing Marvelous,” in *Port Harrison/Inoucdjouac*, ed. Jean Blodgett, exh. cat. (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1977), 22.

1. The modern Inuit art movement emerged from an Inuit handicrafts and carvings “experiment” that blossomed into a fine art practice in the early 1950s. For more on the midcentury development of modern Inuit sculpture and the art market, see Nelson H. H. Graburn, “The Discovery of Inuit Art: James A. Houston-Animateur,” *Inuit Art Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 3–5; Kristen K. Potter, “James Houston, Armchair Tourism, and the Marketing of Inuit Art,” in *Native American Art in the Twentieth Century: Makers, Meanings, Histories*, ed. W. Jackson Rushing III (New York: Routledge, 1999), 39–56; Virginia Watt, “The Beginning,” in *Canadian Guild of Crafts, Quebec* (Montreal: Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec, 1980), 11–15; and Helga Goetz, “Inuit Art: A History of Government Involvement,” in *In the Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art* (Gatineau: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1993), 357–82.

On the term Qallunaat, Minnie Aodla Freeman’s introduction to *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, exh. cat. (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1995), explains that the Inuit word that refers to Europeans and, later, to Euro-Canadians and other non-Inuit who came to the Arctic. Interestingly, the word does not translate to “light-skinned people” or “strangers” as one might expect, but could mean either “people with beautiful eyebrows” or “people with beautiful manufactured material” (15–16).

2. See “Dialogue: Pumipau in Conversation with Zacharias Kunuk,” in *Transference, Technology, Tradition: Aboriginal Media and New Media Art* (Banff: Banff Centre Press, 2005); Raúl Gavez,

but that usefully illuminate my view. I also note, however, that although I was raised in the North and still spend a considerable amount of my time and research in the Arctic with Inuit, as a student of Inuktitut, there is knowledge, through language, to which I do not yet have access and may never fully understand. It is my hope that Inuit curators and art scholars who are fluent Inuktitut speakers will take up and refine this rudimentary work, and that future Inuit curators, art historians, and theorists will far exceed it.

Ilippunga: I Have Learned and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

On June 25, 2016, the Pierre Lassonde Pavilion of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) opened to the public. The decidedly contemporary expansion of stacked glass rectangles increased the museum space by 90 percent, adding three levels of galleries, the Grand Hall, and a new auditorium, restaurant, courtyard, and shop. In the front half of the top floor facing north is the Brousseau Inuit Art Collection. In 2013, I was hired as an independent curator to develop a new permanent exhibition by drawing on the museum's collection of over twenty-six hundred works of Inuit art, the vast majority of which were donated by the collector and later gallerist Raymond Brousseau, who acquired the pieces over more than half a century.³

Brousseau and his wife, Lys, an exhibition designer, created the museum's first exhibition of this collection, and it was on display in the original MNBAQ building between 2006 and 2013. I was invited to bring a new, Inuit perspective to the presentation of what is largely a modern Inuit art collection, with works created from the early 1950s to the present. Although the collection contains a few works in nearly every common twentieth-century Inuit media (basketry, drawings, prints, ceramics, and so on), the vast majority of the artworks, and by far the greatest strength of the collection, are sculptures. Working with that strength, I decided to make the exhibition a sculptural one and activate the presentation of these objects with video within the gallery space. The challenge was not in selecting compelling works for display—Brousseau has a critical eye for Inuit sculpture and amassed an important collection—but rather in taking an existing collection, one that had already been on display for nearly a decade, and saying something novel and meaningful about mid- to late-twentieth-century Nunavut and Nunavik sculpture, the area of Inuit art already most studied, exhibited, and discussed in art scholarship.

To do so, I proposed a new possible direction for interpreting Inuit art history from an emic perspective, taking the phrase *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* as the basis for understanding Inuit artistic productions throughout our long history and today. While the Inuktitut phrase is often simply translated as “Inuit traditional knowledge,” it can be more accurately understood to encompass the complex matrix of Inuit environmental knowledge, societal values, cosmology, worldviews, and language. The term *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* comes from the verb *qaujima* or “to know,” referring to “that which Inuit have always known to be true.”⁴ While the tenets of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, now commonly referred to as IQ, have always existed in Inuit society, the widespread adoption of the overarching term itself is somewhat new. In 1999, when Nunavut separated from the Northwest Territories to become Canada's largest territory, the territorial government chose

“Epic Inuit: In Conversation with Zacharias Kunuk,” *Montage*, Spring 2002, 11; and Gillian Robinson, ed., *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen: A Sense of Memory and High Definition Inuit Storytelling* (Montreal: Isuma, 2008).

