



TD Gallery of Indigenous Art





TD Gallery of Indigenous Art

The TD Gallery of Indigenous Art (formerly the TD Gallery of Inuit Art) is a rotating exhibition space that presents work from the TD Corporate Art Collection reflecting regions across Canada. Through its various pieces, we aim to support the historical and ongoing cultural contributions of artists representing Indigenous communities in Canada. We welcome everyone into this space.

The goal of the TD Art Collection is to enrich the lives of our customers, colleagues and communities. As the world changes, we aspire to amplify diverse voices in the arts; to build a bold collection that sparks conversation, fosters a sense of belonging and celebrates the beauty of all communities. As part of TD's global corporate citizenship platform, the TD Ready Commitment, we want to help open doors for a more inclusive and sustainable tomorrow.

Our long-standing commitment to the arts began in 1967, when TD Bank Group began collecting contemporary art with the goal of creating conversation with customers and colleagues. In 1967, the Inuit Art Collection featured in this gallery was assembled to mark Canada's 100th birthday, reflecting on the past and looking to the future.

We acknowledge that this space is on the traditional territory of many Nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat Peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples. We acknowledge and celebrate the voices of Indigenous communities across Turtle Island, now known as Canada.

The exhibit is located at the TD South Tower (79 Wellington St. W) on the main level and continues up the stairs of the mezzanine level.

Special acknowledgement to the Inuit Art Foundation, TD Indigenous Advisory Council and TD Indigenous Banking.

TD South Tower
79 Wellington Street West
Lobby and Mezzanine Level
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Hours of Operation
Monday to Friday
8:00AM – 6:00PM
Saturday and Sunday
10:00AM – 4:00PM

Learn more about
the TD Art Collection
at www.td.com/art.

Image Credit
Brian Jungen
Walk This Way (echo)
2016
Nike Air Jordans
TD Bank Corporate
Art Collection

Curator's Statement

TD Art is committed to acquiring and caring for the best Indigenous art of our time. Whether focused on art, history, nature or culture, the artists that share their vision, mythologies and lived experiences provide a meaningful context for the art objects that stir emotions and share important stories. We recognize that Indigenous art is made of diverse forms and holds different meanings for all people who engage with them; this includes artists, ancestors who made them, the communities where they were made, outsiders who collected the works and the viewers who learn and experiences them. It is our hope that the artworks foster meaningful engagement and create a lasting impact on viewers.

Through the works on display, we aim to support the historical and ongoing cultural contributions of Indigenous artists in Canada. The TD Art Collection aims to serve as a catalyst for conversation. Many of the contemporary artworks on exhibition in this space highlight the sharing of knowledge across generations, and while some artists are interested in making works faithful to tradition and aesthetic forms, others are inspired by modern lived experiences for exploring new artistic expression.

In 2019, we began a new chapter with the renaming of the space to the TD Gallery of Indigenous Art (formerly the TD Gallery of Inuit Art). This is more than a mere name change. This new name reflects the journey and growth of the Collection itself and our work to amplify underrepresented and diverse voices in the arts through the TD Ready Commitment. Our direction at TD Art is inspired by timely and current conversations about Truth and Reconciliation, diversity and equity that help bring us closer to a more inclusive tomorrow.

Please enjoy!

Stuart Keeler
Senior Curator, TD Bank Corporate Art Collection

Brian Jungen

Dunne-Za, Born Fort St. John, British Columbia (1970-)

Walk This Way (echo), 2016

Nike Air Jordans

76.2 x 81.3 x 50.8 cm

16.84.1

Walk This Way (echo)

Brian Jungen first gathered acclaim in the late 1990s when he began creating what is now his signature work: turning Nike shoes into sculptures resembling Indigenous masks. *Walk This Way (echo)* was created as part of a later series that also used Nike trainers, however in a more abstracted style. He uses traditional Indigenous crafts of cutting and carving on manufactured objects.

Jungen, who is of Dunne-Za and Swiss heritage, began visiting museums of natural history and cultural anthropology and was struck by how objects from Indigenous cultures were presented. Jungen worked in an artist residency and began taking sneakers apart and reassembling them. The results are complex, smart and witty pieces that critique assumptions made about Indigenous objects.



Maria Hupfield

Anishinaabe, Born Wasauksing First Nation, Parry Island, Ontario (1975-)

Snowmobile Suit for the Hudson, 2013

Industrial Felt

Dimensions var.

19.15.1

Snowmobile Suit for the Hudson

Maria Hupfield draws inspiration from her Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) traditions and the history of performance art. Her practice is based on the relationship between cultural memory, the natural environment and the human body. Hupfield is a member of the Wasauksing First Nation in Ontario.

Snowmobile Suit for the Hudson includes a Ski-Doo outfit complete with boots, mitts and a helmet hand-stitched with grey felt. Hupfield uses industrial and metallic materials to make clothing and accessories. The transdisciplinary artist uses these objects in her performances, adding meaning and experience to the artifacts that are later exhibited.



