
ᓵᓵ ᓵᓵ *Siku Sila*

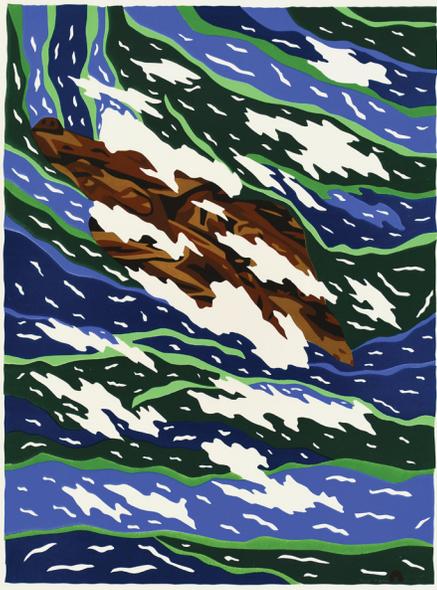
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 9 – August 8, 2021

» Part 1: July 9 – 25

» Part 2: July 28 – August 8

Opening Reception: Nunavut Day, July 9, from 4:00–8:00 p.m.



Ooloosie Saila, *Above the Storm* (2020), lithograph. Courtesy of Dorset Fine Arts.

New York, NY – July 9, 2021: Ki Smith Gallery, located in Manhattan’s East Village, with Kingait Studios, a subdivision of West Baffin Eskimo Co-Operative and Dorset Fine Arts, announce the opening of ᓵᓵ ᓵᓵ *Siku Sila* an exhibition of stone sculptures and paper works created by artists from Kingait (formerly Cape Dorset), Nunavut. The show, brought to New York City by Inuk Activist and Curatorial Advisor Oo Aqpiq and Ki Smith Gallery Director and Partner Claire Foussard, is on view at Ki Smith Gallery’s flagship location from July 9 through August 8.

Siku Sila examines the evolving ways visual art has been used to maintain tradition and share Inuit cultural knowledge with the world since the 1980’s. The exhibition is a two-part installation, named after a traditional Inuit ‘elimination game’ that also pays homage to the Kingait region known as Sikusiila that existed before Inuit settled into communities. In the game, a line is drawn on the ground, designating one side as ‘Siku’, which translates to ‘ice,’ and the other side as ‘Sila’, meaning ‘outside air’ or ‘weather.’ The collection features scenes from the arctic landscape, as well as the still lifes and vignettes of intimate moments from inside the artists’ homes.

Inuk Activist and Curatorial Advisor Oo Aqpiq says: “There’s a direct correlation between *Siku Sila* the game, and what the whole world has endured after spending the past year inside. Now, more than ever, we are feeling the distinction between interior and exterior life. This exhibition, and the talented artists featured, mirror this division with deeply personal depictions of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ life. Unlike the English language which has a binary use of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, Inuktitut words carry descriptive information for safe passages. In exploring this collection, viewers will reconsider their relationship to the environment.”

The first part of the exhibition is a selection of recent works by contemporary Inuit artists including **Ooloosie Saila, Nicotye Samayualie, Padloo Samayualie, Ningeosiaq Ashoona, Pitseolak Qimirpik, Palaya Qiatsuq, and Shuvinai Ashoona.** The second installment features a selection of prints and drawings dating back to the 1980’s by celebrated artists including **Pudlo Pudlat, Napachie Pootoogook, Oshutsiak (Oshoochiak) Pudlat, Itee Pootoogook, and Jutai Toonoo,** as well as the works of master carvers **Pootoogook Jaw and Jamasie Pitseolak.**

The founding of West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative has transformed artistic production for the Kingait community of about 1,400 people. For *Siku Sila*, Aqpiq and Foussard curated the works of artists who currently live and create in Kingait today or have throughout their lifetime, in context of their own community and tradition. Highlights include paper drawings with colored pencil, graphite and ink from Ooloosie Saila, art industry rising star and master of her discipline, an array of prints by Shuvinai Ashoona, featuring characteristic lithographic and etchings inspired by her graphic drawings, paper works by Napachie Pootoogook depicting personal, interior moments from her life lived in a legacy art family, and the pensive and humorous drawings of Jutai Toonoo, which were catalytic for Kingait’s artistic community.

