

Shuvinai Ashoona

Born 1961, Kinngait, Qikiqtaaluk

The Inuit artist Shuvinai Ashoona creates her work at the Kinngait Studios, a community-run art-making cooperative incorporated in 1959 as the artistic arm of the West Baffin Cooperative. The work of her fellow Studio members—her aunts Napachie Pootoogook, Mayoreak Ashoona, and Kenojuak Ashevak—has made a profound influence on her art. Ashoona's pen-and-pencil drawings fuse past and present into a divinatory future. The humans depicted in her drawings are joined by mermaids, human-animal hybrids, and fantastical sea creatures. Surreal details – a mother's nourishing breast transformed into the Earth, the mask-like faces of a hooded figure, the fluorescent orange tint of a giant octopus – signal spiritual, cosmological, or phantasmic forces in delicate coexistence with the everyday.

Ashoona first came to prominence in the late 1990s, when her work was included in the 1997 Cape Dorset Annual Print Collection. Recent solo presentations of her work include *Holding on to Universes* at Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow (2020), and *Mapping Worlds*, organized by the Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto (2019), which toured venues across Canada. Her work is in a number of public collections including the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Canadian Museum of History, Ottawa/Gatineau, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the National Museum of the American Indian, Washington DC. In 2018, Ashoona received the prestigious Gershon Iskowitz Prize.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2024

Shuvinai Ashoona: When I Draw, The Perimeter, London, UK

2022

Inside Out: Shuvinai Ashoona, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

Shuvinai Ashoona (online exhibition), Fort Gansevoort, New York, NY.

2021-22

Shuvinai Ashoona: Beyond the Visible, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada.

Shuvinai Ashoona: Drawings, Institute of Contemporary Art Miami, Miami, FL.

2020

Shuvinai Ashoona: Vapourating, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

Shuvinai Ashoona: Holding Onto Universes, Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow, United Kingdom.

2019

Shuvinai Ashoona: Mapping Worlds (touring), organized and presented by The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto, Canada, on view at Confederation Centre of the Arts, Charlottetown, P.E.I., Canada, Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Montreal, Canada, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada, Yukon Arts Centre, Whitehorse,

Canada, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, Art Canada Institute (online), Toronto, Canada.

Shuvinai Ashoona: We End Up Dreaming, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

2017

Shuvinai Ashoona: Curiosities, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

Shuvinai Ashoona: A For Sure World, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

2014

Shuvinai Ashoona: Woven Thoughts, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

2013

Shuvinai Ashoona: Merged Realities, Inuit Gallery of Vancouver, Vancouver, Canada.

2012

Shuvinai Ashoona: The Printed Works, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

Shuvinai's World(s), Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

Shuvinai Ashoona: Ground, MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Canada.

2011

Contemporary Reflections, The Canadian Guild of Crafts, Montreal, Canada.

2009

Shuvinai Ashoona Drawings, Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa, Canada.

2007

Shuvinai Ashoona: Drawings 1993-2007, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

2006

Shuvinai Ashoona: Time Interrupted, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2023

Once a Myth, Becoming Real, 14th Gwangju Biennale, LeeKangHa Art Museum, Gwangju, Republic of Korea.

2022

Secret Chord: An Ode to Montreal, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, New York.

Ceremony (Burial of an Undead World), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin Germany.

Splendid Isolation, S.M.A.K.— Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent, Belgium.

The Image of the Environment, Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre, Oakville, Canada.

The Milk of Dreams, La Biennale di Venezia, 59th International Art Exhibition, Venice, Italy.

New Inuit Art: Contemporary Inuit Art of Kinngait, The National Museum of Ethnography, Warsaw, Poland.

Ashoona: Enduring Art Stories, La Guilde, Montreal, Canada.

2020

Hybridity: Françoise Oklaga & Shuvinai Ashoona, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Gropius Bau, Berlin, Germany.

2019

An Opera for Animals, Para Site, Hong Kong, and Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, China.

