

# ANNIE POOTOOGOOK

Life & Work

By Nancy G. Campbell



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An illustration of a woman with dark hair, wearing a blue button-down cardigan with a floral brooch and a dark skirt. She is holding a bouquet of flowers tied with a red ribbon. The word "BIOGRAPHY" is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image. The background is a light beige color with several yellow circles scattered around.

# BIOGRAPHY

The life of Annie Pootoogook (1969–2016) tells an important national story, and her career marks a pivotal shift in the national consciousness around contemporary Inuit art. With a keen eye for detail and fearlessness in representing daily life—the celebratory, the frightening, and the mundane—she captured the attention of Southern audiences. Although imported culture and technologies have dramatically changed Inuit life, the North has also stayed true to tradition: community, food, and language remain sources of Inuit pride. In her drawings, Annie depicted what is still valued and unique in her culture and what is changing rapidly. She had a meteoric rise in the art world that was tragically cut short when she died in 2016.

### EARLY LIFE

A member of the Pootoogook clan, Annie<sup>1</sup> was the daughter of Napachie Pootoogook (1938–2002) and Eegyvudluk Pootoogook (1931–2000), and was a third-generation artist. She was born in 1969 in Kinngait (Cape Dorset), Nunavut, an isolated hamlet on Dorset Island off the southern coast of Baffin Island (Qikiqtaaluk). Kinngait, an Inuktitut name that refers to mountains, is home to one of the most important centres of art production in Canada, the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative; its art division is now known as Kinngait Studios. Both of Annie's parents were artists working with the Co-op, and her grandmother, the renowned artist Pitseolak Ashoona (c.1904–1983), and uncle, Kananginak Pootoogook (1935–2010), were also accomplished artists. In the 1970s, at the height of her career, Pitseolak's work was known throughout Canada and abroad, while Kananginak was a critical early leader at the Co-op. Annie grew up surrounded by artists, many of whom would be important influences when she began her own work as a professional artist.

Annie was the third youngest in a family of ten children. Her brother Goo Pootoogook (b.1956), the family's eldest child, also became an artist and still resides in Kinngait. Shortly before Annie's birth, her brother See and sister Annie died in a house fire. According to custom, Annie shares the same name as her deceased sister. Janet Mancini Billson and Kyra Mancini have noted that for Inuit, an important naming practice "involves passing on the name(s) of recently deceased community members to the next newborn, regardless of gender."<sup>2</sup> Also following this tradition, the first boy born after the accident was named Cee (also spelled See). Today Cee Pootoogook (b.1967) is an artist and printer at Kinngait Studios.



Annie Pootoogook, *3 Generations*, 2004-5, coloured pencil on paper, 66.0 x 101.5 cm, Collection of John and Joyce Price.



LEFT: Annie Pootoogook at Kinngait Studios, February 27, 2006, photograph by William Ritchie. RIGHT: Kinngait (Cape Dorset), c.2005, photograph by Nancy Campbell.

Another daughter, Kudluajuk, drowned in 1972 as a young child, swept away by a wave as she was playing on the shore. Despite these tragedies, family members recall hvaing a relatively happy childhood featuring trips to the land for clam digging, berry picking, and camping. Annie attended primary school in Kinngait and was a bright student.<sup>3</sup> Later she travelled to Iqaluit for four years of high school, as there was no high school in her community. It is uncertain whether she graduated. Her cousin, the artist Siassie Kenneally (1969-2018), remembered spending time together with Annie and noted that she was very social.



LEFT: Annie Pootoogook, *Showing a Drawing*, 2001-2, wax pastel and ink on Ragston paper, 66.0 x 50.9 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook, *Drawing with Pencil (Bay Blanket)*, 2005-6, coloured pencil, ink, paper, 55.9 x 66 cm, Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie.

### ARTISTIC TRAINING

Following high school, Annie spent time in Nunavik (Northern Quebec) before returning to Kinngait in 1990. At first Annie had difficulty finding a job in Kinngait. Given her artistic lineage, however, it was only natural to assume that

she would try her hand at drawing at Kinngait Studios, where many of her family members and members of the community worked and socialized each day while creating art to be sold in “the South.”<sup>4</sup> Kinngait boasts more artists per capita than any city in Canada—the result of a federal government program established in the 1950s with the intention of creating a cash economy in Inuit communities.

In 1997 Annie finally began drawing regularly. She honed her skills by working alongside the Elders at Kinngait Studios. In an apprenticeship-style system, she learned by observation and through the back-and-forth of critique and camaraderie among the younger and less experienced artists. They would watch and imitate the senior artists while they worked on developing their own individual styles, which were based on the precedents established by the Elders. Annie understood the purpose of this training; drawing was a way to provide an income for herself. She was encouraged by the Elder women in the community, including her mother, Napachie Pootoogook. Once she gained enough confidence, Annie picked up paper from the studios and began to make her first drawings at home. Then she made it a daily ritual. Each day she would work at the studio with focus, intent, and a drive to represent something new.

William (Bill) Ritchie (b.1954), the manager and supervisor of Kinngait Studios and the printers, offered support and encouragement. He found her “engaging, and kind of hip and cool” and “smart as a whip.”<sup>5</sup> In reflecting on her development as an artist, he noted, “At times she was uninterested and at other times she was keen. She learned to listen to advice, grew with praise and cash incentives, [and] took on the large paper challenge that everyone goes through.”<sup>6</sup> To Annie, as to the other artists, Kinngait Studios offered a supportive environment in which she could work and sell her drawings weekly, permitting her to be self-sufficient but not burdened with the business of selling her own art. There Annie found purpose and independence.



LEFT: Kananginak Pootoogook, *Untitled (Self-Portrait of Kananginak Drawing a Wolf)*, 2009, ink and coloured pencil on paper, 66 cm x 50.8 cm, Collection of John and Joyce Price. RIGHT: Shuvina Ashoona, *Three Cousins*, 2005, Fineliner pen and coloured pencil on paper, 66 x 102 cm, private collection.



Annie Pootoogook, *My Mother and I*, 2004-5, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 76.0 x 106.0 cm, Collection of John and Joyce Price.

### RAPID RISE

Annie's early drawings showed promise, and the more she drew, the more sophisticated her work became. For instance, *Pitseolak Drawing with Two Girls on Her Bed*, 2006, reveals her interest in experimenting with perspective. Her work also followed the path laid down by her grandmother, Pitseolak Ashoona, and her mother, Napachie Pootoogook, who created original autobiographical works that inspired her from a young age. Both Pitseolak and Napachie were highly observant and their profound insights were reflected in their works. Commenting on Napachie's drawings, Darlene Coward Wight noted that they "are filled with details that give a realistic portrait of the culture of the Inuit of south Baffin Island, or the Sikusilaarmiut: the clothing, hairstyles, tools, summer and winter dwellings, and the landscape setting."<sup>7</sup> Annie was similarly gifted in capturing the nuances of her environment.

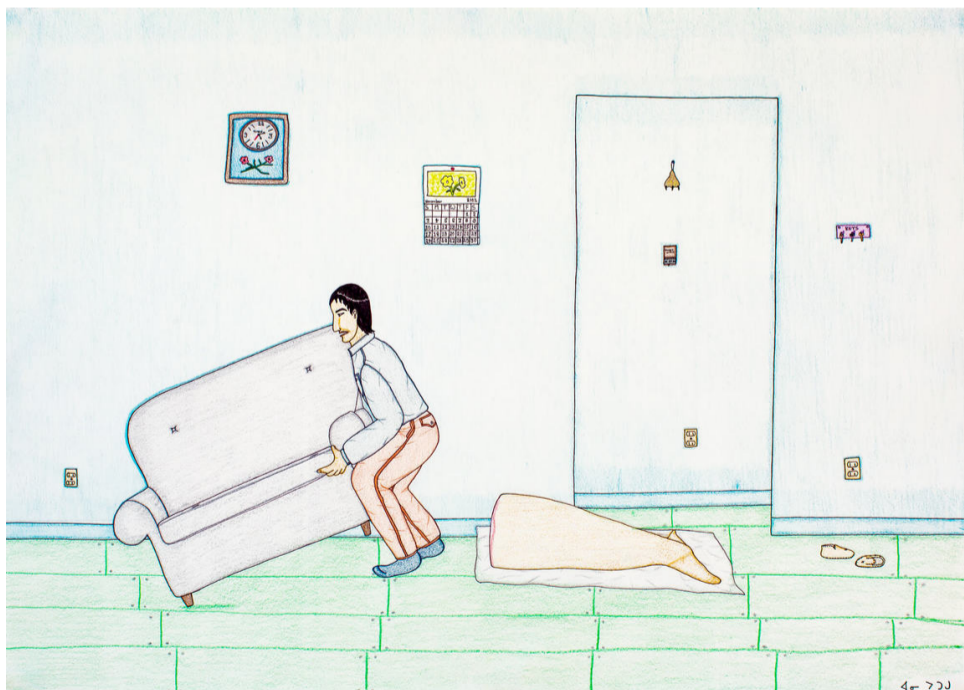
As early as 1997 her drawings caught the eye of Jimmy Manning, who was then an art buyer at the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative. Many of the artists working at the Co-op, though, had their doubts. Annie's drawings did not visually reflect the most prominent prevailing aesthetics and themes at the Co-op at that time, which were primarily scenes from nature or stories from Inuit mythology, subjects that appealed to buyers in the South. Instead, her work reflected the modern life of a young woman living in a consumer society. Some questioned whether this work would ever sell.<sup>8</sup>



LEFT: Napachie Pootoogook, *Aqaqtuq (Singing Love Song)*, 1993, lithograph, 51 x 66.3 cm. RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook, *In the Summer Camp Tent*, 2002, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66 cm, Collection of John and Joyce Price.

The answer soon came in the competitive art market of Toronto. In 2000 a group of Annie's drawings were brought to Dorset Fine Arts, the Toronto marketing arm of the Co-op. This showroom distributes drawings, prints, and sculptures created in Kinngait to sellers throughout the world. Annie's drawings were brought to the attention of art dealer Patricia Feheley, owner of Feheley Fine Arts in Toronto, by Manning, who suggested she take a look at this new artist's work. Feheley writes: "I...was stunned. Both the imagery and the direct style were so unusual and arresting. Although the Inuit Studio manager told me that I would never sell them, I asked for six to be shipped immediately."<sup>9</sup>

As a result of Feheley's interest, Annie was included in a 2001 group exhibition at Feheley Fine Arts titled *The Unexpected*, highlighting emerging artists from Kinngait. "People would gravitate automatically to her drawings," Feheley recalls.<sup>10</sup> The commercial success of this showing prompted Annie's first solo exhibition at the gallery: *Annie Pootoogook—Moving Forward: Works on Paper* was held in 2003. Many who visited the gallery were captivated by Annie's drawings, which included works such as *My Grandmother*, *Pitseolak*, *Drawing*, 2001-2, and *Preparing for the Women's Beluga Feast*, 2001-2. Highly original in content



Annie Pootoogook, *Preparing for the Women's Beluga Feast*, 2001-2, coloured pencil, graphite, and ink on paper, 47 x 66 cm, Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie.

and execution, her work was contemporary while also part of a long trajectory. As the exhibition catalogue noted, her drawings included an enormous range of references to twenty-first-century life in the Arctic, from televisions to community institutions, all of which shaped "northern reality and are as much part of the fabric of Annie's world as the dog sleds and skin clothing of



Pitseolak's drawings were part of Arctic life in the mid-twentieth century."<sup>11</sup>  
A few astute collectors bought out the show.

Writing about Annie's work shortly after her first solo exhibition, Feheley reflected on Annie's interest in how television news enters people's awareness in the North as persistently and obsessively as in the South:

It is not unprecedented for contemporary Inuit artists, particularly those of the younger generation, to create images inspired by current global events. Oviloo Tunnillie has created sculptures of praying or grieving women as a stated response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City. Other artists, including Kavavoaw Mannomee [Qavavau Manumie], have responded with graphics depicting planes crashing into buildings. Annie was not immune to the impact of this seminal moment, and has revisited the theme in her own recent drawings. She explains that Cape Dorset was inundated with news on the radio and television leading up to and during the [Iraq] war [of 2003], and the subject came to dominate local conversation and daily life in the North, as elsewhere.... In many ways Annie's images of the TV news footage of the war are most poignant as they reveal the literal "window on the world" created in contemporary Inuit homes by modern media.<sup>12</sup>



Annie Pootoogook, *War Is Over*, 2003, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66.5 cm, private collection.

Annie became well known for her work on "contemporary Inuit homes," and she quickly won the support of a group of tenacious curators and directors that



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included Wayne Baerwaldt, Reid Shier, and myself at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery in Toronto, and Christine Lalonde at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa.

In 2006 The Power Plant held a solo exhibition of Annie's work, simply titled *Annie Pootoogook*, which I curated. The Power Plant is dedicated to exhibiting Canadian and international contemporary art, and showing Annie's drawings in this space significantly elevated her profile as an emerging Inuit artist creating a compelling body of work. It brought her work to a much larger public than a commercial gallery could have done, and Annie travelled to Toronto to attend the opening.

National attention soon followed. Reviewers, including Murray Whyte, writing for the *Toronto Star*, and Sarah Milroy, at the *Globe and Mail*, saw The Power Plant show as a fascinating exhibition, and an important one.<sup>13</sup> As Whyte later observed, "The Power Plant's landmark 2006 show, of Annie Pootoogook's frank drawings of contemporary northern life, marked the first time Canada's pre-eminent contemporary art venue had held a major show by an Inuit artist."<sup>14</sup> The rave reviews helped direct the awareness and interest of collectors of contemporary art to the new work being done in the Canadian Arctic.



Installation view of Annie Pootoogook's works at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, 2006, photograph by Rafael Goldchain.

Annie's images challenged viewers' expectations. Visitors to The Power Plant discovered an Inuit artist who not only displayed original pictorial skill but also created content that spoke to them. Annie's drawings are narrative based. They record, or reflect on, the activities of her daily life, such as camping, doing her hair, and watching television. Although she sometimes depicts objects with symbolic or emotional properties, such as her grandmother's glasses, Annie does not idealize the domestic-interior spaces that she represents. The contents of these spaces can be surprisingly banal. She belonged to the first generation in the North to have regular access to television, and many of the drawings shown at The Power Plant contain references to popular media topics of the time, ranging from the on-screen chaos of *The Jerry Springer Show* to the ongoing Iraq War and the hunt for Saddam Hussein. Some drawings opened a window onto the cycles of addiction and abuse found in the lives of some members of her community. For Annie, there was no mythic vision of the North.



LEFT: Annie Pootoogook, *Gold Star TV*, 2003-4, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 50 x 66 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook, *Composition (Plucking the Grey Hair)*, 2004-5, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 66.6 x 101.8 cm, Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie.

Annie's exhibition at The Power Plant signified a shift in how contemporary art was understood as well as in how Northern art was received. The presentation of Annie's work in a contemporary art gallery signalled that it was time to drop the pretense that artists working outside the Eurocentric mainstream are automatically locked into ethnic or regional categories of artmaking. Eurocentric beliefs are central in producing problematic, preconceived notions of what Inuit art "should be," and Annie's art refused to conform to these conceptions. As Gerald McMaster notes, "Pootoogook's austere, often humorous pencil-crayon drawings are relentless in capturing the changing conditions of life in the North. Tradition often comes up against modernity."<sup>15</sup> By confronting Southern audiences with the trappings of contemporary life such as television, video games, and store-bought foods, her drawings reveal a reality rooted in cultural practices specific to the North yet tempered by symptoms of everyday life that any consumer of mass media could relate to.

## GLOBAL RECOGNITION

In 2006, after the success of the exhibition at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Annie was selected to be part of the Glenfiddich Artists in Residence program, located in Dufftown, Scotland. The residency invites emerging and award-winning artists from all over the world to draw on a historical Scottish setting, located deep in the Highlands, in creating original works of art. It was an excellent opportunity for her to produce and exhibit work in an international context.

For the first time, Annie was creating outside of the 9-to-5 regularity of Kinngait Studios. She found the experience difficult and struggled with feelings of isolation while completing the residency. Nonetheless, she produced pivotal drawings, including *Myself in Scotland*, 2005-6, and *Bagpipes*, 2006. In Scotland she also created one of her first larger-format works, *Balvenie Castle*, 2006, which depicts a decaying site near the location of the residency. The drawing is richly coloured, with fine detail that brings it to life on the page. Although the castle was foreign to Annie's visual vocabulary, she solved the problem of representation by combining colours and visual elements to create a hybrid structure that



Annie Pootoogook, *Myself in Scotland*, 2005-6, coloured pencil and felt tip pen on paper, 76.5 x 56.6 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.



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reflects both the Scottish landscape and her unique way of rendering the world.

That same year Annie was nominated for the Sobey Art Award, one of Canada's few substantial art prizes not overseen or administered by government. Annie was the first Inuit artist to be nominated for this award, which came with a \$50,000 cash prize. As a result of the isolation of Nunavut and the North from the mainstream art world, at the time of Annie's nomination they were problematically not yet recognized by the Sobey Art Foundation as "designated regions of Canada" where contemporary art was being produced. As Wayne Baerwaldt, former director and curator of the Illingworth Kerr Gallery at the Alberta College of Art and Design (now Alberta University of the Arts) in Calgary, recalls: "I think there was... this long-standing perception that, because of its history, that 'Inuit art' is a commercial form of cultural production and therefore 'artificial,' while contemporary art from the south comes purely from the spirit of the artist and is therefore 'authentic.'"<sup>16</sup> This perception is a legacy of colonialism and it effectively suppressed professional recognition for the myriad contributions of Northern artists to the artistic landscape of Canada. However, when curator Patricia Deadman put forth Annie's name for consideration, the committee acted swiftly to create a new geographical category called "Prairies & the North," which includes the entire region of Inuit Nunangat (the Inuit homeland).



Installation of Annie Pootoogook's drawings in the exhibition *Sobey Art Award 2006* at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, October 17, 2006, to January 7, 2007, photograph by Christine Guest.

In November 2006 the award exhibition was held at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Annie's competitors were Vancouver multimedia artist Steven Shearer (b.1968); Ontario-born digital artist Janice Kerbel (b.1969); the

Quebec City collective BGL; and Halifax painter Mathew Reichertz (b.1969). Given that the North was not even recognized as an artistic hub in the eyes of the Sobey Art Foundation until that year, many—including the artist herself—were happily surprised when she was pronounced the winner. Annie's straightforward pencil crayon drawings were not yet an established part of the conversation surrounding contemporary art, but jury members wrote in their assessment that her work "comes from a point when Modernism is being re-examined and reflects the hybrid nature of contemporary life. There's really a lot to celebrate in the work of this artist."<sup>17</sup> Annie herself was quoted in the *Nunatsiaq News* on the historic recognition of her art: "I was excited.... They like my work, so I was happy."<sup>18</sup> She was thirty-seven years old.

Soon after Annie won the Sobey Art Award, she began to attract international attention. Ruth Noack, one of the curators of *documenta 12*, an important exhibition scheduled to be held in Kassel, Germany, in 2007, visited Toronto, and we met to discuss Annie's work. The theme of *documenta 12* was to bring "unexpected concurrences" to light by exploring the relationships "between works of art from different decades and cultures in which similar formal patterns have emerged." *documenta 12*'s curators were looking for artists whose works showed the

"migration" of aesthetic forms across temporal and cultural boundaries culminating in the art of our postmodern world."<sup>19</sup> There was a fit, and Noack invited Annie to exhibit her drawings in Kassel.

Going abroad once again, Annie brought along a companion from Kinngait, Palaya Qiatsuq, who helped interpret for her and provided moral support during this professional landmark, and they travelled with Patricia Fehelley and me. Still, the institutional art world Annie found in Kassel was of limited interest to her; she showed little inclination to attend meetings with other artists or curators. Always kind and respectful, Annie nonetheless questioned why her art shown at *documenta 12* was not for sale (the reason was that it was an international exhibition and not a commercial art fair). In Kinngait selling her works regularly through Dorset Fine Arts and the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative had taken care of her immediate income needs.