3. The Brousseau Inuit Art Collection in the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec is one of Canada's most significant collections of Inuit sculpture, and it contains numerous works by many prominent, influential artists. The collection features more than twenty-six hundred pieces, including over twenty-one hundred sculptures, created by dozens of artists from communities across the Canadian North since the mid-twentieth century. The collector Raymond Brousseau developed the collection over more than fifty years, primarily in his role as a Quebec gallerist.

4. Shirley Tagalik, “Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: The Role of Indigenous Knowledge in Supporting Wellness in Inuit Communities in Nunavut,” in *Child and Youth Health* (Ottawa: National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2009–10), 1–2.

to formally embed Inuit values, principles, and knowledge into the governance structures of Inuit regions and communities by using the language of IQ.⁵ The implementation of IQ by the government of Nunavut and other organizations makes a statement that, despite its ancient roots, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is not without relevance or application in modern Inuit life; it is a living knowledge. At the center of this philosophy is respect for relationships: the relationship with the land; the relationship with Arctic flora and fauna; and, especially, the relationship between family members and community members as to their responsibilities to each other, as well as their responsibility to pass on knowledge between generations. This philosophy, applied to the arts, underscores that for Inuit, the way to respect our ancestors is to maintain our living traditional knowledge and to be resourceful and creative, as they had to be. In this way, the work of Inuit artists is to constantly seek to deepen their knowledge of our longstanding creative practices while also continuously innovating to ensure that these practices thrive and participate in that living knowledge. Ingenuity is our tradition. The title of the exhibition, *Ilippunga*, the title which the elder Piita Irniq gave to me, reflects this intergenerational transmission of knowledge. It means, “I have learned.”

Art Production and the Six Principles of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

Within Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, six basic principles guide Inuit ontologies and social relations to Arctic residents—people, animals, and nonhuman entities. *Pilimmasarniq*, the first of the six tenets, is the concept that guides the way in which Inuit artists train and develop—the acquisition of knowledge. The majority of artists today continue to develop their artistic skills and knowledge by learning from and observing other Inuit artists, rather than attending art school, visiting museums, and other forms of art training more common and accessible in southern Canada. Inuit artists often closely observe more senior family or community members at home, as is revealed in the works of prolific families such as the graphic artists Pitseolak Ashoona, her daughter Napatchie Pootoogook, and her granddaughters, the cousins Annie Pootoogook and Shuvanai Ashoona. This training also occurs in art-making cooperatives like the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative in Kinngait (Cape Dorset). The Inuit-led cooperative art movement that began in the 1950s and 1960s owes much of its success to this concept of knowledge sharing, as well as the concept of *anngiatqiniq*, the second tenet of IQ, which emphasizes the importance of consensus-building and collective decision-making, with a focus on benefiting the community before the individual.⁶ In collective art organizations like the Pangnirtung Tapestry Studio, weavers base their designs on drawings from named local artists, but collaborate to produce massive, elaborate tapestries that lend “a sense of pride as well as bringing economic benefits to the community while telling and preserving its stories for future generations.”⁷ Cooperatives across the Arctic thus exemplify a third concept as well, of *pinasuatqiniq*, the principle of working together for the common good, and are underscored by *pijitsirarniq*, a fourth tenet of IQ, the concept of serving, which is crucial to the understanding of how success is measured in Inuit communities.⁸ Contributions to the common good are considered the highest form of leadership, as well as the measure of achievement, maturity, and wisdom. Inuit recognize and appreciate the contributions of iconic artists such as Johnny Inukpuk,

5. See Frank Tester and Peter Irniq, “Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Social History, Politics and the Practice of Resistance,” *Arctic* 61, no. 5 (2008): 48–61.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Uqqurmiut Centre for Arts and Crafts, “The Pangnirtung Tapestry Studio,” 2011, at www.uqqurmiut.ca/Tapstudio.html, as of June 5, 2017.

