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NOVEMBER/
DECEMBER 2021

THE VOICE OF CANADA'S FAR NORTH

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Master artist Germaine Arnaktauyok on where she finds it P32

Celebrating Northern musicians who continue to provide it P40

THE ARCTIC INSPIRATION PRIZE

AND THE RESERVED COUPLE WHO STARTED IT ALL

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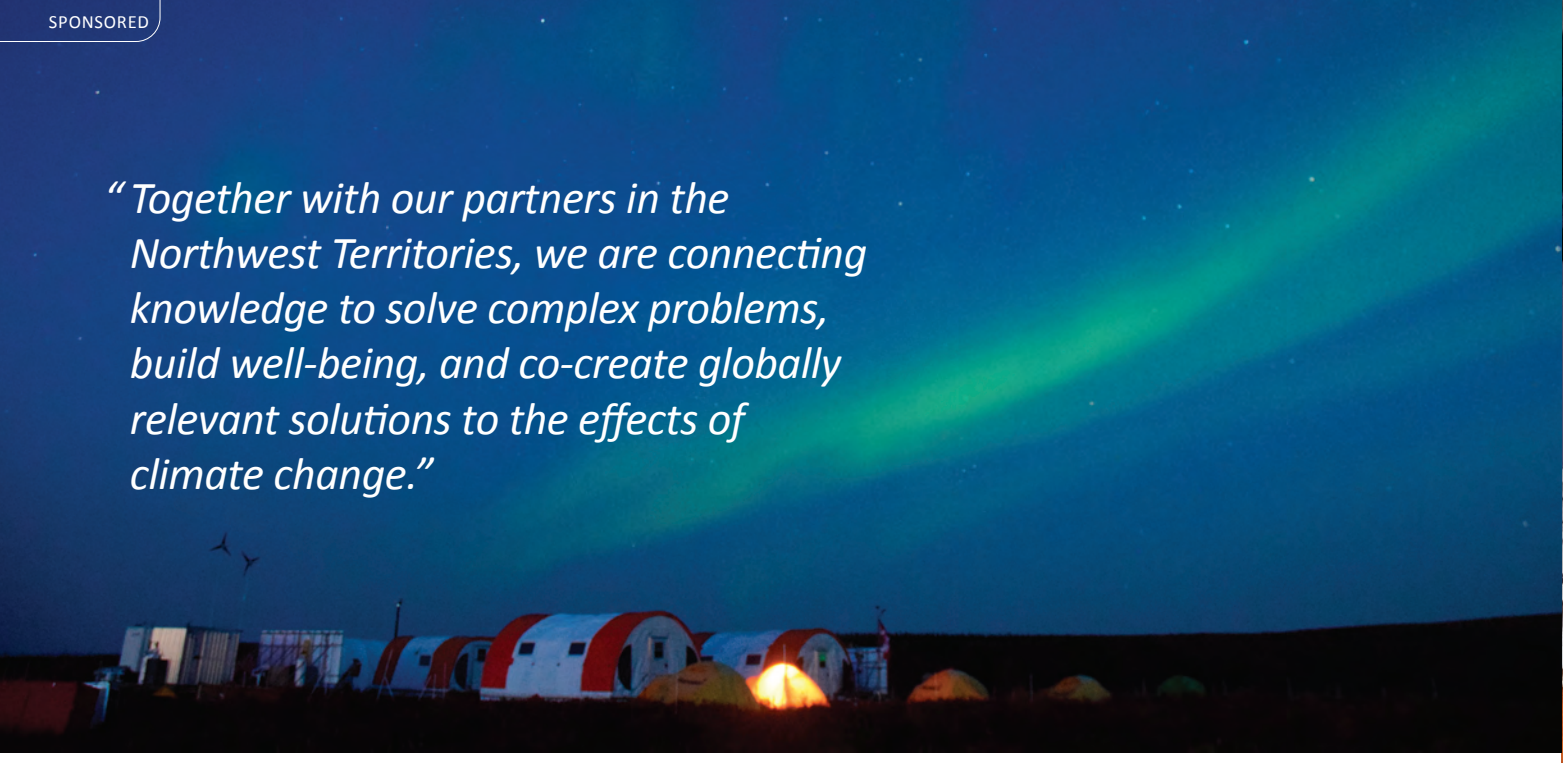

"Together with our partners in the Northwest Territories, we are connecting knowledge to solve complex problems, build well-being, and co-create globally relevant solutions to the effects of climate change."

Wilfrid Laurier University is committed to supporting resilience and capacity building in northern communities. For more than 30 years, we have been working with northern governments and Indigenous communities to answer urgent questions posed by rapid climate change. Laurier's leading edge research and partnerships are supported by a permanently staffed research office in Yellowknife, two major research stations, more than 50 research sites, and long-standing relationships from northern Manitoba to Ellesmere Island. Laurier researchers lead projects involving 348 trainees across 13 institutions across Canada.

Photos by Wolf-Dietrich Marchand and Wilfrid Laurier University

A Robust Northern Research Network

Laurier's Cold Regions Research Centre links researchers across a diverse range of cold regions issues. Researchers are actively co-learning with communities on climate change adaptation, food security action, collaborative monitoring, and other research priorities.

We have built a network of communities, Indigenous governments, territorial and federal governments, and researchers (across social sciences, health, and natural sciences) to address complex issues in the North. Our multidisciplinary networks integrate community-identified issues into collaborative research projects that promote adaptation and well-being in the NWT.

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Since 2010, Laurier has worked with the NWT Government to conduct environmental research and monitoring, develop northern capacity, protect northern beauty and distinct ways-of-life.

This unique Partnership has resulted in research infrastructure equipped for year-round, remote-location data gathering and state-of-the-art labs. Our Partnership offers many collaborative opportunities including hands-on research for trainees and community partners.

Collaborate with Us

Yellowknife Research Office:
5007 – 50 Ave, Yellowknife, YT
Phone: 867.688.2605
wlu.ca/northern-research

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY
LAURIER
Inspiring Lives!

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PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: MARK KELLY; BETH COVVEY; PAGE BURT; ARTS UNDERGROUND

Our Home Is Social Distancing

We can still show love! Aqaq via phone, video or from outside through the window. Don't kunik and hug.

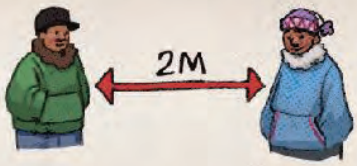
Wash your hands and use utensils to cut your child's food. Don't chew it for them.

Wash your hands and divide what you want to share. Say no when someone says, *"After You"*.

Keep Elders safe. Don't ask Elders to babysit. Leave food and supplies at their door. Wave through the window and call them by phone.

Remember to practice the basics

Wash your hands



Keep a safe distance

Cover when coughing

Keep surfaces clean

Let's all do our part in keeping our communities healthy and safe.

NUNAVUT TUNNGAVIK

Stay updated on COVID-19 news: www.canada.ca

up here
THE VOICE OF CANADA'S FAR NORTH

PUBLISHERS MARION LAVIGNE & RONNE HEMING

EDITOR-AT-LARGE HERB MATHISEN
herb@uphere.ca

ASSOCIATE EDITOR DANA BOWEN
dana@uphere.ca

ART DIRECTOR BRIANNA FREITAG

GRAPHIC DESIGN BETH COVVEY
beth@uphere.ca

ADVERTISING SALES SHERRY RIOUX
sherry@uphere.ca

ADVERTISING SALES MIKE MOREAU
mike@uphere.ca

CIRCULATION RONNE HEMING
ronne@uphere.ca

AD SALES: sales@uphere.ca

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Contact: Suite #102, 4510 50th Ave.
Yellowknife, NT X1A 1B9, Canada.
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Gifts in many shapes and sizes

In early September, I asked six Northerners if they had ever heard of Arnold Witzig. They all said no. Then I asked those same people if they'd ever heard of the annual Arctic Inspiration Prize (AIP). Each one said yes. Most didn't know that it was Arnold Witzig and his wife, Sima Sharifi, who have donated more than $50 million dollars of their own fortune to launch the Arctic Inspiration Prize. And Arnold and Sima like it that way.

But with the AIP celebrating its tenth anniversary this year, *Up Here* magazine thought it was about time to recognize Witzig and Sharifi (a couple who do not live in the North) and the Arctic Inspiration Prize (awarded only to those who do live in the North) as our Northerners of the Year. The couple founded the AIP to provide seed-funding to Northern-based organizations that help others. They attracted even more funding for the prize from companies and organizations in the North and South, and then helped turn AIP into a trust that is now owned by northern Indigenous corporations. In this issue, read about Canada's largest annual prize, why it was started, and the cumulative, societal benefits it has provided to Northerners over the last decade.

In fact, this issue is loaded with stories of people who provide us with gifts. If you live in the North, you know it's a very creative place. There are world renowned Inuit carvers, printmakers, artists. There are playwrights, authors, potters, dancers and more. But what's really amazing is the growing number of Northern musicians from all three territories, and the growing number receiving national recognition at annual Indigenous Music Awards, at the prestigious Junos, Canada's music awards, and with the Polaris Prize. We'll catch you up with the North's latest releases and let you know what some of your old favourites are up to.

Speaking of favourites, I was first introduced to the work of Germaine Arnaktauyok ("It was there all the time," P32) when an acquaintance gave *Up Here* Publishing a pair of posters that El Al Airline commissioned Germaine to complete in the late 1970s. Over the years we gifted one framed poster to a staff member, but *Up Here* continues to proudly display the second poster in the series on the walls of its Yellowknife office.

As we come to the end of our second COVID year, we'd like to thank our subscribers, newsstand buyers, readers, and advertisers for allowing us to keep moving forward through tough times. We'd also like to thank our staff, contractors and freelancers for helping us make it though 2021. Here's to a much happier and healthier 2022.

Marion LaVigne, Publisher

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU: letters@uphere.ca
or Editor, Up Here, Suite 102, 4510 50th Ave., Yellowknife, NT X1A 1B9
facebook.com/uphere @upheremag @upheremag

A neighbourly hello

We were neighbours of the Monkman family ("Ready. Aim. Land the Plane" in Sept/Oct 2021) many years ago at Island Lake, MB. Many mornings, I would watch out my kitchen window as Bud Monkman, then 11 or 12, would steer the family boat across the bay, taking himself and his siblings to school. Nice to hear of them again and of their harrowing episode with a happy ending.

Jocelyn (Jo) Millard
WINNIPEG, MB

But what about the plans?

I read *Up Here* cover to cover every issue. I toured the High Arctic a few years back and agree—the housing up there is dismal.

I was interested to see your article "Great Northern Dream Homes" (Sept/Oct 2021) but was disappointed that no floor plans were included for any of the homes featured. It would have made the whole feature more interesting. Keep up the good work with your magazine.

Derek Hoyle
WETASKIWIN, AB

The disappearing road

It's been a couple of years since the Inuvik to Tuk paved highway was completed. The map in the Sept/Oct 2021 issue still has not reflected that fact.

I'm a keen subscriber and enjoy reading your magazine from cover to cover.

Peter Bahr
VIA EMAIL

(Editor: *You're right! We missed one of the North's most famous roads, but we've got it now. Just to set the record straight: The Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway is not paved. Just gravel all the way.*)

Looking for a copy of Nipaturuq?

Following up on a letter from a reader ("Out There," in May/June 2021), the Inuvialuit Communications Society has advised us copies of Nipaturuq magazine are available for free on Apple Books and will be made available on Google Play Books. You can also email the Nipaturuq team directly at nipaturuq@gmail.com.

An old, cold drink token

Every so often, readers will send us photos of Northern memorabilia.

I found this token in with a bunch of other stuff from my time in Yellowknife. I also have a lot of buttons from Caribou Carnival (oldest 1971) and one from Cosmos 954.

Great magazine.

David Fink
RED DEER, AB

(*Editor: The Lenny Burger reopened in 2016, only to close down in the spring of 2017. Wonder if they would have honoured that token?*)

Return visitors

My wife and I have enjoyed *Up Here* magazine since we subscribed to it after a trip to the Yukon in 2001. On a second trip in 2012, we visited Yellowknife and a few communities along the Mackenzie River, then down the Liard Highway and over to Yukon again. One of the most memorable parts of both trips was travelling the Dempster Highway. Seeing the North is something that every Canadian should try to do at least once.

Charles Taylor
NORTH BAY, ON

2022 ARCTIC ADVENTURE SWEEPSTAKES

A WILDERNESS KAYAK EXPEDITION TO

THE EAST ARM

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For more details visit www.jackpinepaddle.com.

You become eligible for this contest when you subscribe or renew your subscription to Up Here. You can also enter by sending your name and address in an envelope marked "Arctic Adventure Sweepstakes" to: Up Here Publishing, 4510-50th Ave., Ste. 102, Yellowknife, NT X1A 1B9, Canada.
CONTEST CLOSES JUNE 30, 2022. Trip must be taken on date specified. No cash value.

up here
THE VOICE OF CANADA'S FAR NORTH

JACKPINE PADDLE

Local light show

This display of lights at Shipyards Park helps brighten long dark nights from December through March in downtown Whitehorse. Northern cities and towns outdo each other with light shows geared to locals and visitors, who might be in need of a lift through the dark days of winter. By late April the night sky is changing from black to blue.

The park is on the site of the old shipyards where paddle steamers were assembled on the shore of the Yukon River. The park includes walking trails, a skating loop and a toboggan hill, and in summer hosts the Whitehorse outdoor market.

Yukon photographer Mark Kelly captured this high definition image in December.

PHOTO BY MARK KELLY

NOT QUITE FRANK

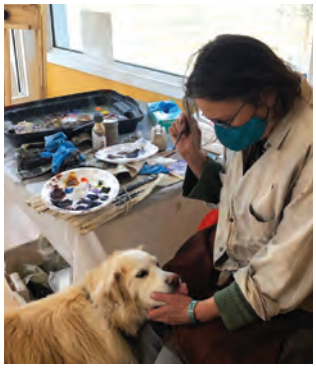
THERE'S A CHEEKY LITTLE online newspaper in Whitehorse, that proclaims that it is "not quite the Beaverton." It's called *Whitewash News* and it proclaims it publishes "News & opinion that really matters, maybe." Operated by local volunteers, the online paper started in 2020 as a purely satirical news site. By late 2020 though, the publication also began posting factual news stories, in response to requests and story ideas from readers. *Whitewash News* does not provide the names of anyone affiliated with the content, but it does list a lengthy string of sanctimonious statements explaining why they do what they do. Or is the screed a remnant of the site's satirical days, before it moved into the serious stuff?

THE YUKON'S BEATING HEART

The Yukon Arts Centre opened in 1993 and, soon after, it commissioned the *Drums Echo Future Vision* project. Northern Tutchone artist **Johnson Edwards** and his apprentice **Joe Migwans** crafted 14 drums from birch and caribou hide. Each drum was decorated with imagery to represent one of the Yukon's 14 First Nations. This year, the drums were refurbished and are on display as part of the centre's permanent collection.

WINNING WRITERS

• Congratulations to **Joanna Lilley**, winner of the 2021 Canadian Authors Association Fred Kerner Book Award for her poetry collection *Endings*. From the judges: "This book-length elegy to the planet's lost species explores the ruinous impact humanity has had on the natural world while still managing to create wonder and hope." … And hats off to historian and storyteller **Michael Gates**, who won a silver medal from the Axiom Business Book Awards in the category of corporate history for his 2020 book, *Dublin Gulch: A History of the Eagle Gold Mine*. His was one of nearly 500 entries from North American authors and publishers, and tells the fascinating story of the Dublin Gulch, which culminates with Victoria Gold's Eagle mine.