Following *documenta 12* the interest in Annie's art remained steady, both in Canada and abroad. Between 2007 and 2010, a touring exhibition of her work travelled across North America. The Illingworth Kerr Gallery and the Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, were the institutions that organized the exhibition, which I curated. It was hosted at



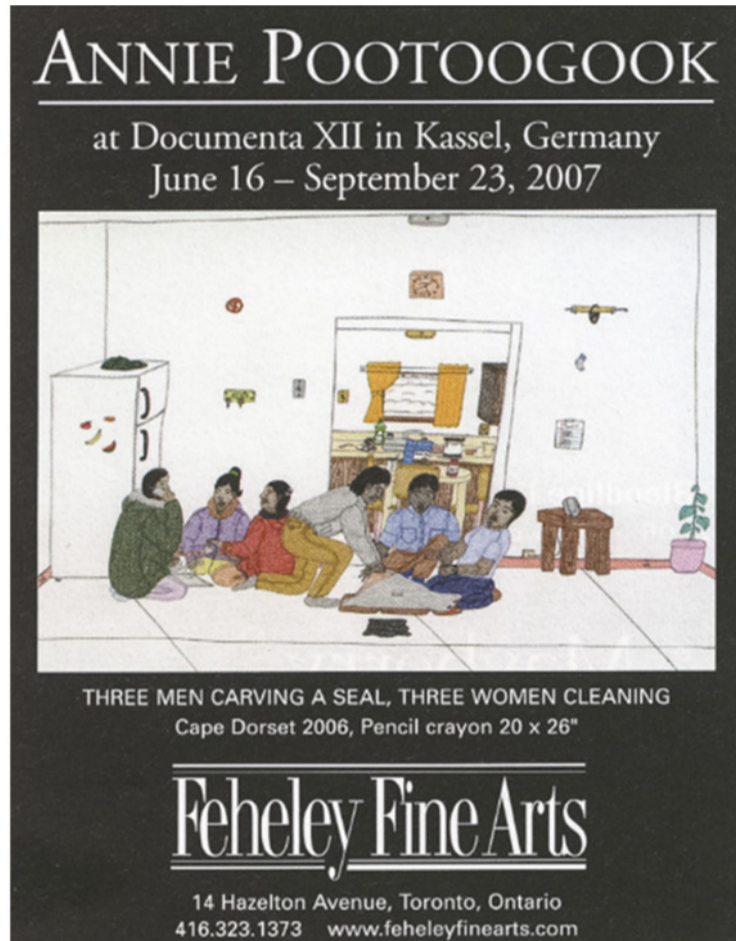
Annie Pootoogook, *Killing Fish*, 2003-4, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66 cm, Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie.



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six galleries across Canada, before making its final stop at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City, where a young Tanya Tagaq performed at the opening. The *New York Times* praised Annie for capturing “life as one contemporary eye sees and depicts it” and creating “a single extended vision that crosses documentary with diary, by an artist who is both a scrupulous recorder of a specific 21st-century reality and an imaginative but unromanticizing editor of that reality.”<sup>20</sup>



LEFT: Annie Pootoogook speaking to the crowds at the Alberta College of Art and Design (now Alberta University of the Arts), 2007, photograph by Patricia Feheley. RIGHT: Promotional poster by Feheley Fine Arts for *Annie Pootoogook at Documenta XII, Kassel, Germany, 2007*.

The amount of critical attention focused on Annie in such a short time would have weighed on any young artist. Her work—at first very inexpensive at around \$500 per drawing—doubled in price, and then tripled. She was launched on a path of artistic success few have the chance to experience. Within a few short years her drawings were being collected by museums, including the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, and the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, and by notable collectors. She not only was a critical and commercial success but also created much-needed space for conversations about and awareness of the North in global contemporary art.

## LIFE IN MONTREAL

In 2007 Annie moved to Montreal. She was now an artist who had won global acclaim; her work was commanding higher prices than ever before, and she was celebrated across Canada and beyond. She had kicked down the door for her peers, friends, and colleagues to be recognized on the global contemporary art stage. She also had her \$50,000 prize, which was a sum of money larger than what she was used to receiving for her work in the context

of Kinngait Studios. Unfortunately, Montreal became the setting for a difficult time in her life: she struggled with substance abuse and abusive domestic relationships. Just a few months after her arrival, her money had been spent, shared, or taken.

Paul Machnik, who runs Studio PM in Montreal, and his partner Bess Muhlstock, an emergency nurse, checked in on Annie daily and provided her with a space in which she could work. For months Machnik and Muhlstock provided care and some financial support for Annie and tried to motivate her to produce drawings, sending her finished work to Dorset Fine Arts in Toronto, which was still distributing her work through Feheley Fine Arts.<sup>21</sup> During this time she tried oil stick drawing as a departure from the pencil crayon drawings she had been producing in Kinngait; an example of this style is *Composition (Drawing of My Grandmother's Glasses)*, which was exhibited at Art Toronto, an international art fair, in 2007 and purchased by the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



Annie Pootoogook, *Begging for Money*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 56 x 76.2 cm, Collection of Paul and Mary Desmarais.

Other drawings produced in Montreal continued to chronicle her daily life but were less well received. The subject matter in *Drinking Beer in Montreal*, 2006, for example, represents content similar to that of her earlier autobiographical drawings from Kinngait. It also demonstrates her signature style and a technical skill that includes a play of shadows on the floor, a detail not seen in her earlier works. The drawing is a prime example of the narrative realism that Annie had practised for years in the North—yet the Montreal works did not whet the appetites of contemporary collectors and the institutional art system. Their settings lacked the problematically sought-after “otherness” of Annie’s Arctic home. The unenthusiastic reception of these artworks points to the ways that notions of exoticism, ethnic novelty, and an exploitation of difference continue to permeate today’s contemporary art world.

In the fall of 2007 Machnik and Patricia Feheley helped purchase a ticket for Annie to return home to the security of her family and community in Kinngait. However, her stay there was short. Within a month of her arrival, the hamlet asked Annie to accompany an Elder on a medical trip to Ottawa as translator. Machnik later observed, “We put so much energy into trying to get her up there and settled in her home, and without thinking, Social Services gave her a ticket right back again. It was a shortcoming, on their part, not to review her situation first, because she was already in difficulties.”<sup>22</sup> Annie was keen to return to the South, where she believed she would be successful on her own.

**OTTAWA AND HER FINAL YEARS**

Once Annie landed in Ottawa in January 2008, the difficulties that she experienced in Montreal began to resurface. She no longer identified as one of the artists with the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative and her work was no longer purchased on a weekly basis, the arrangement she was accustomed to at Kinngait Studios that had provided her with a regular professional routine and financial stability. Outside the umbrella of the Co-op and her community, Annie was left isolated in her negotiation of the art world and the city.



Annie Pootoogook, *Annie and Andre*, 2009, coloured pencil and graphite on paper, 50.1 x 66.2 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.

As with many artists trying to establish themselves professionally, representing herself as an independent contemporary artist was a skill Annie had not acquired. Much of an artist's reputation in the contemporary art world relies on placing the right work in a suitable gallery or exhibition, putting out timely publications, and maintaining a social profile—in other words, it relies on a set of European-colonial attainments and attributes. To decolonize the contemporary art world is also to rethink the expectations and limitations we place on the Inuit art world; Annie became caught in the crossfire of these two shifting standards.<sup>23</sup> In comparison to Kinngait, Ottawa and Montreal as the context for Annie's art were perceived as not being remote enough, not "mysterious" enough to inspire a conversation about the shock value of crossing cultural boundaries. Troublingly, the drawings were considered sad as opposed to avant-garde and edgy—the calling cards of the contemporary art



world. These works were not as popular with buyers or curators, yet they are important. Works like *Annie and Andre*, 2009, are a powerful reminder and reflection of the lives of many Southerners and urban Inuit living in the South.

While there is a large population of Inuit in Ottawa, where Annie could be close to some people from the North that she knew, substance abuse had begun to take a toll on her life.<sup>24</sup> Combined with her shrinking funds, this struggle meant that at times she found it hard to make ends meet. Patricia Feheley, deeply concerned, checked in on Annie when she could. Although Annie knew many people in Ottawa, including Sandra Dyck at the Carleton University Art Gallery and Christine Lalonde at the National Gallery of Canada, and she had the support of Galerie SAW Gallery and particularly Jason St-Laurent, who offered her a place to work and exhibit, she was also exposed to domestic partners and commercial associates who took advantage of her situation.

In Ottawa Annie's participation in the art world came to a near halt, but there were important exceptions. She was honoured to meet Canadian Governor General Michaëlle Jean alongside Kenojuak Ashevak (1927-2013) in 2009 and commemorated the experience with the work *Untitled (Kenojuak and Annie with Governor General Michaëlle Jean)*, 2010. She notably participated in the opening of *Dorset Seen*, 2013, curated by Dyck with Leslie Boyd and held at the Carleton University Art Gallery. Remembering that occasion, William (Bill) Ritchie noted that she "looked like a million bucks."<sup>25</sup> It was an important exhibition that took the pulse of recent developments in the Dorset community's art scene, which owed much to Annie's own exploration of themes of consumerism, technology and transport, and mental illness. Annie also regularly visited Galerie SAW Gallery to chat with St-Laurent, who featured some of her early work in the 2015 exhibition *BIG BANG*. St-Laurent later noted how heavily Annie's celebrity weighed upon her. Each time a new invasive feature that drew attention to Annie's private living situation appeared in the local media, she would disappear for months at a time.<sup>26</sup>



Annie Pootoogook (right) receiving instruction from Kenojuak Ashevak (left) on the traditional method of skinning and stretching bear hide on wooden racks at Kinngait Studios, November 19, 2001, photograph by William Ritchie.

Annie's battles with substance abuse put a serious strain on her life in Ottawa. She began a cycle of living on the street or in shelters.<sup>27</sup> To support herself, she sold what drawings she had time to make to art buyers looking for a "deal" or to tourists. The prices they paid for these drawings were next to nothing in comparison to what she had earned in the past and far lower than what she had received as a Co-op artist, ultimately devaluing the commercial potential of her work. Friends of hers later spoke to *Nunatsiaq News* about this period in Annie's life, saying that she once told them she was "'afraid for her life'—that she was hiding, fleeing from an abusive relationship."<sup>28</sup>

On September 19, 2016, Annie drowned in the Rideau River in Ottawa. The police declared it a "suspicious death." Her drowning and the subsequent investigation drew significant attention because of her status as an internationally renowned artist.<sup>29</sup> The lead investigator in the case, Sergeant Chris Hrnchiar, posted online comments that were condemned and labelled as racist—he wrote that it was likely her death was due to alcoholism or drug abuse because of her ethnicity. In November 2016, Hrnchiar pled guilty to two counts of discreditable conduct under the *Police Services Act*.<sup>30</sup>

Annie is survived by her three children. Her eldest son, Appa (b.1987), was adopted by Kuiga (Kiugak) Ashoona (1933–2014) in Kinngait. Her second son, Salamonie (b.1994), was raised in Iqaluit by relatives. Her daughter Napachie (b.2012) was taken into foster care and later adopted in Ottawa by Veldon Coburn. In 2017 Hrnchiar, Coburn, young Napachie, and her cousin Ellie canoed together up the Rideau Canal during the seventeenth annual Flotilla for Friendship.<sup>31</sup>



Annie Pootoogook, 2006, photograph by Katherine Knight.



## KEY WORKS

The following works, made between 2001 and 2010, give an overview of Annie Pootoogook's short but remarkable career. Annie's drawings have expanded the place of Inuit art in Canadian contemporary art history. Her work was influenced by the places where she lived, the people she worked with, the world she took in through the media, and her intimate experiences. This selection of key works gives an overview of her drawings, from her early views of interiors in her community of Kinngait, Nunavut, to glimpses into her later life as an internationally renowned artist.

## EATING SEAL AT HOME 2001



Annie Pootoogook, *Eating Seal at Home*, 2001  
Coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66.5 cm  
Collection of John and Joyce Price

In *Eating Seal at Home*, a glimpse of day-to-day realities in an Arctic community grabs the viewer and invokes ideas of a life in transition. In this drawing a family shares in the bounty of a seal hunt. The group sits cross-legged on the floor and eats fresh pink meat that they have carved from a splayed-open seal. The people appear happy and take joy in eating and sharing. It is a long-standing community tradition to share in the kill, and so the drawing depicts a traditional practice taking place within a modern setting.

Seal, like meat, fish, and berries, is considered traditional in Inuit Nunangat (the Inuit homeland). These foods are typically eaten while sitting on the floor; this practice is markedly different from the way people eat Southern (often processed) foods, which they buy at the store and eat while sitting in chairs around a table. Despite the contemporary elements of the interior, Annie Pootoogook directs viewers to the strength of a tradition—family gathering to eat or to play, as she also shows in *Composition (Family Playing Cards)*, 2000–2001, in a circle on the floor—one that remains centred on sharing and socializing. The group sits together, arguably in defiance of the furniture in the background.



Annie Pootoogook, *Three Men Carving a Seal, Three Women Cleaning*, 2006, wax pastel and ink on Ragston paper, 50.9 x 66.2 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Annie's<sup>1</sup> early drawings are important, as they often hold the magic of what was fully realized in subsequent works, such as *Three Men Carving a Seal*, *Three Women Cleaning*, 2006. The theme of combining the old with the new, or tradition with contemporary life, is already present in Annie's earliest works. *Eating Seal at Home* shows little or no use of linear perspective; however, it reveals an early attempt on the artist's part to experiment and create an interior with the illusion of three-dimensional space. The floor is presented as a flat square pattern, with depth being shown through the placement of objects that include a container in the foreground, a television in the middle ground, and a couch in the background. Annie's early drawings also introduce us to her iconography. In addition to the television, she includes a light switch, a lamp, and shoes at the door, careful to insert details of the everyday in the interior. These objects of daily life are repeated throughout Annie's works, and this piece is therefore an important marker of her developing style.

This early drawing was exhibited in the group show *The Unexpected* at Toronto's Fehely Fine Arts in 2001. It was quickly purchased by collectors John and Joyce Price of Seattle, Washington, who were fascinated by Annie's original presentation of her lived experience. Their collection remains one of the most important private collections of Annie's work.

## MAN ABUSING HIS PARTNER 2002

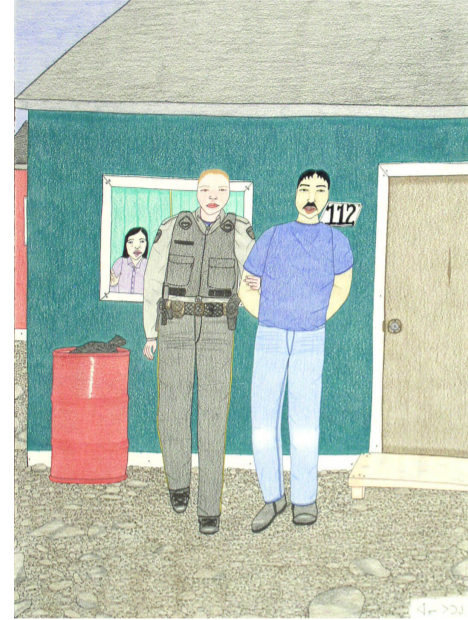


Annie Pootoogook, *Man Abusing His Partner*, 2002  
Coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66.5 cm  
Collection of John and Joyce Price

Annie Pootoogook depicted the delightful side of community life, but she also became known for her representations of darker aspects of contemporary living. Among them are portrayals of domestic violence. *Man Abusing His Partner* depicts a disturbing personal memory from Annie's<sup>1</sup> life during the early 1990s. She was in an abusive relationship with a man in Nunavik (Northern Quebec). Here Annie documents an incident when he locked her in a house and boarded it up, as evidenced by the plywood nailed to the window in the centre of the composition. The drawing depicts the house's interior space, stark and unassuming, with a male figure holding what appears to be a length of wood and poised to strike the woman, who screams helplessly (as indicated by four undulating lines coming from her mouth) as she covers on a mattress.

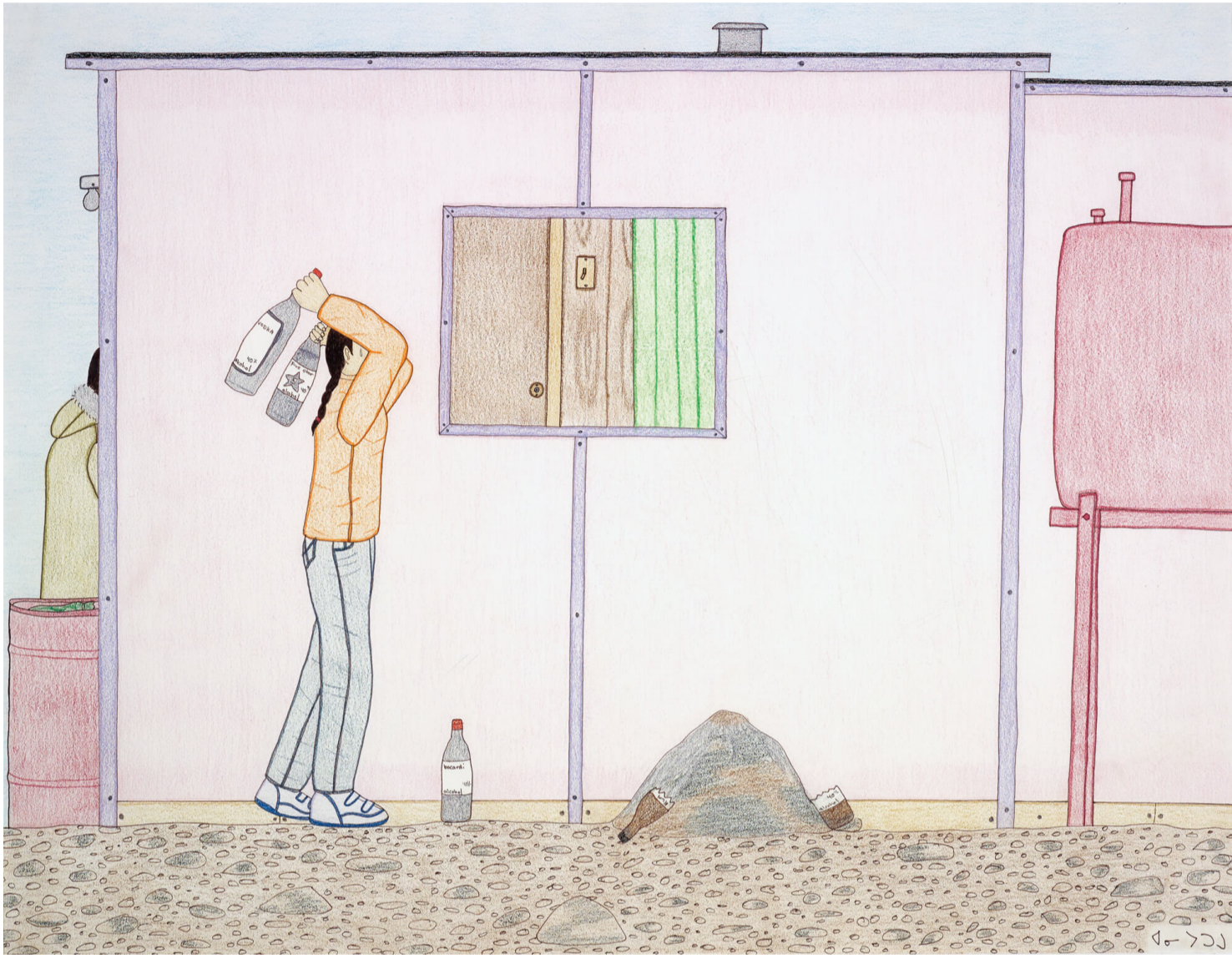
At first, Annie did not admit that this was a drawing of a personal memory, and she often referred to its subject as someone she heard about, but in time she shared the reality of the horrific incident. She spoke about her own experience: "She [my sister] told me to get out of that house before he broke my bone. So my sister was in shock because I was going crazy. And I wasn't normal anymore. But I had to charge him because what he did to me in that house, I had to charge him 'cause he used too much weapons on me and my life was lost."<sup>2</sup> Unsentimental and direct, the drawing is cold in its execution and a chilling reminder of the reality of domestic violence, carried out here hidden from witnesses in a small interior with doors closed and windows boarded shut.

Annie often portrayed the events of her daily life and her home community of Kinngait in works that she derived from her own memory, including *In the Summer Camp Tent*, 2002, and *Dreaming of Marijuana*, 2005. Her narrative is almost always personal—not limited to the observation or strictly accurate reproduction of details but drawn as well from her emotional and psychological state. As writer John Quin observes, there is an Inuktitut word, *sulijuk*, which means "it is true."<sup>3</sup> Annie's drawings reveal certain truths about her life. Her Kinngait is not a mythical, happy land of pre-modern innocence—a misinformed stereotype that is unfortunately often used to homogenize the complexities of Inuit aesthetics, philosophies, and art production. Of works such as this one, Jimmy Manning notes that "Annie's work is very different. Annie's work is, like, today and yesterday... daily happenings, shopping, music, the feast. Sometimes she will draw very hurting feelings from her heart which she's not afraid to say on paper."<sup>4</sup> This drawing is an artwork wrenched out of a personal memory.



Annie Pootoogook, *Under Arrest*, 2003, coloured pencil on paper, 66.5 x 51.0 cm, Collection of John and Joyce Price.