8. See Tagalik, “Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit,” 2.



Annie Pootoogook, *Pitseolak Drawing with Two Girls on the Bed, detail, 2006*, colored pencil on paper, 20 x 26 in. (50.8 x 66 cm). Private collection (artwork © Dorset Fine Arts; photograph provided by Dorset Fine Arts)

Pudlo Pudlat, and Kenojuak Ashevak, who participated in the early modern art movement and were trailblazers for other Inuit artists, clearing a path for the success and prosperity of their communities. The principle that sustains community art collectives is the same value that leads Inuit hunters to distribute the results of the caribou hunt to all the elders in town, as reflected in works such as David Ruben Piqtoukun's minimalist sculpture *Division of Meat* (1996), which succinctly illustrates the importance of sharing healthy, wild food, and as an extension, all resources, equitably for the well-being of all.

A fifth value that can be extrapolated to the arts and is closely related to the previous tenet, is *qanurtuuqatigiinni*—being resourceful and inventive to solve problems.⁹ The ability to adapt, innovate, repurpose, and creatively find solutions to everyday problems is one of the most significant cultural traits of the Inuit, who are known for their ingenious resourcefulness in the Arctic, as exemplified by the invention of the *iglu* or *illuwigaq* (snow house), or the building of a *qayaq*, a one-person boat historically made using only driftwood, bones, sinew, and sealskin. Inuit have long survived in the Arctic with only the resources available from the land, ice, and sea; today they apply this same principle of extreme resourcefulness to their daily lives, making use of all of the supplies available to them. This valued quality has been and continues to be a touchstone of modern and contemporary Inuit art production as well. In the midcentury, Inuit merged their ancient practice of ivory carving, keen observation skills, and deep knowledge of the land required to source bone, ivory, and quarry stone, as well as their experience in making ivory miniatures for trade with whalers and fishermen, and applied that knowledge to the creation of a dynamic new kind of art production: modern stone sculpture. Following *qanurtuuqatigiinni*, being resourceful in the twenty-first century means continuing to make the most of what is available in the Arctic, by applying knowledge of the land to the quarrying of stone and harvesting of other

9. See Jaypetee Arnakak, "Commentary: What Is Inuit *Qaujimajatuqangit*? Using Inuit Family and Kinship Relationships to Apply Inuit *Qaujimajatuqangit*," *Nunatsiaq News*, August 25, 2000, at www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/archives/nunavutoo0831/nvt20825_17.html, as of June 5, 2017.



David Ruben Piqtoukun, *Division of Meat*, 1996, Brazilian soapstone, approx. 7½ x 5⅝ x 20⅞ in. (19 x 14.5 x 51 cm). Art Gallery of Ontario, gift of Samuel and Esther Sarick, 2001/417 (artwork © David Ruben Piqtoukun; photograph provided by Art Gallery of Ontario)

resources, as depicted in works like Michael Massie’s mixed-media sculpture carved from limestone, he gathers limestone to carve—portrait of the artist (2005). In this self-portrait, the artist and his material are one and the same; the artist shows himself both in the act of gathering materials from the land and being of the land. Finally, *avatimik kamatsianiq*—the concept of environmental stewardship—further underscores *qanuqtuurungnarniq*. It emphasizes the responsibility of Inuit to be respectful of their limited resources and to protect the land and its inhabitants. Manasie Akpaliapik’s massive, elaborate whalebone sculpture *Tribute to Animals* (1996), included in *Ilippunga*, with its many shifting, morphing, interrelated representations of animals from the sea, sky, and land, to which a central figure is bound, is a meaningful tribute to this theme and an expression of *avatimik kamattiarniq*. Being resourceful has always meant using materials sourced from the Arctic environment, using locally quarried stone or *ivik* (salt water grass); it is also suggested in art that features found objects like recycled beer boxes and used bingo cards, as in Jesse Tungilik’s humorous piece *Nunavice Flag* (2013).