A WINDOW INTO THE CREATIVE PROCESS

• To get around restrictions in the early days of COVID, a small Whitehorse gallery owned by artists sought a way to interact with the community. Although Yukon Artists at Work closed its doors, it began demonstrating artistry in the front gallery windows, allowing the art-loving public a chance to see artists and craftspeople at work.

Even after the gallery reopened, the Artist in the Window program continued, featuring a different member of the Yukon Artists at Work collective. Artists included **Janet Patterson**, who created sculptures from donated objects, and carver **Donald Watt**, who chose Halloween pumpkin-carving and then sold them for a minimum donation of $50.

PHOTO, BOTTOM LEFT < YUKON ARTISTS AT WORK

STATE OF THE ARTS: A ROUND-UP

A SELECTION OF PRINTS and wall hangings by internationally renowned Inuit artist **Jessie Oonark** are now on display on the second-floor of the Yellowknife courthouse. (If you live in Ottawa, you can still see the late-artist's work on display at the National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Museum of History.) A new, 10-year **NWT arts strategy** was released in September, with the aim of growing the territory's art sector. The strategy proposes improving access to funding for artists, increasing spaces to create, exhibit and sell art, and supporting opportunities for artists to engage with children—the NWT's future artists... Tłı̨chǫ Dene artist **Casey Koyczan's** *Ełexìtǫ; Ehts'ǫ̀ǫ̀/Connected; Apart From Each Other* art installation is on display until November 20 at the Urban Shaman Contemporary Aboriginal Art Gallery in Winnipeg. The work incorporates a variety of media, including hanging sections of tree trunks that transmit Dene drum sounds, and was inspired by Koyczan's journey to learn his culture from a distance... The Łútsël K'é Dene First Nation has launched Caribou People Creations, a new craft shop featuring the work of local artists. Check out the handmade jewelry, sculptures, clothing and more at caribouppeoplecreations.com.

SO MANY WAYS TO STOP

With 11 official languages in the Northwest Territories, there are also 11 official ways to say "Stop." And that variety is reflected across the territory in its stop signs. In Fort Smith, there are stop signs in four languages: Cree, Chipewyan, English and French. In Yellowknife and N'dilo, stop signs can be found in English, Chipewyan and Tłı̨chǫ. In Inuvik, commuters and passengers will stop at signs spelled out in Inuvialuktun and Gwich'in.

DIG OUT THE FLOOD PANTS

• Media notices usually provide a few instructions for journalists. This summer, for a rescue vessel commissioning, the Yellowknife unit of the Canadian Coastguard advised participants to "wear appropriate footwear." Seems that six inches of Great Slave Lake overflow was not going to stop this important ceremony.

HELP WANTED: TERRITORY SEEKING NEW NAME

• Twenty-five years ago, the NWT launched a contest for a new name for the territory. Dozens of names were submitted, including Dene language choices like Denendeh ("the land of the people") and Nahendeh ("our land"). In the end, the Northwest Territories held strong as the most popular choice. (Famously, a group of contest hijackers put forth the name "Bob," which received the second-most votes.)

To this day, the Northwest Territories remains the Canadian jurisdiction with the longest name. It's also the only pluralized name, which implies it's a group of territories. It's not even geographically accurate—the Yukon is truly in the northwest. Worse, it's just plain uncreative. Additional efforts to find a new name were made in 2002, but it's been very quiet on the naming front ever since. Maybe the time is right to find a new name for the Northwest Territories?

Send us your thoughts.

STRENGTH THROUGH MUSIC

MARY PIERCEY-LEWIS sure knows how to strike a chord with her students. Her work towards building a stronger community through music has been recognized, as Iqaluit's Inuksuk High School music teacher was named the winner of the 2021 MusiCounts Teacher of the Year Award. The award, presented by the Canadian Scholarship Trust Foundation, is affiliated with the Juno Awards. The executive director of MusiCounts says Piercey-Lewis has changed the landscape of musical education in Nunavut for generations to come. Over the years, she has travelled across Canada with the school's Inuksuk Drum Dancers and Concert Band to perform at events and for dignitaries. And Piercey-Lewis has literally written the book on music education in the territory, as she has noted there was no dedicated music curriculum when she first arrived in the North two decades ago. She has since published a textbook of Inuit choral music—the first of its kind—and is working on a second book.

SALLIQ'S POP-ARTISTA

Fashion designer, jeweler, illustrator and writer… It seems like Inuk artist **Tarralik Duffy** can do just about anything—and that includes winning the 2021 Kenojuak Ashevak Memorial Award. Hailing from Salliq (Coral Harbour) and currently living in Saskatoon, Tarralik Duffy infuses humour and pop culture references into her creations, noting that she makes art with Inuit audiences in mind. *Stacked Cans of Klik*, for example, features the canned meat staple from Northern pantries as an homage to Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans*. Tarralik Duffy, a contributor to *Up Here* magazine and the winner of our first Sally Manning Award, will receive a $10,000 cash prize for the Kenojauk Ashevak Memorial Award.

FOOTSTEPS TO FOLLOW IN PANGNIRTUNG

• **Joey Nowyuk** picked up a guitar for the first time when a music workshop visited his hometown of Pangnirtung. He would soon learn the obstacles musicians in Nunavut have to overcome when he discovered that new guitar strings were impossible to buy in the community. Now an accomplished guitarist, drummer, vocalist and songwriter, Nowyuk released a new album this summer, titled *Tumitit* ("footsteps" in Inuktut). Nowyuk, who has taken top prize in the annual Government of Nunavut-sponsored Qilaut Songwriting Contest three times (including this year), has also posted his latest video, Pray, on YouTube.

KUNUK'S LATEST FILM GETS TIFF NOD

• The North's most decorated filmmaker just added another award to his collection. In September, **Zacharias Kunuk**'s latest film, *Angakusajaujuq: The Shaman's Apprentice*, which uses stop-motion animation, won best Canadian Short Film at the Toronto International Film Festival. The prize comes 20 years after he won the Caméra d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival for his debut feature film, *Atanarjuat* (The Fast Runner). Kunuk's film—the first Canadian feature to be produced entirely in Inuktitut—would go on to take home 19 awards worldwide. Kunuk won a second Caméra d'Or at Cannes for *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* in 2006. In 2019, his film, *One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk*, represented Canada at the Venice Biennale.

PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: MUSIOUNTS, SWEET MOON PHOTOGRAPHY, HITMAKERZ, RAI FILM FESTIVAL

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Chasing George Joseph

DETERMINED TO FOLLOW IN HER GREAT-GRANDFATHER'S FLIGHT PATH, A YOUNG PILOT PLANS A STOP-OVER IN THE NORTH TO GET EXPERIENCE BEFORE RETURNING HOME. BUT AFTER FINDING OPPORTUNITY AND ADVENTURE PILOTING VINTAGE FLYERS IN YELLOWKNIFE, SHE'S NOW IN MUCH LESS OF A RUSH.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ROBERT S. GRANT

RAIN RIBBONED THE WINDOWS of Yellowknife's airport terminal building, as 21-year-old Jamie MacDonald—stylishly dressed in pressed blue jeans and a Tommy Hilfiger jacket—ventured outside and sloshed towards the Buffalo Airways hangar. It was May 2018, and carrying a commercial pilot's licence—and not much else—MacDonald had left a comfortable Toronto home to try to join the ranks of Northerners hauling bulk cargo to communities beyond Great Slave Lake.

She arrived without promise of employment, but upon meeting MacDonald, airline owner "Buffalo Joe" McBryan and chief pilot Anthony J. Decoste sensed the potential entrant's commitment to their fast-paced world. Still, first-timers often scuttled back to milder climates as soon as the snowflakes fell. In spite of their doubts, they added MacDonald to the payroll.

MacDonald's passion for things with wings originated with her great-grandfather's World War Two logbook. The yellowed pages spoke of Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) rear air gunner George Joseph MacDonald's tribulations in a four-engine bomber called an Avro Lancaster. Not much older than a teenager, he persevered through 36 perilous missions in hostile wartime skies and came home alive. "Little Jamie" never met her great-grandfather—the former flight sergeant passed away in 1959. Nevertheless, his courage and devotion to duty inspired the child as she fingered the logbook's hand-printed numbers and city names

Runway to the Lancaster

EVERY AIRPLANE HAS A SOUL; THEY BEAT, THROB, RUMBLE AND PURR. HERE ARE THE STEPS THAT PILOT JAMIE MACDONALD HAS TAKEN AT BUFFALO AIRWAYS IN YELLOWKNIFE TO GET HER CLOSER TO HER DREAM OF FLYING AN AVRO LANCASTER.

Upper left: Jamie MacDonald is the only woman in the world endorsed to fly a Curtiss C-46. **Upper right:** She also flies a DC-3, more than three times her age. **Lower centre:** The Avro Lancaster Jamie hopes to fly one day. **Lower right:** Pilots MacDonald and Sarah Mousseau help load planes when not flying.

Douglas DC-3
Introduced: 1936
in Buffalo fleet: 6
Specs: Wingspan 28.95m, maximum cruise speed 370 km/h, 7,000lb payload
Relevant experience: Mastering the DC-3, with its 1200hp radial or "round" engines, would help her chances to get on with the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum, MacDonald thought. The museum crew flies one beside the Lancaster.

Curtiss C-46
Introduced: 1941
in Buffalo fleet: 2
Spec: Wingspan 32.90m, maximum cruise speed 435 km/h, 14,000lb payload
Relevant experience: Like the C-46, the Lancaster has a tailwheel, so when the day arrives and MacDonald settles into the mighty four-engine vintage bomber, she will not be intimidated. "When properly trimmed (balanced), everything's pretty smooth and landing is something like being a lion tamer but that never scared me," she says.

Avro Lancaster
Introduced: 1942
Buffalo fleet: 0
Spec: Wingspan 31.1m, 437.6km/h, 22,000lb bomb payload
MacDonald says: "The size and the elegant stance of that beautiful flying machine really reached into me. My thoughts were: Nobody'd want to mess with a Lancaster."

like Essen, Dortmund, and Wiesbaden among pages of crackled photographs.

But MacDonald didn't pursue a career in aviation right away, electing instead to enroll at York University to become an elementary school teacher. During a study break, MacDonald wandered into a nearby flight centre for a sample flying lesson. Before the tiny training airplane's rubber tires scuffed the asphalt again, she knew what had to be done. She signed up for a commercial pilot course, with dreams of piloting a Lancaster—just like her great-grandfather. "I didn't know when and I didn't know how, but I'd fly one someday," she says. (There are only two airworthy Lancasters today. Hamilton's Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum (CWH) restored one that used to fly over MacDonald's Toronto home when she was a child.)

Three years later, she had gained her commercial licence. She thought about becoming a volunteer pilot with the CWH, but recognized she'd need more experience. Around that time, fellow flying school graduate Mike Corazza described his new position as a Buffalo Airways co-pilot and encouraged MacDonald to apply. MacDonald knew Buffalo received resumes from all over the world since the popular *Ice Pilots NWT* reality TV show took to the airwaves. Aware of intense competition, she decided to take a chance and invested in an airline ticket. "I'd applied for jobs everywhere but with Buffalo, it might be possible to fly World War Two vintage airplanes," she says. "Yellowknife was farther north than I'd ever been and probably colder, with a higher cost of living, but it was worth a try and a good way to explore my own country."

MacDonald accepted an apprentice-like position as a "rampie"—or future co-pilot. Ground assignments proved far more demanding than wiping windshields. Pallets packed with epicurean delights such as Mr. Noodles for Kugluktuk, Nunavut, awkward snow machines or boats expected in Tulita, or generators manifested to Paulatuk all meant cautious lifting and adroit manipulating in summer blackflies and winter's frosty air.

When not brushing hangar floors amid squealing brakes and hissing hydraulics, MacDonald walked the innards of a classic twin-engine freighter called the Douglas DC-3, which dwarfed anything she'd flown before. The "Grand Old Lady," as aviation aficionados know the 1935 design, had played important roles in World War Two; great-grandfather George Joseph would have watched them crossing the English Channel. To MacDonald's delight, operations manager Jeff Schroeder assigned her to DC-3s. After training and air testing, she found the huge aluminum-skinned airplane quick to respond but gentle.

MacDonald then set her sights on a larger Buffalo airplane known as a Curtiss C-46, which carried twice the DC-3's cargo.

Aircrew warned the ponderous "Calamity Curtiss" could be tricky: the colossal transport depended on a tailwheel similar to the DC-3 for ground steerage instead of an easily manoeuvrable nosewheel apparatus typical of modern jets. C-46s have swerved off airstrips and runways due to crosswinds, unequal control pressures or pilots relaxing their firm grip on the controls too soon after landing. Pilots require prompt action and exceptional skill to bring the giant of the North safely home.

Some chauvinistic experts suggested the physical handling of a Calamity Curtiss might exceed the capabilities of a woman pilot. Decoste and McBryan disagreed. On August 4, 2018, MacDonald tested successfully under the watchful eyes of Schroeder, who happened to have more C-46 experience than any pilot in North America. When she silenced the three-blade propellers, MacDonald had unknowingly created history by becoming the only female C-46 pilot in any country to hold both current C-46 and DC-3 ratings on a commercial pilot licence.

"I never sought the recognition. All I wanted to do was fly and considered the C-46 as another step toward a Lancaster," she says. "Although the C-46 may be challenging, I'm being coached, monitored and encouraged by professionals and every time the throttles go forward, I learn something."

Each flight provides the opportunity to experience something new, with MacDonald safety-belted in the flight deck, in aircraft where onboard heaters provide meager comfort and freight reeks of aromatic paint cans, over-ripe groceries and snugged-down fuel bladders. "Consignments to the Sahtu or Nunavut regions like the Kitikmeot or Kivalliq are never routine," she says. Runs down the Mackenzie River valley are common. "We drop into historical sites like Fort Franklin (Deline) where Sir John Franklin wintered, and Fort Norman (Tulita) where the Hudson's Bay Company put a post in 1810. Everything that goes aboard out of Yellowknife's important, whether it's food, coiled mine cables or time-sensitive Buffalo Express packages."

Although space remains for the Lancaster in her pilot logbook, Yellowknife has come to feel more and more like home to MacDonald. She enjoys the off-duty camaraderie with fellow pilots and mechanics, who cluster at 'cultural centres' like the Black Knight Pub or Gold Range Saloon. And she relishes any chance she gets to head out on Great Slave Lake to hunt trophy trout.

She admits she will eventually apply to major carriers for a place in international jets, but plans to stay in the NWT capital permanently. Whatever changes come her way, the rampie who never scuttled southbound when snowflakes powdered her parka, appreciates life North of 60.

And, at least for now, the Avro Lancaster will have to wait.

ARNOLD WITZIG, 72, AND SIMA SHARIFI, 65, HAVE DONATED $60 MILLION TO HELP NORTHERNERS FOLLOW THROUGH ON THEIR DREAMS—AND IMPROVE THEIR HOME COMMUNITIES.

BETH COVVEY

A STEADY SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR A DECADE, THE ARCTIC INSPIRATION PRIZE—WITH ITS SPOTLIGHT-ESCHEWING FOUNDERS ARNOLD WITZIG AND SIMA SHARIFI—ARE UP HERE'S NORTHERNERS OF THE YEAR.

BY RHIANNON RUSSELL

The dream makers

IT WAS BACK IN 2014 when a tall, white man with a Swiss accent first approached Harry Flaherty.

At the Northern Lights conference in Ottawa, where Northern businesspeople and politicians mingle with southern counterparts, this stranger said he had a few ideas, and could he have a few moments of Flaherty's time. Flaherty, then interim president and CEO of the 100-percent Inuit-owned Nunasi Corporation, as well as president and CEO of Qikiqtaaluk Corporation, was wary. He'd heard this refrain before.

"My first impression was: What does he want from me? What does he want from us? I looked at him and said, 'Well, who doesn't have ideas to bring to Nunavut or to Indigenous people?'"

The man was Arnold Witzig, and he was polite but persistent. He'd been trying to reach Flaherty before the conference. Witzig would go on to tell Flaherty that he and his wife, Sima Sharifi, had recently founded the Arctic Inspiration Prize. The goal was to support small, community-led initiatives that don't often fit within how southerners think about the North—meaning these projects get overlooked for crucial federal or territorial funding. Witzig was trying to get Northern organizations on board with the idea.

Flaherty, who was born in Grise Fiord and has lived in the Arctic all his life, recognized the talent, ingenuity, and ambition that existed all around him in the North. But at the time, he says, he felt there was a disconnect—Northerners needed a catalyst to encourage people to come together, to express themselves, and to bring their ideas to life. "When I had an opportunity to talk to Arnold, that's exactly what he was trying to do," Flaherty says. "His thoughts and ideas were right in line with what I believed in."

He invited Witzig to Nunasi's next board meeting to make a pitch. There, Nunasi committed to contributing $60,000 to

the prize over the next three years—in addition to the $1 million he and Sharifi were donating annually.

Today, eight years later, Nunasi co-owns the Arctic Inspiration Prize, along with about 30 other corporations owned by Northern First Nations and Inuit. Its selection committees, comprised of Northerners and southerners, annually award $3 million to projects pitched by residents of the North—everything from local sea-ice monitoring in Nunatsiavut, to a land-based healing program in Yellowknife, to a welding studio in Cambridge Bay. The one thing each prize-winner has in common? They empower Northerners to tackle local problems their way and to improve the quality of life in their own communities.

This is the story of how it all happened—how a Swiss businessman-turned-philanthropist fell in love with the Canadian North; how he and his wife created the country's largest annual prize; and how the prize has benefitted Northerners since it began a decade ago.

But this is not a story of southerners rushing in to save the day. Rather, they create the conditions necessary for uniquely Northern ideas to flourish—and then they walk away. It's a story of unlikely allyship and southern dollars flowing north with no strings attached.

Witzig, for one, is a reluctant subject. He refused to be photographed for this story, and he intimated several times during the reporting process that he'd prefer the story be focused on Northerners now involved with the prize.

But without Witzig and Sharifi, there would be no Arctic Inspiration Prize. And many of the more than 40 ingenious, winning Northern-led projects that have used the prize money to get off the ground would not be where they are today.

As Wally Schumann, former NWT industry minister and incoming chair of the AIP Charitable Trust, puts it: "Ask yourself this one question, if you won Lotto 6/49... how many people would take it and give $50 million to put in trust to do what he's doing? Nobody! Because nobody's ever done it."

PHOTOS COURTESY: JUSTIN TANG/ARCTIC INSPIRATION PRIZE

"THEY SHOULD ONLY COME ON BOARD IF THEY ARE WILLING TO LET THE NORTHERNERS DO WHAT THEY NEED TO DO, THE WAY THEY WANT TO DO IT."
- ARNOLD WITZIG

BORN IN SWITZERLAND and growing up on the family farm, Witzig went on to study architecture. After heading a small firm, he built an engineering company that specialized in building sophisticated factories. According to his bio, "he understood that economic, environmental, architectural, technical and social needs had to be integrated in order to succeed, especially for complex industrial projects." Witzig worked long days, with time for little else. Once his company expanded into Germany and became the market leader, he sold the business to his team in 1998, making every employee an owner.

Having achieved his business goals, Witzig decided to see what lay outside of Europe. His two children "challenged his view of the world from within the corporate walls of his business life," according to his personal website.

Witzig narrowed down his starting point to San Diego or Vancouver—he wanted to climb mountains and improve his English, which was nearly non-existent. Ultimately, Vancouver won out.

He landed on July 1, 1999, and, that evening, watched a fireworks show in front of his hotel. How welcoming Canadians are, he thought. For a few months, he studied

LEFT: Every Arctic Inspiration Prize winner in 2019. RIGHT: The Arctic Indigenous Wellness Project members celebrate their million-dollar prize win in 2017.

English at the University of British Columbia (UBC), and that winter, headed to Fairbanks, curious about Alaskan cold and snow. Europeans know a lot about Alaska, he says. "We want to go there." And then he met Sharifi.

Sima Sharifi had come to Canada in 1986 as a refugee from Iran, where she'd been an activist, protesting the government, organizing rallies, and graffiting walls. She was arrested several times, and once, imprisoned for two years. Ultimately, she was released with a suspended death penalty. "You are never safe," she says. "They can always come and catch you for whatever reason and kill you."

She was studying and working as a teaching assistant at Simon Fraser University and met Witzig on a dating website. Initially, she was put off by his profile, where he described himself as a businessman. "I have a problem with businessmen, ideologically speaking," she says with a laugh. But she kept an open mind, and they began exchanging emails—Sharifi in Vancouver, Witzig still vacationing in Fairbanks.

"I saw immediately there are so many interesting things we had together—core values and so on," Witzig says. "Even so, I was a capitalist and she was a left-wing activist, so there were also some things that were not in line, but the core values were there."

He flew from Alaska to Vancouver to meet her, and invited her to come stay with him in Fairbanks. They returned to Vancouver later that winter, passing through the Yukon for the first time together. The beauty of the landscape struck them both; that highway drive planted the seed of their Northern love.

In 2004, Witzig and Sharifi were married. Over the next seven years, they worked with NGOs in Ethiopia, Bolivia, and Guatemala. The work was important to Sharifi. In Iran, her mother was Arab, her father Persian, and the family spoke Arabic. "Basically, we're linguistically, ethnically a minority there and not liked by the dominating culture," she says. "So I understand, I think, very well the working of colonialism—the working of dominant culture over the minority culture—and the long-term impact it has."

The couple watched tensions flare in Bolivia under Evo Morales, the country's first Indigenous president. Their thoughts turned to Canada, with its own devastating colonial history and wondered why they were working abroad when these issues existed in their own country. "We decided our backyard needs help too," Sharifi says. "We should focus on our backyard first."

"I THINK THE ARCTIC INSPIRATION PRIZE JUST ALLOWS THESE SMALLER GROUPS TO CHANGE THE CULTURE OF SOMETHING IN THEIR COMMUNITIES."
- KAREN AGLUKARK

WHEN KAREN NUTARAK learned the early childhood education program she'd co-developed in Pond Inlet had won the $1-million Arctic Inspiration Prize, she called co-founder Tessa Lochhead and they both started crying.

Nutarak and Lochhead had opened Pirurvik Preschool—Inuktitut for "a place to grow"—in 2016. Later, they developed a program that taught kids a blend of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (traditional knowledge and cultural values) and the Montessori method.

"A long time ago, before Inuit went to school, before the residential school and federal day school, children used to learn from their parents and there was no teacher," says Nutarak. "Everything was observation, hands-on."

The Pirurvik program relies on these traditional child-rearing practices, bringing ulus, scraping boards, sleds, and sealskins to children at preschool while also incorporating Montessori materials translated into Inuktitut. Parents have said their kids are more active at home and more eager to help out, Nutarak says.

Northerners know what will work up here and what won't, Nutarak says. "We know our community. We know our people." Southern programs and ideas aren't always suitable for Northerners, she says, because life is so different down there.

"It was our dream to open a preschool that was based on our culture." The prize has helped Pirurvik bring that dream—and their program—to four other communities in Nunavut.

Pirurvik's win came seven years into the prize's existence. Back in the fall of 2011, Witzig was finding inspiration in the Nobel Peace Prize. "We could see how a prize simply can have a much bigger impact in showcasing success, but also in generating support... You can build a whole network of supporters from North and south around this prize. When somebody wins the Nobel Prize, they are immediately visible."

Witzig reached out to members of ArcticNet, a network of Arctic scientists and researchers, for guidance. "We had no idea with whom to talk. We didn't know anybody in the North then," Witzig says. "I was actually a bit afraid the idea of a prize would make us look pompous."

ArcticNet took on the prize's management. The inaugural selection committee was full of big Northern and southern names, including Susan Aglukark, Geraldine Van Bibber, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Peter Mansbridge, and Michaëlle Jean. "That was the most important part, that the first laureates would be chosen by people that everybody would trust made the right decision," says Witzig.

In 2012, with a $1-million donation from

PHOTOS COURTESY, FROM TOP: ALISTAIR MAITLAND/ARCTIC INSPIRATION PRIZE; JUSTIN TANG/ARCTIC INSPIRATION PRIZE

Witzig and Sharifi, the first four AIP winners were announced and they spanned the Canadian North. They included the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation for its efforts to become stewards of Canada's newest national park, Thaidene Nëné, on the East Arm of Great Slave Lake; the Nunavut Literacy Council for encouraging the use of literacy skills outside of the classroom; the book *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit - What Inuit have always known to be true,* for preserving Inuit knowledge from elders for future generations; and the Arctic Food Network, to develop food-sharing structures along snowmobile trails on Baffin Island.

"That was for us like a test if the whole idea might work or not," says Witzig of the prize's first two years. "Pretty soon, we saw that these winning laureates really had an impact... and that's why we then said it seems to work."

Around this time, Witzig was travelling often to the North, attending any public events he could—festivals, chamber of commerce meetings, mining conferences, anything—trying to spread the word about the prize and seek feedback from Northerners. "At the beginning, I was an absolute nobody and a southerner and nobody knew us, so it was not that easy."

But once Nunasi came on board, in 2014, other Indigenous organizations did too. "He has been able to manage getting all these groups together in the North, all the way from Inuvialuit to Nunatsiavut, to Nunavut to north Quebec to Northwest Territories," Flaherty says. "That's a big accomplishment, what he's been able to do."

In 2016, the Rideau Hall Foundation took on the AIP's operational costs, from flights and staff salaries to the televised awards ceremony. That meant any money contributed to the prize would now go entirely to winners.

Then, in 2018, Witzig and Sharifi made national headlines when they decided to donate their life savings—about $60 million—to the prize. "We were finally convinced that Northerners see the AIP as something they want," says Witzig. "We came to the conclusion it's

TOP: Pirurvik, winners of the 2018 million-dollar prize. BOTTOM: Northern Compass poses with its grand-prize win.

Imma Like This, a project to get Inuit-specific music programming into schools, won the 2020 grand-prize. Due to COVID, the ceremony was held virtually and broadcast on APTN.

"WE KNOW OUR COMMUNITY. WE KNOW OUR PEOPLE."
- KAREN NUTARAK

the right thing to do and it's the right time to do it." (He did have to break the news to his two adult children that they wouldn't receive an inheritance. They were understanding, he says.)

"It was a way for us to give back to our adopted country," adds Sharifi. "I came to Canada and I was welcomed. I was given rights, like a Canadian who was born here. I didn't have the right to live in the country where I was born... So for me, it was a golden opportunity to give back, and what better [way] than [to] strengthen the North? And as a result, make a stronger country."

Witzig, 72, and Sharifi, 65, have lived full and fulfilling lives. He has climbed the Seven Summits—the highest mountain on each continent—and skiied to the North and South poles. Sharifi, meanwhile, has completed her PhD in translation studies.

"From a practical point of view, it doesn't make sense to keep something you don't need until you are dead, when you can invest it now in a way that it has an impact," Witzig says.

BEFORE DAVIDA WOOD accepted her position as the AIP's first Yukon region manager in

PHOTO COURTESY: ARCTIC INSPIRATION PRIZE

2020, she asked around about Witzig. What was he like to work with? What did people think of the prize?

"I think, for Northerners across the country, there has been this aspect that things don't come for free," she says. There is often an unspoken expectation of some underlying return, in the form of access or ownership, when Indigenous Northerners share who they are, she adds.

A Teslin Tlingit Council citizen who runs a consulting business in Whitehorse, Wood wanted to make sure she wasn't walking into anything like that. But everything she heard, and everything she saw in her conversations with Witzig, made her feel his intentions were pure and genuine. "I think that there is a very important space for this, whether we want to talk about it from a reconciliation lens or even the idea of bringing North and south together."

Witzig says he's scaling back his involvement in the prize, bringing on more Northern leadership. Wood is essentially its Yukon representative; her job involves promoting the award in the territory. In the NWT, the prize's board has hired former territorial health minister Glen Abernethy in a similar role, and he intends to bring on a manager for each of the Nunavut, Nunatsiavut, and Nunavik regions.

"The thing that I really appreciate is that he's still intimately involved, but he's handing over the reins more and more all the time to representatives from the Arctic, people who live here, who make decisions here," says Abernethy.

The prize's governance structure has developed over the years, too. A board of mostly Northern trustees manages the prize purse. Regional selection committees first narrow down applications, then a national committee makes the final choices. Today, the annual prize totals more than $3 million: the $1 million grand prize, as many as four prizes of up to $500,000 each, and as many as seven youth prizes of up to $100,000 each.

Southern companies with a stake in the North are also involved, giving financial contributions annually to the purse. This southern involvement is key—as Witzig puts it, the prize is "by the North, for the North, with unconditional support from the south."

And he's firm on that point. "Unconditional really means if there is southern support, they only should come on board if they are willing to let the Northerners do what they need to do, the way they want to do it," he says.

Northerners come up with great ideas, says Abernethy, but these plans don't always fit into a southerner's worldview. Even in the North, he explains, Yellowknife politicians and bureaucrats try to push ideas that work in the capital into smaller communities. But federal and territorial governments hold the purse strings, so community-based ideas that work locally often get passed over for funding. The Arctic Inspiration Prize exists to recognize and support these projects that have untapped potential.

With the $60-million endowment wisely invested, plus annual donations from co-owners and partners, Witzig says the money should last forever.

KAREN AGLUKARK and Rebecca Bisson have certainly seen the ripple effects from prize winners across the North. They're team leaders with Northern Compass, a program that helps Northern youth pursue post-secondary education. After FOXY (Fostering Open eXpression among Youth) won $1 million in 2014 for leading youth-based sexual health and education conversations across the North, Aglukark and Bisson noticed, for the first time, some of their participants were openly gay and trans.

And then when Qaggiq—a program dedicated to strengthening Arctic performing arts—won $600,000 in 2016, they saw more and more young people were interested in careers in music.

"I think the Arctic Inspiration Prize just allows these smaller groups to change the culture of something in their

FOXY was awarded the 2014 million-dollar prize and has since become an institution in NWT schools.

communities," says Aglukark, who is from Arviat. "Just to change the way we think about what we're capable of in our communities."

Northern Compass's team members are prime examples. The project won $1 million in 2020, and they're currently supporting 200 to 300 young people across the North with everything from tutoring to helping them prepare for college or university. "When you're coming from a community that doesn't have a lot of people who've gone on to post-secondary, you've maybe never been in a city, never been on a bus, never had a bank account," says Bisson. "There's so many additional hurdles."

Winning provides teams with more than just money. It's also external validation that they're on the right track—recognition that others see their vision, too.

Derrick Hastings, the manager of the TH Farm in Dawson City, says it was reinvigorating to win $500,000 in 2019 to build a cold-climate greenhouse. "Sometimes you go through these lulls. You're like, is this worth it?" he says. "Is all this work... gonna amount to really changing anything?"

Winning the prize told him it would. The farm, owned by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, plays an important role in the Dawson area when it comes to achieving food security and providing learning opportunities for the youth who work there.

"People believe in it," Hastings says, noting the innovative greenhouse is now under construction. "You talk to elders, you talk to youth, and everybody sees the benefit in fresh vegetables in the winter and having a place to go and grow things. Everyone's so excited."

YOU COULDN'T MAKE the story up: a Swiss millionaire and an Iranian activist meet in Vancouver and agree to hand their fortune over to the Canadian North, a region they don't live in. (Sharifi's not a fan of the cold, and she's terribly allergic to mosquitoes.)

Clearly, Witzig loves the North, but he's happy to support residents from a distance instead of trampling them to do it. What he and Sharifi have done isn't for their own fame or recognition. It boils down to respect—recognizing that the climate, culture, landscape, and traditions of the North are best known by Northerners and no one else.

Witzig recalls Canada Day 2019, when he and Sharifi visited former NWT premier Nellie Cournoyea in Tuktoyaktuk and celebrated his 20-year anniversary of coming to Canada. "It took me literally years to bring Nellie on board [with the prize], but now we are actually great friends and I have a huge respect for her," Witzig says. She cooked up some caribou meat, and at 3 a.m., they went outside and watched children playing in the street in broad daylight.

"IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE TO KEEP SOMETHING YOU DON'T NEED UNTIL YOU ARE DEAD, WHEN YOU CAN INVEST IT NOW IN A WAY THAT IT HAS AN IMPACT."
- ARNOLD WITZIG

PHOTO COURTESY: FRED CATTROLL/ARCTIC INSPIRATION PRIZE

WITH A LOW TOLERANCE FOR BOREDOM, INUK MASTER ARTIST GERMAINE ARNAKTAUYOK HAS FOLLOWED HER CREATIVE AMBITIONS AND LOVE OF INUIT LEGENDS WHEREVER THEY TOOK HER, IN A CAREER THAT HAS INSPIRED BOOKS, FILMS AND EVEN ACROBATS.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BILL BRADEN

"IT WAS

THERE ALL THE TIME."

AT HER COZY, neat-as-a-pin apartment in a Yellowknife seniors' community, Germaine Arnaktauyok sits almost motionless at her kitchen table. Before her is a 22x30 inch sheet of Arches fine art paper, in her hand is a fine-tipped Rapidograph pen, delicately jabbing tiny dots and squiggly thin lines of azure-blue ink to painstakingly build the sky on her latest work.

It's her depiction of an Inuit legend of the Moon Man and Sun Mother—a personal piece she's been at, on and off, for almost two years. It will take many more weeks to complete, but she's in no hurry.

"It's very monotonous work. I have to stop every so often, otherwise you go crazy. I get carried away, doing it for hours," says Arnaktauyok, the 75-year-old icon of the Inuit and Canadian art world. Her unparalleled career as a printmaker, author, illustrator and collaborator ranges in media as varied as animation, stage production and stained glass.

HER LIFE TODAY IS, like many of her generation, totally removed from her childhood in a traditional family camp. She grew up at Maniituq, 90 kilometres from Iglulik on the Melville Peninsula in central Nunavut. As the seasons dictated, her family lived in sod houses, tents made of seal skin, and *igluit* built during winter trips. She is the third-oldest of six children; six others did not survive.

Drawing came naturally, almost instinctively, to the young Arnaktauyok—even in a remote camp. "We didn't have any paper. Just little pencils that you use for ages until they are just little stubs." She was persistent about securing art supplies. If her father was travelling to IgluIik, she'd ask him to pick up provisions. "Sometimes I would write the priest, and he would send me some crayons," she says. Arnaktauyok would doodle faces from her imagination on whatever paper scrap—like chewing gum wrappers—was at hand.

And she had plenty to feed her creative mind. "My father told us stories when we were all in bed. Because we were little, we would end up going to sleep in the middle of the story. But somehow, I would stay up and listen."

WHEN ARNAKTAUYOK WAS NINE,

Sir Joseph Bernier Federal Day School in Chesterfield Inlet became her institutional home for the next seven years—except for summer visits back to the Maniituq camp.

"In school, we weren't allowed to think about how we lived or the [Inuktut] language. We had to learn everything about how the white people lived," she says. "For many, many years after, I just lived the way white people lived."

To this day, she doesn't remember much from Chesterfield Inlet. "I know there's something there, but I can't recall anything. I had a hard time knowing what was going on, with the sexual and physical abuse. I vaguely remember a lot of noises in the middle of the night, and I was wondering, were they having a party? But I didn't know."

If she was—and still is—able to shut out the memories, those years at the residential school had devastating consequences. After many years of suffering terrible nightmares—"like something in the house, ghosts doing things at night"—her doctor suggested she may have had depression since she was a child at the school.

But there was one bright, transformative event for Arnaktauyok at Chesterfield Inlet—a nun she remembers as "kind of liberated and free-spirited, who played the guitar" led a small group in painting classes every Saturday. Arnaktauyok sold one of those paintings, of a family at their iglu, when she was eleven. "That was how it started."

She carried on to the vocational high school in Churchill, Manitoba. There, George Swinton, a visiting university professor, saw her work and encouraged her to pursue fine art training in Winnipeg. A year later, she enrolled, living with a white family in a big city.

But she found it tedious. "After taking fine art for almost three years, I got bored. Models, painting, still life, lettering... I asked

"I DON'T FOLLOW ANYBODY. I DON'T COPY ANYTHING. I FIND THAT EXTREMELY BORING."

someone, what do you do in the fourth year? Well, we do the same thing. That's when I decided to leave."

She wasn't quite done with school yet. She went to study commercial art in Ottawa, after an instructor hinted that she might be able to make a living with her talent. But after just one semester, that, too, proved boring and she abandoned commercial art for good.

That summer in Ottawa, she got her first real job as an artist, illustrating children's books for the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs which ran the education systems in the North. Then she moved to Iqaluit, returning to the North for the first time since residential school. It was 1968 and she was 21, working at the Frobisher Bay Arts and Crafts Centre, where she

helped design the Canadian contingent's bright red parkas for the 1972 Sapporo Winter Olympics, as well as a private commission to design posters for EL AL, Israel's national airline.

She soon moved west to Yellowknife for work, creating educational illustrations for the newly minted NWT government. There, she met her husband and they had a daughter. When their only child was three, they moved south to British Columbia. In 1989, after the marriage ended, Germaine was back in Yellowknife, where she took the first steps in her renowned solo career, adding the intricate techniques of etching, lithography and screen-printing to her grounding in fine and commercial arts.

"I started going back to Inuit art because that's what I know. That's when I started looking into those Inuit legends," she says, recalling her father's nightly storytelling from her childhood. "I remember looking at carvings, how smooth they were. I started doing my artwork like that, fluid kind of artwork. That is where I got my own style.

"I don't follow anybody," she says. "I don't copy anything. I find that extremely boring."

DARLENE COWARD WIGHT was entranced with Arnaktauyok's print creations—the painstaking detail, the refined techniques—from the moment she first saw them on a visit to Iqaluit in the mid-1990s. Wight, the Inuit art collection curator at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, persuaded Arnaktauyok to have a feature exhibition at the WAG back in 1998. "I don't think there's anybody who has that kind of focus in her work," she says. "She really is quite extraordinary. It's her God-given gift."

While Arnaktauyok's style opened up doors in the fine art world, the business of big art was not kind—agents took advantage of her. "It was bad. I'm not good in business, money. I had a bad time for many years, dealing with people as my agents. I lost

HER NAME IS ARNATTAUJUQ

Germaine Arnaktauyok now signs her artwork Arnattaujuq, the correct spelling of the anglicized Arnaktauyok recorded at birth. It is the name of a friend of her mother's, a blind woman who asked that her name be given to a daughter. Germaine is the name given her at a Catholic-run residential school.

"AFTER TAKING FINE ART FOR ALMOST THREE YEARS I GOT BORED."

so much but, eventually, I couldn't do it anymore. It was so frustrating. That's when I decided to break off. I was willing to lose everything to not have to work for anybody."

Her breaking point came after a show of some 30 original artworks, priced between $300 and $4,000 apiece, through an agent at a Toronto gallery. Arnaktauyok didn't see a cent out of two years' work. She was so disheartened that she even turned down a lawyer's *pro bono* offer to get what she deserved. "I decided to forget about it. Don't let me hang on, it's past now. I could leave it alone. It's not worth getting angry about. You just have to leave it alone and keep going."

Somehow, everything worked out, she says.

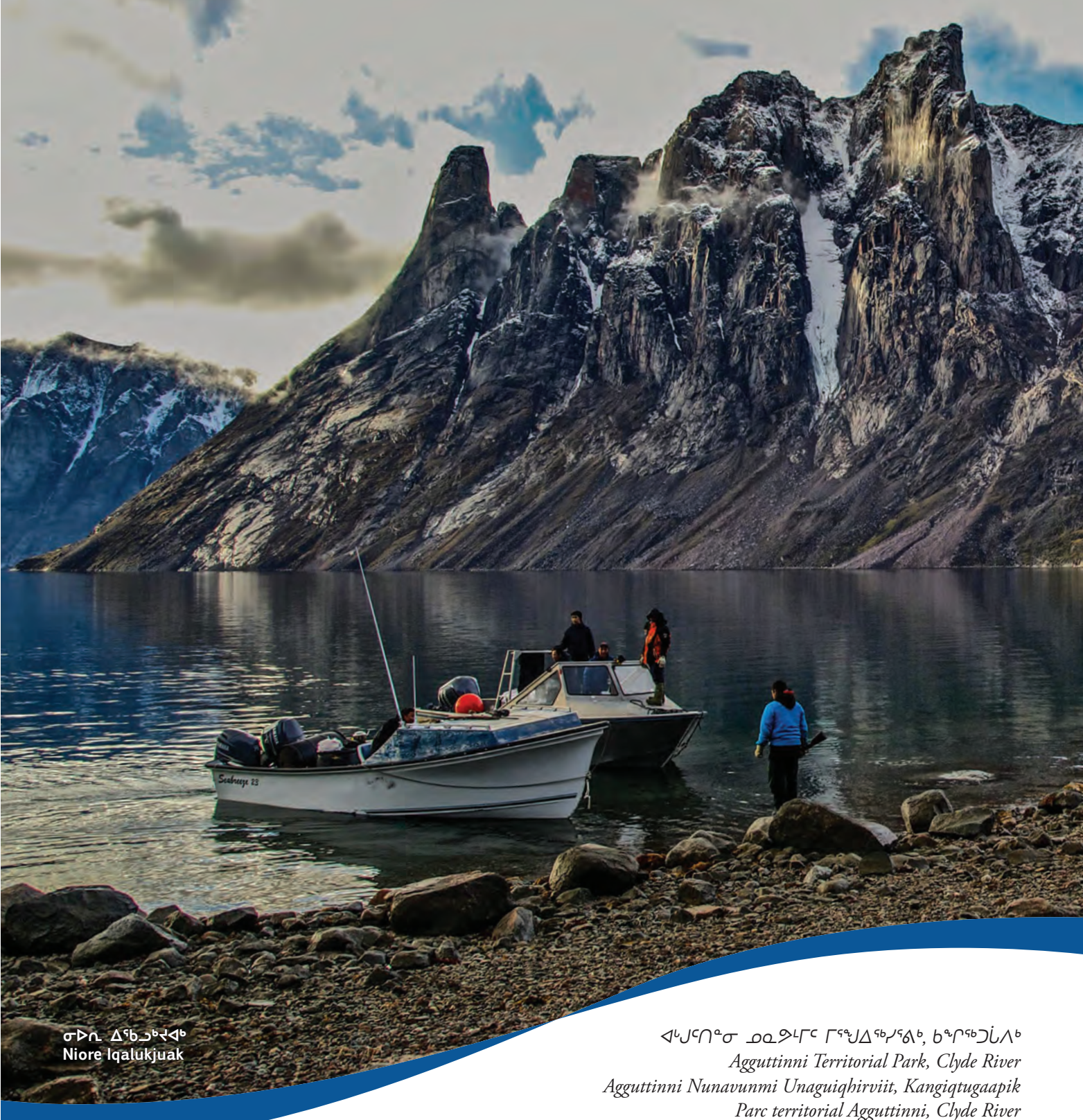
Mother Earth, 2007. Ink and coloured pencil on paper. 72.1 cm x 53.6 cm. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

Sedna, Ruler of All Sea Animals, 1994. Etching, aquatint on paper. 18/50. 48.2 x 56. 2 cm. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

ARNAKTAUYOK RESOLVED to never again put her career in the hands of managers or agents, vowing only to work on contract assignments. It was an arrangement that suited the emerging Iqaluit-based publisher of Inuit culture, Inhabit Media, and its co-founder, Neil Christopher.

Her classic, formal art training is a huge asset to Inhabit Media, says Christopher. "She understands the process," he says, adding it works best when she tells Inhabit what she wants to do. "It would be foolish to direct her—that's part of her genius. How can you not love that?"

↬ *continues on p.75*



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60 YEARS OF NORTHERN MUSIC

A LOOK BACK—AND AHEAD—AT THE ARTISTS WHO PROVIDE THE SOUNDTRACK OF THE NORTH

BY UP HERE STAFF

HOW DOES IT HAPPEN THAT NORTHERN CANADA has so many successful musicians, in a population of around 120,000 souls—or about the same number of people as Red Deer, Alberta?

One organization that can take some credit is the CBC Northern Service. Starting 60 years ago or more, CBC producers travelled to remote locations and recorded some of the earliest Northern musicians to be heard on the airwaves. The CBC would go on to record more than 600 broadcast recordings of original and traditional music. For years, they gathered entertainers together for concerts, starting with the first True North concert in Frobisher Bay in 1980. More concerts were held in Whitehorse, Inuvik, Yellowknife and Rankin Inlet over the next 25 years. Today, *CBC North* is still recording and promoting many of our newest artists.

Another factor is the inspiration musicians draw from the long dark winters, when Northerners have traditionally gathered to entertain each other. All three territories have their own musical histories and sources of support—festivals, community events, arts grants, bars, and a handful of theatres and recording studios. Original music and songwriters are being recorded in even the smallest communities, with the Internet, social media and studio software lowering the barrier to entry for artists. Today, a song recorded in a bedroom in Arctic Bay can reach the entire world.

Up Here has tracked down some illustrious Northerners, but we've had to leave many dozens of our favorites out of this listing. Tell us who we've missed and we'll try to follow up in a future issue.

Yukon

Jerry Alfred

A Northern Tutchone musician and member of the Selkirk First Nation, Alfred inherited the honourary role of Keeper of the Songs from his father—a title that conferred the responsibility of collecting traditional songs and performing at ceremonial events. A choirboy at residential school, Alfred would later be influenced by Bob Dylan, and his music became the song of his people. He recorded his first album *Etsi Shon (Grandfather Song)* in 1994. *Nendaä: Go Back* was released in 1996, and *Kehlonn* in 1999. He received a Juno as Jerry Alfred and the Medicine Beat in 1997.

Peters Drury Trio

Starting out as teenagers, this Yukon-based trio of jazz musicians toured across Canada and internationally. Singer Caroline Drury and brothers Graeme and Jesse Peters—on drums and piano, respectively—released two CDs, *When Old Met New* and *Backbeat*, highlighting an eight-year collaboration that ended in 2004. Caroline went on to study opera, while the Peters brothers have since formed Speed Control, touring widely and teaching the finer points of rock and roll to school-aged youngsters.

Undertakin' Daddies

The Daddies first appeared at Frostbite music festival in Whitehorse in 2000. *Post Atomic Hillbilly*, their debut album, featured songs about murder and other disasters. It was released in 2001, blending roots, folk, country and bluegrass, and was nominated for a Juno. Their second album, *Devil in the Rearview*, was nominated for a Western Canadian Music Award. (*Two Wheels in the Ditch*, from that album, is a Northern road-driving classic.) The Daddies included well-known Whitehorse musicians Nathan Tinkham, Bob Hamilton, Kevin Barr and George McConkey. The band toured together in Canada, the U.S. and Europe for seven years.

Kim Barlow

Barlow migrated to the Yukon in the 1990s. A folk singer and songwriter, she has recorded six albums. Her second, *Gingerbread*, was nominated for a Roots and Traditional Music Juno in 2003. Barlow's folk sounds combined with wry observations on Yukon lifestyles led to many collaborations in Whitehorse, in North America and beyond. Barlow returned to the East Coast in 2013, where she continues to collaborate with musicians. A tour to Whitehorse and other points in Canada was cut short by COVID in 2020.

Matthew Lien

Musician and sound-man extraordinaire, Matthew Lien records the natural world in the Yukon. In addition to two recent videos exploring the Yukon wilderness, Lien was commissioned to create an album in Taiwan, where he met makers of traditional music. *Consonance*, a multi-channel recording and audio display, re-creates a live performance of circle singers of the Bunun tribe. In addition to awards for music in Taiwan, he has received a Western Canadian Music Award.

PHOTO, RIGHT, COURTESY: YUKON ARTS CENTRE

Gordie Tentrees

Much-loved folk performer Gordie Tentrees is a songwriter and musician who has drawn comparisons to John Prine or a young Bob Dylan, according to some reviews. Originally from Hamilton, Gordie first found his poetic voice in Whitehorse. Several albums on, he's a hit onstage in Canada, the U.S., U.K. and Australia. His 2018 album, *Grit*, includes songs that are, at times, funny, serious and nostalgic—a reflection of his life before and after hitting the musical stage.

Paris Pick

Whitehorse songwriter and performer Paris Pick now has two albums to her credit, *Feeling Love* (2018) and *Hope for the Best*, issued this past summer. Pick toured Western Canada with her first album and, this spring, she hooked up with Whitehorse video artists to create a music video about the day-to-day life of pizza delivery drivers. She leads a six-piece Yukon-based band on her sophomore album, and plans to tour B.C. soon.

Sarah MacDougall

A unique singer-songwriter with multiple awards and four albums, Sarah MacDougall is originally from Sweden, but makes her home in Whitehorse. MacDougall has played festivals across Europe and North America. Her album, *All the Hours I Have Left to Tell You Anything*, won two Indie Awards in 2019, and was nominated for the Western Canadian Music Awards and a Canadian Folk Music Award. MacDougall operates her own studio, Dream Ship Sound, while also producing local artists, and collaborating on theatre shows.

Diyet

Diyet, a songwriter and bass guitar player, sings in English and Southern Tutchone—her native language. Diyet has released three albums of her audience-pleasing alternative country, folk, roots and traditional melodies. Backed by her husband Robert van Lieshout and award-winning producer Bob Hamilton on her 2018 album, *Diyet and the Love Soldiers*, she received nominations for the Indigenous Music Awards, Western Canadian Music Awards and the Canadian Folk Music Awards. Diyet and the Love Soldiers have appeared on APTN, CTV, and in 2020, on CBC's New Year's Eve national broadcast.

Nunavut

Charlie Panigoniak

One of the first performers to write and record only in Inuktitut, Charlie Panigoniak was a household name across the Arctic for 40 years. He toured in Canada and played all the major festivals and arts events in the North. Panigoniak took up the guitar in the early 1970s, singing about his friends and everyday happenings. CBC released six of his albums, including one for children. Panigoniak's distinctive, fun-loving music is still played on national radio. He received the Order of Nunavut in 2012. Panigoniak died in 2019.

Northern Haze

Their classic 1985 album *Northern Haze* is believed to be the first ever Indigenous-language hard rock album recorded in North America. Although the Iglulik hard rockers broke up in 2007, an independent label released a compilation called *Sinaaktuq* in 2012, which included the original album with some singles. Aakuluk Music reissued the 1985 album in 2017. Soon after, three original Northern Haze rockers and two new members launched *Siqinnaarut* in 2018, 33 years after their first album. It was nominated for an Indigenous Music Juno Award in 2020.

Tudjaat

Inuit throat-singers Madeleine Allakarialak and Phoebe Atagotaaluk, grandchildren of Inuit transported to Resolute Bay from northern Quebec by the federal government, wrote and recorded songs for a CD in 1994. The self-titled *Tudjaat* featured *Kajusita (When My Ship Comes In)*, which describes the plight of the High Arctic exiles. *Kajusita* won the 1997 American Film Institute Award's Best Song, and was nominated for a Juno. The cousins continued to record in 1998, but later went on to other careers. One of their songs, *When the Elders Sing to Me*, is included on the 2000 CBC True North Concert album, *Truly Something*.

Night Sun

Iqaluit-based band, Night Sun, released a total of six albums. Beginning in 1991, the band's releases—like *Night Sun*, *Calling*, *Home* and *One Moment of Grace*—garnered rave reviews. Much of the praise was devoted to lead singer and songwriter Ellen Hamilton's voice and the Northern imagery found in her lyrics. The group's energetic sound—a combination of folk, Klezmer, Celtic and Zydeco influences—was evident in the 2005 release, *Drive*. Hamilton, an educator and founding member of Qaggiavut, has received the Order of Nunavut and the Order of Canada.

PHOTOS COURTESY: DIYET: MOM/MAVERICK; AAKULUK MUSIC

Susan Aglukark

Few Northern artists have reached the heights of Juno-winning songwriter Susan Aglukark, raised in Arviat. Her second album, *Arctic Rose*, won two Junos in 1995 and *O Siem*, from her 1995 album, *This Child*, was a number-one hit in Canada, selling some 300,000 copies. Aglukark's sixth album, *Big Feeling*, garnered a third Juno award in 2004, the same year she was named an Officer of the Order of Canada. *Blood Red Earth*, her seventh album, was nominated for a Juno in the Aboriginal Recording of the Year category in 2007. Aglukark is a motivational speaker and advocate for Inuit children who have suffered sexual abuse.

Tatanniq Idlout

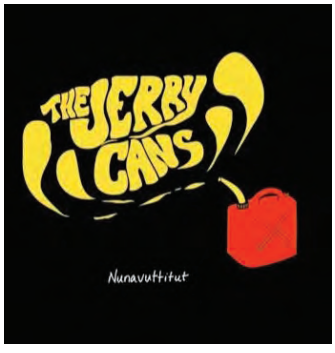
A singer, songwriter, and climate change advocate from Igloolik and Iqaluit, Tatanniq (Lucie) Idlout's second album in 2009, *Swagger*, won best rock album, as well as garnering seven nominations at the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards, a Juno nomination, and six nominations at the Aboriginal Peoples' Choice Music Awards. Her song, *Lovely Irene*, was reworked and renamed *Angel Street*, inspiring a campaign to call attention to domestic violence. Idlout has scored films and television shows, and served on Canada's panel on Climate Change.

Tanya Tagaq

Multi-award winning musician and performer Tanya Tagaq has five albums to her credit, each one pushing the boundaries of throat-singing, over innovative and experimental soundscapes. Tagaq's aggressive style and her distinctive voice, conjuring elemental spirits, have wowed audiences on stages around the world and been recognized for originality by the Western Canadian Music Awards, the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards, and the Junos. In 2014, she took home the Polaris Prize—the prestigious award in the Canadian indie scene—for her album, *Animism*. Tagaq is an outspoken advocate for Inuit and women's rights, and is a member of the Order of Canada.

Riit

Rita Claire Mike-Murphy is an Inuk musician and APTN television personality from Pangnirtung, with two albums under her belt. Her sound is a blend of traditional throat-singing and electronic dance music. Her first self-titled album was released in collaboration with the Jerry Cans in 2017. Her second album, *Ataataga*, released in 2019, was a Juno Award-nominee for Indigenous Music Album of the Year in 2020, and longlisted for the 2020 Polaris Prize. Riit hosts APTN's children show, Anaana's Tent.



The Jerry Cans

The Jerry Cans, a five-member band from Iqaluit, combine Inuit themes and throat-singing over a driving folk-rock sound. The band has released four Inuktitut/English-language albums, with accordionist and throat-singer Nancy Mike winning Aboriginal Songwriter of the Year at the Canadian Folk Music Awards in 2013. The band was nominated for two Juno Awards in 2018, and toured Canada and overseas. Credits include music for APTN's children's series, Anaana's Tent, and a bilingual children's book. Aakuluk Music, established by the band in 2016, releases Nunavut artists and promotes Inuktut music to the world. The Jerry Cans' most recent album, *Echoes*, launched in 2021 following Mike's departure.

Kelly Fraser

An Inuk pop singer and songwriter from Iglulik and Sanikiluaq, Kelly Fraser recorded two albums, *Isuma* and *Sedna*. Fraser was dedicated to sharing Inuit culture and raising Inuit rights issues through her music. She died by suicide in 2019, a victim of racism and cyber bullying, while working on a third album.

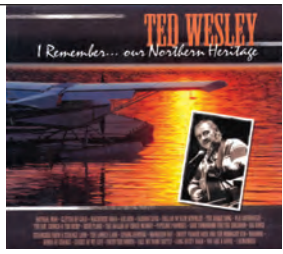
Josh Q. and the Trade-Offs

Singer-songwriter and guitarist Joshua Qaumariaq, bassist Jeff Maurice and a rotating roster of drummers and collaborators mix Inuktitut and English songs into a pleasing and powerful blend of Arctic blues. Qaumariaq's deep voice has been described as Arctic Soul, highlighting the closeness and isolation, and the ups and downs of Northern life. Josh Q. and the Trade-Offs have been crowd favourites at major festivals all across Canada. Their album is available through Aakuluk Music.

Terry Uyarak

Terry Uyarak grew up in Iglulik and began his performance career as an actor, juggler and musician with the Inuit circus troupe Artcirq. His debut album *Nunarjua Isulinginniani* was released in 2020, and nominated for the Indigenous Artist of the Year Juno Award in 2021. The 14-track collection features Uyarak's songs in Inuktitut, with storytelling by elder Simon Qamaniq. Other artists on the album, recorded by Aakuluk Music in Iqaluit, include Becky Han, Celina Kalluk and Riit.

Northwest Territories



Ted Wesley

Ted Wesley moved north in the 1960s to work at Discovery Mine. He soon formed a band with Andy Steen, and performed as a singer in Yellowknife through the 1970s. His first album, *Straight North*, made him the first NWT musician to ever be signed by a major label. *Blackflies and Mosquitoes* followed in 1973, and *North of Canada*, in 1977, nabbed Wesley a Juno nomination for Country Male Vocalist of the Year. His nostalgic songs about young people experiencing the North were—and remain to this day—NWT anthems.

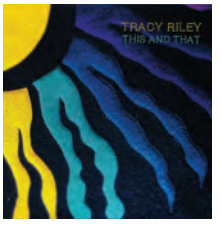
PHOTOS TERRY UYARAK, JOHN Q - AAKULUKS

Willie Thrasher

Thrasher, an Inuvialuk from Aklavik, is a residential school survivor who was a member of The Cordells, an Inuit rock group in the mid-1960s. Later, as a singer-songwriter, he travelled across Canada and the United States through the 1970s and '80s. His album *Spirit Child* was released by the CBC in 1981. It saw new life in 2014 on the *Native North America (Vol. 1)* compilation, by label Light in the Attic. Thrasher's original hit, *Wolves Don't Live by the Rules*, was covered by Nunavik artist Elisapie Isaac in 2018, bringing Thrasher back into the spotlight.

Razzamajazz!

Founded in 2001 in Inuvik, Razzamajazz! released two albums, with some original compositions and plenty of old-time jazz favorites. Mike Whiteside, Bob Mumford, Miki O'Kane, Carrie Young and Christina Wilsdon played Yellowknife's Folk on the Rocks several times and even opened for Rick Mercer at the Inuvik Oil and Gas Show. *Sauna Sessions*, recorded in 2005, was supported by Yellowknife legends Norm Glowach and Pat Braden as backup musicians. The group followed that up with *Northern Lights* in 2009.



Tracy Riley

Singer-songwriter Tracy Riley continues to enchant audiences at festivals and concerts across the North, the country, and the continent with her rich, soulful voice and energetic performances. A multi-talented musician, she has performed with the likes of Leela Gilday, Tanya Tagaq, KD Lang, Valdy and Rita MacNeil. Her music has roots in folk—with overtones of funk, blues and jazz—and a unique percussive style. Recently on tour in B.C. with Brodie Dawson, Riley returned home to Yellowknife for her latest album, released in 2020, called *This and That*.

Digawolf

Diga, a poet, artist and singer-songwriter, grew up speaking Tlicho Yatii in Behchoko—the Tlicho Government capital. Now living in Yellowknife, he works with local musicians and his band Digawolf, which has brought him acclaim from critics and fans. His sound is garage rock, or electric blues, with Tlicho heritage and language woven in. He has released six albums and toured the country. His first, *Diga*, in 2004, brought him a Canadian Aboriginal Music Artist of the Year award. *Distant Morning Star*, in 2010, and *Yellowstone*, in 2019, were both nominated for a Juno. The latest Digawolf album, *High Arctic*, was released in 2020.

Leela Gilday

One of the North's most popular artists, Yellowknife-born, Sahtu Dene singer-songwriter, Leela Gilday has five albums to her credit—each one is an award winner, while two, *Sedze*, and *North Star Calling*, are Juno winners. Gilday's powerful voice and strong traditional roots have captivated audiences around the world. She has toured extensively in Canada, the U.S. and abroad, as far as Japan. A storyteller, Gilday sings about the people and the Northern land that created her. SOCAN awarded Gilday their inaugural "Her" award for outstanding achievement in 2020

PIQSIQ

Sisters Kayley Inuksuk Mackay and Tiffany Kuliktana Ayalik grew up in Yellowknife, with roots in Nunavut's Kitikmeot and Kivalliq regions. In their youth, they were nourished by recordings and performances of Inuit throat-singing, but they bring a modern take to *katajjaq*, the songs of everyday life. Their 2018 release, *Altering the Timeline*, led to collaboration with a Finnish duo, VILDÁ, adding Sámi vocals and accordion playing. Recent live CBC performances by the sisters include two new numbers, *Seascape* and *Run*. Ayalik also founded Quantum Tangle, with G.R. Gritt, winning a 2017 Juno for Indigenous Album of the Year for their EP, *Tiny Hands*.

Wesley Hardisty

An award-winning fiddler, Hardisty makes his home in Fort Simpson, but can be heard just about anywhere fiddle music is played in the territory. With roots in Northern, Metis and West Coast fiddle music, Hardisty also writes some of his own compositions. He won Best Fiddle CD for *12:12*, at the 2012 Indigenous Music Awards. In 2021, he played at the Arctic Inspiration Prize award event broadcast on APTN, hit the stage at Folk on the Rocks, and he released *Hittin Home* with a live concert at NACC with Yellowknife musicians.

ANDREA BETTGER, CARMEN BRADEN - MOM/MAVERICK

Leanne Goose

Nominated for Best Country Album at the Aboriginal Peoples' Choice Awards in 2014, Goose is originally from Aklavik, and makes her home in Inuvik. A Northern singer-songwriter, musician and producer, her music has blues, country and rock influences, with a nod to her Inuvialuit and Sahtu Dene backgrounds. Goose toured North America and, as a mentor, she reaches out to other Northern performers over the Internet to provide advice and support. Goose has two albums available online: *Anywhere* and *This Time*.

Andrea Bettger

A musician and music educator, Bettger has a background playing classical, jazz and bluegrass violin. She moved from Toronto to Hay River in 2003, and began teaching Northern fiddlers. Bettger is in demand with Northern musicians, among them The Jerry Cans, Carmen Braden and Leela Gilday. Her first original fiddle album, *Snappy Day*, was nominated for a Canadian Folk Music Award in 2018. Bettger and her family live off-grid near Yellowknife. Her second album, *Bush Chords*, debuted in 2020.

Carmen Braden

Carmen Braden is a multi-talented Yellowknife composer/performer. She has completed classical and choral commissions from the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Gryphon Trio, the Canadian Chamber Choir, and many others. She also writes and performs what she calls "little pieces," among them *Small Town Song* and a catchy 2021 item called *Kick Kick*. Braden has won awards for Classical Composer, Album, Artist, and Composition at the Western Canadian Music and East Coast Music awards from 2017 through 2020.

HISTORIES HELD IN WOOD, BONE ÁND STONE

A SERIES OF INUIT CARVINGS BRING PIVOTAL MOMENTS IN CANADIAN LEGAL HISTORY TO LIFE. BUT WHEN THE ARTISTS AREN'T PROUD OF THE MACABRE EVENTS THEY WERE COMMISSIONED TO RECREATE, WHAT STORY IS ACTUALLY BEING TOLD?

BY DANA BOWEN

Now retired Justice John Vertes, Senior Judge of the Supreme Court, poses with the first carving in the Sissons-Morrow collection.

BILL BRADEN

THE SISSONS-MORROW COLLECTION'S COLD CASE

It's ironic—an art collection dedicated to law and order was itself the victim of a theft.

For 11 years, the entire Sissons-Morrow collection remained in the shadows. The carvings were kept in cardboard boxes in downtown Yellowknife, within the Court of Justice's locked storage room, after multiple thefts took place in 1999. Public display cases had twice been broken into and several carvings were stolen, while other art works were damaged. Those stolen include *Rescuing the Injured* by James Hala, *Two People Fighting* by Bob Ekalopialok, and two others—*Mafa Garrotting Husband* and *Hunter Attacked by Bear*—of which the artists are unknown. Although the incidents were reported to the RCMP, no one was ever apprehended for the theft. Property crime files are kept for no more than eight years, a spokesperson with the RCMP in the Northwest Territories explained. "So the file would no longer be in our system, and the officers who would have worked on that file would be long departed from Yellowknife RCMP." Jeff Round, Director of Court Services with the Department of Justice, explains the last contact his office made with the RCMP about the case was more than 15 years ago. "We were contacted in 2004 by Edmonton Police who had retrieved a stolen carving which they believed may be a part of the collection," he said. "Unfortunately, the piece was not from the Sissons collection." To this day, the carvings have never been found.

THE GAVEL RANG DOWN.

A jury declared Allan Kaotak innocent of murder.

It was 1955 and Kaotak had been arrested and flown south from Cambridge Bay to Yellowknife for what was the first trial administered by the territory's Supreme Court.

Kaotak was charged with murdering his father. In reality, his father had committed suicide. Kaotak waited in custody for six months before his trial, which took place in the basement of Yellowknife's Elks' Lodge because the court room was still being constructed. The sights and sounds Kaotak experienced before and during the trial must have felt completely foreign.

A year later, Kaotak would channel his impressions of the event into a carving, originally made of wood, which depicted Judge John Howard Sissons as a large figure towering over a desk. Kaotak made himself to appear small and deferential in front of the judge.

Contrasting the power imbalance between the judge and the accused, the statement Kaotak made with his work seems obvious. Yet Sissons loved the carving and decided he wanted more just like it to memorialize the novel cases he was presiding over. Kaotak's 13cm-by-12.5-cm creation became the first piece in a historical collection, with Sissons commissioning art works that documented his trials across the North.

Sissons considered the carvings as valuable archival monuments that, together, told the story of the Canadian legal system's arrival in the High Arctic. But several artists behind the pieces remain unknown to this day and that wasn't an accident. Many didn't want their names attached to such projects. "Some of the people who carved them didn't even tell family members," says Rebecca Johnson, associate director of the University of Victoria's Indigenous Law Research Unit. "You know, money is money and people need to put food on the table. But they're not the kind of sculptures people would have produced on their own."

The carvings found in the collection vividly detail scenes of grisly murders and tragic losses in communities around the North. "It just brings a bad feeling toward those times, is the way I understand and see it," says Eli Nasogaluak, a skilled carver from Tuktoyaktuk. "It's a continuous reminder of what they've done in the past."

These are stories the artists weren't proud to tell.

BEHIND A CLEAR CABINET door at the Nunavut Court of Justice in Iqaluit, there sit 25 small stone sculptures and one stuffed duck. The Sissons-Morrow Collection, typically located in Yellowknife's Court of Justice, was briefly moved east to commemorate the 20-year anniversary of the Nunavut court opening.

Between 1956 and his retirement in 1966, Judge Sissons sought out local carvers to depict the events that prompted notable legal cases. The tradition continued when Judge William Morrow took over, says Jeff Round, Director of Court Services for the NWT Department of Justice, until 1976.

Over the years, the collection has made the rounds—travelling across Canada, to Toronto, to Charlottetown—sharing a history that Sissons and Morrow curated of the North's first trials. The sculptures replicate scenes of murder, suicide, 'illegal' hunting (hence the stuffed duck), and other crimes. Some are grotesque. *The Murder of Salamonee* (thought to be made by Bob Ekalopialok of Kugluktuk in 1963) shows a man stabbing a woman, while another victim lies on the ground. Red knitting wool protrudes from the two bodies as though it were blood.

The sculptures also show events where traditional Inuit customs or practices were at odds with Canadian law. The *Suicide of Kolitalik* (created by Sam Anavilok in 1963) depicts three men—Amak, Avinga, and Nangmalik—standing by local leader, Aleak Kolitalik (otherwise known as Arrak Qulitalik), as he shoots himself at a hunting camp. This was not uncommon at the time—community members who felt they had become a burden in their old age chose to end their lives and sometimes sought help from rela-

tives. In this case, Kolitalik had been ill with measles, which could have infected others in the camp.

Bob Pilot (who would later become NWT deputy commissioner) flew to the hunting camp by the police's airplane to investigate Kolitalik's death. "From the beginning Amak, Avinga, and Nangmalik were very open," Pilot had said, according to *Images of Justice,* a book detailing the story behind each sculpture in the collection. "They admitted their acts and were concerned about them." The three men—Kolitalik's son and two nephews—were charged in Kolitalik's death and they were put on trial because they had supplied the elder with a gun and ammunition. Although assisted suicide was part of Inuit tradition back then, the court brought the case to trial to show people in communities they should be abiding by Canadian law that was being imposed on them.

The three men pleaded guilty under a Canadian law prohibiting assisted suicide. Their sentences were suspended—imprisoning the hunters would have had dire repercussions on their families and the camp. Instead, Sissons ordered the men to regularly report to the Hudson's Bay Company post in Iglulik.

Like with Kaotak's case, Sissons listened to and learned from the Inuit, understanding the differences between southern and Northern customs and values. Here, suicide was an acceptable decision for the infirm. He also demonstrated some flexibility and adaptability with sentencing. Still, when Canada began to assert its control over the Arctic, it imposed its legal system there, instead of recognizing Inuit laws and authorities, said Johnson. "What we see when law comes to the North is really the Canadian state asserting itself by using law."

In *Images of Justice,* Pilot said the arrival of this new foreign legal code changed the fabric of Inuit society. "All of a sudden the twentieth century was plopped right down in the middle of their lives."

While Sissons may have had good intentions with his collection, it seems he didn't recognize the power dynamics at play when commissioning carvers to reproduce these tragic events. It may not have occurred to him to ask whether the artists producing the works wanted to share these stories.

When five pieces from the Sissons-Morrow collection were stolen from the Yellowknife Court of Justice, Eli Nasogaluak was hired to replicate the works, and repair a sixth—titled *Hunter, Seal and Dog*. Like other carvers who previously worked on the collection, Nasogaluak was not proud of the work. He regrets having taken on the job. "The Sissons Collection is preserving what happened in the past. It's all a dark time in their lives and I don't feel good about bringing it up in public," he says. "I think it's best we leave it be, rather than have it as something Sissons is being recognized for."

The first piece in the collection, then, might be the most meaningful and historically valuable. Kaotak created the work of his own accord, relaying and revealing how he felt in the face of Canada's arrival in the North, represented by Sissons—the imposing authority figure.

Kaotak tells his own story.

A GIFT FOR EVERY OCCASION!

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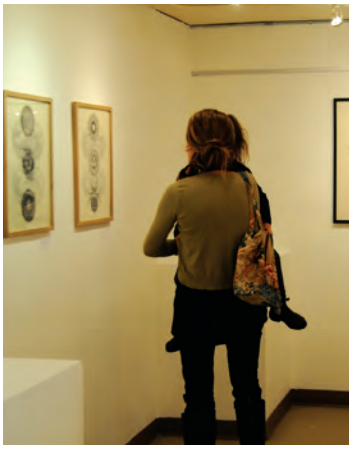

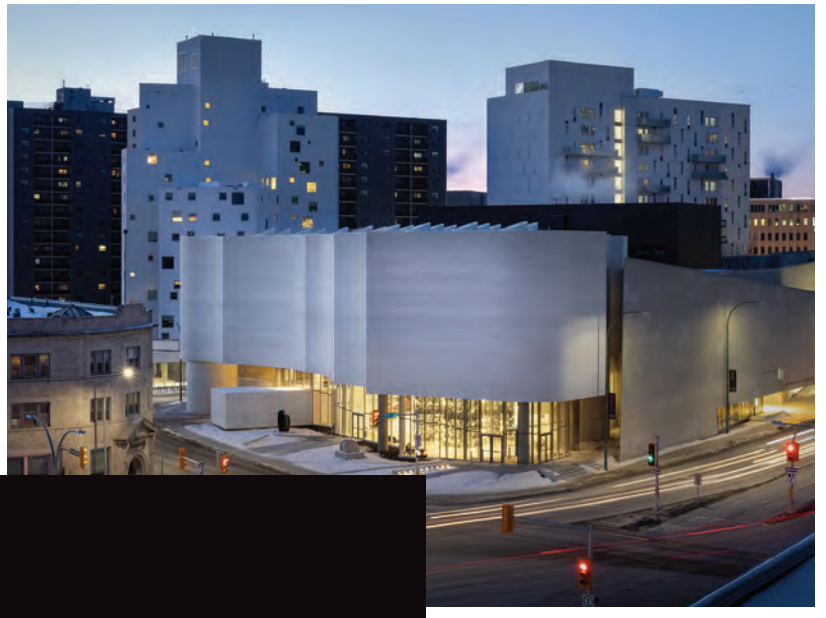

PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURESY: ARTS UNDERGROUND; COURTESY NORTHERN ARTS AND CULTURAL CENTRE (NACC); COURTESY ARTS UNDERGROUND; DAVID KILABUK; COURTESY WINNIPEG ART GALLERY

Creative spaces

Churches as galleries and school gyms as concert halls—art spaces and performance venues are hard to come by in the North. But art-lovers in each territory make do with what they have. BY DANA BOWEN

Born and raised in Yellowknife, Sofia Grogono went to study dance in Montreal. The experience proved illuminating, as she witnessed first-hand the difference in support artists receive in northern and southern Canada.

"There are these amazing programs and festivals that are designed for young choreographers and dancers to get their work seen [in Montreal]," she explains. "There are many support systems for [the arts]. There's nothing like that in Yellowknife. It's not that people aren't willing or aren't supportive, it's just that the infrastructure hasn't been built. The system hasn't been built."

There is no lack of performing arts talent in the North. But when most communities struggle with housing shortages, finding space for musicians to jam, dancers to perfect their choreography or painters to display their work can seem next to impossible.

Still, these artists use their creative talents to build up the arts infrastructure in their communities. They repurpose abandoned buildings, public spaces and even pickup trucks as temporary gallery spaces and mobile stages—finding ways to get together in unexpected places to offer a beacon of light during our long and dark winters.

Here's where to go to see the latest shows, exhibits and performances across the North.

NWT

Back in the late 1980s, Matthew Grogono remembers telling a Dalhousie university professor of his how there was no art school in the Northwest Territories. The professor's response shocked him. He encouraged a young Grogono to start his own. "Are you absolutely mad?" Grogono replied, thinking about the amount of work that would entail.

But that conversation stayed with him after he returned to Yellowknife. Grogono worked as a mechanic before starting Old Town Glassworks, which created custom glassware out of recycled bottles and eventually taught guests how to do it themselves. By 2000, he had begun to build a communal art space with friend Earl McCauley. Together, they helped to found the Aurora Arts Society and, later, the Artist


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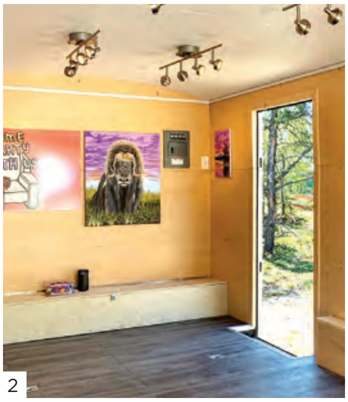
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Run Community Centre (YK ARCC).

It was an exciting time in Yellowknife. "We were in a Pentecostal church and we turned it into a thriving art centre for a short period of time," Grogono explains. The church hosted exhibits, workshops, live music and legendary parties. It gave locals a place to experiment, to collaborate, to come together. But it only lasted nine months, as the building was set for demolition.

The search for a permanent art space in Yellowknife continues today. Artists set up displays at coffee shops, in public parks and in their homes. Meanwhile, YK ARCC has relocated a dozen times in the last decade—hosting art shows and concerts in vacant Old Town buildings and abandoned downtown storefronts. Its latest endeavour is a trailer that serves as a mobile art gallery.

Meanwhile, the Yellowknife Artist Co-operative has converted the closed down Wildcat Café into a temporary art space. Sofia Grogono—Mathew's daughter and program coordinator with the YK Artist Co-op—says the Wildcat makes for an ideal gallery space. "[It's] something Yellowknife doesn't have," she says. "We're also going to use it as a jam space."

PHOTOS: 1. CARIBOU SHAMAN BY IOLA ABRAHAM IKKIDLUAK; 2. SHAMAN BY KAROO ASHEVAK; 3. FISH IN WEIR BY MARTHA NOAH; 4. WOMAN DRESSED IN CARIBOU CLOTHING BY UNKNOWN; 3. PHOTO CREDIT FOR FOUR PIX ABOVE: PHOTOS COURTESY WINNIPEG ART GALLERY; 5. GRIEVING WOMAN BY OVILOO TUNNILLIE

That's where you might catch new songs from the territory's most ambitious musicians before they take the stage at the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre (NACC)—a 301-seat venue attached to Sir John Franklin High School. The centre hosts theatre productions and award-winning musicians like Iskwe, Tanya Tagaq and Jimmy Rankin. But it can be difficult to bring large shows north—NACC often organizes tours across communities—because when these artists land in communities like Hay River, Inuvik, Norman Wells and Fort Smith, they have to make do with what is available. And that is usually churches or school auditoriums as stages.

WHERE TO SEE...

- **a play, dance performance or big name concert?** The Northern Arts and Cultural Centre in Yellowknife.
- **an exhibit by an up-and-coming artist or an NWT legend?** The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife.
- **the latest creations from talented local and area artists?** The Gallery of the Midnight Sun and Down to Earth Gallery in Yellowknife.
- **handmade treasures from Dene artists inspired by the land?** The Acho Dene Native Crafts store in Fort Liard, Winnie's in Enterprise, the Tlicho Store in Behchoko, or the YKDFN Artisan Shop in Dettah.
- **work by artists in the Beaufort Delta and surrounding communities?** The Artisan Collective in Inuvik.
- **a place to buy and enjoy local art with a cup of coffee?** The Rusty Raven Gallery & Gift Shop in Fort Smith.
- **local films, children's plays, photography exhibits, elaborate snow sculptures—and just about anything else you can imagine?** The SnowKing's castle on Yellowknife Bay.

YUKON

Like the Northwest Territories, the Yukon's capital boasts a number of public and performing arts spaces, while outlying communities must get creative.

"People work with what they can," says

5

Where to see Inuit art...

- in **Winnipeg?** The Winnipeg Art Gallery, with the largest collection of Inuit art in the world.
- in **Vancouver?** The Marion Scott Gallery and Inuit Gallery of Vancouver.
- in **Ontario?** Feheley Fine Arts and Gallery Phillip in Toronto and Snow Goose Gallery in Ottawa.
- in **Quebec?** The Elca London Gallery and Galerie Images Boréales in Montreal and Brousseau Inuit Art Gallery in Quebec City.

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Courtney Holmes, store manager for the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association (YFNCT). "There's a salon in Dawson City that just started selling Indigenous artwork. And there are places like the cannabis dispensary [in Dawson City] that has a little set up."

Most cultural centres in Yukon communities showcase local art, while the YFNCT hosts a website that sells works created by Indigenous artists. That website promotes more than 50 artists, selling anything from beaded canvas pictures to tufted earrings, sealskin mitts and books by Indigenous authors. Those works come from artists all over the territory, as well as from Yukon-born artists no longer living in the North. (The website sees the most traffic from Canada, the U.S., and, surprisingly, Ireland, Holmes says.)

In Whitehorse, the Yukon Arts Centre (YAC) is best known for hosting live performances from local and international performers. It features an exhibit space that contains a permanent collection of more than 100 Northern pieces in photography, paintings and textiles. Rotating exhibits highlight work from Northern and Indigenous artists.

There are several other galleries in Whitehorse, including Arts Underground—a vibrant red building nestled among the shops on Main Street. Inside, multiple rooms are dedicated to Yukon artists, from the Edge Gallery, which shows "cutting-edge" modern art from local artists, to the members' gallery, which displays art in many mediums by Yukon Artist Co-operative members. Arts Underground also features an art supplies shop and a ceramic studio.

Close by is Unorthodox Yukon. This small boutique is packed with artistic creations from all three territories. On a single wall, customers will find elaborate prints and paintings, beaded jewelry, Inuit parkas, mukluks and decorative pillows.

WHERE TO SEE...

- **contemporary visual art exhibits from local, national and international artists?** The ODD Gallery in Dawson City or Arts Underground in Whitehorse.
- **the top acts in music, theatre, dance and performing arts?** The Yukon Arts Centre in Whitehorse.
- **Northern works of art—from Inuit soapstone carvings to local fashion and jewellery designs?** The North End Gallery or Unorthodox Yukon in Whitehorse.
- **a mix of local art and history?** The Kluane Museum of Natural History Gift Shop in Burwash Landing.
- **carvers working on Tlingit clan poles and masks?** The Carcross/Tagish First Nation Carving Centre in Carcross.
- **exhibits on traditional clothing along with handmade arts and crafts for sale?** The Tage Cho Hudan Interpretive Centre in Carmacks.

NUNAVUT

With a lack of dedicated art studios and spaces, Nunavut residents are resourceful, converting school gyms and community centres into makeshift concert halls and galleries. Iqaluit's Inuksuk High School gym regularly holds headliner concerts, while the Alianait Arts Festival sets up a big-top tent every summer to host performances from artists across the circumpolar region. Musicians have even been known to perform on the back of pick-up trucks driven around town, like when the Jerry Cans organized such an event one summer. Qaggiavuut—a local arts organizations pushing for a performing arts venue in Iqaluit—built a *qaggiq* (a giant igloo) on the Koojesse Inlet ice to serve as a stage. (Albeit, a temporary one.)

The territory is unique in Canada in being without a stand-alone ↬ *continues on p.76*

6: PUDLO PUDLAT – PRINTMAKER AOUDLA PUDLAT; 7: MOTHER HUBBARD PARKA BY ARTIST UNKNOWN; 8: SPRING COLLECTION BY ROGER & LAURANT AKSADJUAK; PHOTOS COURTESY WINNIPEG ART GALLERY


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Upisaut fox trap near Rankin Inlet, NU

Building a better fox trap

Before foxes had any real value for the Inuit, fox traps were used as vermin control.

BY PAGE BURT

The scent is delicious, fishy, rich, enticing... It wafts over the tundra, drawing the attention of a prowling red fox. He puts his head down and traces the scent trail with absorption and skill, winding through large boulders and up the side of a rocky hill, and stops, nose up, twitching, mouth half open, tasting the attraction. It seems to come from a hill of rounded stones... Delicately, he rears up and places his front feet on the stones... stretching higher, higher... Lifting his head, he leaps lightly to the top of the pile, which turns out to be a rim of a crater in the stones. The scent is richer here... Saliva comes to his mouth. He crouches, sniffing the scent pools within the crater, and he leans further... further... edging out on the flat top of a stone. It teeters, and he pulls back, but it is too late. The stone suddenly slips sideways, falling into the darkness. The fox falls lightly into the centre of the cone of stone. On the floor, he finds a fish head and investigates it, pulling at the gills and cheeks, gulping the sweet flesh. Panic comes later when he realizes there is no way out... The sides are coated with ice and slant inward; his nails find no purchase. He is doomed. Doomed to starve or die at the end of a spear when the hunter checks the trap.

Sometimes, hiking on the tundra, and along our Arctic rivers, you come across a symmetrical pile of stones, and suddenly discover it is hollow inside, almost like an *iglu* of stone, constructed by Inuit. Or, on a rocky ridge above the sea, you might find a stone box on the land, with a rectangular chamber, a stone lintel over the door, and a groove made by stones set on either side of the entrance. If you are lucky, the door will still be in place, so you can better understand how this ingenious structure works.

These are stone fox traps, used in the past as vermin control, to remove marauding foxes (both red foxes and arctic foxes) seeking food in Inuit encampments. Foxes were agile, hard to spear, and highly destructive when allowed access to a caribou skin tent, skin blankets on the sleeping platform, or stored food in a tent or sod house. Stone traps required a lot of energy to build, but once constructed, they lasted for years, and required only baiting.

Before the coming of the traders to the Arctic coast and

PAGE BURT

Top: Two pulat fox traps, Bathurst Inlet, NU. Below: Uplisaut fox trap, Rankin Inlet

islands, foxes were eaten in times of starvation, or fed to sled dogs. Fox skins were considered of almost no value. They were used to clean babies, wipe out stone pots, almost like dishcloths. It was only with the coming of outsiders like traders, seeking fox skins for the European fashion trade, that fox skins acquired real value to Inuit. It was an artificial value—they could be traded for implements that made life much easier for Inuit across the Arctic. They were exchanged for needles, steel tools, knives, pots, primus stoves, flour, sugar, tea, and (perhaps most important), rifles, lead for bullets, and reloaders, all products of the white man's world that made life so much easier across the Arctic.

And the traders brought other items that enabled a whole commercial enterprise to be set up around the trapping of white foxes—steel leghold traps, skinning knives, foods that allowed the hunters to spend less time hunting for food to feed their families, and more time trapping to provide furs to trade for household items. Credit systems developed, with the traders grubstaking trappers so they could spend less time hunting and more time trapping.

Life changed tremendously. Good trappers were able to buy more goods, and became the elite of the various groups of Inuit, especially in the Central Arctic.

PAGE BURT

Once the steel traps were introduced, the building of stone fox traps stopped. No one would spend the time and back-breaking work building a trap out of heavy rocks when a light leghold trap, easily carried on the dogsled, would do. So, any stone fox trap you see was likely built prior to 1900, and often much earlier. Some are very old, with lichens bridging stone to stone.

Types of fox traps, and how they worked:

The *pulat* type of fox trap is a horizontal chamber of fairly heavy rocks, with a narrow chamber in the middle, a stone lintel over the entrance. There were heavy rocks lined up at the sides that guided a flat rock acting as a door. The door was a flat heavy stone that slid down neatly into the slots made by the rocks. According to Elders Moses Aliyak, John Towtongie, and John Tatty of Rankin Inlet, the trigger system was very clever. A caribou antler was built into the back of the trap, and served as a column around which a leather thong was passed, much like in a pulley. In the entrance, a caribou tibia was set on its rounded end, and a round pebble was balanced in the shallow cups on the top end of the bone. The thong was tied around the tibia, run though the trap, passed around the antler pivot, and back to a fish head set on the ground inside the entrance of the trap. The bait had to be something the fox would want to take away, and not eat in place. The flat rock "door" was balanced on one corner, with the other corner set onto the pebble on the top of the tibia. This arrangement was very strong compression-wise, and very unstable laterally. The slightest touch would cause the pebble to roll and the bone to become unbalanced, and the rock would crash down into the entrance, blocking it. The narrow chamber prevented the fox from turning around, and it could not claw its way out. Many pulat traps have no stone doors. The doors on these may have been slabs of ice.

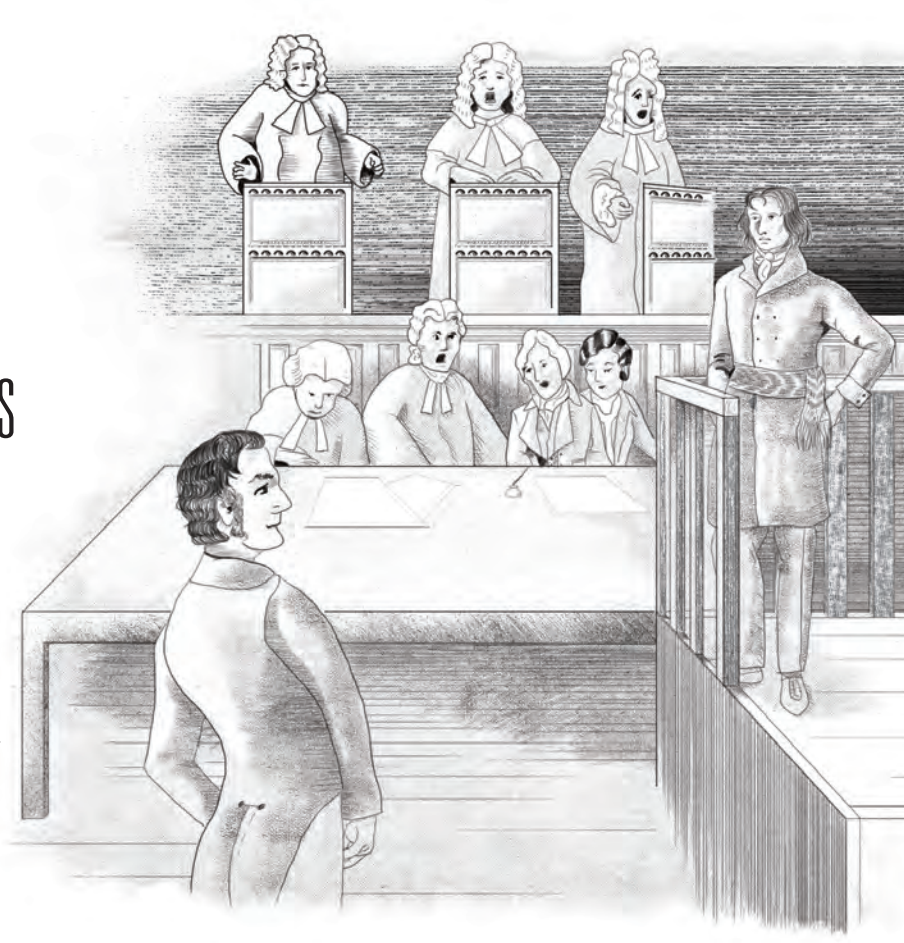
The *uplisaut* type of trap is a cone-shaped trap, built much like an iglu but with rocks, tapering in at the top, and rocks balanced on rim, pivoting in some cases to drop into the trap with the fox. Bait was tied under the rim, so the fox had to reach for it. When possible, the inside of the trap was iced with water so it would be too slippery to allow purchase for climbing. These could also be covered with a thin sheet of snow which would look solid—not hold the weight of the fox, but allow it to fall through.

Fox traps were placed where foxes foraging in a camp would smell the bait and go to the trap instead of the tents or sod houses. They might be built off to the side, but where there is a fox trap, tent rings or a *qamat* (sod house) might be located nearby.

And the stone traps were used not only for foxes, but larger versions were built to trap wolves. These required large stones and were a cooperative venture among several men, as the lintel stones were very heavy, and the trap had to be made quite narrow so the wolf would be confined by the stone and could not get the leverage required to move the side stones. Essentially, the wolf wiggled into the trap to get the bait, and the door fell behind it, holding the animal immobile until it was speared or starved to death.

An even larger version of these traps could be used to trap polar bears, but these were often made in natural rock chambers. These were enhanced by snow blocks guiding the bear into the trap, and sometimes sharpened stakes onto which the bear fell, and was wounded or killed. These were watched so the hunters could quickly approach before the bear managed to destroy the trap and escape.

The ingenuity of Inuit hunters never fails to impress those of us that now see only the tangible evidence of their lives in a harsh and unforgiving land, where they relied on their skills and techniques learned from experience and from the Elders.



Facing Time, Clashing Traditions

In 1838, a Métis interpreter from Tulita was sentenced to hard labour for life in Australia. But what if he was tried under Dene law, as he should have been?

BY DANA BOWEN

Amidst the dark and cramped corners of the British ship's cabins, Tulita NWT-born Baptiste Cadien lived out his last days far from the land he knew. Had he made it to the ship's final destination, the Métis interpreter may have travelled farther away from his homeland than any Northerner of the century. Whether that would have been a blessing or a curse, however, is hard to say.

In March 1838, Cadien stood trial for murder in Trois Rivieres, Quebec. Make no mistake—he was a killer. Witness Baptiste Jourdain testified that Cadien and another man named Lagraisse had killed 10 people at a Sahtu Dene fishing camp, in December 1835. Jourdain said he tried to stop the two men, who chased after their victims and shot them—but to no avail. Leading up to the gruesome act, Cadien had apparently told Jourdain this group was planning to kill him, but he was going to get them first. (What happened to Lagraisse is undocumented.)

Cadien, employed by the Hudson's Bay Company at the fur-trading post of Fort Norman (now Tulita), was sentenced to be hanged. But due to his lawyer's repeated pleas to reassess the punishment, Cadien was instead given a life sentence in Australia. From 1788 to 1868, the British government sent more than 160,000 convicts to penal colonies Down Under. Many were shackled, starved and worked to death in the extreme heat. Along with the British criminals, 154 Canadians were sent to Australia. Cadien was likely the only Northerner of the lot.

"This Baptise Cadien case is an unusual one," says historical geographer Randy Freeman, who studied Cadien's plight for the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. "I had not read anywhere, in any records, any reference of someone being sent out of this area to be tried down south."

Although the sentence for the crime may have seemed fitting at the time, Cadien's lawyer argued his client should not have been tried under British law. Given where the crime took place and who it involved, Cadien should have been tried under Dene law. Had that been the case, the outcome would have been quite different.

Historians still wonder why Cadien was tried under British law when no British subjects were involved in the incident that took place near Deline (formerly called Fort Franklin), in what was then still the North-Western Territory—a giant swath of land administered by the Hudson's Bay Company.

The rationale given at the time came down to the simple fact that Cadien worked as a translator for the Hudson's Bay Company. "It was not something the Hudson's Bay Company normally would be involved in," says Freeman—even if it was a trial for murder. Freeman posits the HBC was making an example out of Cadien to show others there would be severe consequences for such crimes.

HOW WOULD CADIEN'S FATE HAVE DIFFERED UNDER DENE LAW?

Dene Elder Morris Neyelle, who lives in Deline and grew up on the land in the 1950s and 1960s, says the main purpose of Dene laws in the olden days

ILLUSTRATION BY BETH COVVEY

was to ensure the survival of the community. "If one person did any damage then the leaders and the community would put that person in a field and then the whole community would sit down and talk to them," he says. "If it happens again, then there's no next time. They would be banned from the community."

"Sometimes if someone was acting out and just totally uncontrollable within the community, the community would often leave them behind," he says. "You would see banishment and it would sometimes be really effective—especially in Northern winters. Sometimes they would be able to come back if they changed their ways."

When it came to crimes as serious as murder, the accused could explain why they did it. If the act committed was in self-defense—as Cadien's lawyer argued—or to protect one's family or home, that person may be granted leniency. In a case like Cadien's, author and law student Catherine Lafferty reckons there would be some negotiation between the Dene and Métis.

"Peace agreements were still being made to stop killings," she says. "The [agreements] usually took place with different negotiators or go-betweens, who would help get the two parties in conflict to talk to one another." While this form of justice wouldn't bring back the victims, it may have brought some peace to both communities involved.

Although today all Canadian residents live under the country's legal system, Dene law is still in use in the Northwest Territories. Sentencing circles are one example where it exists. Here, the accused, the victim and members of the community gather and everyone involved is allowed to speak about the incident, with the goal of understanding what happened, why it happened and to identify steps needed to help heal all involved parties. Those suggestions are then given to a judge, with the aims of rehabilitating the accused and reintegrating them into the community. It's similar to the circles Neyelle grew up witnessing, only in a more formal setting.

"You see them now in courtrooms, where they'll do diversion techniques and try to divert people back into communities to do community service," Lafferty explains, noting the Yellowknives Dene First Nation organizes sentencing circles in Ndilo. Similar practices are common throughout several Yukon communities too. It's meant to bring healing to each party involved and decrease the chances that the guilty party will re-offend.

Cadien's case, of course, did not play out that way. He died of an unknown disease on a ship destined for Australia. It hadn't even left its port on London's Thames River. He was banished, without the opportunity to change his ways.

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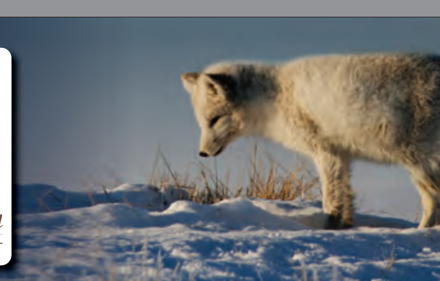

Real fur for real comfort

In a land where temperatures regularly drop to 40-below, real fur products continue to keep Northerners from shivering in the cold.

BY DANA BOWEN

Hoarfrost sparkled on the trees and thick layers of snow crunched under Brenda Dragon's mukluk-clad feet. The cold wind whipped past her face and ruffled the fur lining her hood, as she walked the quiet streets of Fort Smith. Dragon stretched out her fingers, cozy inside the soft beaver fur mitts her mother had made for her, and carried on to school as if she were in her own personal bubble of warmth.

On these winter mornings as a kid, Dragon remembers feeling superior to the frigid temperatures.

"As humans, we were not born with fur on our backs. We were always meant to wear fur," she says. "I grew up wearing fur, and was never cold."

Fur has played a central role in Dragon family life for generations. "Our family tree is full of trappers—my grandparents, my parents, and, as it turns out, my daughter and her partner are trapping in the Fort Smith area," she says "It's a deep part of who we are as Northern people."

Dragon has been carrying on the tradition with Aurora Heat—a company the Chipewyan Dene entrepreneur founded in 2015 that sells fur hand and feet warmers, among other items. (Aurora Heat is a family affair too—Dragon's son Joel works with her as a marketing specialist.)

The small, handmade patches consist of the wool from sheared beaver fur. Each patch can be placed inside mitts, boots or a hat to provide an extra layer of protection against the cold. The patches can be used for years—for a lifetime, even—as opposed to the disposable warmers people buy from plastic packages that only last a few hours.

Real fur is also a big step up from faux fur, says Dragon. The imitation stuff, she explains, is actually made with thousands of pieces of micro-plastics and faux fur doesn't keep its form for long, even though the plastic remains in landfills for centuries. "We have all seen the fake fur on a coat looking terribly ragged in no time at all," says Dragon. Yet authentic fur comes from animals who evolved over countless winters to grow coats that perfectly insulate them from frigid temperatures

But when it comes to selecting a specific fur to keep you warm, it really depends on what you'll use your garment for.

Iqaluit's Emily Joanasie sells numerous types of furs—from fox, coyote and racoon, to seal skin—at her fabric shop, Miqsuqta!. While every animal's fur provides a degree of warmth, each serves a different purpose, she says.

PHOTOS COURTESY BRENDA DRAGON

For instance, fox fur tends to sell the fastest, but many hunters—including Joanasie's father—opt for other animals. "Fox fur is a little too delicate for [my father]," she says "It holds more moisture." Although fox fur will still keep you warm, its fluffy hairs are more fashion than function. Shorter fur, from coyotes for example, is not as long, but denser and absorbs less moisture, making it ideal for longer hunting trips out on the land. It sounds contradictory, but some shorter furs are warmer than longer furs because the longer ones are meant to protect from wind rather than maintain heat.

Dragon notes that many animals have two layers of fur, and these furs prove the best at keeping the cold at bay. A beaver's longer guard hairs are stiff and protect the animal from things like branches, while also allowing it to easily glide through the water, she explains. The shorter layer, or the wool, is closer to the skin and that's what works to hold in heat. "Beaver is very durable and ever-lasting," she says. "Wild fur is an incredible insulator."

Sealskin, on the other hand, is not as effective in retaining heat, but it's great for its waterproof qualities—that is, of course, if you buy it from someone who knows how to treat it. "Sealskin, if traditionally processed, will be waterproof because of the natural oils it contains," Joanasie explains. "But if it is commercially tanned, it loses its waterproof properties because the oils are extracted."

That's a good tip in general for purchasing fur and sealskin products—it's best to buy locally from hunters, trappers and Northern designers who do everything by hand. Because, really, people who experience harsh weather understand how to dress for it.

For designers like Joanasie and Dragon, real fur products are more than just an accessory—they're part of their culture, heritage and everyday life.

"It's critical to support all arts, period," says Dragon. "Supporting local Indigenous designers builds pride in Northern culture and allows us to practice and share our traditional ways while participating in the economy. It's an act of reconciliation."

Plus, you can't enjoy the wonders of winter when your fingers and toes are frozen.

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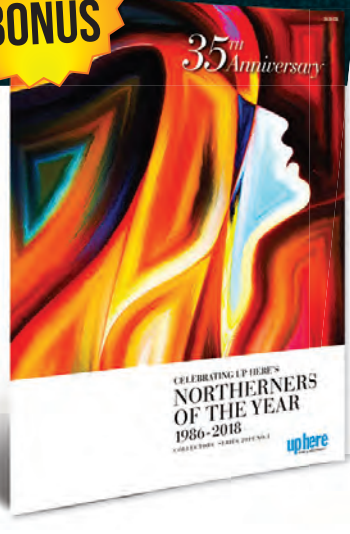

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The relationship began in 2015, when Christopher asked if she would collaborate on a book about her career. *My Name is Arnaktauyok* was the result—a 134-page, richly illustrated autobiography that charts her life and depicts a selection of significant works, in Arnaktauyok's own words. It was published in 2017.

She has been busy ever since. In early 2020, *Unikkaaqtuat (The Old Stories)*, based on Arnaktauyok's telling of Inuit legends, merged breathtaking acrobatics by 11 performers from Iglulik's Artcirq troupe and Montreal's 7 Fingers collective, with her art projected onto a giant backdrop. The show toured Canada, making stops in Ottawa, B.C., Alberta and Yellowknife—where Arnaktauyok took a bow in the audience before the captivating performance.

Her most recent print exhibition, *Piujut Arnaqsiutit*, was staged at Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum in Iqaluit in early 2020. It showcased her fine, detailed etchings of traditional Inuit tattoos (*tunniit*) and ivory combs. The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife will host the exhibit from December 2021 to May 2022.

And the Winnipeg Art Gallery, which boasts 26 Arnaktauyok prints in its extensive Inuit art collection, will host a gala showing in January 2022 of *Arctic Song*, a five-minute animated film of her works depicting five creation myths from Iglulik culture. The film, two years in the works, is co-produced by the National Film Board and Inhabit Media. It will also feature the voice of Iqaluit singer Celina Kalluk.

Arnaktauyok's prolific output and influential style have not gone unrecognized. Earlier this year, following a nomination by Wight, she won the Governor General's prestigious Award for Artistic Achievement in Visual and Media Arts, for her innovative work and role as an ambassador for Inuit art.

Wight says audiences continue to be fascinated by Inuit art, noting that many Northern artists had not seen styles or techniques from different countries before producing their works. "It just came from their own backgrounds. It's very authentic. It speaks to a unique culture that the south didn't know much about." The interest is only growing, she says, pointing to the young, urban Inuk creators—such painter and illustrator Megan Kyak Monteith—coming into the spotlight.

As for Arnaktauyok, taking a break from her latest project at her kitchen table, she is characteristically humble when reflecting back on how it all started. "I didn't have to think about what I was going to do when I grow up. It was there all the time."

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performing arts centre. Qaggiavuut has been fundraising since 2010 to build the Qaggiq Hub—a cultural learning centre and a space for Inuit performing arts. As it works toward its goal, Qaggiavuut organizes events and workshops to promote Inuit art across the territory. In 2019 alone, the non-profit generated more than $1 million for Nunavut's economy.

The arts are big business in Nunavut. Some communities have established communal art spaces that act as both a gallery and workshop spaces. Rankin Inlet has been home to Matchbox Gallery since 1987. The artist-run facility offers use of its ceramic studio while also exhibiting permanent and temporary art collections. Staff at the centre train local artists and help them find jobs.

The Uqqurmiut Centre for Arts & Crafts in Pangnirtung includes art studios, craft galleries and a print shop, while Baker Lake's Jessie Oonark Centre—named after the famed local artist—provides work space for carvers, printmakers, jewellery designers and seamstresses. And Kinngait Studios—in the community formerly known as Cape Dorset—is the longest continuously running print studio in all of Canada.

The territory's latest addition is the Red Fish Art Studio in Cambridge Bay, which transformed a 1950s fish plant into a vibrant arts hub this fall. Youth and adults can learn how to turn welding into high-art.

WHERE TO SEE...

- **giant, blown-up reproductions of classic Nunavut prints?** The walls of the main terminal in Iqaluit's airport.
- **a wide-selection of Inuit soapstone carvings, elaborate wall hangings, prints and sealskin products?** Malikaat, Rannva or Northern Collectables in Iqaluit or Ivalu in Rankin Inlet.
- **local films, storytellers and cultural arts exhibits?** The Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum in Iqaluit.
- **cultural performance, local screenings and live music?** The Franco-Centre in Iqaluit.
- **the latest in Arctic fashions?** Kiluk in Arviat or Victoria's Arctic Fashion online.
- **murals, local art and informative cultural exhibits?** Heritage centres in Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk and Gjoa Haven.
- **hand-crafted jewellery in production?** Aayuraa Studio in Iqaluit.

Kugaaruk by chance

On being thankful for a change in plans

BY BILL AKERLY

It's an unpleasant cognitive dissonance when you know you should be thankful—but you aren't.

Modern air travel is a miracle and the result of many people's diligent industry. I ought to be astonished arriving in the High Arctic in anything under thirty days, with dry feet even. But my appreciation is lacking today. Despite the captain's even-keel tone as he announces the course change miles above the tundra, I am less than enthused about returning to Yellowknife due to mechanical issues.

Hours later, we make a second unblessed attempt to depart for Taloyoak—Canada's most northerly community on the mainland. Eventually, a reserve plane is wheeled out. My morning flight home has become an evening trip—'milk run' stops still included. The Grumpersons are moving in.

We lift off and my worry is now that something else will go wrong. We land in Gjoa Haven. No issues. We touch down in Kugaaruk, the neighboring community. No issues. Twenty more minutes and I'm home. But the flight attendant addresses those passengers heading to Taloyoak: they're skipping our stop. The pilots have been up too long—"Transport Canada regulations." We're to fly two hours then call it a night in Cambridge Bay.

No. I need off this tin can. Graciously, they let me go.

But in Kugaaruk's shack of an airport, relief transforms to self-doubt. It's 4°C, windy and drizzling. Any auspicious feelings leave with the aircraft's rising, shrinking, and fading image.

Feelings can change. Making a list feels in order, so I do.

1. Borrow the phone and rebook your ticket.
2. It's hard to be cavalier when you're cold—dress up, champ.
3. Walk into town and see something new.

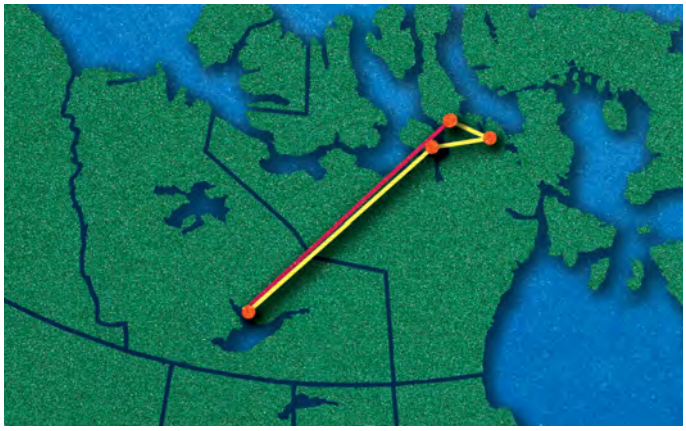
Done, done, and airport staffers Wilfred and Daniel drive me into the community. They give me a hot tip too: at 11 p.m. there's a one-night-only live band playing at the community hall. They also let me know Jesse (my Kugaaruk work colleague) lives in a green house. Fortuitous feelings are back. I remind myself, it's not an adventure if nothing can go wrong.

I step out into the town a stranger. I'm reminded of my first Arctic days seven years ago, when I arrived naïve and unadjusted to Taloyoak, still the only Nunavut community I know. I feel rejuvenated to see the world as new again, though this time less the tenderfoot.

As before, the kids zero in. "What's your name?"

"I'm looking for Jesse."

"He lives in the green house."



"That's him."

We walk. Jesse's not home. No one is. I walk on. More kids follow. And more kids still. A pickup rolls up alongside. Two becoming young women invite me to share the front bench of the darkened cab. I accept.

"Lots of kids, eh?" one of the women whispers.

Not whispering, I say, "Yes, I was just..."

"Shh... our babies are sleeping in the back."

Right. "I'm going to the Hall," I speak softly.

The lasses kindly taxi me to my venue. There's Jesse and his son, who is in the band no less. In small places, one's luck is condensed: here, Canada's thousands of extraneous Jesses have been filtered out. I see there's a Taloyoak diaspora here, too. Peter, Lucy-Ann, Byron, and Edmond are heading home for this weekend's volleyball tournament—same flight as me no less. The band turns 'The Wreck of the John B.', an old Bahamian folk ballad, into an Inuktitut punk-metal classic. It's a great show.

The next morning, I get up early for a walk. A long ascent takes me up a river hidden under rocks and overgrown moss. Atop the hill, I take in the view of Pelly Bay (Arvilikjuaq), with multiple islands and an only slightly rippled ocean. Back in town, Jesse meets me for lunch, followed by a driving tour—no babies, this time. Every house, every corner has a story.

Boarding the turbo-prop destined for home, I'm thankful at last—to the flight crew letting me off the plane, for the impromptu taxi ride to the show, and for meeting so many friends, old and new.

Byron and I share a seat row. From the air, we pick out lakes and landmarks below, until Taloyoak's telltale Sandy Point scrolls into view. We are home now, happier for the stops along the way.

ILLUSTRATION BY BETH COVVEY

HERE'S WHY THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HAS THE BEST NORTHERN LIGHTS IN THE WORLD.

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