

FORT GANSEVOORT



**Saimaiyu Akesuk, Josie Pootoogook, Pitsiulaq Qimirpik, Ooloosie Saila,
Nicotye Samayualie, Padloo Samayualie, Alasuaq Sharky, and Ningiukulu Teevee**
Voices from Kinngait

An online exhibition

February 20, 2025 – April 26, 2025

Beginning February 20, 2025, Fort Gansevoort will present *Voices from Kinngait*, an online group exhibition of eight Inuit artists hailing from the Canadian Arctic. Saimaiyu Akesuk, Josie Pootoogook, Pitsiulaq Qimirpik, Ooloosie Saila, Nicotye Samayualie, Padloo Samayualie, Alasuaq Sharky, and Ningiukulu Teevee all live in Kinngait (formerly Cape Dorset), an Inuit hamlet at the southern tip of Baffin Island in the isolated territory of Nunavut. As members of the West Baffin Cooperative—an indigenous community-owned organization founded in 1959—they work alongside other multi-generational artist, who share space at the state-of-the-art Kinngait Studios, housed in Kenojuak Cultural Centre.

With a dynamic selection of drawings, *Voices from Kinngait* showcases a new wave of contemporary Inuit artists who are reconfiguring and critically examining their positions in relation to history, traditional media, and narrative figuration. While never fully divorced from the formal influences of older generations, these artists' varying aesthetic modes and proclivity for experimentation are expanding the horizons of established artmaking practices in their community. Filled with double-speak and winking referentiality, the works of these eight artists reflect contemporary Inuit culture from multivalent perspectives. By embracing personal expression and defying expectations of common pictorial motifs, their artmaking is boldly redefining Inuit cultural production in relation to the global contemporary art world.

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About the Artists

Saimaiyu Akesuk (b. 1988)

Saimaiyu Akesuk was born in Iqaluit (the capital city of the Nunavut territory) but has lived in Kinngait her whole life. Saimaiyu was inspired to start drawing by an artist friend, Ningiukulu Teevee, while they were enrolled in a class together at the Nunavut Teaching Education Program. Saimaiyu's expressively rendered drawings of birds and bears are characterized by bold and dynamic simplicity inflected with a touch of whimsy.

Josie Pootoogook (b. 1959)

Josie Pootoogook hails from a large, multi-generational artmaking family. Her father, Paulassie Pootoogook, was a well-known sculptor. Her brother, Itee Pootoogook, and sister, Malaiya Pootoogook, were graphic artists. All three of her other brothers are sculptors. Josie started drawing as a student and continued making graphic art as she entered adulthood. Her aesthetic is largely inspired by the works of her uncle, Kanaginak Pootoogook, her aunt, Napachie Pootoogook, and her late cousin, Annie Pootoogook. Following in the footsteps of her accomplished relatives, Josie utilizes a similar illustrative and observational approach in her drawing practice. Rendered with extraordinary attention to detail, her compositions depict scenes of everyday life in her native Kinngait community.

Pitsiulaq Qimirpik (b. 1986)

After apprenticing with his father, the renowned Dorset carver Kelly Qimirpik, Pitsiulaq Qimirpik established his own contemporary aesthetic both as a sculptor and a graphic artist. His sculpture practice marries pop-culture signifiers, including imagery of iPods and characters from Nintendo and *The Simpsons*, with traditional carving techniques and motifs. In 2021, he expanded his artmaking practice to graphic art. Characterized by energetic combinations of color and patterns, his expressive drawings of plants, animals, and human figures embody the playful spirit of their maker.

Ooloosie Saila (b. 1991)

As a child, Ooloosie Saila was first inspired to draw through occasional visits to the home of the artist Kenojuak Ashevak. In 2015, she embarked on her own artmaking journey, embracing drawing as her chosen medium. The Arctic landscape serves as a formative source of inspiration and appears as a recurring subject in much of Ooloosie's works. Her experimental rendering of perspective and space often manifests as colorful, abstracted compositions. She continues to explore various pictorial modes as a means to express diverse themes and ideas.

Nicotye Samayualie (b. 1983)

Nicotye Samayualie is the granddaughter of the well-known graphic artist Keeleemeeoomie Samayualie. Nicotye is fascinated by patterns found in nature and in industrially fabricated materials. Rendered with photo-realistic accuracy, many of her drawings depict quotidian objects and commercial products, such as the contents of a pantry shelf or a bottle of bleach. Through text-based artworks, she expresses personal anxieties and explores societal pressures. Her dense, stream-of-consciousness scrawling of English and Inuktitut phrases form weblike structures of intermingling languages.

Padloo Samayualie (b. 1977)

Padloo Samayualie comes from a family of well-known artists. Her grandparents on her mother's side are renowned sculptors Qababuwa and Taraya Tunnillie. Her grandmother on her father's side was the influential graphic artist Keeleemeeoomie Samayualie. Padloo's own artmaking journey began in earnest while attending a Banff drawing workshop in 2001. The formative experience expanded her horizon beyond traditional media and modes of representation. She has since studied jewelry making at Arctic College and participated in a Kinngait animation workshop in 2007. Her irreverent portraiture defies stereotypes of Inuit culture, while other works allude to settings beyond the borders of her small hamlet of Kinngait.

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Alasuaq Sharky (b. 1973)

At the young age of 13 or 14 years old, Alasua Sharky learned to carve by observing his grandfather, Kopapik Ragee, and his late stepfather, Shorty Killiktee. His engagement with graphic art, however, did not begin until 2016. Since then, he has experimented with various aesthetic modes in his drawings, and his personal style continues to evolve. His artworks often depict local Arctic animals, hunting scenes, and other genre scenes of his Kinngait community.

Ningiukulu Teevee (b. 1963)

Ningiukulu Teevee is one of the most versatile graphic artists to emerge from the Kinngait Studios. Ningiukulu's portraiture reflects contemporary Inuit fashion and modes of self-expression. Her comprehensive knowledge of Inuit legends often inspires the subject matter of her narrative drawings. In 2009, Ningiukulu's first children's book was published by Groundwood Books (A Division of House of Anansi Press). Entitled *Alego*, her book tells an autobiographical story of a young girl named Alego who goes clam digging with her grandmother for the first time and, along the way, discovers all of the wonders of the seashore. The book was short-listed for the Governor General's Literary Award for children's illustration.

About West Baffin Cooperative

The West Baffin Cooperative is an Inuit artist collective located in the Arctic hamlet of Kinngait, Canada, an isolated town in the Nunavut territory. The Co-op compound houses acclaimed third- and fourth-generation carvers, printmakers, and graphic artists. As a community-owned organization, shared profits are distributed annually to its shareholders, which include nearly all of the town's adults. Founded in 1959, the West Baffin Cooperative was established as a means to encourage artmaking as an income stream for local residents in the Canadian Arctic community. Today, the Co-op has an international reputation for the exquisite prints, drawings, and carvings created by its Inuit artist members. Much of the artwork produced in the Co-op celebrates Inuit culture and arctic wildlife.

For sale inquiries please contact:

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Caption and courtesy information:

Pitsiulaq Qimirpik

Mix Image

2022

Colored pencil on paper

10 x 13 inches

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