Shuvinaï Ashoona

Inuit, Born Cape Dorset, Nunavut (1961-)

Taking Pictures of the Creature, 2016

Pencil on Paper

91.4 x 127 cm

19.11.1

Taking Pictures of the Creature

Many of Shuvinaï Ashoona's early drawings depict naturalistic and domestic scenes of her Arctic home, continuing an artistic tradition begun by the Ashoona family. Shuvinaï began drawing in 1996, working with pen and ink, coloured pencils and oil sticks. Current drawings often involve a combination of reality and imagination in which she creates her own abstract outlook of Northern contemporary Inuit life and visions of mystical creatures.



Colonialism and Inuit Art

Indigenous People across (what is now known as) Canada inhabited this land for thousands of years prior to settler contact. The Inuit lived semi-nomadically and relied on the natural cycles of wildlife and climate for food, clothing, and shelter. Colonialism resulted in a loss of tradition and culture for Indigenous People. The *Qallunaat* (people who are not Indigenous) introduced a foreign system of values based on capitalism and exploited Indigenous trades, including hunters and artists.

This system forced the Inuit into permanent settlements, forbidding them to hunt in traditional ways. As part of this system, the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development established co-operatives in the Arctic and printed guidebooks to encourage artistic production for economic advantages. Through these co-operatives, the government introduced soapstone carving and print-making as an 'ideal' representation of Canada and the Arctic region to circulate in the southern market.

Today, many Indigenous artists continue to create diverse and unique works of art, including Inuit artists who are reclaiming traditions lost through colonial settlement. TD aspires to amplify contemporary Indigenous voices and create meaningful community connections to build a Corporate Art Collection that reflects the diversity of Canada.

Kumakuluk Saggiak

Inuit, Born Salluit, Québec (1944-)

Owl and Owlet, 1972

Stone

46.9 x 35.5 x 25.4 cm

EC 82-596

Owl and Owlet

The way in which the newborn owlet clings to its mother conveys the idea of how animals and humans alike rely on their parents for survival.

Kumakuluk's sculpture shares many of the characteristics associated with the carvings done in Cape Dorset after 1960. Made from the signature green stone that the region is famous for, the piece is carved in a highly stylized manner that is designed to impress the viewer rather than offer an accurate portrayal of the subject.



Johnny Inukpuk

Inuit, Born Inoucdjouac, Québec (1911-1976)

Tattooed Woman, c. 1958

Stone, ivory and inlay

61 x 27.3 x 24 cm

EC 82-605

Tattooed Woman

The faint patterning on the woman's face indicates the presence of tattoos. It is a cherished tradition to tattoo girls once they reach puberty. The most common designs are on the chin, brow and cheeks. The tattooing is performed by a pricking method or by passing a sinew line coated with soot through the skin.



Kiawak Ashoona

Inuit, Born Baffin Island, Nunavut (1933-2014)

Woman with Ulu Knife, 1967

Stone and metal

54 x 54.6 x 35.2 cm

EC 72-12

Woman with Ulu Knife

A crescent-shaped knife called an *ulu* is an important tool used by women from across the Canadian Arctic for skinning animals, preparing skins, butchering, eating, sewing and other activities. To accommodate these purposes and integrate regional styles, there are many variations in the size, shape and material used for the *ulu*.



Aodua Pee

Inuit, Born Cape Dorset, Nunavut (1920-2002)

Sedna, 1965

Stone

17.7 x 34.2 x 101.1 cm

EC 82-610

Sedna

The Sea Spirit is among the most powerful of the controlling spirits in Inuit mythology. The Inuit believe that this creature, who assumes the form of half woman, half fish, determines the success or failure of fishing expeditions.

Among the many renditions of the Sea Spirit legend is the story of Sedna. A young woman, Sedna married a hunter who revealed himself to be a powerful shaman. When he carried her away to a distant land, Sedna's father pursued them and rescued her. As they were sailing home, the shaman followed their boat, creating a violent storm. Terrified, her father threw Sedna overboard and when she tried to climb back onto the boat, he cut off her fingers. These fingers became the seals, whales, walruses and fish that inhabit the sea.



Sanajaqsaq: Eskimo Handicrafts

James Houston is widely considered an influential and controversial figure in the early development of arts and crafts in the Arctic that were imposed by the Canadian government. His impact in the region, which is extensive, includes introducing modern printmaking and encouraging many artists to learn carving.

A young artist from Québec, Houston first travelled to Inukjuak in the fall of 1948. He arranged with the Canadian Handicrafts Guild to promote the production of crafts in Inuit communities. These activities were sanctioned by the Canadian government, which provided additional assistance in the form of grants.

Later, Houston wrote the illustrated guidebook *Sanajaqsaq: Eskimo Handicrafts*.¹ The publication – distributed across the North from 1951 to 1953 – contained illustrations of items that could be produced for sale. The goal of the publication was to guide makers and artists to know what would be sought after in the marketplace.