## MEMORY OF MY LIFE: BREAKING BOTTLES 2001-2



Annie Pootoogook, *Memory of My Life: Breaking Bottles*, 2001-2  
Coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66 cm  
Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie

*Memory of My Life: Breaking Bottles* documents Annie Pootoogook's growing frustration with alcoholism in her family. The drawing is an exterior scene that shows a young woman breaking bottles on a rock behind a house. A person wearing a parka can be seen to the far left, entering through the side door of the house, but nothing more about this person can be identified. There is an open window through which the viewer sees directly into the home, faced by the opposing interior wall. It is an unsettling artistic device, as it appears to flatten the house and erase any illusion of depth, with the result that the woman behind the house appears to be boxed into a two-dimensional space.



The rawness of a number of Annie's<sup>1</sup> drawings dealing with difficult subject matter related to violence or substance abuse, including this one, quickly grabbed the attention of Southern audiences, and Annie became almost exclusively known for her brave and original images of the North. Such imagery was not traditional in Inuit art, and therefore Annie's frank representations of challenging issues facing her community became one of the most discussed and reported-on elements in her work.



Napachie Pootoogook, *Untitled (Alcohol)*, 1993-94, pencil crayon and ink on paper, 50.8 x 66 cm, Collection of Edward J. Guarino.

Annie eventually admitted that, as in other works done in this style, she had depicted herself: she is the young woman breaking bottles on a rock. She explained that "one time I drew when I broke bottles 'cause I got tired of drinking people every day. So I had to broke... break their bottles on the rock so they won't drink tomorrow. I think I did a good job."<sup>2</sup>

Radical though it is, *Memory of My Life: Breaking Bottles* was not without precedent. Annie was influenced by the art of her mother, Napachie Pootoogook (1938-2002), who struggled with mental health problems and abuse and was unafraid to show her reality in the drawings she produced in the last years of her life. *Untitled (Alcohol)*, 1993-94, comments on the devastating effects of alcohol. Her work caused a strong reaction when it was exhibited in 1999 in *Three Women, Three Generations: Drawings by Pitseolak Ashoona, Napachie [sic] Pootoogook and Shuvinai Ashoona* at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, and the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Napachie's late drawings no doubt made their mark on the impressionable Annie. She, like her mother, drew from personal experience.

This drawing was purchased by contemporary artist Rob Craigie of Chicago and his wife Stephanie Comer, who, along with a few other collectors, recognized the importance of Annie's work early on and acquired significant holdings. Their collection is available for public viewing on their website, *Expanding Inuit*.<sup>3</sup>

## THE NATIONAL 2003



Annie Pootoogook, *The National*, 2003

Pencil, ink, and pencil crayons, 50.9 x 66.2 cm

Confederation Centre Art Gallery, Confederation Centre of the Arts, Charlottetown

*The National* demonstrates Annie Pootoogook's increasing skill at depicting interiors and interest in the arrangement and detail of her subject matter. An adolescent in cargo pants walks from one room to another wearing his iPod and a baseball cap turned sideways. A female figure looks at a calendar on a wall that is covered with many familiar items often found in Annie's<sup>1</sup> drawings: a clock, a light, snowmobile keys, and a Jesus sign. On the table is Southern food, and the television on the left side of the drawing shows Peter Mansbridge, at that time the anchor of the CBC news program *The National*.

This drawing recalls the importance of the arrival of Southern broadcasting in the North in 1972 with the Canadian government's launch of the *Anik A-1* satellite, when Annie was just three years old. The new technology had a profound impact on a remote community; numerous Arctic households now have satellite television. Annie's generation grew up with this technology, and so it has influenced how she and her peers interpret the world. In the North, the news—both national news and local broadcasts on television or community radio—is a constant source of information and connection. Seldom does one enter a house or workplace without hearing the background noise of the radio or the television. On the screens in her interiors, Annie frequently shows familiar television personalities—as in the drawing *Dr. Phil*, 2006—or popular programs such as *The Simpsons*. Onscreen gaming is also a common subject, as can be seen in *Playing Nintendo*, 2006, where a young boy is absorbed in a game and has his back to the viewer. Scenes such as these might be found in any living room in Canada.

Annie's drawings are unusual in their repeated acknowledgement of two cultures colliding and sometimes merging. She takes no stand on this issue, either for or against; she shows little nostalgia for the past and often appears to prefer an ironic detachment. In this drawing she invites Southerners to watch Northerners watching Southerners, igniting a playful engagement with the contemporary world.



Annie Pootoogook, *Dr. Phil*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 40 x 50 cm, private collection.

## WATCHING HUNTING SHOWS 2004



Annie Pootoogook, *Watching Hunting Shows*, 2004  
 Coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51.5 x 66 cm  
 Collection of John and Joyce Price

*Watching Hunting Shows* is an interior scene with a twist. A young child wrapped in a green sleeping bag sits on an orange mattress sucking a lollipop as he watches television. His infant sibling rests on a couch behind him. On the wall hang a simple picture of flowers in a vase and a Pop art-style clock in the form of a huge wristwatch. A small pink lamp stands on a blue side table; above the couch, a wall thermostat is set to a comfortable temperature. Amidst this unremarkable modern decor, the child is watching a seal hunt, a kill that could be happening at that very moment somewhere near Annie Pootoogook's home community of Kinngait. Annie<sup>1</sup> addressed hunting in other drawings as well, for example *Hunter Mimics Seal*, 2006.

The drawing *Watching Hunting Shows* is one of Annie's most compelling: the image of a child watching traditional hunting practices on television in his modern living room in Nunavut centralizes economic and cultural presence in this visual story. Since the designation of Nunavut as a territory in 1999, its education system has been guided by the aim of grounding Nunavut society in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, the people's traditional framework of beliefs, laws, principles, values, skills, and knowledge.<sup>2</sup> The intention is that over time this set of initiatives will help restore collective Inuit pride and increase individual self-esteem. Television programs like the one the child in this drawing is watching are carried on local stations, and they are meant to advance the aims of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.<sup>3</sup>



Annie Pootoogook, *Hunter Mimics Seal*, 2006, coloured pencil, black porous-point pen on paper, 50.8 × 66.2 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

Seen in this light, *Watching Hunting Shows* highlights the efforts in Nunavut to preserve and revive not only hunting but also other traditional activities such as sewing and throat singing. It suggests that future generations will be enabled to learn traditional practices, but perhaps by relying on technology rather than through instruction from the community's Elders. As a result, the hope that many Inuit place in these efforts may also be tinged with regret for lost attachments to the traditions of the Elders, losses brought about by colonialism and social dislocation in the North. Annie's own unsentimental realism, however, discourages us from reading too strong a feeling of nostalgia into this drawing, for there is no denying her keen eye for irony and the pointed use she makes of the interaction of cultures in her work. The child in the centre of the frame who is sucking on the lollipop is also guarding some snack wrappers and a can of Coca-Cola as the seal is killed in living colour on television and the infant on the couch is feeding peacefully from a baby bottle.

## PORTRAIT OF MY GRANDMOTHER 2004



**Annie Pootoogook, *Portrait of My Grandmother*, 2004**  
Coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 50 cm  
Collection of John and Joyce Price

Many of Annie Pootoogook's drawings reference her grandmother, Pitseolak Ashoona (c.1904-1983), whom she admired. Pitseolak is always identified by her black-framed eyeglasses—sometimes the eyeglasses alone stand in for the woman. Done primarily in graphite and pen, this drawing is highlighted with colour in the pencil crayon Pitseolak is holding. Often mistaken for a portrait of Annie<sup>1</sup> herself, the picture shows Pitseolak looking straight into the viewer's eyes.

According to William (Bill) Ritchie, the image is likely taken from a photograph by Tessa Macintosh, who spent time in the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative studios in Kinngait in the 1970s photographing the artists. Annie's drawing is not an exact copy of the photograph, but there are too many similarities to ignore; Pitseolak's posture is the same, as are her signature glasses and her parka worn on only one arm. Many artists wear their parkas this way in the studio to stay cozy but at the same time free up their drawing arm. If Annie made this drawing from Macintosh's photograph, it is the only drawing we know of that she produced from a photographic reference. Annie preferred to draw from memory or from scenes she had before her. Increasingly, however, artists in Kinngait have been using photographs for inspiration. For instance, Annie's cousin, the artist Itee Pootoogook (1951-2014), used photographs in his practice.



LEFT: Pitseolak in Lithography Studio signing her work, Cape Dorset, 1976, photograph by Tessa Macintosh. RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook, *Pitseolak Drawing with Two Girls on Her Bed*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66 cm, private collection.

Pitseolak was not only Annie's grandmother, she was a highly successful professional artist whose work was featured in significant galleries and publications in the South. Through her art she had achieved a measure of financial freedom and stability for her family. She was an important role model for the young Annie, who reflected on Pitseolak in an interview in 2006:

I used to go and see my grandma drawing because I wanted to learn and she was my grandma. Nobody used to watch her. I don't know why. I wanted to learn, so I had to watch her.... She used to talk to me and say... "I'm drawing because my grandchildren have to eat." But she drew a true story, too, about her life.... She used to tell me, "You should try when you grow up, if you can."<sup>2</sup>

In her later work *Pitseolak Drawing with Two Girls on Her Bed*, 2006, Annie offers another example of the closeness of generations of women and the practice of learning by watching, an apprenticeship model that is still practised today.

## COMPOSITION (EVIL SPIRIT) 2003–4



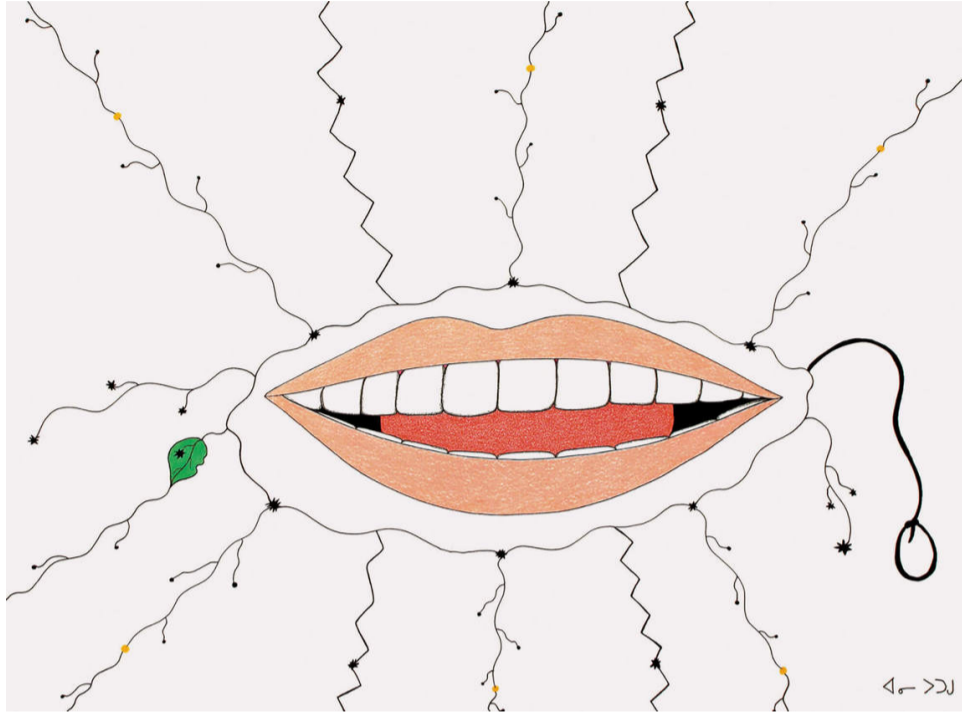
Annie Pootoogook, *Composition (Evil Spirit)*, 2003–4  
 Ink and pencil crayon on paper, 50.8 x 66 cm  
 Collection of Jay Smith and Laura Rapp

*Composition (Evil Spirit)* is an important work within a group of drawings representing emotional distress or elation, subjects that Annie Pootoogook took up sporadically throughout her short career.<sup>1</sup> She was a very private person and rarely spoke about her work in detail. This picture was particularly hard for her to talk about. She never explained exactly what the scene refers to, and she never said whether the woman in the image is a self-portrait. In this drawing a central figure is crouching on her hands and knees with her tongue hanging out of her mouth. The young woman's eyes are closed, and a lone tear slides from the corner of her eye down her cheek. A monstrous creature squats before her with legs splayed wide apart; it is rendered in black stripes, with red eyes and bull-like horns on its head. One black-clawed hand is gripping the woman's throat in what seems to be a choking gesture, while the other hand pats her hair. The woman herself has black-painted fingernails. A thick, black sinuous line surrounds both the kneeling woman and the creature, balancing the composition. The end of the line that surrounds them is tied to one of the creature's horns. Another thick black line descends from the creature's mouth like a misshapen tongue, flowing along the woman's own tongue and down her



throat. A third black line, heavy and taut like a curving phallus, leaves the creature's anus-like opening and passes through the woman's arms toward her heart. Beneath the woman's knees runs a jagged black crack.

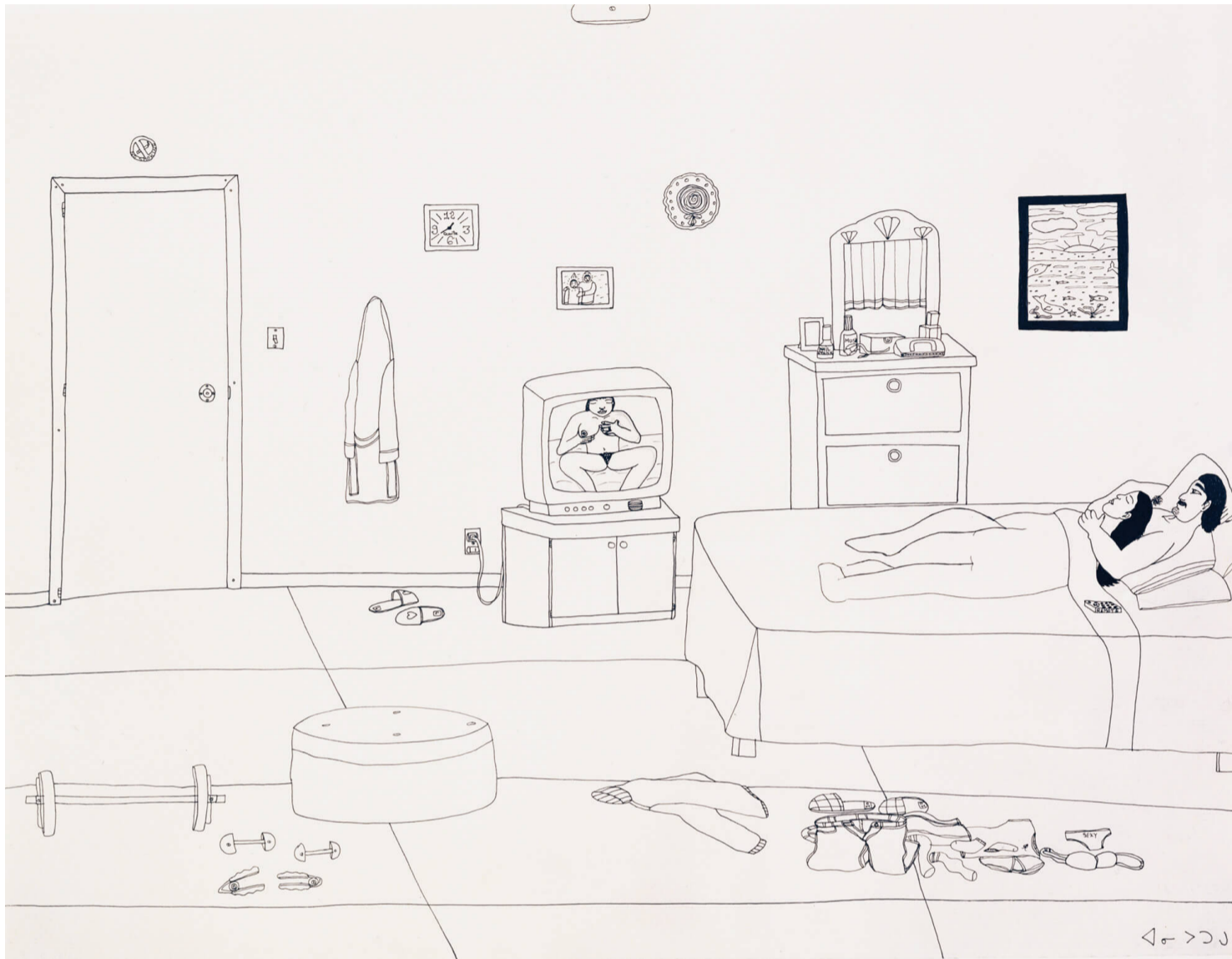
A thought bubble floats prominently above the woman. According to Juumi Tapaungai, assistant manager of Kinngait Studios, it contains the word *taqapaa* in Inuktitut syllabics, meaning "exhausted" or "stressed out." From this thought bubble radiate curvy black lines, terminating in small black spiked circles. The horrifying creature also has a spiky thought bubble above its head, one that says *piapiga!*, meaning "mine!" in Inuktitut. Tapaungai adds, "I'm thinking that the evil is trying to take over her life."<sup>2</sup>



Annie Pootoogook, *Gossip*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66 cm, private collection.

This "psychological drawing" and the others that Annie<sup>3</sup> made recall her struggles with her feelings and her mental health. Annie represents intensely personal emotions in a number of drawings that are constructed in this way. Typically, these drawings have a central figure or scene that radiates lines or dots or is encircled by a sinuous black line embedded with yellow, black, or red dots that signify happiness and sadness. Annie experimented with this legend of dots, lines, and stars in drawings that include *Gossip*, 2006, and *Composition (Sadness and Relief for My Brother)*, 2006. Annie spoke of the release she achieved through her art: "It seems like I throw that shit out of mind and start drawing. Well, drawing makes me feel better . . . better a lot than before."<sup>4</sup>

## COMPOSITION: WATCHING PORN ON TELEVISION 2005



Annie Pootoogook, *Composition: Watching Porn on Television*, 2005  
Coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66 cm  
Private collection

*Composition: Watching Porn on Television* is an interior scene rendered in Fineliner pen and rich in detail. Pictured in the work are a couple who embrace in bed. They are under the covers and are watching a pornographic movie. The domestic interior is filled with details of the individuals' daily lives. Clothes are strewn on the floor, a set of weights sits neglected in the corner, and pictures hang on the wall. A dresser is littered with makeup bottles. The television is the focus of the drawing, and the sexually explicit image on the screen surprises the viewer of this setting, which is cluttered with otherwise unremarkable objects. *Composition: Watching Porn on Television* suggests a direct correlation between life in the North and life in the South, where many homes are lit by television screens until the early morning. As the couple in the drawing are lying quietly in bed, this image is not an explicit sexual scene; however, the drawing invites the viewer into the reality of the common modern practice of consuming erotic media.

Annie Pootoogook's erotic drawings, like many of her drawings that present scenes from life, are sometimes tender and sometimes humorous. These sexual scenes are a departure from what has come to be expected of Inuit visual art in Southern exhibition contexts. Although sexuality is present in traditional Inuit storytelling, the history of Inuit drawing before Annie<sup>1</sup> offers few figurative representations of lust, desire, or intimacy; likewise, these subjects are rarely seen in carvings done in the North (a notable exception is the work of sculptor Oviloo Tunnillie [1949-2014]).



LEFT: Annie Pootoogook, *Woman at Her Mirror (Playboy Pose)*, 2003, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 66 x 51 cm, Collection of John and Joyce Price. RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook, *Erotic Scene - 4 Figures*, 2001, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51.9 x 67.1 cm, Collection of John and Joyce Price.

This work is comparable to Annie's earlier drawing *Erotic Scene - 4 Figures*, 2001, which is a much more graphic image of sexual activity. The interior of the room is once again quite detailed. Making up the background are a television set, a stereo system, a lamp, a plant, and a window draped with an open curtain. The four people in the centre of the composition are in the throes of a group sexual encounter on a rug on the floor. Annie presents this scene with a sense of detachment and the same stark realism that we see in her other drawings.

Annie's erotic drawings, like her other works, are neither sentimental nor romantic. They represent a kind of narrative realism that shows these scenes in as commonplace a light as that seen in her depictions of eating dinner. Like many of her pictures that found a ready market in the South, Annie's erotic drawings, including *Composition: Watching Porn on Television* and the humorous *Woman at Her Mirror (Playboy Pose)*, 2003, were purchased by a select group of collectors of Inuit and contemporary art. They remain a rarity. To this day, erotic images are uncommon in Inuit art.

## COLEMAN STOVE WITH ROBIN HOOD FLOUR AND TENDERFLAKE 2003–4



Annie Pootoogook, *Coleman Stove with Robin Hood Flour and Tenderflake*, 2003-4  
Coloured pencil and ink on paper, 76.0 x 112.5 cm  
Collection of Reid Shier and Zoe Lasham

This drawing shows the objects necessary for making bannock, a bread typically made while camping, in isolation. The large green Coleman stove is central to the image; it is surrounded by a bag of Robin Hood flour, salt, a box of Tenderflake lard, and a tin of Magic Baking Powder, a collection which also represents Annie Pootoogook's interest in commercial brands. The drawing is rendered with the firm application of pencil crayon, allowing the colours to play off each other effectively. It is one of a few important works that Annie<sup>1</sup> executed on larger-format paper.