The Co-op, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

2018

Manif d'Art, Quebec City Biennial, Quebec City, Canada.

Canadian Biennial, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

2017

Every, Now, Then: Reframing Nationhood, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada.

The Voiced Plate: Contemporary Inuit Prints, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

Earthlings, Esker Foundation, Calgary, Canada.

Astral Bodies, Mercer Union, Toronto, Canada.

2016

Neon NDN: Indigenous Pop Art, Saw Gallery, Ottawa, Canada.

Change Makers, Art Gallery of Mississauga, Mississauga, Canada.

Cape Dorset and Points South 2, Theo Gantz Studio, Beacon, NY.

Floe Edge: Contemporary Art and Collaborations from Nunavut, Canada Gallery, Canada House, London, United Kingdom.

2015

Universal Cobra: Shuvinai Ashoona and Shary Boyle, Pierre-François Ouellette Art Contemporain, Montreal, Canada.

Contemporary North II, Madrona Gallery, Victoria, Canada.

Fifteen Years: Kingait 2000-2015, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

Axeme 07 – Axe/Direction, Stockholm Supermarket Art Fair, Stockholm, Sweden.

Over the Top, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

Unsettled Landscapes: SITElines: New Perspectives on the Art of the Americas, SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM.

Shine a Light: Canadian Biennial 2014, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

2014

North South Encounter, Pierre-François Ouellette Art Contemporain, Montreal, Canada.

Views from the North: Original Drawings from Cape Dorset, Alaska on Madison, New York, NY.

Cape Dorset: New Generation, Willock and Sax Gallery – Banff Art Gallery, Banff, Canada.

Winter Show: Gallery Artists, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

2013

Cape Dorset Prints, Gallery 210, St. Louis, MO.

Sanaunguanik: Traditions and Transformations in Inuit Art, Enterprise Square Gallery, Edmonton, Canada.

Toronto International Art Fair, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, Canada.

Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

Shuvinaï Ashoona and John Noestheden: Earth and Sky, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

New Voices from the New North, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

Dorset Seen, Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa, Canada.

Animal Power: Images in Contemporary Inuit Art, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

Where Do We Come From? What are We? Where are We Going? Identity in Contemporary Cape Dorset Art, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Canada.

Takujaksait (Something to See), Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum, Iqaluit, Canada.

Air, Land, Seed, 516 Arts, Albuquerque, NM.

Oh, Canada: Contemporary Art from North North America, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, MA.

Telling Stories: Inuit Art from Cape Dorset, Toronto Pearson International Airport (Terminal 1), Toronto, Canada.

2012

John Noestheden: Sky and Shuvinaï Ashoona: Earth, 18th Biennale of Sydney: All our Relations, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.

The Unexpected, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

Sky Ecchymosis: Part of the Series – Women of the Arctic, La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse, Montreal, Canada.

Dorset Now, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

Sleep of Reason, Yukon Arts Centre, Whitehorse, Canada.

Octopus Dreams: 200 Works on Paper by Contemporary Native American Artists, Yekaterinburg Museum of Fine Arts, Yekaterinburg, Russia, State Museum of Novosibirsk, Novosibirsk, Russia, Togliatti Art Museum, Tolyatti, Russia, Samara Regional Museum of Art, Samara, Russia, Tomski Regional Art Museum, Tomsk, Russia, and Irkutsk Regional Art Museum, Irkutsk, Russia.

Women in Charge: Inuit Contemporary Women Artists, Museo Nazionale Preistorico ed Etnografico Luigi Pigorini, Rome, Italy.

2011

Contemporary North: Drawings from Cape Dorset, Madrona Gallery, Victoria, Canada.

Surreal: Eight Artists in the Fantastical Tradition, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

Dorset Annual Print Collection, Gallery d'Art Vincent, Ottawa, Canada.

