

Shuvinai Ashoona: *When I Draw*

24 January - 26 April 2024

The Perimeter is proud to announce a solo exhibition of Shuvinai Ashoona. Shuvinai Ashoona makes drawings which engage with the complexities of life, land and community in the Canadian Arctic, through fantastical motifs and modes of storytelling. The work interweaves scenes from everyday Arctic life with imagery associated with Inuit animism and shamanism. This is the first time Ashoona's works will be shown in Europe since receiving a Special Mention by the awards jury at the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022, for her installation of six drawings in *The Milk of Dreams*.

Shuvinai Ashoona (b. 1961) is a third-generation Inuit artist who lives and works in Kinngait (formerly Cape Dorset), Nunavut, in the Arctic north of Canada. Stemming from a lineage of celebrated artists, Ashoona continues a tradition of working at the West Baffin Cooperative's venerable Kinngait Studios. Founded in 1959, Kinngait Studios is a community owned cultural institution governed by an all-Inuit Board of Directors. Within the cooperative, the Ashoona family's artistic traditions can be traced back to generations of stone carvers, painters and printmakers.

Through the depiction of daily life in Kinngait, often seen through a surrealist lens, this exhibition delves into Ashoona's world as she narrates a vision of the Arctic landscape and community. As the artist says, "*Many people don't know what kind of a town it is and that we have some kinds of mountains around us. Since a long time ago there was a Kinngait, I couldn't know that much about it way back then, but maybe I'd like the people curious to know that it's surrounded by Nunavut and Arctic land and water.*"

Primarily working with coloured pencils and drawing, her practice maps the topography of both history and contemporary Inuit life with a sensitivity and stillness that radiates throughout the terrain. The dreamlike landscapes of Ashoona's monumental works articulate the relationship between scale and perspective as she captures an intimate view into life in Kinngait. These works exemplify the tension within the artist's process overlapping with popular culture and tradition in the North. Transitioning between perception of the real and imaginary, Ashoona creates transportive imagery that moves between the natural world and psychological mind, approaching each subject as a poetic entanglement.

"The power of art and imagination to inspire dialogue, understanding and change is undeniable. Shuvinai Ashoona is a vital creative voice in Canada and beyond, and her depictions of contemporary life in the Canadian Arctic tell the stories of her people and her world, from the dual impact of colonial and environmental changes in Nunavut, to the traditional tales and daily realities of Canada's far north. I am very proud to see one of Canada's most recognisable contemporary Inuit artists hosted in London by The Perimeter, and I am looking forward to discovering this exhibition, including the works that have been recently acquired by Tate."

The Honourable Ralph E. Goodale, PC, High Commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom.



Shuvinai Ashoona's work has been exhibited internationally and featured in major exhibitions including: Gwangju Biennale (2023); *Venice Biennale* (2022); Shuvinai Ashoona: *Drawings* at ICA Miami (2021); *Mapping Worlds* at The Power Plant, Toronto (2019); *18th Biennale of Sydney: All Our Relations* (2012); *Oh, Canada* (2012) at Mass MoCA. Her work are held in institutional public collections including Tate, UK; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, ON; and National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, DC, U.S.

The Perimeter is grateful for support from Tate, the West Baffin Cooperative, The High Commission of Canada in the United Kingdom, Gregor Muir, Fort Gansevoort, Royal Bank of Canada and Marnie Schreiber. This exhibition was made possible through the generous loan by Tate of all the Shuvinai Ashoona works in its collection.

This exhibition is presented in partnership with the West Baffin Cooperative.

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The Perimeter

The Perimeter is a non-profit exhibition space for contemporary art in London, founded by Alexander V. Petalas. The exhibition programme is defined by The Perimeter's objective to elevate British and international contemporary artists at pivotal moments in their careers.

Housed in a quiet cobbled mews in historic Bloomsbury, The Perimeter offers visitors a uniquely intimate encounter with exceptional art by some of today's leading and up-and-coming contemporary artists.

Since opening in 2018, The Perimeter has staged solo exhibitions dedicated to Carmen Herrera, Sarah Lucas, Ron Nagle, Andreas Schulze, Anj Smith, and Joseph Yaeger, and curated organised group exhibitions in partnership with external curators, which have highlighted the work of artists including Phyllida Barlow, Rachel Jones, Helen Marten, Walter Price and Wolfgang Tillmans, among others.