(cont.)



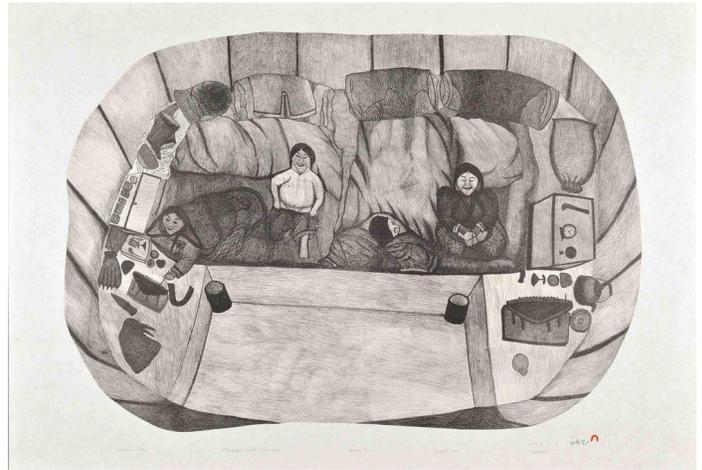
197 East 4th Street
New York, NY 10009
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Gallery Hours:
Wednesday – Sunday
12:30 – 6:30 p.m.

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Ki Smith Gallery Director and Partner Claire Foussard adds,

“The name *Siku Sila* is also a repudiation of the art world’s use of the label ‘outsider art’ which places Western perspectives and aesthetics at the center, and anything that deviates at the periphery. After working directly with artists as a research resident with the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative in 2017, I saw how past exhibitions of Inuit arts relied on constructed narratives of cultural uniformity and tokenism. In response, this collection celebrates the artists’ diverse styles and individual expressions of their indigeneity. As the only gallery in New York currently representing contemporary Inuit artists, we take this responsibility very seriously and are taking the necessary steps to share their artworks in a way that illuminates this intersectionality, amplifies indigenous voices, and brings Kinngait’s artistic community to the forefront of the public consciousness.”

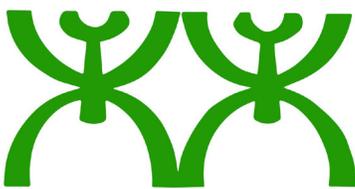


Napachie Pootoogook, *Interior View* (2000), lithograph and chine colle. Courtesy of Dorset Fine Arts.

Please join Kinngait Studios and Ki Smith Gallery on Friday, July 9th from 4:00-8:00 p.m. for the opening reception of *Siku Sila*, featuring a conversation with Oo Aqpiq, and celebration of Nunavut Day — a territory holiday commemorating the passage of the Nunavut Lands Claims Agreement Act and the Nunavut Act in 1993, and the official division of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, meaning “Our Land,” in 1999. No appointments necessary. For more information on Kinngait Studios, please visit <https://www.westbaffin.com/kinngait-studios> and for more information on Ki Smith Gallery, or to schedule a private viewing of the exhibition, please visit: <https://www.kismithgallery.com/>

Contact:

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About West Baffin Eskimo Co-Operative and Kinngait Studios: The West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative in Cape Dorset has earned a worldwide reputation for the quality and originality of limited edition prints made by its member artists. Every year since 1959 the printmaking studios (now known as Kinngait Studios) have released an annual catalogued collection of between 30 and 60 images as well as numerous commissions and special releases. Kinngait Studios is the longest continuous running print studio in Canada.

About Dorset Fine Arts: Dorset Fine Arts was established in Toronto in 1978 as the wholesale marketing division of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative. The Co-operative is in Cape Dorset, Nunavut and is unique among the Arctic Co-operatives for its focus on the arts and artists of the community. The Annual Graphics Collection from Cape Dorset has been released since 1959 and the Co-operative also represents many acclaimed sculptors and drawing artists. Dorset Fine Arts was established to develop and serve the market for Inuit fine art produced by the artist members of the Co-operative. Sales and exhibitions of prints, drawings and sculptures are made through the Dorset Fine Arts showroom in Toronto to galleries around the world.



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