Organizing an Exhibition According to IQ

In *Ilippunga: Inuit Art. The Brousseau Inuit Art Collection*, these six principles are borne out across a number of central themes, including “Respect for Animals, Respect for the Land / *Nirjutinik Suusutsaniq, Nunami Suusutsaniq*,” “Importance of Family and Respect for Motherhood / *Anaananiq suusutsaniq & Ilagiinniup pimmarinuna*,” and “Oral Histories of the Arctic / *Unikkaatuat*.” The works in these sections refer to such principles as *avatimik kamatsianiq*, which guide us to harvest only what is necessary and sustainable, and to maintain a respectful relationship with animals of the northern sea, sky, and land. This continues to be a pressing responsibility for Inuit, made even more urgent by rising levels of industrial pollutants in the North and the global effects of climate change, felt most acutely in the Arctic. Many artists have recently turned their attention to climate change and understanding ecological knowledge, such as Kunuk in his recent film *Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change* (2010), as well Geronimo Inutiq in experimental videos

Michael Massie, carved from limestone, he gathers limestone to carve—portrait of the artist, 2005, limestone, jatoba wood, ebony, bone, sinew, 13¾ x 20 x 15½ in. (34.9 x 50.8 x 39.4 cm) (artwork © Michael Massie; photograph provided by Spirit Wrestler Gallery)

Manasie Akpaliapik, Tribute to Animals, 1996, whale vertebra, ivory, steatite, claws, 11 x 39⅞ x 14⅞ in. (27.8 x 101.3 x 36.6 cm). Brousseau Inuit Art Collection, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (artwork © Manasie Akpaliapik; photograph provided by MNBAQ)



like *ARCTICNOISE* (2015), which remixes some of Kunuk's footage, showing elders reflecting on the same pressing topic.

Inuit art has also often focused on the transmission of Inuit oral histories, or *unikkaatuat*, through which storytelling practices, cultural histories, and personal memories have been preserved, morals and values are passed on, and knowledge of the powerful spirits that inhabit the Arctic land, sea, and sky—as well as the *angakkuit*, or shamans, who commune with them—are transmitted from one generation to the next.

Another persistent theme is the depiction of family, particularly motherhood and the important skills and knowledge mothers contribute and pass down intergenerationally, which make them critical to the fabric of Inuit society. Inuit families have long relied not only on the responsible harvest of animals but also on the ability to turn skins and hides into warm, waterproof clothing, and



Jesse Tungilik, Nunavice Flag, 2013, mixed media on plywood, approx. 4 x 6 ft. (1.2 x 1.8 m) (artwork © Jesse Tungilik; photograph provided by the artist)

contemporary clothing designers such as Victoria Okpik of Nunavik Creations—featured in one of the exhibition videos—continue to produce beautiful, elaborate garments in both skins and commercially produced fabrics, including the ever-popular, ingeniously designed mother’s coat, the *amauti*, in which the mother carries the child on her back, sheltered inside a large *amaut* (pouch) and hood. For Inuit, the representation of a mother and child in an *amauti* is not just an audience-pleasing motif, but also a present, shared experience of mothers and children today. A perennially popular image in Inuit prints and sculpture, its repetition embodies beliefs about Inuit approaches to early childhood development and the centrality of family.

Although *Ilippunga* is a sculptural exhibition—including works in a variety of carving materials such as serpentinite, steatite (soapstone), marble, bone, whalebone, and antler—the field of modern and contemporary Inuit art production is remarkably diverse and encompasses mediums such as basketry, photography, drawing, printmaking, jewelry, textile arts, installation, video, and new media. In even in the broadest study of Inuit art, common themes can be found across time, diverse circumpolar regions, and media. For example, Inuit artists continue to be fascinated by and invested in the representation of our land and animals. To Qallunaat audiences, the repeated motif of the dancing polar bear in print and stone may appear to be merely catering to desires of the southern art market and, to be sure, Inuit artists are savvy to the desires of the market and understand that such sculptures are popular and highly sought after. Yet even a simple dancing bear sculpture can also reveal aspects of Inuit *Qaujimagatuqangit*. It is my thesis that all of these productions can be understood through its lens. Our arts do not need to take the form or medium of “traditional” Inuit art or craft in order to participate in the continuation of our living traditions. Rather, the presence of



Clothing designer Victoria Okpik demonstrates the pouch where a baby rests inside the back of a sealskin amauti, 2016, video still, *Ilippunga: I Have Learned*. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (photograph provided by MNBAQ)

