

Johnny Pootoogook

January 29 – March 12, 2022



Daniel Faria Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of work by Johnny Pootoogook.

Johnny Pootoogook was born in 1970, in a traditional Inuit camp called Ikerasak, near Kinngait (Cape Dorset), Nunavut. His father, Kananginak Pootoogook, a prominent and involved community leader, was a renowned artist himself and a great influence in the development of Pootoogook's career. Inspired by his Inuit culture, Pootoogook depicts a wide range of subject matter, from landscapes and animals, to everyday scenes of community life, to intimate views of private life, to imagined scenes that often appear uncanny or surreal.

Pootoogook's detailed and meticulous drawings are intimately connected to language, bearing titles that are sometimes poetic and at other times humorous, and that lend new interpretations to the scenes and subjects he depicts. In one drawing titled "Box keeps getting smaller" a man's body fills the page as he curls over his knees as if trying to squeeze into the tight, square space of the paper. In another, titled "Farewell to an old friend," a man embraces a polar bear, their heads intertwined almost as one. Interested in compound words—two disparate things that come together to create a new subject with an entirely new meaning—Pootoogook uses wordplay as a way to expand his drawing practice beyond traditional image-making. Similarly, he often brings together two different views of the same subject, as in "The Artist," where we see a man split in two—his right side is dressed in protective equipment and his right arm yields a power tool as he cuts into stone, while his left

side is casually dressed in shorts and a t-shirt, his left arm resting on a table. His unique perspectives also bring the viewer into spaces caught somewhere between imagination and reality: animals rendered from above become pattern-like in "Herd of Caribou," or three fishermen in a boat appear almost flattened against a wall of sky as a seal looms in the forefront in "Seal pops up from the rear."

Pootoogook has had several exhibitions throughout his career, including a solo exhibition at Feheley Fine Arts in 2021, and his work is held in multiple collections including the Canadian Museum of History. In March 2022 his work will be included in an exhibition at the National Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw, Poland. He lives and works in Kinngait.

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