

PRESS RELEASE



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DREAM/IMAGE/REAL: SIX INUIT ARTISTS

April 9 – May 14, 2022



Vancouver, BC – Marion Scott Gallery is pleased to present *Dream/Image/Real: Six Inuit Artists*. Opening Saturday, April 9 and continuing until May 14, the spring exhibition brings together images by Kenojuak Ashevak, Shuvinai Ashoona, Myra Kukiiyaut, Qavavau Manumie, Jamasee Pitseolak and Kananginak Pootoogook. Featuring both works on paper and sculptures in stone, the presentation explores the relationship between what is real and what is imagined, a duality that takes on special significance in the often dream-like expressions of the six featured artists, all of whom are widely regarded as leading voices of their respective generations.

The exhibition includes two works by Kenojuak Ashevak, one of Inuit art's most celebrated visionaries. The first, an etching and aquatint from 2000, features the image of a northern owl (a classic theme in the artist's expression) whose bodily extensions transform into seals, bears and other birds. As with many of the artist's depictions from this era, the image appears on the page as if drawn directly out of a dream. Ashevak's other work in the exhibition is the monumental triptych from 2010 entitled *Angakuit Qaijut (Emerging Sprits)*. Part of a series of collaborative works that Ashevak produced with the Canadian painter Harold Klunder, this sprawling hand-coloured sugar-lift etching portrays a colourful frieze of transforming creatures silhouetted against the dark night.

Shuvinai Ashoona is represented in the exhibition by a pair of monumentally-scaled drawings along with some smaller works on paper. In one of the large untitled drawings, Ashoona portrays an underwater scene dominated by a colourful octopus-like being with yellow-tipped floating tentacles and a giant head containing a string of shifting blue eyeballs. A second large drawing features a trio of fantastical half-human and half-animal beings gathered together for a conference of some sort, their playful forms illuminated by the radiating rays of the sun.

Two drawings by Myra Kukiiyaut, the lone artist from the inland community of Qamanittuaq, reflect the artist's interest in Inuit shamanistic traditions and otherworldly realms. *Untitled (composition of birds)*, a coloured pencil drawing from 1979, belongs to the artist's distinctive series of images featuring silhouetted abstract forms of birds dancing like shadows cast against the white paper. In *untitled (composition with seal and sea life)*, also from 1979, the form of a seal-like creature with large multi-coloured eyes, gazes out at the viewer, its ghostly white face enlivened by fronds of aquatic plant life.

The exhibition features a series of delicately rendered drawings by Qavavau Manumie, whose distinctive expressions typically combine formal abstraction with an interest in exploring realities beyond the visible. In these imaginative dream-like works, Manumie presents mostly circular compositions consisting of various shapes and objects, human stick figures, other kinds of people and birds, all arranged in patterns or constellations around a central form. Many of Manumie's images contain pictures within pictures, transforming these works into meditations on the nature of perception and the mind's ability to see into different worlds simultaneously.

Jamasee Pitseolak's stone sculptures juxtapose and explore different worlds in a different way. Known for his depictions of contemporary objects in stone, Pitseolak combines an interest in history with a powerful commitment to craftsmanship. The exhibition includes *Not So Victorian*, a nearly life-size recreation of a Victorian-era table collaged together from different shades of carved green serpentinite. The singular work exemplifies the artist's love of surprising contrasts and is informed by his ongoing project of reflecting on the past and the cultural collisions that have shaped the Inuit perception of reality in the colonial era.

The final image in the exhibition is a work by Kananginak Pootoogook, an artist best known for his realistic renderings of northern birdlife and for drawings documenting the modern history of the Baffin Island Inuit. In this unusual work, the artist has deconstructed his own imagery of ducks, arranging the creatures' different elements into an abstract-decorative circular composition that closely resembles Manumie's approach.

PRESS INQUIRIES: Please contact Robert Kardosh at robert@marionscottgallery.com or by phone at 604-685-1934. High-resolution images are available upon request.

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