

A Story in Three Parts opens at Kelowna Art Gallery

A Story in Three Parts: Ashevak, Pootoogook, Isuma
December 4, 2021 to May 8, 2022

November 30, 2021 – Kelowna, BC: A new exhibition will line the walls of the Kelowna Art Gallery beginning this weekend. Titled *A Story in Three Parts: Ashevak, Pootoogook, Isuma*, it brings together three distinct but connected narratives, which explore the past and present of Inuit creative expression.

“Okanagan audiences are in for a treat. This will be the first time we’ve shown work by these groundbreaking artists,” says Nataley Nagy, Executive Director at the Gallery “The breathtaking prints, eerie and playful monochromatic drawings, along with the film and video works will transport patrons thousands of miles away to the Canadian Arctic.”

The exhibition features the work of **Kenojuak Ashevak** (1927–2013) and **Sharni Pootoogook** (1922–2003), early generation Kinngait (formerly Cape Dorset) artists who became two of the first to create drawings, prints, and sculptures under the auspices of the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative. Both were instrumental in establishing the global importance of Canada’s Inuit art movement. It was fifty years ago (in 1970) that Ashevak’s *The Enchanted Owl* was reproduced by Canada Post on a six-cent stamp commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the Northwest Territories. This marked the first time a female Inuit artist’s work had ever been displayed on a Canadian stamp.

Flash forward to 1990 when **Isuma** — the third part of the story and Canada’s inaugural Inuit-owned independent production company — was formed. Isuma received global recognition for their first feature-length drama *Atanarjuat The Fast Runner*, when it won the Camera d’or at the Cannes Film Festival in 2001. At the presentation in Kelowna, visitors will be able to watch *Ataguttaluk – A Life to Live For* (2020), a 37-minute experimental documentary created by filmmaker Carol Kunnuk. This powerful film set in the early 1900s tells the story of a woman who survived famine to become one of the most important residents of Igloolik.

Behind the exhibition is curator, educator, and writer **William Huffman**. He divides his time between Kinngait, Nunavut and Toronto working with the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative, which provides him with a unique lens.

“Beautiful, vibrant, colourful, yet brooding, stark, and sometimes haunting — these are the curious contradictions which are analogous to life in the Canadian Arctic,” says Huffman. “These three stories are a series of moments in which women of the North are the anchors of a constantly evolving Arctic narrative, ensuring prosperity, uplifting us, and inspiring us to overcome.”

A Story in Three Parts: Ashevak, Pootoogook, Isuma runs from December 4 to May 8, 2022. It is presented with support from Benson Law LLP, the Government of Nunavut, Canadian Heritage, and media support from *The Walrus*.

The Kelowna Art Gallery is located in the heart of the cultural district at 1315 Water Street.

Media Inquiries

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