Camping scenes have been a popular subject in Inuit drawing since the 1950s, yet *Coleman Stove with Robin Hood Flour and Tenderflake* stands out as a new and noteworthy representation of this traditional Northern activity. It is one of a group of works that Annie made that isolate objects from a larger scene. By showing one or more objects that stand in for the activity, she represents the activity taking place conceptually rather than literally.

The practice of isolating objects representing camping is also seen in a related drawing made by Annie's uncle Kananginak Pootoogook (1935–2010), *Untitled*, 2006. Robin Laurence describes this drawing as “all delivered in what could be described as a folk realist style, one that gives equal weight to every form and detail, although often with characterful distortions of scale. His graphic art manifests an ethnographic fondness for visual inventories of material objects, each of his drawings inscribed by hand in Inuktitut syllabics [at the bottom of the picture]... with explanations such as ‘What we use for hunting nowadays in the North.’”<sup>2</sup> Kananginak presents contemporary hunting tools in much the same way as Annie details what is used to prepare bannock.

Today camping in the North remains a tradition and a delight for those who live there. In the short summer months families return to old camps where they hunt, fish, and gather berries. Some in Annie's home community of Kinngait have summer tents or small cabins within sight of their homes, because they enjoy both the fresh breezes off the harbour and life on the land. Annie would have been exposed to her mother's and grandmother's drawings of camp life when she was a child. One drawing by her mother, Napachie Pootoogook (1938–2002), *Napachie Drawing in Her Tent*, 1984–85, shows the artist working on a drawing in her summer camp tent while a child, presumably Annie, watches her work. In another work by Annie, *In the Summer Camp Tent*, 2002, we see a family asleep, surrounded by the accessories of contemporary camping.



Kananginak Pootoogook, *Untitled*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 66 x 50.8 cm.

## CAPE DORSET FREEZER 2005



Annie Pootoogook, *Cape Dorset Freezer*, 2005

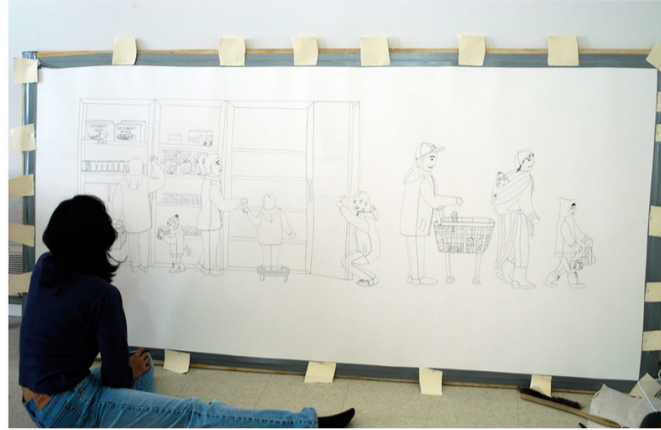
Coloured pencil, black metallic ballpoint pen, and graphite on wove paper, 111.5 x 233.1 cm

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

In *Cape Dorset Freezer*, Annie Pootoogook's bold undertaking to use reflections in plate glass to show the activity in her town's co-op store pushed her drawing skills to new heights. The glass doors delicately reveal the reflections of the shoppers and children admiring the contents, demonstrating Annie's<sup>1</sup> mastery of coloured pencil. One shopper wears an amauti, a parka with a large hood in which mothers carry their babies, and, behind her, another is pushing a grocery cart. A man holding a shopping basket looks intently through the glass at offerings that include Hungry-Man dinners, frozen vegetables, and other packaged products. The scene subtly reveals the collision of tradition and modern convenience that typifies communities across the North, and it cleverly plays on the oddity of bringing frozen goods up to the Arctic.

Annie made this drawing for her 2006 exhibition at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery. It was the first time she had worked at this scale, and to achieve this feat she was helped by the team at Kinngait Studios. According to William (Bill) Ritchie, Annie found working at this scale difficult and grew tired of the other artists gathering around to watch her. Ritchie took the panel to Annie's apartment and set it up for her to work on at home.

Ever since the studios began operating in 1959, the artists have typically done their drawings on 51 x 66 cm paper. This more compact size served many purposes. Finished pieces were easy to ship, the paper fit the studio printing presses, and the drawings were portable if artists wanted to work on them at home. This size also suited the walls of collectors' homes. Eventually, however, some of the artists felt its limitations—their drawings were diminutive compared to many contemporary drawings created by artists in the South. Fortunately, Kinngait Studios easily accommodated the production of larger formats, as the drawing studio was a large, communal working space.



LEFT: Annie Pootoogook working on *Cape Dorset Freezer*, 2005, at Kinngait Studios, October 19, 2005, photograph by William Ritchie. RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook with her work *Cape Dorset Freezer*, 2005, at her home in Kinngait (Cape Dorset), October 6, 2005, photograph by William Ritchie.

Over the last fifteen years, large-scale drawings coming out of Kinngait Studios have attracted ever greater interest from collectors and museums. Annie was at the forefront of this sea change with the production of *Cape Dorset Freezer*, which was immediately purchased by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Beyond the satisfaction of taking on new artistic challenges, the positive response art museums gave these large-format works is one of the reasons that some other artists, notably Tim Pitsiulak (1967–2016) and Shuvina Ashoona (b.1961), adopted the size for their own drawings. *Cape Dorset Freezer* announces a new, large-scale direction for contemporary Inuit art being produced out of Kinngait Studios, and Annie's intention to create art outside the tradition.

## BALVENIE CASTLE 2006



Annie Pootoogook, *Balvenie Castle*, 2006  
Wax pastel and ink on Arches paper, 77.0 x 113.0 cm  
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax

In 2006 Annie Pootoogook attended an artists' residency in Dufftown, Scotland. There she made drawings in her signature style; she continued using the experience as subject matter upon her return. *Balvenie Castle* is the largest and most detailed of the few drawings she completed while away from Canada for the first time. The work depicts a decaying castle located near Dufftown. Alive and rich in colour, the grass surrounding the castle is a pure bright green, straight from the pencil crayon box. The stones that make up the castle are red, blue, orange, yellow, grey, and white, each outlined in black Fineliner pen and stacked one upon the other to form the walls.

The castle strangely resembles the stacking of multi-coloured snow blocks used to build a snow house, or perhaps a stone ring, which Annie<sup>1</sup> would recall from her life in Kinngait. If the foreignness of this scene in Annie's visual vocabulary posed a representational challenge, she cleverly solved it by combining colours and visual elements of her lived reality in Kinngait to create a hybrid structure in a Scottish landscape.



Upon her return to Canada, Annie continued to experiment, producing *Bagpipes*, 2006, in which she isolated an object and drew it against a plain field, as she did in *Red Bra (35/36)*, 2006, and *Composition (Pipe)*, 2006. *Myself in Scotland*, 2005-6, is a more personal drawing, reflecting her experience in Dufftown. This work is an image of a woman, presumably Annie herself, with her hair standing straight up on her head. We know it is likely Annie because the necklace the woman is wearing has an ulu pendant, a piece of jewellery that she wore often. The hair-raising image of the woman could imply that she is overwhelmed, in awe, or excited—we will never know. These drawings were among the first Annie produced that represented her new lived reality away from the North and that are devoid of the references to the Arctic that many collectors sought.

*Balvenie Castle* was purchased by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and was included in the Sobey Art Award selection.



LEFT: Annie Pootoogook, *Bagpipes*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 57.2 x 76.2 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook, *Red Bra (35/36)*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66 cm, Dorset Fine Arts, Toronto.

**UNTITLED (KENOJUAK AND ANNIE WITH GOVERNOR GENERAL  
MICHAËLLE JEAN) 2010**

Annie Pootoogook, *Untitled (Kenojuak and Annie with Governor General Michaëlle Jean)*, 2010

Coloured pencil on paper, 51 x 66 cm  
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

One of the last complete drawings done by Annie Pootoogook is *Untitled (Kenojuak and Annie with Governor General Michaëlle Jean)*. An important late work, it shows the two highly influential Inuit artists standing in the office of Michaëlle Jean when she was serving as governor general of Canada. Jean was acting as the honorary patron of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative for its fiftieth anniversary year. The work is a time capsule of a significant moment in the history of Canadian and Inuit art.

Kenojuak Ashevak (1927-2013) was a pivotal artist in establishing the recognition of Inuit art in Canada in its formative years. In this scene she is wearing her parka and printed skirt, while Annie<sup>1</sup>, an artist who took Inuit art into the sphere of global contemporary art, wears a business suit. The exchange is happy and all are smiling. The office is formally decorated with a patterned carpet, long drapes pulled back with a sash, and sconces on the wall. Through the window we see a beautiful leafy tree, indicating the Southern locale. This drawing is significant in that it shows two notable Inuit women meeting the governor general, a meeting that celebrates their important contributions to the arts in Canada. The Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts, unlike many other national arts awards, had a precedent for honouring an Inuit artist: Kenojuak received the award in 2008.



Annie Pootoogook, *Sobey Awards*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 57.5 x 76.5 cm, Collection of John and Joyce Price.

Although Annie was most prolific while she lived in Kinngait and worked at the studios there, she continued to work in the South. There she would record notable events and people in her life, but these drawings were either not completed or not enticing to a public that was stubbornly fixated on its own ideas of the perceived exoticism and beauty of the North. Few of these drawings were distributed commercially.

Another drawing Annie made to record her life in the South is *Sobey Award 2006, 2007*. It is a self-portrait, with Annie standing alone and crying tears of happiness and wonder on the occasion when she received the Sobey Art Award. *Sobey Awards, 2006*, is a companion piece, showing her from the rear, facing a tightly assembled group of media and other attendees. In this drawing too Annie stands alone. Both works can be read as making a statement of loneliness and alienation, of Annie's feelings of unease in public, in such formal company. The contrast is unmistakable in the easy smiles that brighten the faces of the three women in *Untitled (Kenojuak and Annie with Governor General Michaëlle Jean)*. Despite the equally formal and potentially stressful occasion, having Kenojuak there along with Annie seems to have lightened the mood.

Annie Pootoogook's artwork depicts a person in a red hooded parka sitting in a wooden boat with a red trim. The person is looking towards the right. The background is a textured blue. In the foreground, a green area represents the water, and a person's face with a distressed expression is visible in the water. The text "SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES" is overlaid in white capital letters.

# SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

Annie Pootoogook came of age at a time when the North and its people were being flooded by the products and media of a consumer society, and she chose to reflect this reality in her art. Her drawings depict her life as part of a world in transition, a world that respects its past while negotiating an uncertain future. By confronting prevailing expectations regarding Inuit art and refusing to cling to accepted regional and ethnic subjects and styles, Annie challenged the definition of contemporary art and changed the way Inuit art is received. Only a few artists have profoundly affected the way art is understood in Canada: Annie is one of them.

### A NEW VISION FOR INUIT ART

Early in her career, Annie Pootoogook was supported by fellow artists at the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative (whose artistic division is now known as Kinngait Studios), but they also warned that her drawings might never sell. Her experimentation with subject matter expanded upon the work of her mother, Napachie Pootoogook (1938–2002), whose art was similarly wide ranging and included several works that confronted difficult social issues. For Annie,<sup>1</sup> it was a gamble to depict contemporary subject matter based on her own experiences and to make works that might not sell and provide the income she needed. Inuit art

historian Heather Igloliorte writes of the predicament facing Inuit artists: “While all around them their culture was being debased, devalued, and actively oppressed by the dual forces of colonialism and Christianity, these same values were revered, celebrated, and voraciously collected in their arts.”<sup>2</sup> Annie leapt past this predicament when she created a body of work that curators recognized as unusually contemporary, and collectors and museums bought her drawings eagerly.

Annie holds a unique place in the history of Inuit art and within Canadian art history. Her work represents a fresh perspective on and distinct vision within her community. By the time she came of age, the community of Kinngait and the lives of its people were rapidly being transformed through the availability of Southern consumer goods and the penetration of mass communications. Annie observed the circumstances of her modern life and surroundings objectively, without nostalgia and with no false romanticism. “I didn’t see any igloos in my life,” she said in a 2006 documentary. “Only Ski-Doo, Honda, the house, things inside the house.”<sup>3</sup> She documented these things in her drawings just as honestly as her predecessors had documented their own lived experiences in earlier and far different times. *Composition (Family Cooking in Kitchen)*, 2002, exemplifies her interest in “things inside the house.”



Annie Pootoogook, *Junior Rangers*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 50.8 x 66 cm, Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie.



Annie Pootoogook, *Composition (Family Cooking in Kitchen)*, 2002, wax pastel and graphite on Somerset paper, 76.4 x 111.6 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Many Kinngait artists had already pushed at the boundaries of expectations regarding what should or could be consumed by the Southern art market, which was still accustomed to picturesque "ethnic" pieces supposedly emerging from a world of shamans and myths. Annie's mother, Napachie, is one such artist. Her later works, such as *Untitled (Alcohol)*, 1993-94, or *Trading Women for Supplies*, 1997-98, included dark personal recollections and troubling scenes from her community. Yet at the time Annie's drawings were first shown in the South, Inuit art was still being compartmentalized by historians of Canadian art. The prevailing expectation was that what is Inuit is not contemporary.

It is worth considering the meaning of "contemporary"—a word that is both a simple description and an elite standard used to exclude certain artists and groups. It has been used for, among other things, art made in the past twenty years, with an awareness of current trends in art history; critical social consciousness in art; and experimentation for its own sake as a value in the arts. Informed by Eurocentric values, this definition often



LEFT: Napachie Pootoogook, *Trading Women for Supplies*, 1997-98, ink on paper, 50.8 x 66 cm, Collection of Edward J. Guarino. RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook, *A Man Abuses His Wife*, 2004, pencil crayon and ink on paper, 35.0 x 51.0 cm, Collection of John and Joyce Price.

excludes culturally marginalized and remote populations. "Contemporary" can also describe subject matter: the furnishings of a modern house interior; the daily activities of the people represented in a narrative image and the ordinary ways they stand, move, or sit; in short, the contemporary scene.

An honest look at daily life in the Arctic in the twenty-first century through the eyes of a self-aware and often irreverent artist like Annie was a shock for audiences in the South. A select group of dealers and curators were willing to accept that what they were seeing in Annie's works was important and maybe even unprecedented. Annie came to the attention of the public quietly in a 2001 group exhibition titled *The Unexpected* at Feheley Fine Arts, a small commercial gallery in Toronto. For most artists, the road to reach a broader public takes years to travel. But through the determination and support of these dealers and curators, Annie's drawings quickly became celebrated for capturing the spirit of a time when Canada was looking at Indigenous cultures in new ways, not only in the arts, but also culturally, politically, and ethically.



Annie Pootoogook, *Watching the Simpsons on TV*, 2003, pencil, ink, and pencil crayon, 50.8 x 66 cm, Collection of Edward J. Guarino.

### ACCEPTANCE IN CANADA AND ABROAD

A major shift in Canadian art history occurred in 2006. Annie's drawings began to be included in numerous exhibitions, including her solo show at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery in Toronto, a contemporary gallery known around the world for exhibiting cutting-edge Canadian and international art.

This exhibition, which included works such as  *Holding Boots* , 2004, and  *Family Taking Supplies Home* , 2006, proclaimed that Annie's drawings belonged alongside the works of other leading contemporary artists.



LEFT: Annie Pootoogook,  *Holding Boots* , 2004, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook,  *Family Taking Supplies Home* , 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 47 x 66.4 cm, Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie.

Sarah Milroy of the  *Globe and Mail*  reviewed the show enthusiastically:

What stops you and makes you look... is the honesty of her reporting. Given the extremity of her personal history—alcoholic parents, domestic abuse, poverty—Pootoogook could be forgiven for seeing what she wants to see, and profiting by peddling to the white world's expectations: quaint scenes of traditional Inuit life, the redeeming beauty of the natural world and the animals that inhabit it, the fantasy world of myth.<sup>4</sup>

Instead, Milroy continues, Annie shows "beating, drug addiction, despair, all presented with a remarkable lack of histrionics or self-pity." Nonetheless, in the end Milroy finds that "the tone of the show is one of jubilation."<sup>5</sup>

In 2006 Annie's selection for the Glenfiddich Artists in Residence program in Dufftown, Scotland, was a personal distinction and an opportunity for her to try her hand at unfamiliar landscapes, colours, and light effects. But it was her nomination for the Sobey Art Award, also in 2006, that truly transformed her career. The Sobey Art Foundation formally recognized for the first time that Annie and her generation of Inuit artists were creating relevant works of contemporary art. The foundation, which selects as its nominees contemporary artists from geographic regions across Canada, lacked a classification for artists from Nunavut and the North. Quickly, the curatorial team created a new regional category, "Prairies & the North," to allow for Annie's inclusion as a nominee.



No one on the awards committee had imagined that a submission from Nunavut would be considered for this prestigious prize in Canadian contemporary art. The simple fact of Annie's inclusion in the list of nominees broke through the barriers that had long kept works created by Inuit artists outside the contemporary gallery. However, the choice of Annie as the prizewinner at the award exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in November 2006 was not without controversy, a controversy that revealed discriminatory bias.

Wayne Baerwaldt, former director and curator of the Illingworth Kerr Gallery at the Alberta College of Art and Design (now Alberta University of the Arts) in Calgary and a member of the award jury, explains:

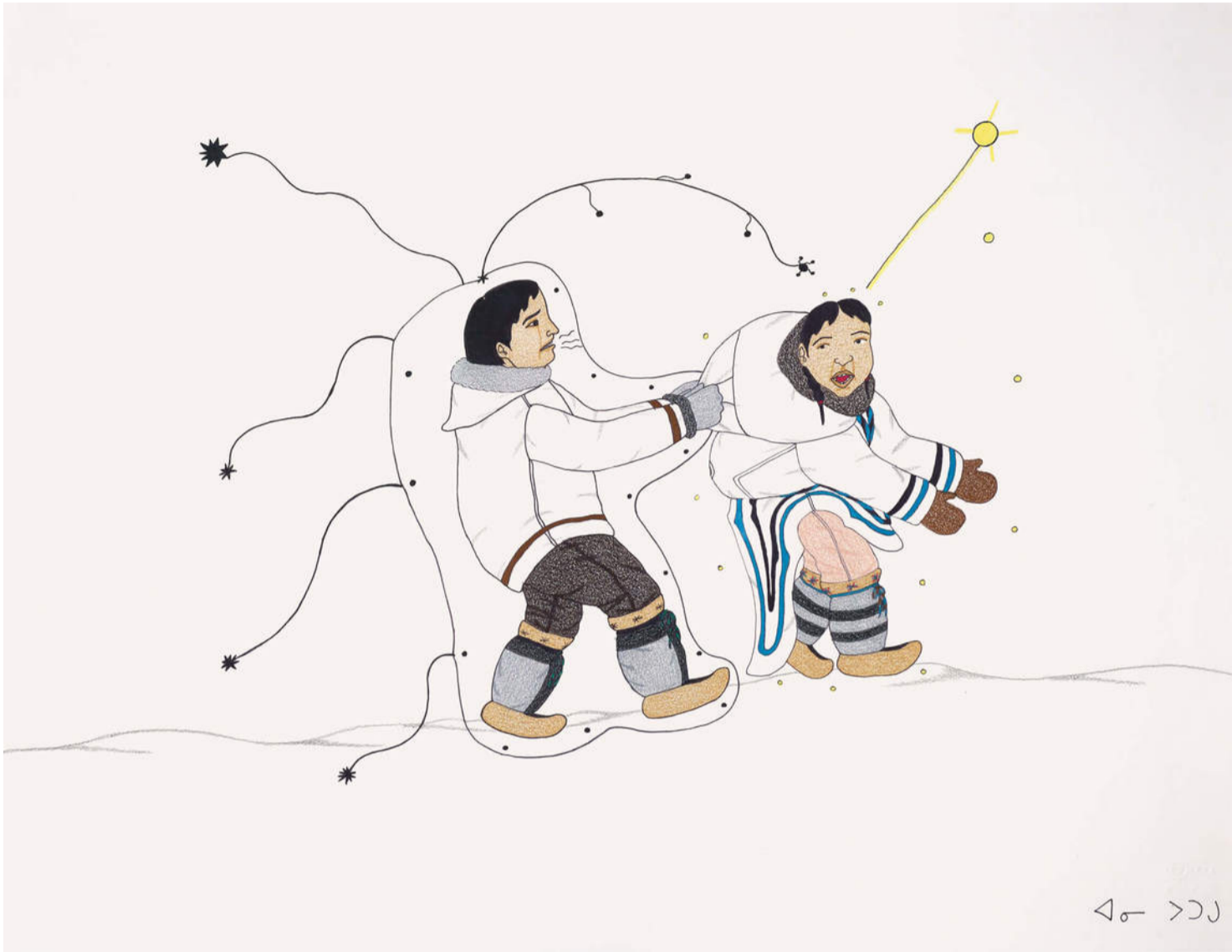
There were so many people on the jury at that time who were resistant to Annie winning.... They said because she was from the North that she wasn't "informed"

enough, hadn't been exposed to modernism and hadn't had formal training at art college like other artists did. For me, that was like listening to some 19th century discourse.... I think there was also this long-standing perception that, because of its history, that "Inuit art" is a commercial form of cultural production and therefore "artificial" while contemporary art from the south comes purely from the spirit of the artist and is therefore "authentic." But who can say what motivates any individual artist, no matter where they come from?<sup>6</sup>

Annie simply expressed her delight that her drawings were "liked." Her modest words understate by a long shot the monumental shift in art history that took place when the Sobey Art Award panel first considered an Inuit artist for the award and then chose her to be the prizewinner.



Annie Pootoogook, *Sobey Award 2006*, 2007, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 50.1 x 66 cm, Collection of Paul and Mary Desmarais.



Annie Pootoogook, *Man Pulling Woman*, 2003-4, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66 cm, Collection of John and Joyce Price.

The drawings selected for inclusion at the Montreal exhibition, many of them taken from The Power Plant solo show, highlight Annie's interpretations of contemporary life in the North and a version of her own life in Kinngait. Among them were interiors, exterior community scenes, and portrayals of emotion. Alongside these she presented works such as *Man Pulling Woman*, 2003-4, that spoke out loudly in a woman's voice at a time when feminist perspectives were transforming the artistic mainstream.

In 2007 Annie's works were shown in *documenta 12*, in Kassel, Germany. The organizers of this prestigious exhibition wrote that they were seeking traces of the postmodern in artwork that crosses "temporal and cultural boundaries."<sup>7</sup> Annie's drawings easily fit the criteria; *Dr. Phil*, 2006, and *Ritz Crackers*, 2004, were among the works shown. Personally, Annie felt out of place in the high-powered world of global contemporary art. Did she also sense that *documenta 12* may have valued her work (consciously or not) on account of its perceived exoticism? A similar question arises when we look at the ways in which Annie was marginalized both as a person and as an artist in Montreal and Ottawa, when she lived in those cities.



LEFT: Annie Pootoogook, *Bear by the Window*, 2004, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51.5 x 66 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook, *Untitled (Making Rope and Bannock)*, 2004-5, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 66 x 101.6 cm, Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie.

### MARGINALIZATION IN THE SOUTH

Annie chose to stay in the South after her Sobey Art Award win in 2006. She enjoyed the freedom she found in Montreal and aspired to make art outside the system she had grown up in at Kinngait Studios. Yet, like many aspiring artists, she lacked the skills to negotiate the commercial art market on her own and soon found herself in difficult circumstances. She still created drawings, although her production became less regular in the years leading to her death in 2016. The reasons for her decrease in production are complex; they include a lack of guidance and structure, as well as mental health issues, particularly addictions. Equally important, perhaps, was a wider struggle that was being waged, one beyond Annie's control: how her artwork was to be understood in its new Southern milieu. Annie's move from North to South exposed a critical flaw in how she was perceived in the context of Canadian art. Seen as an interpreter of the North, she was not accepted in the same way for the work she created in the South.

This marginalization becomes evident through an analysis of a significant drawing entitled *Drinking Beer in Montreal*, 2006. The work sits stylistically and compositionally alongside Annie's drawings of daily life in the North, but it does not feature any of the notable references to the North that collectors of so-called "exotic" works look for. (Even drawings without polar bears and snowmobiles can have a Northern "aura" if a room is decorated in a certain way, for instance.) In this Montreal setting, where two nondescript men are drinking beer in a room, the window behind them shows not a snowy landscape



Annie Pootoogook, *Drinking Beer in Montreal*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 77.5 x 111.8 cm, Collection of John and Joyce Price.

but a tree, a street, and a recycling bin. Annie's advanced technical skill is evident. The work is a fine example of the narrative realism that Annie had practised for years in the North—but for most collectors and curators it lacked the seduction of her earlier work. What accounts for this indifference? The truth of the matter is that Montreal was not remote enough or “mysterious” enough for the bias of the Canadian art world.

*Drinking Beer in Montreal* is as real as Annie's Kinngait drawings. That it was not embraced in the same way exposes a neo-colonial appetite for Inuit art, an appetite whose preconceptions of what these works ought to be remains unchanged. The things that made her drawings so compelling are still present in works she completed in the South; the drawings were simply rejected by many collectors for not being “Inuit enough,” a disturbing reality that raises important questions about how the art of the North is framed by the tastes and biases of others.

A critical consideration of Annie's drawings reminds us that it is essential to address the reality of collecting art from the North. There is a colonial impulse attached to the desire to view Inuit art creation as necessarily a collective activity undertaken in a far-off place. This projection of Western definitions of the self, the other, and society stands in the way of a proper understanding of the individual Inuit artist and of the artwork when it is left to stand on its own. Annie's drawings are the creations of an individual who was part of the human conversation, part of the story of being in the world.



Annie Pootoogook, *Composition (Hands with Praying Figure)*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink, 50.8 x 66 cm.

By 2012, six years after leaving Kinngait, Annie was destitute and living on the streets in Ottawa, struggling with addiction and abuse. That a world-famous artist was living outdoors in the city was no secret: that summer, Hugh Adami of the *Ottawa Citizen* and James Adams of the *Globe and Mail* wrote about this tragedy.<sup>8</sup> How could an artist who had so many gifts, who was granted opportunities and support, end up living on the streets of Canada's capital city, camped out near the prime minister's residence? If there is an answer to be found, some day we may find it along the long road that Canada still has to travel as part of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

### LEGACY AND IMPACT

Inuit art was nearly absent from contemporary art discourse before Annie's extraordinary year of 2006. Since Annie's arrival on the scene, works created by Inuit artists are no longer expected by all who see them to tell the story of an imaginary Canadian identity and a yearning for an exotic, pristine North. They are now widely accepted as expressions of contemporary identities and realities in a physical and social landscape undergoing constant change—whether in the North or anywhere else.

Relegating Inuit art to another space is limiting for the artists producing today and locks them into a colonial system that says who and what is contemporary. Only within the last twenty years has this system slowly begun to break down. Curators, scholars, and art buyers have begun to challenge the traditional segregation of Inuit artists in museums and history books by rethinking the function of art and how their own expectations contribute to the problem. As frank responses to the realities of life in Arctic communities today, Annie's drawings contributed to this change.

While Annie was shattering the limiting expectations that had been placed upon earlier generations of Inuit artists, she was also honouring their work. Creators such as Pitseolak Ashoona (c.1904–1983), Pudlo Pudlat (1916–1992), Kenojuak Ashevak (1927–2013), and Oviloo Tunnillie (1949–2014) had announced the existence of a new Inuit art to the world—although audiences still viewed their creations as local and ethnic products. Annie's *Composition: Women Gathering Whale Meat*, 2003–4, and other early works interpret traditional Inuit activities meticulously and respectfully, yet with her straightforward and unromantic realism she succeeded in bridging the one-time solitudes of Inuit art and what is understood as contemporary art.



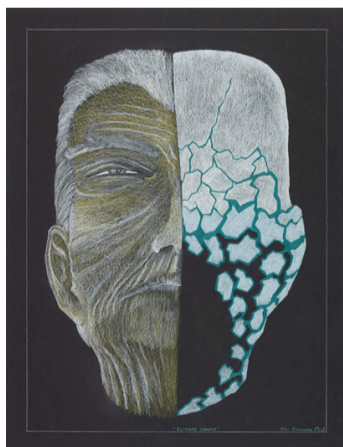
Annie Pootoogook, *Playing Nintendo*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 41.5 x 51 cm, private collection.



Annie Pootoogook, *Composition: Women Gathering Whale Meat*, 2003-4, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 66 x 102 cm, private collection.

Drawings like *Family Taking Supplies Home*, 2006, and *Cape Dorset Freezer*, 2005, present the consumption of Southern imports with cool irony. Annie knew exactly what she was doing here: her *Coleman Stove with Robin Hood Flour and Tenderflake*, 2003-4, recalls, with a difference, the composition and content of Pitseolak's *Untitled*, c.1966-76, with its traditional women's items on a plain ground. In these works, Annie comments pointedly on the complicated effects of a century of colonial influence in the Arctic, responding both from a socially conscious perspective and from the perspective of an artist working within a respected tradition.

Heather Igloliorte wrote a tribute to Annie in *Canadian Art* in response to her untimely and tragic death in September 2016. At the time Igloliorte commented that Annie permanently transformed the landscape of Inuit art by "breaking through the 'ethnic art' glass ceiling and firmly establishing contemporary Inuit art in the mainstream.... With her smart, unpretentious drawings," Igloliorte wrote, "[Annie] captured the attention of the international art world and held it for several years, keeping the door open for other Inuit artists to also enter in the



LEFT: Tim Pitsiulak, *Climate Change*, 2011, coloured pencil on black paper, 65 x 50 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. RIGHT: Itee Pootoogook, *Rear of Canoe*, 2011, coloured pencil and graphite on black paper, 50.2 x 66 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.

process."<sup>9</sup> These artists include peers from her own generation in Kinngait, notably Shuvinai Ashoona (b.1961), Jutai Toonoo (1959–2015), Siassie Kenneally (1969–2018), Itee Pootoogook (1951–2014), and later Tim Pitsiulak (1967–2016).

The interest in Annie's drawings marked a change at Kinngait Studios and drawings began to be sold in much greater quantities alongside the long-established Cape Dorset Annual Print Collection. Her drawing *Cape Dorset Freezer*, 2005, also marked a move to larger papers for some Northern artists (this size works well in museum exhibitions). Today Annie's name remains known and respected in Kinngait, where young students are introduced to her work.<sup>10</sup> In Ottawa Annie's friends at Galerie SAW Gallery have named a new studio after her to be used by emerging Inuit artists and as an educational space.<sup>11</sup>



Annie Pootoogook, *Composition (Happy Woman)*, 2003–4, coloured pencil and felt tip pen on paper, 39.6 x 50.8 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.

Annie remains well known for her renderings of the darker side of life. Some of her works, such as *Man Abusing His Partner*, 2002, *Memory of My Life: Breaking Bottles*, 2001–2, and *Hanging*, 2003–4, reveal themes of violence and broken social safety nets in Arctic communities. Yet a different picture unfolds from a review of the hundreds of drawings that Annie produced. Many represent a life of love, tradition, joy, and attachment to the land. Jimmy Manning reminds us that when looking at Annie's drawings, it is important to remember that she was loved in her home of Kinngait and that life in the North has much that is wonderful.

In Canada we are experiencing a renaissance of Inuit art. More Inuit artists are being reviewed, supported, and exhibited in exhibitions of contemporary art than ever before. Museums are focusing on the gaps in their collections and acquiring significant works of Indigenous art, an area that now includes works done by Inuit artists. Progressive collectors and curators no longer dismiss Inuit artists' creations as handicraft or tourist art. Annie's striking, powerful drawings were central to this movement. She captured the attention of the broader contemporary art world at a critical point in Canada's ongoing reconciliation process.

The background of the top half of the page is a red-toned illustration of an open book. The pages are filled with intricate, repeating floral or cloud-like patterns. The book is bound in the center, and the edges of the pages are visible. The overall style is reminiscent of traditional East Asian art.

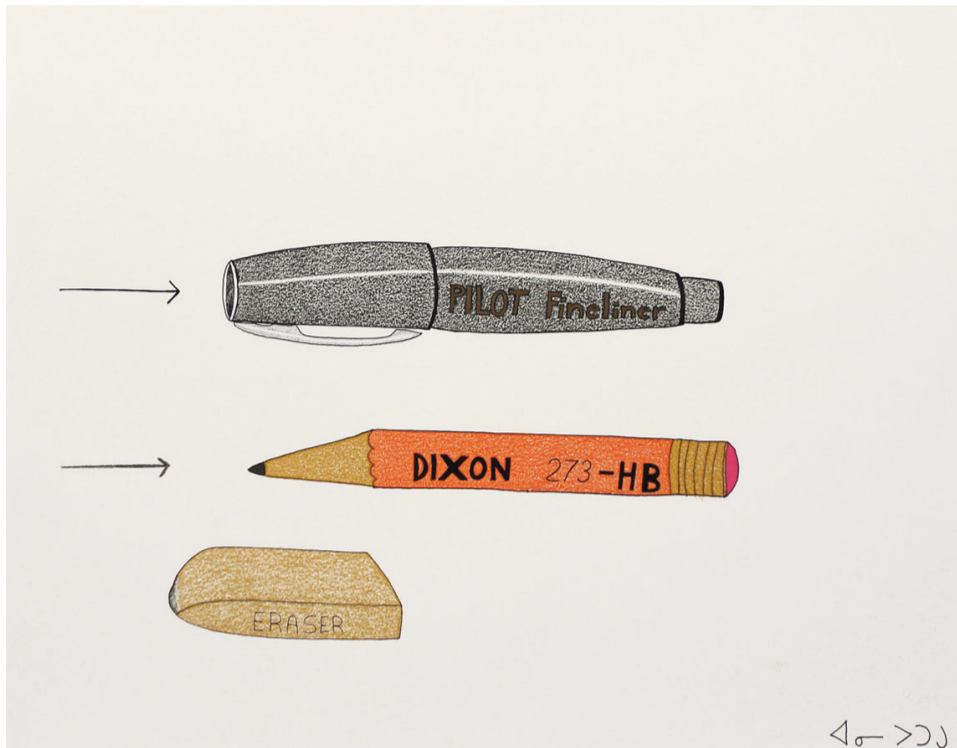
# STYLE & TECHNIQUE

Annie Pootoogook worked in a unique style of art that remained unmistakable throughout her short career. She actively pursued drawing for about ten years, though she also created works during her later life. She remained committed to a drawing practice that employed felt tip pen, pencil, and coloured pencil to create narrative, direct, and often understated compositions. Although she did experiment with large-scale papers, she preferred to work with smaller sheets of 51 x 66 cm. Yet regardless of what size Annie chose to make her compositions, they always had a tremendous impact.



## CRITICAL MATERIALS AND EARLY INFLUENCES

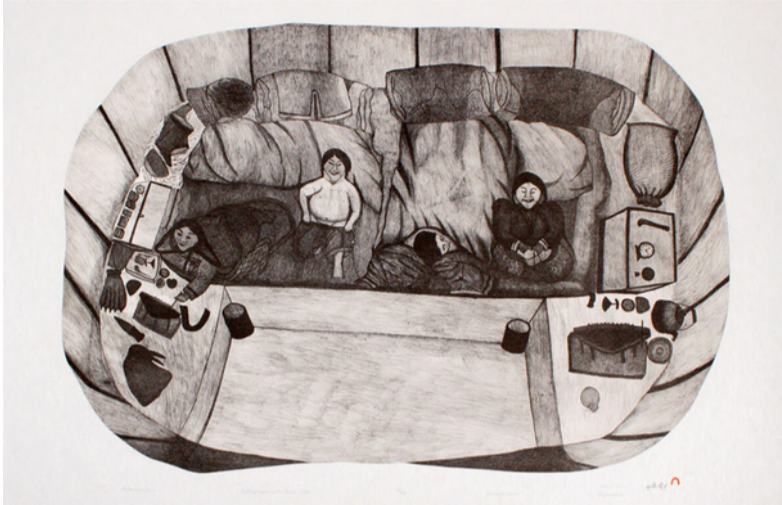
In her practice, Annie Pootoogook made use of felt tip pens, graphite, pencil crayons, and paper. The varied styles and techniques of her early works, such as *Eating Seal at Home*, 2001, and *Composition (Family Playing Cards)*, 2000–2001, demonstrate her willingness to experiment and learn. Annie<sup>1</sup> quickly developed a technical command of the drawing medium. Drawing on paper is a long-held tradition in the North, begun in the 1950s and originally practised by what is known as the first generation, which includes notable artists such as Annie's grandmother Pitseolak Ashoona (c.1904–1983) and Pudlo Pudlat (1916–1992).



Annie Pootoogook, *Pen, Pencil and Eraser*, 2003–4, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 50.8 x 66 cm, private collection.

Although her use of line is similar to that of many of her predecessors, including her grandmother and her mother, Napachie Pootoogook (1938–2002), Annie's mature compositions are very different from those of earlier Inuit artists. In the works of artists such as Kenojuak Ashevak (1927–2013) and Mayoreak Ashoona (b.1946), images of mythic animals dominate the paper. Annie is known for her interior spaces, which she defines by walls and floors, and sometimes a door and windows. She typically fills the room with a clutter of furnishings and mundane objects. The people in her interiors take up the space as people tend to do—they arrange themselves comfortably and naturally. When she shows an isolated object, such as a pair of glasses or a bra, it shows up boldly, like an icon against the expanse of paper. Although Annie's predecessors did not typically compose interiors or isolate objects in the same way that Annie did, certain works, specifically works by Napachie, are recognized as important precedents.

Napachie's influence on Annie's work can be seen in works like *Interior View*, 2000. No doubt Annie had watched her mother create drawings during her younger years; traces of Napachie's descriptive compositions, which include the minutiae of daily life, are visible in Annie's later creations. Direct correlations between the two artists' works can also be found. For example, Napachie's *Trading Women for Supplies*, 1997–98, is a drawing that portrays the darker subject matter of gender-based exploitation. Annie too created works, such as *A True Story*, 2006, that depict disturbing real-life occurrences drawn from her community. Napachie's struggles with mental health and abuse influenced Annie's art as well. After watching her mother make drawings about these difficult experiences, Annie went on to create her own, including *Man Abusing His Partner*, 2002, and *Memory of My Life: Breaking Bottles*, 2001–2. More broadly, both Annie and her mother were inspired by memories of their childhoods.<sup>2</sup>



LEFT: Napachie Pootoogook, *Interior View*, 2000, edition 1/25, lithograph and chine-collé, 64.8 x 94.6 cm, Fehely Fine Arts, Toronto.  
 RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook, *Family Camping on the Land*, 2001-2, coloured pencil and felt tip pen on paper, 50.8 x 66.2 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.

Annie spent time as a young girl watching her bedridden grandmother, Pitseolak, draw. We see Pitseolak's influence in Annie's strong lines and also, in subtle ways, in some of Annie's subject matter. For example, Pitseolak's signature black-framed glasses appear in numerous drawings, revealing the bond between the two. Annie also drew her grandmother's portrait.

Annie produced art prolifically during her time at Kinngait Studios, developing her original take on contemporary life in the North with the support of the studio's staff, especially William (Bill) Ritchie, who encouraged her to push herself. Annie chose to draw the realities of her North: domestic interiors, consumer products, and fragments of her own life as a young woman, experiences that are referenced in works such as *Morning Routine*, 2003. Art dealer and curator Patricia Fehely writes that "Annie's narrative tendencies, meticulous draftsmanship and contemporary subject matter stand out against a half-century of graphics preoccupied primarily with issues of design and colour."<sup>3</sup>



Annie Pootoogook, *Morning Routine*, 2003, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66 cm, private collection.

### LINE, PERSPECTIVE, AND COLOUR EXPERIMENTS

Annie approached each one of her drawings systematically, beginning with outlines in graphite before working up details in Fineliner and finishing with increasingly bold areas of coloured pencil. Her earlier works reveal a more tentative use of pencil crayon with less saturated hues and a lighter touch. Later works show confidence in her colour sense, with strokes that are deliberate, bright, and hard. Similarly, her earlier works were rendered in two dimensions with pencil and Fineliner, but increasingly she experimented with colour, shading, and shadows, and with the presentation of a more three-dimensional view.



Annie Pootoogook, *Composition (Family Playing Cards)*, 2000-2001, ink, pencil, pencil crayon, 51 x 66 cm, Collection of Baljit and Roshi Chadha.

It is common for artists to begin working in black and white, a practice through which they start to establish their particular styles. In Annie's case she began incorporating colour early on, demonstrating a strong sense of its possibilities. She made limited use of three-point perspective, although her handling of this technique improved as she gained experience. Her progress can be seen by comparing an early work such as *Eating Seal at Home*, 2001, with *Composition: Watching Porn on Television*, 2005, with its development of a foreground, middle ground, and background. Annie is best known for her interiors that depict daily life and routine activities, including getting ready for a date, eating country food (the traditional Inuit diet of things either caught or collected from the land), watching television, or playing cards. Her interiors show much experimentation. Some, like *Dr. Phil*, 2006, are densely coloured, while others use techniques suggesting perspective and depth to show a room beyond a door.