Dorset Large: Large Scale Drawings from the Kinngait Studios, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

Gallery Artists, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

Inuit Modern: The Samuel and Esther Sarick Collection, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada.

It Is What It Is: Recent Acquisitions of New Canadian Art, Canadian Biennial, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

Ijurnaqtut: Whimsy, Wit and Humor in Inuit Art, Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa, Canada.

2010

Nipirasait: Many Voices, Inuit Prints from Cape Dorset, The Canadian Embassy Art Gallery, Washington, DC.

The Drawing Room, Pendulum Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

North Meets South, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

Monster, West Vancouver Museum, West Vancouver, Canada.

Big, Bold and Beautiful: Large Scale Drawings from Cape Dorset, Museum of Inuit Art, Toronto, Canada.

Facing Forward – New Works from Kinngait Studios, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

Nunannguaq: In the Likeness of the Earth, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Canada.

Uuturautiit: Cape Dorset Celebrates 50 Years of Printmaking, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

Arctic Spirit: 50th Anniversary of Cape Dorset's Kinngait Studios, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada.

2009

Mixed Media from Cape Dorset, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

Noise Ghost: Shary Boyle and Shuvinai Ashoona, Justina M. Barnike Gallery, Hart House, Toronto, Canada.

Extreme Drawing, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

Kenojuak Ashevak RCA, CC and Shuvinai Ashoona, Inuit Gallery of Vancouver, Vancouver, Canada.

Contemporary Traditions: Shuvinai Ashoona and Annie Pootoogook, Pierre-François Ouellette Art Contemporain, Montreal, Canada.

2008

Never Let the Facts Get in the Way of the Truth, Western Front, Vancouver, Canada.

Breaking Ground: New Oil Stick Drawings from Cape Dorset, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

The Basel Project: Shuvinai Ashoona and John Noesthedan, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

Earth and Sky, Stadhimmel Citysky Project, Basel, Switzerland.

2007

Three Cousins, Original Drawings by Annie Pootoogook, Shuvinai Ashoona and Siassie Kenneally, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

Burning Cold: Emerging Artists from Across the North and South, Yukon Arts Centre, Whitehorse, Canada.

Ashoona: Third Wave, New Drawings by Shuvinai Ashoona, Siassie Kenneally and Annie Pootoogook, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

2006

Landscape: Contemporary Inuit Drawings, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

Drawing Restraint, Saw Gallery, Ottawa, Canada.

Marion Scott at 30: 65 Masterpieces from the Canadian Arctic, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

2005

Oye Canada, VIP Lounge, Canadian Pavillion, Expo2005, Aichi, Japan.

Unique Visions, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

2001

Transitions 2, Inuit and Inuit Art Centre, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Montreal, Canada.

Art by Women: An Investigation of Inuit Sculpture and Graphics, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Canada.

2000

Shuvenai Ashoona and Annago Ashevak, Inuit Gallery of Vancouver, Vancouver, Canada.

1999

Three Women, Three Generations: Drawings by Pitseolak Ashoona, Napatchie Pootoogook and Suvenai Ashoona, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Canada.

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS

2022

La Biennale di Venezia, 59th International Art Exhibition (awarded special mention)

2018

Gershon Iskowitz Prize

2017

REVEAL Indigenous Art Award, Hnatyshyn Foundation

2016

Elected to the Royal Canadian Academy of the Arts

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada

Art Gallery of Guelph, Guelph, Canada

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada

BMO Financial Group, Corporate Art Collection, Toronto, Canada

Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa, Canada

Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau, Canada

Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI

Fidelity Investments Corporate Art Collection, Boston, MA

George Brown College, Toronto, Canada
Hart House Collection, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Canada
Inuit Art Centre, Indian and Northern Affairs, Ottawa, Canada
McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Canada
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Canada
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada
National Museum of the American Indian, New York, NY
Oakville Galleries, Oakville, Canada
Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO
TD Gallery of Inuit Art, Toronto, Canada
Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Canada
Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada