

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 20, 2022

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MSG'S BOOTH AT ART TORONTO 2022 WILL FEATURE SHUVINAI ASHOONA'S CONSTELLATION OF FLOATING SCULPTURES

October 27-30

Metro Toronto Convention Centre

Booth A25



Vancouver, BC — Marion Scott Gallery is excited to announce a special exhibition of Shuvina Ashoona's work as part of the gallery's presentation at the 2022 edition of Art Toronto. Entitled *Help Us*, the installation will feature a constellation of the Kinngait-based artist's sculptural drawings against a backdrop of a suite of recent and monumentally scaled works on paper. The sculptures, which range from tiny to massive, take the form of specific geometric shapes—including cubes, pyramids, polyhedrons, and decahedrons—that Ashoona has covered with her fantastical imagery. Visitors to the booth will find themselves immersed in Ashoona's universe, within a dynamic installation that allows them to make a range of discoveries and connections across this extraordinary body of work.

"Shuvina Ashoona is one of Canada's leading contemporary artists," said Robert Kardosh, MSG's owner and director. "We are thrilled to be presenting this installation to the public at Art Toronto. Ashoona's imagery, at the boundary of the joyful and apocalyptic, has never seemed more important than at this critical moment in human history."

Produced in collaboration with Vancouver's New Leaf Editions, *Help Us* is a multi-faceted work that speaks to the urgent social issues that have arisen in light of the precariousness of multiple systems (and even of their imminent failure). Taking as a central theme the concepts of time and date, Ashoona's playful imagery is a distinctive mix of the real and the imagined, in which the intensely local is juxtaposed with the global and even inter-planetary. In her highly personal and at times dream-like vision, there is an urgent sense that humanity is running out of time, as we have become victims of our own inattention to the world (or worlds) around us.

The first full-scale installation of its kind by an Inuk artist, Ashoona's immersive work pushes beyond the boundaries that have historically determined what Inuit drawing can be. The majority of the sculptures are suspended in mid-air at varying heights, endowing Ashoona's already multi-dimensional graphic vision with a new element of volume and spatialized dimensionality. The resulting work is a gently moving constellation of shapes and forms in which the densely drawn angled surfaces restlessly twist and turn in the ambient air, giving viewers the opportunity to experience Ashoona's powerful vision in a completely new way.

Ashoona's intensely imaginative designs convey wild exuberance combined with a sense of foreboding. Her imagery is filled with bodies—human and other—transforming into other bodies or sprouting multiple limbs. A super connector whose work expresses a rapturous vision of joined creatures and multiple, inter-linked worlds, Ashoona's images are also about the land as a living entity and the Inuit relation to it. Many of the works incorporate text in both English and Inuktitut, their at-times rap-like alliterations giving an additional verbal dimension to her explorations. The works on the wall that serve as a backdrop to the sculptures reinforce the installation's central themes. One large drawing features a massive calendar surmounted by a crowd of people in winter garments holding up placards bearing

messages in Inuktitut syllabics. A work about the future (the calendar is dated 2023), it expresses in metaphorical terms a collective warning about and for our world.

Shuvina Ashoona (b. 1961, Kinngait, Nunavut) is one of Canada's foremost contemporary artists. Based in the remote northern community of Kinngait on southern Baffin Island, the third-generation Inuk artist has been gaining ever more attention, nationally and internationally, for her drawings and prints, in which she fuses fantastical and everyday imagery. Ashoona is the winner of the 2018 Gershon Iskowitz Prize, one of Canada's top art prizes, and her work is currently featured in *The Milk of Dreams*, the central exhibition of the 59th Venice Biennale, where she received a Special Mention. She has had solo exhibitions at the Art Gallery of Ontario, The Power Plant, The Vancouver Art Gallery, and ICI Miami. Her work is in numerous private and public collections including the National Gallery of Canada, the Smithsonian, the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Ontario, ICI Miami, Winnipeg Art Gallery and the Remail Modern.

Marion Scott Gallery is a leading showcase for contemporary Inuit art from the modern era. Founded in 1975 by Marion Scott, the gallery's mission from the outset has been to present fine Inuit art within a contemporary context, often showing it alongside other Indigenous and non-Indigenous forms. In 1989, the directorship passed to Judy Kardosh, Marion's daughter, under whose leadership the gallery began mounting regular group and solo exhibitions, many of which broke new ground by bringing focus and attention to some of Inuit art's most dynamic voices. Now under the directorship of Robert Kardosh, a third-generation family member, the gallery continues to champion the work of artists of Inuit and Indigenous heritage, organizing several exhibitions throughout the year. Active in both the primary and secondary markets, the gallery's programme seeks to celebrate the ongoing evolution of Inuit expression in all media, from its beginnings in the late 1940s and 1950s as a form centred mainly on sculptures and prints, to more recent manifestations encompassing photography, video, performance, sound, painting and large-scale drawings.

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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Shuinai Ashoona
untitled (double-sided polyhedron), 2022
pencil crayon, ink & glitter on paper
63 x 24 x 24 in. / 160 x 61 x 61 cm.



Shuvina Ashoona
untitled (dodecagon), 2022
pencil crayon & ink on paper
9.25 x 9.25 x 9.25 in. / 23.5 x 23.5 x 23.5 cm.



Shuvinai Ashoona
untitled (star-shaped polyhedron), 2022
pencil crayon & ink on paper
41.5 x 41.5 x 35 in. / 105.5 x 105.5 x 89 cm.