Throughout her short career Annie carried on the practice of drawing with pencil crayon, as her grandmother and mother had done. Her early drawings, such as *Untitled (Women Sewing)*, 2004, are executed in graphite and felt tip pen. A number of drawings show a restrained use of coloured pencil; in *Composition (Family Portrait)*, 2005-6, she cleverly inserts a thin red hairband and three pairs of delicate pink lips into a composition dominated by flat black forms and strong, thin black lines on a white surface. In some earlier works, her pencil work appears more cautious. This approach may have been intentional, but most likely as her confidence in image-making improved she began to feel more comfortable using colour. As she progressed, it became evident that her colour sense was exceptional; her mastery is shown in the bold strokes of colour that saturate the paper of her mature work. In  *Holding Boots*, 2004, a work that plays with flat surfaces and implied perspective, she uses the complements of green in the woman's socks to ground the drawing between the crouching red knees.



LEFT: Annie Pootoogook, *Untitled (Women Sewing)*, 2004, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66 cm, Collection of John and Joyce Price. RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook, *Composition (Family Portrait)*, 2005-6, coloured pencil and felt tip pen over graphite on paper, 50.7 x 66.3 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.

In some later works, Annie used marker, paint, and oil stick to achieve new, experimental effects. In 2007, while she was living in Montreal, she was introduced to oil stick by Paul Machnik at Studio PM. This new medium



# ANNIE POOTOOGOOK

Life & Work by Nancy G. Campbell

remained an experiment for Annie and she did not prioritize it in the same way she did coloured pencil, graphite, and ink. However, she did produce a number of works with oil stick, most significantly (*Composition*) *Drawing of My Grandmother's Glasses*, 2007, a large, vibrantly coloured drawing of her grandmother's immediately recognizable black-framed glasses. It was awarded a purchase prize by the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, at Art Toronto, an international art fair, in 2007.



Installation view of Annie Pootoogook's *Composition (Drawing of My Grandmother's Glasses)*, 2007, at Tate Liverpool for the Liverpool Biennial 2018, photograph by Elyse Jacobson.

## COMPOSITION IN THE *SULIJUK* TRADITION

Compositionally, Annie's work is within the *sulijuk* tradition (translated as "true" or "real"). This practice is a mode of working seen in the North and the approach encouraged at Kinngait Studios. Much has changed, though, since Annie's predecessors began drawing their experiences of living on the land; in composing images of a far different North, Annie too was drawing her own lived and true reality. She depicted life as she saw it, revealing a reality that, to outsiders with little knowledge of the North, appeared to be at odds with the traditional outdoor scenes that people in Southern Canada had come to expect in Inuit artists' works on paper. This honesty is the source of Annie's originality.

The timing of Annie's arrival on the scene is also important. Kinngait artists were starting to produce drawings that were being recognized as finished artworks. The drawing medium gave Annie the freedom to develop the subjects of her own lived reality—she did not have to yield to the expectation that her drawings were preparatory works for the production of prints, a medium that still held traditional associations. Although Annie's work was included in some Cape Dorset Annual Print Collections, it was her drawings that were sought after in the market.



Annie Pootoogook, *Composition (Mother and Child)*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 38.1 x 50.8 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.

At the beginning of her career, Annie drew many small interior and camp scenes, but as she developed her skills as an artist she alternated freely among different compositional schemes. These include interiors of homes, objects taken from those interiors and displayed in isolation, vignettes of life on the land, and images centred on the page and encompassed by sinuous lines. Her process was meticulous, requiring great concentration to execute her finished works.

The simple graphic style that came to characterize Annie's art was at first controversial among curators and collectors alike, yet it proved to be immensely popular, especially among supporters of contemporary art. Some people condescendingly commented that a child could accomplish similar work or that it appeared naive. This type of criticism is nothing new; it has been a consistent reaction to modern and contemporary art for over a century. However, with respect to Annie it held little credence. She was talented and hard-working; she honed her drawing skills by working diligently, employing the lessons of Elders while seeking to set herself apart from her peers. The originality of her work speaks to her commitment, vision, and skill.



Annie Pootoogook, *Sculptor with Pipe*, 2003-4, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66 cm, Collection of John and Joyce Price.

### NARRATIVE REALISM

Annie's most recognized and documented drawings are in the tradition of narrative realism. They tell stories or document her life. Her drawings depict life as she experienced it in Kinngait, from eating meals and watching television to playing games or having sex. Her domestic interiors, for which she is best known, are often a compilation of many real homes and in these scenes we see familiar motifs, such as the same coffee mug, clock, or artwork repeated in different interiors. For example, a distinct coffee mug with a flower on it can be seen in both *Tea Time, Cape Dorset*, 2003, and *Ritz Crackers*, 2004. These motifs taken from everyday life set the stage in the present, not in a distant past.



LEFT: Annie Pootoogook, *Ritz Crackers*, 2004, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 76 x 112.5 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook, *Untitled (Softening Skin)*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 50.8 x 66 cm, Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie.

Through the techniques of narrative realism Annie was determined to reveal some of the difficult social, economic, and physical realities of today's North. She delves into her personal struggles with domestic violence in *Man Abusing His Partner*, 2002, and the problem of addiction in *Memory of My Life: Breaking Bottles*, 2001-2. *Shooting a Mountie*, 2001, documents the tragic murder of RCMP Constable Jurgen Seewald in Kinngait in 2001. Similarly, in *A True Story*, 2006, Annie recalls from memory an accident at sea in 1979 when Special Constable Ningoseak Etidloi drowned on patrol with Constable Gordon Brooks when their twenty-four-foot-long freighter canoe capsized in rough conditions on the Arctic Ocean. It is said that the officers were setting off to find Kuiga (Kiugak) Ashoona (1933-2014), Annie's uncle, who was at their outpost camp, and they planned to do some walrus hunting on the way. Here the different stories are conflated in a single image that shows the drowning, complete with flailing bodies and a broken canoe, the walrus hunt, and the search for her uncle all collapsed into one scene.



LEFT: Annie Pootoogook, *A True Story*, 2006, coloured pencil, ink, and graphite on paper, 66 x 102 cm, Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie. RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook, *Shooting a Mountie*, 2001, pencil crayon and ink on paper, 50.8 x 66.0 cm, private collection.

The acknowledgment of difficult issues recalls the later work of Annie's mother, Napachie Pootoogook, who depicted the hardships of her community and her own life in some of her work. Many of these works document the



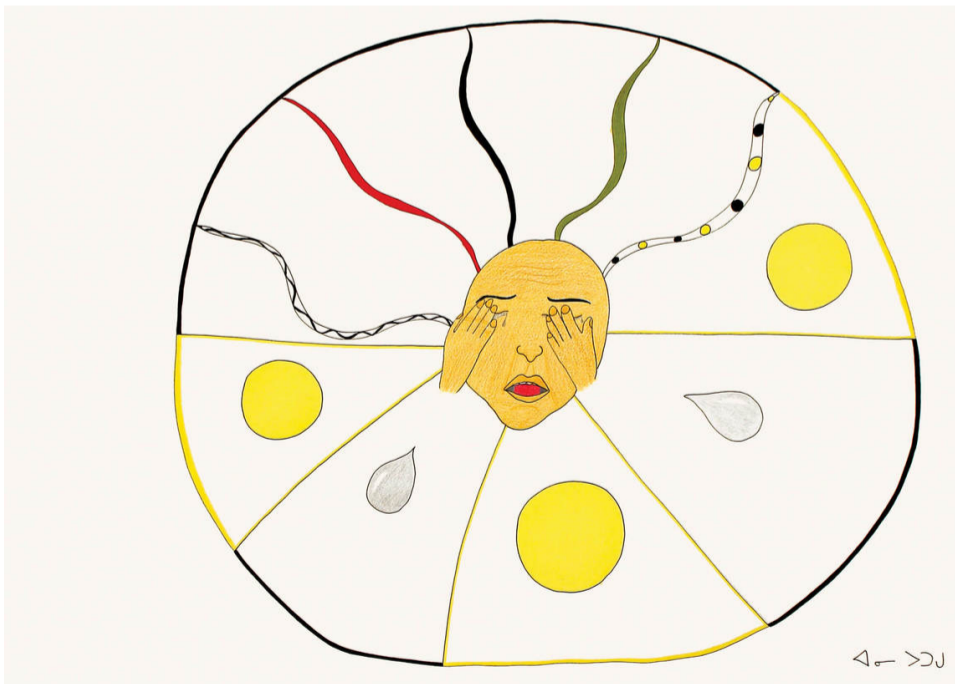
transition period of the 1960s and the Inuit moving into and living in government-built settlements. Napachie began to draw upon episodes from her personal life, and sometimes scenes of abuse, in 1996, and continued to do so until her death six years later. Some of these works were shown in *Three Women, Three Generations: Drawings by Pitseolak Ashoona, Napachie [sic] Pootoogook and Shuvina Ashoona*, an exhibition held at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, and the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 1999. Only a few years later, Annie's own similar drawings became her most iconic pictures.

Elder Jimmy Manning said in an interview in 2005 that "Annie's work is, like, today and yesterday... daily happenings, shopping, music, the feast."<sup>4</sup> But Manning has also said: "Sometimes she will draw hurting feelings from her heart which she's not afraid to say on paper."<sup>5</sup>

### PSYCHOLOGICAL DRAWINGS

Caoimhe Morgan-Feir writes that while Annie's interior and exterior scenes function like stages, with rectangular regions where actions take place, the drawings that are interior to herself—her "psychological drawings"—are notable for their sinuous lines encircling a central image that often seems to float on the page. One such image is *Composition (Evil Spirit)*, 2003-4, where, writes Morgan-Feir, "an umbilical cord-like line connects the figure's mouth to the genitals of the spirit, encircling them both."<sup>6</sup> In many of these drawings, Morgan-Feir observes, "the central figures sit in the middle of the page, with elements reaching in and looping out. There are some formal similarities with her other scenes—namely, her strong, clear lines, which she marked in pencil before rendering in ink."<sup>7</sup>

An illustration of this style is *Composition (Sadness and Relief for My Brother)*, 2006. Annie began this work in Scotland, where she spent two months participating in the Glenfiddich Artists in Residence program. Patricia Feheley interviewed Annie extensively about her work, and they discussed this drawing. Feheley recalls, "She had started a drawing and there were all of these black lines and things.... And she said, 'I'm drawing this because I'm upset about my brother, because he was arrested, and I think this time they're going to put him in jail.' But the next day, she talked to her family again and he hadn't been jailed, he had been let go, and she completed the drawing in happy mode."<sup>8</sup>



Annie Pootoogook, *Composition (Sadness and Relief for My Brother)*, 2006, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 56 x 76.2 cm, Collection of Gary Evans.

This exchange helps explain the complexities of Annie's technique: the curving lines, red dots, yellow dots, and stars she included in some of these works are a guide to her psychological state during the act of creating. She developed these motifs as a way to code her emotions onto the page. Some of the psychological drawings are the result of complicated entanglements with realities of the North, the influence of Kinngait Studios, Annie's own interior battles, and her struggles to find her place in the world.

### LARGE-SCALE WORKS

Annie produced works in a larger format than was customary at Kinngait Studios. Although larger papers had been used in the studios in the past, there was never a market for this format before Annie tried her hand at it. Inuit art before the early 2000s was primarily marketed for private collectors rather than public museums and galleries, and smaller sizes were common. Annie's 2006 exhibition at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto, offered a new opportunity to exhibit large-scale drawings. Typically, contemporary art museums demand larger works to create an impact in their enormous rooms, a requirement which has prompted many artists to push the boundaries of scale. *Cape Dorset Freezer*, 2005, was the first major large-scale piece Annie produced. For this drawing she was given a large sheet of paper, which she began to work on in the studio but eventually finished at home. Annie chose for her subject a new wall-length freezer that had been recently installed at a store in Kinngait. In the *sulijuk* tradition, Annie meticulously rendered the contents of the freezer and the shoppers in the store. This drawing was a tour de force and was immediately purchased by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

*Cape Dorset Freezer* marked a significant change in scale for drawings from artists in Kinngait. This precedent (not strictly an innovation—it had been tried before in the North) spread throughout the studios. Artists followed Annie's example with enthusiasm, as these larger works commanded higher prices. Annie, however, remained comfortable with the smaller scale—*Freezer* was the largest drawing she ever created. She preferred the freedom to work quickly and move easily from one image to another. Other artists, though, such as Annie's cousin Shuvina Ashoona (b.1961), have taken up large-scale works in exciting new ways.



Annie Pootoogook holding her drawing *Balvenie Castle*, 2006, at Castle Croft residence, where she stayed during her Glenfiddich Artist Residency, 2006, photograph by John Paul Photography. Castle Croft overlooks Balvenie Castle.



Shuvinai Ashoona, *Composition (Purple Bird Transformation)*, 2010, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 61 x 160 cm, Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie.

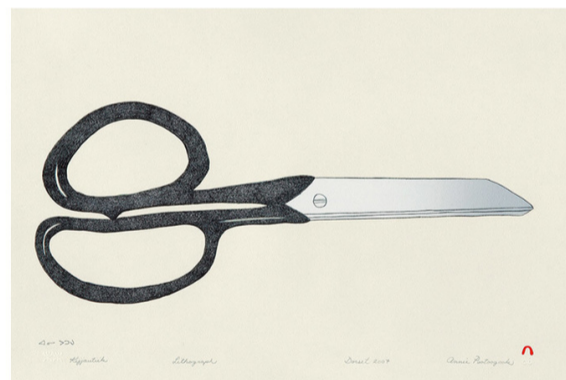
## PRINTMAKING

Although Annie is most renowned for her drawings, from 2003 to 2008 her drawings served as source material for the Cape Dorset Annual Print Collection, which featured eight of her prints. Because Annie's career as an artist was brief, so too were her print production runs for the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative.

Since 1959 Kinngait Studios has been respected internationally for its release of the Cape Dorset Annual Print Collection. It maintains its commitment to high-quality print production, exquisite stonecut prints, etchings, lithographs, and collagraphs, and to nurturing a secure and committed collector base. The studios actively foster local talent, and artists from Kinngait have continued to dominate the Inuit art market. The strategic planning at the senior management level of the Co-op has made an important contribution to its success.<sup>9</sup> In addition to its first manager, James Houston, another manager, Terrence Ryan, was critical to the Co-op's stability. Ryan, who had a solid background in the arts, served for forty years as the general manager of the Co-op and did much to support the development of the community's arts sector while maintaining a strong and vibrant Co-op. Under Ryan's leadership, the arts flourished in Kinngait and the Co-op concentrated on developing and expanding artists' techniques and visual vocabularies. Following Ryan, William (Bill) Ritchie became the studio manager, and he has nurtured and supported the artists and encouraged emerging artists to spend time in the studios and experiment.



LEFT: Annie Pootoogook, *Cross*, 2007, AP VI/VII, silkscreen, 33 x 33 cm, Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie. RIGHT: Annie Pootoogook, *Kijjautiik (Scissors)*, 2007, lithograph, 38.1 x 56.5 cm.



Just as Annie was viewed by some of her peers at the Co-op as something of a dissident for her drawings (although the Co-op staff encouraged her), so her contributions to the print release were also notably experimental. The studio adapted works representing her unique vision of the new North. *Briefcase*, 2005, and *35/36*, 2006, images of men's briefs and a bra, were definitely outside the box of customary prints. Other prints, such as *The Homecoming*, 2006, and *Interior and Exterior*, 2003, are more sentimental—they focus on Annie's love of community. Although Annie's prints are successful in sales and distribution, her drawings hold the art world's attention with the sheer scope of her vision, her prolific output, and the startling directness of her imagery and composition.



Annie Pootoogook, *The Homecoming*, 2006, etching and aquatint, 40/50, 52.1 x 66.7 cm.



The works of Annie Pootoogook are held in public and private collections, in Canada and internationally. Although the following institutions hold the works listed below, they may not always be on view. This list contains only the works in public collections discussed and illustrated in this book.



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## ART GALLERY OF NOVA SCOTIA

1723 Hollis Street  
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada  
902-424-5280  
artgalleryofnovascotia.ca



**Annie Pootoogook,**  
***Showing a Drawing,***  
**2001-2**  
Wax pastel and ink on  
Ragston paper  
66.0 x 50.9 cm



**Annie Pootoogook,**  
***Composition (Family***  
***Cooking in Kitchen),***  
**2002**  
Wax pastel and  
graphite on Somerset  
paper  
76.4 x 111.6 cm



**Annie Pootoogook,**  
***Balvenie Castle,***  
**2006**  
Wax pastel and ink on  
Arches paper  
77 x 113 cm



**Annie Pootoogook,**  
***Three Men Carving a***  
***Seal, Three Women***  
***Cleaning,***  
**2006**  
Wax pastel and ink on  
Ragston paper  
50.9 x 66.2 cm

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## ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

317 Dundas Street West  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
416-979-6648  
ago.ca



**Annie Pootoogook, *Hunter***  
***Mimics Seal,***  
**2006**  
Coloured pencil, black porous-  
point pen on paper  
50.8 x 66.2 cm

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## CONFEDERATION CENTRE ART GALLERY

145 Richmond Street  
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada  
902-628-1864  
confederationcentre.com



**Annie Pootoogook, *The National*, 2003**  
Pencil, ink, and pencil crayon  
50.9 x 66.2 cm

## MCMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

10365 Islington Avenue  
Kleinburg, Ontario, Canada  
905-893-1121  
mcmichael.com



**Annie Pootoogook, *Family Camping on the Land*, 2001-2**  
Coloured pencil and ink on paper  
50.8 x 66.2 cm



**Annie Pootoogook, *Composition (Happy Woman)*, 2003-4**  
Coloured pencil and ink on paper  
39.6 x 50.8 cm



**Annie Pootoogook, *Composition (Family Portrait)*, 2005-6**  
Coloured pencil and ink over graphite on paper  
50.7 x 66.3 cm



**Annie Pootoogook, *Myself in Scotland*, 2005-6**  
Coloured pencil and ink on paper  
76.5 x 56.6 cm



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**Annie Pootoogook, *Composition (Mother and Child)*, 2006**

Coloured pencil and ink on paper  
38.1 x 50.8 cm



**Annie Pootoogook, *Annie and Andre*, 2009**

Coloured pencil and graphite on paper  
50.1 x 66.2 cm

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## NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA

380 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
613-990-1985  
gallery.ca



**Annie Pootoogook, *Cape Dorset Freezer*, 2005**

Coloured pencil crayon, black metallic ballpoint pen, and graphite on wove paper  
111.5 x 233.1 cm



**Annie Pootoogook, *Untitled (Kenojuak and Annie with Governor General Michaëlle Jean)*, 2010**

Coloured pencil on paper  
51 x 66 cm

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## NOTES

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#### **KEY WORKS: EATING SEAL AT HOME**

1. While it is common to refer to artists by their surnames, many Inuit artists share the same surname, so it is sometimes clearer to use artists' first names. This style has been chosen for this book.

#### **KEY WORKS: MAN ABUSING HIS PARTNER**

1. While it is common to refer to artists by their surnames, many Inuit artists share the same surname, so it is sometimes clearer to use artists' first names. This style has been chosen for this book.

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#### **KEY WORKS: MEMORY OF MY LIFE: BREAKING BOTTLES**

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#### **KEY WORKS: THE NATIONAL**

1. While it is common to refer to artists by their surnames, many Inuit artists share the same surname, so it is sometimes clearer to use artists' first names. This style has been chosen for this book.



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## KEY WORKS: WATCHING HUNTING SHOWS

1. While it is common to refer to artists by their surnames, many Inuit artists share the same surname, so it is sometimes clearer to use artists' first names. This style has been chosen for this book.

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## KEY WORKS: PORTRAIT OF MY GRANDMOTHER

1. While it is common to refer to artists by their surnames, many Inuit artists share the same surname, so it is sometimes clearer to use artists' first names. This style has been chosen for this book.

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## KEY WORKS: COMPOSITION (EVIL SPIRIT)

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4. *Annie Pootoogook*, dir. Marcia Connolly (Toronto: Site Media, 2006), film, 24 min.

## KEY WORKS: COMPOSITION: WATCHING PORN ON TELEVISION

1. While it is common to refer to artists by their surnames, many Inuit artists share the same surname, so it is sometimes clearer to use artists' first names. This style has been chosen for this book.

## KEY WORKS: COLEMAN STOVE WITH ROBIN HOOD FLOUR AND TENDERFLAKE

1. While it is common to refer to artists by their surnames, many Inuit artists share the same surname, so it is sometimes clearer to use artists' first names. This style has been chosen for this book.

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## KEY WORKS: CAPE DORSET FREEZER

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## KEY WORKS: BALVENIE CASTLE

1. While it is common to refer to artists by their surnames, many Inuit artists share the same surname, so it is sometimes clearer to use artists' first names. This style has been chosen for this book.