Isa Oomayualoo

Inuit, Born Inukjuak, Québec (1915-1976)

Raven Pot and Holder, c. 1950

Stone and inlay

14.6 x 15.8 x 7.6 cm

EC 82-630



¹ The title *Sanajaqsaq: Eskimo Handicrafts* originates from the term used to previously describe Inuit communities and has been kept in its original interpretation for historical accuracy.

Spirits and Legends

Many Inuit artists are inspired by a rich spiritual life and a belief in the supernatural, as their predecessors were. Common mythical imagery includes transformations of animals into humans and vice versa, as well as depictions of giants, monsters and dwarfs among other forms.

Central to the belief in the supernatural was the role of *angakkuq* (Shaman), a spiritual figure that was prominent in pre-colonial Inuit life. The Shaman could be either male or female and had the ability to assume the physical characteristics of both human and beast. A Shaman served as an intermediary between humans and the greater spirit forces. The Shaman was called upon by the community to perform many functions, including curing the sick, locating game, predicting and controlling weather, and finding lost people or objects.

Carvings of fantastic beings and transformation figures serve to document the numerous stories and legends that were important to the traditional Inuit belief system. With a culture that relies heavily on oral tradition, these carvings serve as a means of communicating the stories to future generations and audiences outside of the community. Davidialuk Alasua Amittu's depictions of imaginary figures such as *Kajjutaijuk*, a monster with an enormous head resting on two stumpy legs, brings the legend to life.

Davidialuk Alasua Amittu

Inuit, Born Nunagiirniraq, Québec (1910-1976)

Inuk Delousing Male Spirit, c. 1952

Stone

17.7 x 20.3 x 11.4 cm

EC 82-629



Preparing Sealskins

Wildlife provides the Inuit with raw materials required to make clothing, tools, and other devices for day to day living. Known for their water-resistant properties, sealskins were often fashioned into water-proof boots or ropes. The furs were washed and then dried before they were used.

The process of removing the water from the sealskin is illustrated by the carving entitled *Man Wringing Seal Line*. Sealskin ropes were made by hand and had many purposes, including dog whips, harness and tent lines, packing lines and ties for sleds, tools and weapons.

Johnny Inukpuk

Inuit, Born Inoucdjouac, Québec (1911-2007)

Man Wringing Seal Line, before 1965

Stone

43.8 x 30.5 x 30.4 cm

EC 72-7



Pauta Saila

Inuit, Born Kilaparutua camp, Kilapak (1916-2009)

Bear, 1964

Stone and ivory

43.1 x 41.2 x 41.9 cm

EC 82-604

Bear

Throughout his life, Pauta Saila has been fascinated with polar bears, likening them to humans in their actions and behaviours. In this massive carving, Pauta evokes the power and strength of the Arctic polar bear through simplified forms. In the Inuit culture, many believed that the Shaman or spiritual leader of the community could assume the spirit of the bear.

Growing up in his father's camp on the western Coast of the Foxe Peninsula, Pauta Saila had the opportunity to study the characteristics of the polar bears that were abundant in the region. Pauta's carvings of bears illustrate the artist's in-depth knowledge of an animal widely admired by the Arctic hunters.



Joe Talirunili

Inuit, Born Puvirnituaq, Québec (1893-1976)

The Migration, 1964

Stone and antler

16 x 44 x 13 cm

EC 72-99

Migration Boat

The Migration depicts an episode from Joe Talirunili's childhood. As a young boy, Joe and several other members of his community were returning home by dog sled when the sea ice they were traveling on broke apart from the mainland. Adrift in the sea on a floating piece of ice slowly dissolving, the travelers fashioned a makeshift *umiak* (boat) from their belongings.

The wood from their sleds and the racks used to dry the sealskins served as ribs for the *umiak* (boat). The sealskins that they had obtained during their hunt were used to cover the boat. Even though the boat was weighted down by the 40 passengers on board, the group eventually made it back to shore. The names of some of the individuals who survived this ordeal are inscribed in graphite on the paddles of this carving.



Abraham P.O.V. (attrib.)

Inuit, Born Inukjuak, Québec (1927-1994)

Mother and Child, c. 1953

Stone and inlay

27.9 x 16.5 x 30.4 cm

EC 82-613

Mother and Child

The close relationship between mother and child is a theme widely explored in Inuit artwork. The *amauti* (woman's parka) has unique features that are designed to allow women to carry Inuit children from infancy until the age of two or three. Central to its design is a back pouch where the baby is housed. The belt worn around the woman's body secures the placement of the child and controls the size of the pouch.

In the frigid Arctic temperatures, mothers can protect their children with the large hood that allows fresh air to filter down to the child. The broad shoulders of the garment allow a child to be transferred from back to front of the mother. The facial expression exhibited by the mother in Abraham P.O.V.'s *Mother and Child* represents a universal anguish.