Inuit knowledge, values, and teachings is the evidence of that continuity. In the above example, *pilimmasarniq*—the principle of acquiring and sharing skills and knowledge through careful observation and practice—reflects an artist’s complex knowledge of the interrelated land and sea mammals, fish, and birds that populate Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit regions of Canada. Even fanciful depictions can reveal intimate, lived knowledge of the Arctic. Some knowledge about polar bears can only be gained by patient observation and time on the land, such as knowing how the vertebrae in a bear’s neck will elongate when it dives underwater, or how a bear will sniff the air when it catches the scent of prey far across the ice. In this way, Inuit artworks demonstrate how lived experiences, values, and knowledge are embedded and apparent in a variety of complex and interrelated ways, even if it is not always apparent to southern audiences, as well as how important it is for Inuit to be able to demonstrate to each other that, through their art, *ilippunga*—“I have learned,” or I am learning.¹⁰

It is important to acknowledge that there have been significant disruptions to the intergenerational transmission of Inuit Qaujimaqatunqangit, not coincidentally occurring throughout the same period in which the modern Inuit art movement was born in the Arctic. In *Ilippunga*, the section that addresses this issue is titled “Changes in the Arctic in the Twentieth Century: Christianity, Colonialism, Modernization / Ukiurtatuup Asitjipaalianinga: Uppiniq, Qallunaanut tikitausimaniq, Nutaanngupalliajut.” Artists across the North have addressed this topic many times in recent years. For countless generations before contact with outsiders, the Inuit of the circumpolar region maintained their knowledge, histories, and spiritual customs, yet in the early twentieth century, the rapid introduction of Christianity and the colonization that swept across the North threatened to

10. For an introduction to the interrelated concepts of IQ, see Arnakkak.

disrupt, even erase, Inuit values, language, and spirituality. Within a period of a few short decades between 1900 and 1950, the Inuit way of life was rapidly altered by contact with Qallunaat culture in the North, in areas now known as Nunavut and Nunavik, and earlier in the east and west of the Arctic. Massive changes came to the Arctic. Inuit were almost completely converted to Christianity in the first decades of the century by eager missionaries.¹¹ At the same time, the Hudson's Bay Company began building trading posts in the Arctic and encouraged the Inuit to trap for financial gain rather than to hunt for food. This economic shift soon led many Inuit to settle in communities around the posts, which then led to a scarcity of local "country food," thereby causing an increased reliance on canned goods and other store-bought items from southern Canada. The Inuit quickly became skilled in their employment as trappers of such animals as Arctic fox, only to have the fur industry collapse in the 1930s during the Great Depression, leaving many of them suddenly economically dependent on the state.¹² The new settlements also became unfortunate breeding grounds for foreign diseases such as smallpox and tuberculosis. Following a 1935 census, all Inuit—who had previously been known only by one name—were forced to identify themselves to the government according to their "Eskimo Identification" tag serial numbers (sometimes known as E7 numbers), rather than their names, and this demeaning colonial practice continued until the advent of Project Surname in 1969.¹³ In Nunavik and Nunatsiavut, the federal government relocated a number of Inuit communities, an action that had long-term, devastating consequences wherever it occurred.¹⁴ There have also been allegations that Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers orchestrated the slaughter of thousands of sled dogs across the Arctic to force Inuit to stay in their new communities, a tragic story that was recently investigated by Nunavut's Qikiqtani Truth Commission.¹⁵

After 1950, the government required almost all children to attend school, compelling parents to send their children, some as young as four and five, to federally funded, church-run schools. The role of these schools was to "civilize" the Native population, and it was thought that moving Inuit children to schools far from their homes and introducing them to a completely foreign way of life would be the most effective way to accomplish this purpose, so many Inuit children were sent to residential schools or "day schools" where they lived in nearby hostels. In contrast to these purported aims, the disastrous legacy of the residential school system is frequently one of neglect, abuse, and mistreatment; where schools were underfunded and mismanaged, and children were underfed, lived in overcrowded dormitories, and were forbidden to speak their language. Many children suffered physical, mental, and sexual abuse, and for some that trauma has been passed on through generations from parent to child. Artists such as the brothers Abraham Anghik Ruben and David Ruben Piqtoukun were among the first Inuit artists to directly address the impact of residential schools in their sculptures. The devastating legacies of these combined efforts to eradicate Inuit culture and ways of life continue to be felt in Inuit communities today.¹⁶