## KEY WORKS: UNTITLED (KENOJUAK AND ANNIE WITH GOVERNOR GENERAL MICHAËLLE JEAN)

1. While it is common to refer to artists by their surnames, many Inuit artists share the same surname, so it is sometimes clearer to use artists' first names. This style has been chosen for this book.

## SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

1. While it is common to refer to artists by their surnames, many Inuit artists share the same surname, so it is sometimes clearer to use artists' first names. This style has been chosen for this book.

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8. Hugh Adami, "Desperate to Get off the Street; Acclaimed Inuit Artist Annie Pootoogook Is Pregnant, Homeless and Still Drawing," *Ottawa Citizen*, July 21, 2012; James Adams, "A Revolutionary Inuit Artist's Life Imitates Her Art, Darkly," *Globe and Mail*, August 16, 2012. Reports also appeared in other newspapers at the time and later.



9. Heather Igloliorte, "Annie Pootoogook: 1969-2016," *Canadian Art*, September 27, 2016, <https://canadianart.ca/features/annie-pootoogook-1969-2016/>.

10. Chris Rattan, "Cape Dorset Youth Pick Their Favourite Annie Pootoogook Drawings," *NOW*, November 1, 2017, 12:23 PM, <https://nowtoronto.com/art-and-books/art/cape-dorset-youth-pick-favourite-annie-pootoogook-drawings/>.

11. Sara Frizzell, "Ottawa Gallery to Dedicate Studio to Late Inuk Artist Annie Pootoogook," *CBC News*, May 12, 2017, 4:00 AM CT, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/annie-pootoogook-artist-studio-saw-1.4111258>.

## STYLE & TECHNIQUE

1. While it is common to refer to artists by their surnames, many Inuit artists share the same surname, so it is sometimes clearer to use artists' first names. This style has been chosen for this book.

2. Leslie Boyd Ryan, *Windows on Kinngait: The Drawings of Napachie Pootoogook and Annie Pootoogook* (Toronto: Feheley Fine Arts, 2005).

3. Patricia Feheley, "Modern Language: The Art of Annie Pootoogook," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 13.

4. Jimmy Manning, telephone interview with the author, May 2005.

5. Manning quoted in Caoimhe Morgan-Feir, "Revisiting Annie Pootoogook: The Spirit, the Self and Other Stories," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 32.

6. Morgan-Feir, "Revisiting Annie Pootoogook," 32.

7. Morgan-Feir, "Revisiting Annie Pootoogook," 32.

8. Morgan-Feir, "Revisiting Annie Pootoogook," 32.

9. The West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative sells artworks through its art marketing arm, Dorset Fine Arts, in Toronto. Dorset Fine Arts has also collaborated with Paul Machnik of Studio PM in Montreal since 1994. Machnik has worked in Montreal with many artists from Kinngait, including Annie Pootoogook.



## GLOSSARY

### **Art Gallery of Nova Scotia**

One of the largest museums in Atlantic Canada, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia was founded in 1908. Its collection includes more than 17,000 works, with a focus on work by artists with strong connections to Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada as well as work by historical and contemporary Canadian artists more generally. Its collection of folk art, anchored by the work of Maud Lewis, is especially notable.

### **Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO)**

Founded in 1900 as the Art Museum of Toronto, later the Art Gallery of Toronto, the Art Gallery of Ontario is a major collecting institution in Toronto, Ontario, holding close to 95,000 works by Canadian and international artists.

### **Ashevak, Kenojuak (Ikirasak/Kinngait, 1927–2013)**

Born on southern Baffin Island, this graphic artist largely represented Inuit art in Canada and internationally from the 1960s onward. The recipient of numerous commissions from federal and public institutions, including Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Canada Post, and VIA Rail, her captivating images of animal and human figures are among the most recognizable in Canadian art history.

### **Ashoona, Kuiga (Kiugak) (Kinngait, 1933–2014)**

A master carver of traditional Inuit sculpture, Kuiga Ashoona received the Order of Canada in 2000 and is among the most significant figures in contemporary northern art. A second-generation Inuit artist, he was one of Pitseolak Ashoona's sons. A retrospective exhibition of his decades-long career was held at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 2010.

### **Ashoona, Mayoreak (Ashoona, Mayureak) (Saturituk/Kinngait, b.1946)**

A graphic artist and master carver whose mother was the pioneering graphic artist Sheouak Parr. After the death of her husband, the carver Qaqaq Ashoona, Mayoreak Ashoona moved from their camp on southern Baffin Island to Cape Dorset. Her work has been exhibited in Germany and Japan, as well as across Canada.

### **Ashoona, Pitseolak (Tujakjuak/Kinngait, c.1904–1983)**

A major figure in the history of Cape Dorset graphic art, Pitseolak Ashoona made well over eight thousand drawings during her twenty-five-year career. Beginning in 1960, her enormously popular, frequently autobiographical images were included in the Cape Dorset Annual Print Collection yearly. She bore seventeen children, and many became significant artists in their own right. (See *Pitseolak Ashoona: Life & Work* by Christine Lalonde.)



## **Ashoona, Shuinai (Kinngait, b.1961)**

A third-generation artist from Cape Dorset, Shuinai Ashoona creates unconventional and imaginative graphic works that are widely collected and exhibited. Her work ranges from intensely coloured and intricate coloured-pencil drawings to boldly graphic stonecuts and monochromatic ink drawings of simple, isolated forms. (See *Shuinai Ashoona: Life & Work* by Nancy G. Campbell.)

## **avant-garde**

From the French for “vanguard” or “advance guard,” avant-garde entered discussions about art in the early nineteenth-century work of the socialist thinker Henri de Saint-Simon, who believed that artists had a role to play in building a new society. The meaning of “avant-garde” has shifted over the years, referring to artists in relation to their times rather than to a particular group of artists working at a specific time in history. It connotes radicalism and rejection of a status quo and is often associated with work that is provocative and confrontational.

## **BGL**

Founded in 1996, BGL is an art collective based in Quebec City, Quebec. Its three members, Jasmin Bilodeau, Sébastien Giguère, and Nicolas Laverdière (the initials “BGL” are taken from their last names), create large-scale installation work, often incorporating ironic humour and irreverence, as well as kinetic elements. Shortlisted for the Sobey Art Award in 2006, BGL represented Canada at the 2015 Venice Biennale with the installation *Canadassimo*.

## **Boyd, Leslie (Canadian, b.1956)**

The owner and director of Inuit Fine Art Gallery in Port Hope, Ontario, Boyd is a writer and curator specializing in Inuit art, especially that produced by artists in Kinngait (Cape Dorset). After travelling to Cape Dorset in 1980 for a temporary position at the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative (whose art division is now known as Kinngait Studios), Boyd spent the first decades of her career travelling back and forth between Toronto and Cape Dorset while working for the Co-op and its marketing and wholesale division, Dorset Fine Arts. She opened her Port Hope gallery in 2018.

## **Cape Dorset Annual Print Collection**

Established in 1959, this is the annual release of prints created by artists in the printmaking section of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative (now Kinngait Studios). Prints have been distributed in the art market of the South by Dorset Fine Arts, which markets Inuit art to galleries and institutions.

## **collagraphy**

A printmaking technique popularized by American printmaker and art educator Glen Alps in the 1950s, collagraphy involves affixing three-dimensional objects to a rigid material, often a piece of cardboard. The textured surface created by the objects becomes the basis for a print—it can be inked and pressed by hand or in a printing press. Collagraphs can be used to create either relief prints, in which the upper surfaces of the plate are inked, or intaglio prints, in which ink





is worked into the whole plate and then removed from the upper surface so that the print will draw pigment from the spaces between objects.

### **Confederation Centre of the Arts**

Located in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, the Confederation Centre of the Arts is a musical theatre, visual arts, and heritage venue. Founded in 1964 to commemorate the Charlottetown Conference of 1864, it is Canada's official memorial to the Fathers of Confederation. Its theatre is the home of the Charlottetown Festival and its art gallery holds a collection of over 16,000 works by contemporary and historic Canadian artists.

### **Documenta**

One of the world's longest-running international art events and most important recurrent exhibitions of modern and contemporary art. It launched in 1955 in Kassel, Germany, with the primary intention of reintegrating Germany into the international art scene after the Second World War. It takes place in Kassel every five years.

### **Dorset Fine Arts**

The wholesale marketing division of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative (now Kinngait Studios), based in Toronto and established in 1978, Dorset Fine Arts makes available to an international market Inuit sculptures, drawings, and prints.

### **ethnic art**

A term historically used to refer to art by non-Western artists, ethnic art was traditionally collected by ethnographic and natural history museums rather than art galleries. The term has been criticized for separating non-Western artists, including Indigenous artists, from their Western peers, and excluding them from art markets and discussions of art's place in society both historically and in the present day.

### **exoticism**

Exoticism is most often used to describe a quality of unusualness or unfamiliarity. When the term "exoticism" is used to discuss works of art or attitudes toward them, it refers to a way of looking at something that focuses on its otherness. Often, this means valuing a different culture specifically for its difference, rather than attempting to understand the numerous complex ways in which culture shapes society.

### **Feheley, Patricia (Canadian, b.1953)**

The director of the Toronto commercial art gallery Feheley Fine Arts, Feheley is an expert in Inuit art. Since taking over from her father, M.F. (Budd) Feheley, who established the gallery in 1961, Feheley has represented important contemporary artists including Annie Pootoogook (1969-2016) and Shuvinai Ashoona (b.1961). She has also written extensively on the subject of Inuit art and served as a consultant for public and corporate Inuit art collections in Canada, the United States, and Europe.

### **Feheley Fine Arts**

Founded and incorporated in 1961 by M.F. (Budd) Feheley and now run by his



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daughter, Pat, Feheley Fine Arts is a Toronto, Ontario, art gallery dedicated to Inuit art. Artists represented by the gallery include major twentieth-century and contemporary figures such as Kenojuak Ashevak, Shuvinai Ashoona, Annie Pootoogook, and Jutai Toonoo.

## **Galerie SAW Gallery**

An artist-run centre in Ottawa, Ontario, Galerie SAW Gallery was founded in 1973 by a group of Ottawa artists. Since 1989 it has been located in the Arts Court building in Ottawa's ByWard Market neighbourhood, alongside SAW Video, with which it was once affiliated. SAW exhibits the work of emerging and established Canadian and international artists, with a focus on cultural diversity and politically engaged art.

## **global contemporary art**

Global contemporary art describes art that, beginning around the end of the Cold War, defied traditional geographical distinctions. From the late nineteenth century to the 1980s, artists had built careers by travelling to and gaining recognition in art centres such as Paris, London, and New York City, and artists outside of these centres were often peripheral to discussions of art in major museums, galleries, and universities. However, as global trade and technological connectivity increased, artists began to circulate their work globally, sending it to art fairs in cities around the world and developing international networks.

## **Houston, James (Canadian, 1921–2005)**

An artist, writer, filmmaker, and civil administrator, James Houston, with his wife, Alma Houston, was instrumental in the popularization of Inuit art. After studying art in Toronto and Paris, Houston spent fourteen years in the Canadian Arctic. In 1949, working with the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, he organized the first exhibition of Inuit art in southern Canada, held in Montreal.

## **Illingworth Kerr Gallery**

Part of the Alberta University of the Arts (previously Alberta College of Art and Design), the Illingworth Kerr Gallery is a contemporary art gallery in Calgary, Alberta. Opened in 1958, the gallery has hosted exhibitions of art, craft, and design, with a current focus on contemporary visual culture, research, and university and public programming.

## **Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit**

A term used to describe Inuit principles, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) encompasses Inuit experience, values, beliefs, and knowledge about the world, with the past informing the present and future in a non-linear way. It brings together social, cultural, ecological, and cosmological knowledge. IQ played an integral role in establishing Nunavut's government.

## **Kenneally, Siassie (Iqalugajuk/Kinngait, 1969–2018)**

A member of an unusually artistic Cape Dorset family that includes her father, the carver Kaka Ashoona, and her grandmother, the widely admired Pitseolak Ashoona, Siassie Kenneally began drawing at Kinngait Studios (formerly the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative) in 2004. She often drew on a large scale, depicting traditional Inuit lifestyles in a contemporary manner.



## **Kerbel, Janice (Canadian, b.1969)**

Born in Toronto, Ontario, Kerbel is an artist who lives and works in London, England, where she is also a reader in fine art at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her work uses performance, audio recording, printed materials, light, and music to create new forms out of conventional narratives, such as a bank heist, a baseball game, or a ghost town. She was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2015 for *DOUG* (2013), a performance work for six voices that imagines the spiralling bad luck of a man named Doug.

## **Kinngait (Cape Dorset)**

Located on Dorset Island off the southwest coast of Baffin Island, Kinngait is a community of approximately 1,400 in the territory of Nunavut. Incorporated in 1982, the Hamlet of Cape Dorset, which had been named for the 4th Earl of Dorset in 1613, voted in 2019 to change its name to the Hamlet of Kinngait ("where the hills are"), the Inuktitut name for the hamlet's location. Kinngait is the home of Kinngait Studios, the oldest Inuit art co-operative in Canada.

## **Kinngait Studios**

Since the mid-2000s, the arts and crafts sector of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative of Cape Dorset (Kinngait), Nunavut, has also been referred to as Kinngait Studios. The studio includes artist co-op members who carve, draw, and make prints.

## **linear perspective**

A visual strategy for depicting three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface, linear perspective uses lines converging on a vanishing point or series of vanishing points to create an illusion of depth on a flat surface. One-, two-, and three-point perspective are different forms of linear perspective.

## **lithograph**

A type of print invented in 1798 in Germany by Aloys Senefelder. Like other planographic methods of image reproduction, lithography relies on the fact that grease and water do not mix. Placed in a press, the moistened and inked lithographic stone will print only those areas previously designed with greasy lithographic ink.

## **Manumie, Qavavau (Mannomee, Kavavaow) (Brandon/Kinngait, b. 1958)**

Qavavau Manumie began his artistic career as a skilled printmaker for the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative (now Kinngait Studios), translating other artists' drawings into prints for publication. He later began concentrating more on his own compositions: imaginative and personal drawings in ink and coloured pencil that can have a surreal quality.

## **McMaster, Gerald (Plains Cree, Siksika First Nation, b. 1953)**

An artist, educator, and curator, McMaster has worked at national and international institutions, including the National Museum of Man (now the Canadian Museum of History) in Canada and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in the United States. His artwork, which



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juxtaposes contemporary pop culture and traditional elements, has been exhibited at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and SITE Santa Fe, among others.

## **Montreal Museum of Fine Arts**

Founded in 1860 as the Art Association of Montreal, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts has an encyclopedic collection of artworks and artifacts dating from antiquity to the present day. From its beginnings as a private museum and exhibition space to its current status as a public institution spread over four buildings on Sherbrooke Street, the museum has accumulated a collection of more than 43,000 works and hosts historical, modern, and contemporary exhibitions.

## **National Gallery of Canada**

Established in 1880, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa holds the most extensive collection of Canadian art in the country as well as works by prominent international artists. Spearheaded by the governor general, the Marquis of Lorne, the gallery was created to strengthen a specifically Canadian brand of artistic culture and identity and to build a national collection of art that would match the level of other British Empire institutions. Since 1988 the gallery has been located on Sussex Drive in a building designed by Moshe Safdie.

## **neo-colonial**

Adopted following the Second World War, the term “neo-colonial” refers to policies, actions, and economies designed to produce colonial-style dependencies between nations after former colonies gained independence. Such dependencies are exploitative relationships. In contemporary Canada the term refers to laws, institutions, practices, and attitudes that perpetuate the treatment of Indigenous Canadians as colonized and exploited peoples.

## **Nunavik**

One of four regions that make up Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland in Canada, Nunavik is located on the Ungava Peninsula and along Hudson Bay in northern Quebec. It is administered by the Makivik Corporation, which acts as the legal representative for Inuit in Quebec and works to ensure that the terms of the two land claims agreements affecting Nunavik—the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the 2007 offshore Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement—continue to be met.

## **Pitsiulak, Tim (Kimmirut/Kinngait, 1967–2016)**

A prominent member of the artistic community of Cape Dorset. His meticulous prints, drawings, sculptures, and jewellery convey the natural environment and everyday life. His work is held by numerous public institutions, including the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; the Winnipeg Art Gallery; and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

## **Pootoogook, Cee (Kinngait, b.1967)**

A carver since about 1990, Cee Pootoogook turned to drawing and stonecut printmaking in 2009. His work depicts both contemporary and traditional



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subjects: scenes of daily Cape Dorset life as well as Arctic wildlife and Inuit spirits. A third-generation artist, he is the brother of Annie Pootoogook and is Shuvinai Ashoona's first cousin.

## **Pootoogook, Goo (Kinngait, b.1956)**

An Inuit graphic artist, Pootoogook makes drawings that depict the natural world and traditional life. The brother of fellow artists Annie Pootoogook and Cee Pootoogook and the son of the artists Napachie Pootoogook and Eegyvudluk Pootoogook, he lives and works in Kinngait.

## **Pootoogook, Itee (Kinngait, 1951–2014)**

Born in Kimmirut, Nunavut, Pootoogook was an Inuit artist known for his photo-based coloured pencil drawings. Working at Kinngait Studios in Cape Dorset, he relied on source images from his own photography and from other Inuit artists and community members to create images that possess a documentary quality. Pootoogook's artistic career did not start until late in life, and his drawings were exhibited in Toronto for the first time in 2007. Earlier, in the 1970s and 1980s, he had tried first carving and then drawing, but his interests in depicting contemporary aspects of Inuit life and in photography did not fit with dominant ideas of Inuit art at that time.

## **Pootoogook, Kananginak (Kinngait, 1935–2010)**

One of the four carvers who helped James Houston start the print program at the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative in the 1950s, Kananginak became a prolific printmaker and graphic artist. Known for his nuanced and realistic representations of animals, especially owls, he has been called the "Audubon of the North," but he also depicted social change in his community. The son of the important camp leader Pootoogook and uncle of the artist Annie Pootoogook, in 2017 Kananginak became the first Inuit artist to have work included in the Venice Biennale.

## **Pootoogook, Napachie (Kinngait, 1938–2002)**

Napachie Pootoogook was born in Sako, a camp on the southwest coast of Baffin Island, and took up drawing in the late 1950s alongside her mother, Pitseolak Ashoona. While her earliest prints and drawings largely depict the Inuit spirit world, from the 1970s she concentrated on more earth-bound subjects, including historical events and traditional life and customs. A series of autobiographical drawings was featured in a solo exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 2004.

## **Pop art**

A movement of the late 1950s to early 1970s in Britain and the United States, Pop art adopted imagery from commercial design, television, and cinema. Pop art's most recognized proponents are Richard Hamilton, David Hockney, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein.

## **postmodernism**

A broad art historical category of contemporary art that uses both traditional and new media to deconstruct cultural history and deploys theory in its attack on modernist ideals. Canadian postmodern artists include Janice Gurney, Mark Lewis, Ken Lum, and Joanne Tod.



## **The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery**

Founded in 1987, The Power Plant is located in Toronto, Ontario. Initially established as the Art Gallery at Harbourfront in 1976, the gallery changed its name when it moved into its current premises, the power plant that provided heating and refrigeration for Toronto Terminal Warehouse from 1926 until 1980. A non-collecting public gallery, The Power Plant shows contemporary work by artists from Canada and around the world.

## **Pudlat, Pudlo (Ilupirulik/Kinngait, 1916–1992)**

A prolific first-generation Inuit artist who began his career in the 1950s, drawing with a lead pencil. As his career progressed, he adopted other media, including felt tip pen and coloured pencil, and his iconography included imagined scenes, animals, and airplanes. His work is known to be imbued with the artist's unique sense of humour.

## **Reichertz, Mathew (Canadian, b.1969)**

Originally from Montreal, Reichertz is a painter based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he is a faculty member at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD). Often working in series, he draws on personal and historical experiences to create fractured narratives that suggest stories without providing the viewer with a defined beginning, middle, and end. Instead, his paintings attempt to evoke emotions in the viewer that parallel those of the experience or event depicted in the works themselves. Reichertz was the 2006 Atlantic Canada nominee for the Sobey Art Award.

## **Ritchie, William (Canadian, b.1954)**

Born in Windsor, Ontario, Ritchie has spent most of his life in small communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Primarily a printmaker working in various techniques, Ritchie also works in watercolour and acrylic paint, film, and digital media. His work often depicts the landscapes and animals that have fascinated him for many years. He is also the manager of Cape Dorset's Kinngait Studios (formerly the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative).

## **Ryan, Terrence (Canadian, 1933–2017)**

A Toronto artist who settled in Cape Dorset in 1960, where for nearly fifty years he managed and then directed what is now Kinngait Studios, the most prosperous printmaking centre in Canadian history. Ryan received the Order of Canada in 1983 and a Governor General's Award in 2010 for his support of the visual arts in northern Canada.