In this difficult period of cultural upheaval, it was artists who preserved much of this vulnerable knowledge by recording in their artworks what they were discouraged from or forbidden to practice in their own communities. These prohibitions included knowledge of ceremonies, *angakkuit*, the spirit world, tattoos, oral histories, and great legends, which can now be accessed through sculpture and the

11. For a discussion on traditional Inuit spirituality and the introduction of Christianity throughout the Arctic, see Frédéric B. Laugrand and Jarich G. Oosten, *Inuit Shamanism and Christianity: Transitions and Transformations in the Twentieth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

12. For more on the Canadian Arctic fur trade and its impact on Inuit peoples, see Kenneth Coates, *Canada's Colonies: A History of the Yukon and Northwest Territories* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1985).

13. See Valerie Alia, *Names, Numbers, and Northern Policy: Inuit, Project Surname, and the Politics of Identity* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1994).

14. The forcible relocation of Inuit families and communities has been explored in Frank J. Tester and Peter Kulchyski, *Tammarniit (Mistakes): Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic 1939–63* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994); René Dussault and George Erasmus, *The High Arctic Relocation: A Report on the 1953–55 Relocation* (Ottawa: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, published by Canadian Government Publishing, 1994); and Carol Brice-Bennett, *Reconciling with Memories: A Record of the Reunion at Hebron 40 Years after Relocation / Ikkaumajännik Piusivinnik: Titigattausimajut Katiutsumaningit Hebronimi 40 Jâret Kingungani Nottitaisimaldlutik* (Nain: Labrador Inuit Association, 2000).

15. The final written and video reports of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission examining this history can be downloaded and viewed at <http://qtcommission.ca>, as of June 5, 2017.

16. For more on Inuit residential schools, see Heather Igloorte, ed., "We Were So Far Away": *The Inuit Experience of Residential Schools* (Ottawa: Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2010); and David King, *A Brief Report of The Federal Government of Canada's Residential School System for Inuit* (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2006).



Barnabus Arnasungaaq, *Man Carrying a Sculpted Muskox*, 1990, basalt, $10\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{8} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$ in. (25.9 x 16.8 x 16.1 cm). Brousseau Inuit Art Collection, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (artwork © Barnabus Arnasungaaq; photograph provided by MNBAQ)

graphic arts. By embedding that otherwise forbidden knowledge in their artworks, Inuit artists expressed the principle of *qanuqtuurunarniq*, being innovative and resourceful to solve problems, by using the means available to them—art making—to cleverly safeguard Inuit knowledge for future generations. This resourcefulness is perhaps the single most important trait valued by Inuit, who survived for millennia in the Arctic with only the resources available in the vast, yet relatively barren Arctic land, sky, and sea. As Jaypetee Arnakak has explained, “Inuit culture is *qanuqtuurniq*.”¹⁷ Around the midcentury, Inuit began to apply their skills in carving ivory, powers of observation, and extensive understanding of the land required to find bone and quarry stone to the creation of a dynamic new kind of art production, stone sculpture. This shift from hunter to artist is celebrated in works such as Barnabus Arnasungaaq’s *Man Carrying a Sculpted Muskox* (1990), in which the artist reflects on the significance of the introduction of the art industry on his livelihood and identity. By adapting quickly to this new industry, Inuit artists such as Arnasungaaq from across Inuit Nunangat developed a modern stone sculpture industry that largely replaced the rapidly declining commerce in trapping, while garnering worldwide critical and popular acclaim.

Finally, *Ilippunga* reflects on the exciting new period developing in the arts and in our communities with the section “Cultural Resurgence through the Arts / Ilurqusirmik uummatitsiniq takuminartutigut.” As the Inuit regions of Canada

17. Arnakak.



Tanya Lukin Linklater, still from *Slay All Day*, 2016, video, 4 min. (artwork © Tanya Lukin Linklater; photograph provided by Remai Modern)

Tanya Tagaq on stage, date unknown (photograph by Massey Hall)



have, as recently as 2005, settled all land claims across the Arctic, we have been experiencing an emergent yet powerful political and cultural renaissance.¹⁸ Although Inuit still grapple with the histories and ongoing legacies of nearly a century of colonialism in the North, and current serious issues regarding the environment, food security, and quality of life in the Arctic, there has been a shift toward Inuit independence and a return to a self-determined existence brought about by the practice of Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit, paralleled by a growing critique of past representations and an assertion of Inuit self-representation. Tanya Lukin Linklater's video *Slay All Day* (2016) features elements of choreography informed by Robert Flaherty's controversial film *Nanook of the North* (1920), as well as movements inspired by Inuit traditional games and athletic competitions, offering at once a critique of colonial representation and its antidote. In the arts, we are witnessing the rapid reemergence and popularity of many forms of cultural expression such as Inuit dance, athletics, and performance. Inuit throat singing, or *katujjaniq*, which largely fell out of practice in Inuit communities in the latter half

18. See Heather Igloliorte, "Arctic Culture / Global Indigeneity," in *Negotiations in a Vacant Lot: Studying the Visual in Canada*, ed. Lynda Jessup, Erin Morton, and Kirsty Robertson (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 152; and Bernadette Driscoll Englestad, "Inuit Art and the Creation of Nunavut," in *Inuit Modern*, ed. Gerald McMaster (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 2011), 36.



Hugh Haqpi, *Preacher in a Kayak*, 1993, basalt and caribou antler, $5\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{8} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$ in. (14.9 x 8.6 x 22.1 cm). Brousseau Inuit Art Collection, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (artwork © Hugh Haqpi; photograph provided by MNBAQ)

of the twentieth century, has recently become popular again, and many young women are learning the practice now. Contemporary musicians such as Tanya Tagaq and the Sila Sisters have helped popularize and share this art form with a new generation. The rapper Nelson Tagoona has created a new hybrid style of beat-boxing that draws on *katajjaniq*, which he has dubbed “throatboxing.” Similarly, drum groups and other forms of cultural expression are also on the rise, signaling a hopeful new era for the residents of Inuit Nunangat as well as the Inuit living in urban centers across southern Canada. As Inuit continue to practice Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit and ensure its continuation and relevance in daily life, our artistic practices thrive.

In *Ilippunga*, sculptures ranging from the miniature to the monumental are grouped together on several levels of a large, central display structure, rather than in individual cases, creating relationships among works that vary depending on the direction you choose to navigate through the display. There is no didactic path or chronology; instead, the sculptures are organized to relate to each other in a holistic fashion. For example, the section “Cultural Resurgence through the Arts,” which features images of Inuit throat singers, dancers, and storytellers, either flows into or out from “Changes in the Arctic in the Twentieth Century,” providing the viewer with insights into where we have come from and where we are going—or it flows into or out from a section on oral history that focuses on personal and collective memory. That section also flows into or out from the oral history specifically on knowledge of the *angakkuit*, which also flows into or out from sections on transformations and pre-Christian spirituality, but is across from the area dedicated to the introduction of Christianity in “Changes in the Arctic in the Twentieth Century.” In this way, your path through the exhibition



Koomatuk Curley video on one of the eight exhibition digital media stations, 2016, installation view, *Ilippunga: I Have Learned*, Brousseau Inuit Art Collection, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (photograph by Daniel Drouin provided by MNBAQ)

shapes how you come to understand the complexity and interrelatedness of Inuit knowledge, history, and culture. The works are further contextualized by a series of short videos on multimedia players that line the outer walls of the gallery space, featuring a group of Inuit who share their knowledge of ongoing practices not only in the visual arts but also in clothing production, throat singing, tattooing, and other cultural practices that were threatened during colonization but are now experiencing a resurgence. The videos feature prominent Inuit artists and knowledge keepers, including Irniq, the throat singer and musician Beatrice Deer, the cultural consultant Evie Mark, the sculptor David Ruben Piqtoukun, the filmmaker Alethea Arnaquq-Baril, the sculptor Kuzy (Koomatuk) Curley, and the clothing designer Victoria Okpik, and include Inuktitut text and syllabic translations by Harriet Keleutak and Taqralik Partridge. The inclusion of these short videos, which relate to both specific works and the overall themes of the exhibition, highlights areas of Inuit knowledge, history, and culture while also providing the visitor with new ways of looking at these objects and understanding how Inuit view their own artistic production. Their multivocal inclusion works to address the longstanding lack of Inuit voices within Inuit art and exhibition history and indicates a path forward in the discourse on Inuit art.

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