## **Shearer, Steven (Canadian, b.1968)**

A Vancouver-based artist, Shearer draws on the aesthetics of his suburban youth in the 1970s to create collages, paintings, and drawings. His work examines the insecurities and vulnerability of adolescent boys and the walls they construct to hide them. Shearer was a nominee for the 2006 Sobey Art Award and represented Canada at the Venice Biennale in 2011.

## **Shier, Reid (Canadian, b.1963)**

The Director of The Polygon Gallery (formerly Presentation House Gallery) in North Vancouver, British Columbia, Shier is a Canadian contemporary art



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curator and writer. He previously held positions at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery in Toronto, Ontario, and the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver, British Columbia, and his writing has appeared in journals, magazines, and exhibition catalogues in Canada and around the world.

## **Sobey Art Award**

Created in 2002, the Sobey Art Award is presented annually to a Canadian artist under forty. The award selects a winner from a shortlist of five finalists representing five Canadian regions: the West Coast and the Yukon, the Prairies and the North, Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic Provinces. Funded by the Sobey Art Foundation and administered by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, in partnership with the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, it is the largest art award in Canada.

## ***sulijuk***

An Inuit concept often translated as “it is true,” *sulijuk* is used to describe things that are truthful and convey a sense of completeness. In art, this means work that is not simply realistic in its form but also in the way it represents the truth about its subject. Inuit artists in Nunavik, for example, have used *sulijuk* to describe carvings that encapsulate an artist’s idea of a person, animal, object, or experience, especially for works of art related to traditional ways of life. It has also been used to describe the work of artists such as Annie Pootoogook (1969–2016) who represent contemporary realities of life in the North.

## **Tagaq, Tanya (Canadian/Inuk, b.1975)**

A throat singer, experimental musician, painter, and novelist, Tagaq was born in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut. She released her first album, *Sinaa*, in 2005 as Tanya Tagaq Gillis and has collaborated with Björk, Kronos Quartet, and the composer Derek Charke. Her recordings and performances combine traditional throat singing with experimental instrumental and electronic music. A Polaris Music Prize- and Juno Award-winning artist, Tagaq is a member of the Order of Canada.

## **three-point perspective**

A form of linear perspective, three-point perspective uses a horizon line and three vanishing points—two positioned on the horizon line and one either above or below—to represent three-dimensional objects seen from above or below.

## **Toonoo, Jutai (Kinngait, 1959–2015)**

A carver, graphic artist, and printmaker, Jutai Toonoo rejected traditional subjects and themes in favour of a range of subject matter, including contemporary Inuit life and social issues in his community. Known for incorporating spiritual themes and text into his graphic work, Jutai created sculptures that tended toward abstraction. The brother of artists Oviloo Tunnillie and Samonie Toonoo, he was the subject of the Radio Canada International documentary *The Rebel* in 2010.

## **Tunnillie, Oviloo (Kinngait, 1949–2014)**

Born in Kangia, on the southern coast of Baffin Island, Tunnillie was an Inuit



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sculptor who lived and worked in Kinngait (Cape Dorset). While her early stone carvings featured realistic animals and human figures, she moved on to address taboo subjects, including residential schools and female sexuality, often carving scenes and figures from her own life. A woman working in stone at a time when the medium was dominated by men, Tunnillie broke ground for later Inuit artists with her personal subjects, abstracted forms, and innovative use of materials. (See *Oviloo Tunnillie: Life & Work* by Darlene Coward Wight.)

## **West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative (Kinngait Studios)**

Established in 1960 as a formalized organization, the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative is an artists' co-operative that houses a print shop. It markets and sells Inuit carvings and prints, in particular through its affiliate in the South, Dorset Fine Arts. Since approximately 2006 the arts and crafts sector of the co-op has been referred to as Kinngait Studios.





# SOURCES & RESOURCES

Soon after Annie Pootoogook started exhibiting her work, her drawings began to attract tremendous public attention, especially after a landmark solo exhibition at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto, in 2006. Her work has subsequently been shown in major solo exhibitions, including *Annie Pootoogook: Cutting Ice*, a retrospective at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, that opened in 2017, as well as several group exhibitions.



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Annie Pootoogook at the *Sobey Art Award 2006* exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, November 7, 2007, photograph by Denis Bernier.

## MAJOR SOLO EXHIBITIONS

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**2003** May–June, *Moving Forward: Works on Paper by Annie Pootoogook*, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto. Exhibition catalogue.

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**2006** June, *Annie Pootoogook–Reflections*, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto.

June–September, *Annie Pootoogook*, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto. Exhibition catalogue.

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**2007** January–March, *Annie Pootoogook*, Illingworth Kerr Gallery, Alberta College of Art and Design (now Alberta University of the Arts), Calgary. Exhibition catalogue. This exhibition travelled to several Canadian cities as well as the National Museum of the American Indian, New York (2009–10).

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**2011** August–December, *Annie Pootoogook: Kinngait Compositions*, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen’s University, Kingston. Exhibition catalogue.

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**2017–18** September–February, *Annie Pootoogook: Cutting Ice*, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Exhibition catalogue.



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## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

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- 2001**      *The Unexpected*, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto.
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- 2005**      *Unique Visions*, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto.
- November, *Windows on Kinngait: The Drawings of Napachie Pootoogook and Annie Pootoogook*, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto. Exhibition catalogue.
- 
- 2006**      January–May, *In the Shadow of the Sun: Sami and Inuit Art*, Art Gallery of Hamilton.
- December, *Ashoona: Third Wave*, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton.
- 
- 2007**      June–July, *Annie Pootoogook, Shuvinai Ashoona, Siassie Kenneally: 3 Cousins*, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto. Exhibition catalogue.
- June–September, *documenta 12*, Kassel, Germany. Exhibition catalogue.
- 
- 2008**      November–December, *Breaking Ground: New Oil Stick Drawings from Cape Dorset*, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto.
- 
- 2009**      *Shuvinai Ashoona & Annie Pootoogook: Recent Drawings*, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto.
- May, *Narrative: Contemporary Inuit Prints from Cape Dorset*, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver.
- July–August, *Shuvinai Ashoona & Annie Pootoogook*, Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain, Montreal.
- September–October, *Women of the North: Seen in Sculptures and Prints*, Arctic Artistry, Chappaqua, New York.
- November–December, *New Views on Old Traditions*, The Guild Shop, Toronto.
- 
- 2009–10**      October–January, *Uuturautiit: Cape Dorset Celebrates 50 Years of Printmaking*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.
- October–January, *Nunannguaq: In the Likeness of the Earth*, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.
- 
- 2010**      June–July, *North Meets South*, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto.
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- 2010–11**      November–January, *Ijurnaqtut: Whimsy, Wit and Humor in Inuit Art*, Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa.
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- 2011** April, *Inuit Modern: The Samuel and Esther Sarick Collection*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Exhibition catalogue.
- June, *Dorset Large: Large Scale Drawings from the Kinngait Studios*, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto.
- August, *Memory for the Future*, Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain, Montreal.
- 
- 2011–12** December–February, *Women in Charge: Inuit Contemporary Women Artists*, Museo Nazionale Preistorica Etnografica “Luigi Pigorini,” Rome, Italy.
- 
- 2012** February–March, *Colour*, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver.
- April–July, *Polar Shift*, Museum London, London, Ontario.
- November–December, *Past Sobey Award Winners—A Selection from the National Gallery of Canada Collection*, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto.
- 
- 2012–13** May–April, *Oh, Canada*, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, MA. Exhibition catalogue.
- December–May, *Telling Stories: Inuit Art from Cape Dorset*, Toronto Pearson International Airport (Terminal 1), Toronto.
- 
- 2013** April–June, *Dorset Seen*, Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa. Exhibition catalogue.
- May–September, *Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Exhibition catalogue.
- 
- 2014–15** September–January, *Northern Exposure*, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.
- October–January, *Inuit Ullumi: Inuit Today*, The Rooms, St. John’s.
- 
- 2015** July–October, *BIG BANG*, Galerie SAW Gallery, Ottawa.
- September–October, *Fifteen Years: Kinngait 2000–2015*, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto.
- 
- 2016** August–September, *Neon NDN: Indigenous Pop Art*, Galerie SAW Gallery, Ottawa.
- 
- 2016–17** November–January, *Dear Life*, Art Gallery of Guelph.
- 
- 2017–18** June–January, *Akunnittinni: A Kinngait Family Portrait*, National Museum of the American Indian, New York.
-

2018 July–October, *Beautiful World, Where Are You?*, Tate Liverpool, U.K.

2019 September–October, *Shifting Geographies*, University of Alberta Museums, Edmonton.

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The McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, holds the largest public collection of Annie Pootoogook's drawings. Another significant collection is represented on the website of collectors Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie, *Expanding Inuit* (<https://www.expandinginuit.com/>). Annie's prints were included in the Cape Dorset Annual Print Collection in 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008. Before that, in 2003, Feheley Fine Arts commissioned a print that was not included in the Cape Dorset Annual Print Collection but was included in its 2003 catalogue. The Inuit Artists' Print Database ([https://www.gallery.ca/inuit\\_artists/home.jsp?Lang=EN](https://www.gallery.ca/inuit_artists/home.jsp?Lang=EN)) includes catalogue information for nine of the artist's prints.

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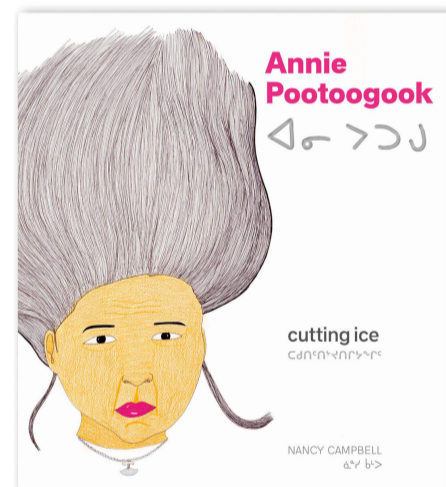
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Lunch at the Diner in Kinngait (Cape Dorset), c.2005, photographer unknown. From left to right: Nancy Campbell, Siassie Kenneally, Shuvina Ashoona, Patricia Fehelley, and Annie Pootoogook.



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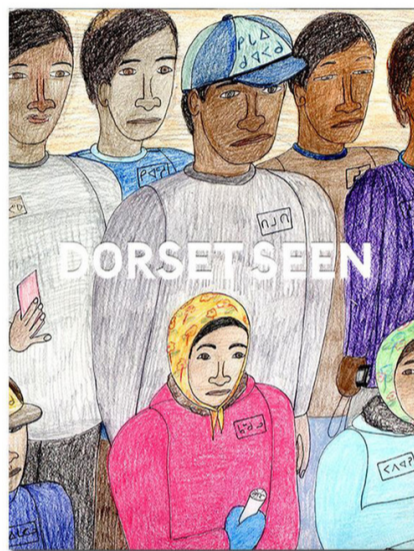
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LEFT: Cover of *Dorset Seen*, 2017, curated by Leslie Boyd and Sandra Dyck. Catalogue cover features a detail of a drawing by Shuvinai Ashoona, *Untitled (People Lining Up to Sell Artwork)*, 2012. RIGHT: Cover of *Annie Pootoogook: Kinngait Compositions*, 2011, by Jan Allen, featuring *Portrait of My Grandmother*, 2004, by Annie Pootoogook.



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Cover of *Inuit Art Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (Fall 2018), featuring *Sobey Awards, 2006*, by Annie Pootoogook.





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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

Writing a monograph on an artist places a burden of interpretation and understanding on the writer. I knew Annie Pootoogook, and this fact is an essential part of the story told here. Curatorial projects of my own and of others, which I outline in this book, have contributed to the scholarship, interpretation, and reception of Inuit art in Canada, and to the story of Annie's life.

It was with caution and trepidation that I entered into the complexities of the Indigenous art world and Annie's own place in it—always aware of my position as a settler from the South. Annie's biography includes episodes of displacement, and her career as an artist in the North intersected with a series of jarring professional and cultural transformations. With her rise in art world celebrity after her 2006 exhibition which I curated for The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, she navigated unfamiliar norms of art consumption that proved to be a challenge.

One of the challenges and pleasures of curating is making associations that provoke a new understanding of the work included in an exhibition. In my experience, exhibitions can redirect preconceived ideas about one artist or another. My study of the art of Canadian Inuit has not only led me to see the work of living Inuit artists in a new context but has also allowed me to recontextualize some of the contemporary art I encounter in the South. My interest in the work of Annie Pootoogook began in the early 2000s (I visited Kinngait for the first time in early 2004); I saw something special and unique that was of extreme interest. My curatorial methodology was my own: intuitive, visual, and discursive, but it ultimately resulted in a provocative reconsideration of Inuit art in the present. This book draws on my work as an academic and my doctoral dissertation, entitled *Cracking the Glass Ceiling: Contemporary Inuit Drawing*, which includes detailed studies of Shuvinai Ashoona and Annie Pootoogook. With this book and with my scholarship, I hope to achieve a reconsideration of what Inuit art tells of the time within which it was created.



**“Annie Pootoogook challenged the definition of contemporary art and changed the way Inuit art is received. Only a few artists have profoundly affected the way art is understood in Canada: Annie is one of them.”**



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#### From the Author

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#### From the Art Canada Institute

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Annie Pootoogook, *Cape Dorset Freezer*, 2005. (See below for details.)

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Biography: Annie Pootoogook, *Sobey Award 2006, 2007*. (See below for details.)



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Key Works: Annie Pootoogook, *Untitled (Kenojuak and Annie with Governor General Michaëlle Jean)*, 2010. (See below for details.)



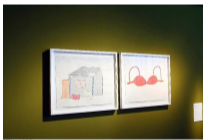
Significance & Critical Issues: Annie Pootoogook, *A True Story*, 2006. (See below for details.)



Style & Technique: Annie Pootoogook, *35/36*, 2006, collagraph and stencil with graphite on paper, 44.1 x 75.9 cm. Collection of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, Gift from the Christopher Bredt and Jamie Cameron Collection (2016.10.11). Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.



Sources & Resources: Annie Pootoogook, *Portrait of My Grandmother*, 2004. (See below for details.)



Where to See: Installation view of Annie Pootoogook, *Bear by the Window*, 2004, and *Red Bra (35/36)*, 2006. (See below for details.)

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## Credits for Works by Annie Pootoogook



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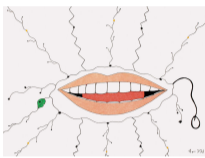
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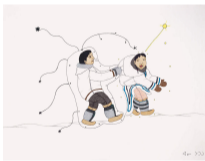
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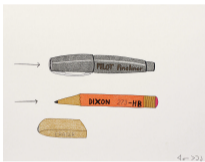
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*Untitled (Softening Skin)*, 2006. Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie. Courtesy of [expandinginuit.com](http://expandinginuit.com). Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.



*Untitled (Women Sewing)*, 2004. Collection of John and Joyce Price. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.



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*War Is Over*, 2003. Private collection. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.



*Watching Hunting Shows*, 2004. Collection of John and Joyce Price. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.



*Watching the Simpsons on TV*, 2003. Collection of Edward J. Guarino. Courtesy of Fehely Fine Arts, Toronto. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.



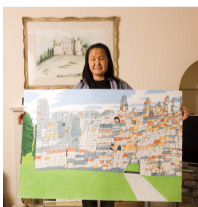
*Woman at Her Mirror (Playboy Pose)*, 2003. Collection of John and Joyce Price. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.

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## Credits for Photographs and Works by Other Artists



Annie Pootoogook, 2006. Courtesy of McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. © Katherine Knight and Site Media Inc., Toronto. Photo credit: Katherine Knight.



Annie Pootoogook at Castle Croft residence, where she stayed during her Glenfiddich Artist Residency, 2006. Photo credit: John Paul Photography.



Annie Pootoogook with her work *Cape Dorset Freezer*, 2005, at her home in Kinngait (Cape Dorset), October 6, 2005, photograph by William Ritchie. © William Ritchie.



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Annie Pootoogook at Kinngait Studios, February 27, 2006, photograph by William Ritchie. © William Ritchie.



Annie Pootoogook receiving instruction from Kenojuak Ashevak on the traditional method of skinning and stretching bear hide on wooden racks at Kinngait Studios, November 19, 2001, photograph by William Ritchie. © William Ritchie.



Annie Pootoogook at the *Sobey Art Award 2006* exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, November 7, 2007. Photo credit: Denis Bernier.



Annie Pootoogook speaking to the crowds at the Alberta College of Art and Design, 2007. Courtesy of Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto. Photo credit: Patricia Feheley.



Annie Pootoogook working on *Cape Dorset Freezer*, 2005, at Kinngait Studios, October 19, 2005. Photograph by William Ritchie. © William Ritchie.



*Aqaqtuq (Singing Love Song)*, 1993, by Napachie Pootoogook. Courtesy of Dorset Fine Arts, Toronto. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.



*Climate Change*, 2011, by Tim Pitsiulak. Collection of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, purchased with the generous support of The Dr. Michael Braudo Fund of the McMichael Canadian Art Foundation (2013.2.3). Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.

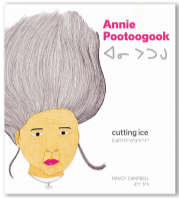


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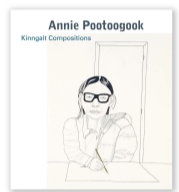
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*Composition (Purple Bird Transformation)*, 2010, by Shuvina Ashoona. Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie. Courtesy of expandinginuit.com. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.



Cover of *Annie Pootoogook: Cutting Ice*, 2017, by Nancy Campbell, translated by Rhoda Kayakjuak, co-published by the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and Goose Lane, 2017, featuring *Myself in Scotland*, 2005-6, by Annie Pootoogook. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.



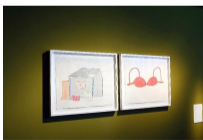
Cover of *Annie Pootoogook: Kinngait Compositions*, 2011, by Jan Allen, published by the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston, 2011, featuring *Portrait of My Grandmother*, 2004, by Annie Pootoogook.



Cover of *Dorset Seen*, 2017, curated by Leslie Boyd and Sandra Dyck. Catalogue designed by Mark Timmings and published by Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa, 2017, featuring a detail of *Untitled (People Lining Up to Sell Artwork)*, 2012, by Shuvina Ashoona.



Cover of *Inuit Art Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (Fall 2018), featuring *Sobey Awards*, 2006, by Annie Pootoogook. Courtesy of *Inuit Art Quarterly*, <https://www.inuitartfoundation.org/inuit-art-quarterly>.



Installation view of Annie Pootoogook's *Bear by the Window*, 2004, and *Red Bra (35/36)*, 2006, at *documenta 12*, 2007, photograph by Ryszard Kasiewicz.



Installation view of Annie Pootoogook's *Composition (Drawing of My Grandmother's Glasses)*, 2007, at the Liverpool Biennial, September 2018. Courtesy of Elyse Jacobson. Photo credit: Elyse Jacobson.



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Installation view of Annie Pootoogook's drawings in the exhibition *Sobey Art Award 2006* at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, October 17, 2006, to January 7, 2007. Photo credit: MBAM, Christine Guest.



Installation view of Annie Pootoogook's work at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, 2006. Courtesy of The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto. Photo credit: Rafael Goldchain.



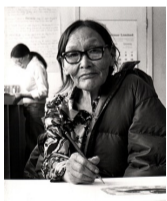
*Interior View*, 2000, by Napachie Pootoogook. Courtesy of Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.



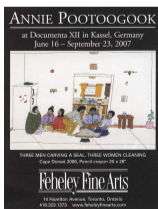
Kinngait (Cape Dorset), c.2005. Photo credit: Nancy Campbell.



Lunch at the Diner with Nancy Campbell, Siassie Kenneally, Shuvina Ashoona, Patricia Feheley, and Annie Pootoogook, c.2005, photographer unknown. Photo courtesy of Nancy Campbell.



Pitseolak in Lithography Studio signing her work, Cape Dorset, 1976. Photo credit: Tessa Macintosh Photography, tmacfoto.ca.



Promotional poster for *Annie Pootoogook at Documenta XII, Kassel, Germany, 2007*, by Feheley Fine Arts. Courtesy of Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto.



*Rear of Canoe*, 2011, by Itee Pootoogook. Collection of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Gift from the Christopher Bredt and Jamie Cameron Collection (2018.7.25). Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.





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*Three Cousins*, 2005, by Shuvinai Ashoona. Private collection. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.



*Trading Women for Supplies*, 1997-98, by Napachie Pootoogook. Collection of Edward J. Guarino. Courtesy of Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.



*Untitled (Alcohol)*, 1993-94, by Napachie Pootoogook. Collection of Edward J. Guarino. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.



*Untitled*, 2006, by Kananginak Pootoogook. Courtesy of Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.



*Untitled (Self-Portrait of Kananginak Drawing a Wolf)*, 2009, by Kananginak Pootoogook. Courtesy of Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts.

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