How the Arctic Became White:
Qallunaat Explorers' Misrepresentations of the Botanic Landscape

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A Thesis in The Department of Art History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts (Art History) at

Concordia University

Montréal, Quebec, Canada

April 2019

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

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and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts (Art History)

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ABSTRACT

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On account of its geographic remoteness from southern Canada and Europe, the Arctic region has long been consumed and mediated by images and media, yet until now, little scholarly attention has been given to explorers' sketches, prints, and other disseminated visual culture. This thesis investigates the historic roots of the perception that the Arctic landscape is a "flat, white nothingness." I ask how and why explorers throughout the nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries represented the Canadian-Alaskan Arctic as devoid of flora, as they often visited in the summer months when the land is covered in mosses, lichens, flowers, and other colourful plant life, and actively gathered botanical samples on these same expeditions. In this thesis I argue that Qallunaat explorers deliberately misrepresented the Arctic environment to bolster their own accomplishments and supposed technological superiority, despite having to continuously rely on Indigenous technologies and knowledge of the land for survival. Colonial explorers' images are generally variations on the theme of ice and snow, oversimplifying a complex natural order. These landscape representations replace a focus on the natural environment with a focus on the explorer "exploring". In this thesis, I demonstrate how Inuit artists challenge these outsider narratives by foregrounding their botanical knowledge and reasserting their own representations of their home land, Inuit Nunangat, through contemporary art practices. I read the land's agency, Inuit knowledge, and environmental art history back into this dominant discourse of frozen imagery. This thesis addresses how we construct and consume images of the natural world, which landscapes we deem important or aesthetically pleasing to conserve, and what others we designate to be sacrificed for industry. This is crucial to the polar region, a place that climate change is rendering increasingly important in global politics and economics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

☆ Firstly, my deepest gratitude to the lands, waters, air, plants, and creatures that sustain life. I will always love and fight for you. <3

I extend thanks to my supervisor Dr. Heather Igloliorte for sharing her knowledge with me and for providing opportunities with the Indigenous Art Research Group. It has been a special and formative opportunity to learn from you, Nakummek. Thank you Dr. Kristina Huneault for your generous and considerate feedback, guidance, and support editing. I also wish to thank Dr. Charmaine Nelson and Dr. Allan Downey for mentoring me on this longer journey of thinking and growth. All of you have helped shape my mind and for that I am forever grateful.

I could not have done this without the help, support, and unconditional love of my family. I would not be the person I am today without all of you and Alex in my heart. Mum and Dad I owe you so much. Dr. Melissa Gismondi thank you for being the best copy editor, role-model, and sister a brother could ask for. Maggie and Dawn your phone calls and added hands moving are always much appreciated. Aunt Trish, Veronica, and Toria thank you for your light and laughter.

To all of my friends for bringing me joy and laughter, I could not get by without you. To my Thesis Accountability Group-team Brenna, Kristina, Polina, Gabrielle, and Jeanne it has been a pleasure growing with all of you. :D

Thank you to the Social Sciences Humanities Research Council for their support. Thank you to the archivists and librarians for helping this research come together, thank you Saffron and Naomi. Lastly, many thanks to the Faculty of Fine Arts and the Art History Department at Concordia University for this program, your guidance, training, funding, and opportunity. ☆

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Introduction

On August 7th, 1857 while collecting wildflower specimens with his crew around a lake in Cumberland Sound, whaling Captain William Penny recorded that "the men's spirits were lifted."[1] Two years prior on May 5th 1855 on the Back River, Hudson's Bay Company fur-trader James Green Stewart wrote in his diary while searching for John Franklin in the Northwest Passage: "the scenery here is a little diversified by the round hills and green colour of the moss at a distance one would fancy it was grass. The dwarf birch too adds a little to the deception."[2] While the tundra vegetation was playing tricks on Stewart, the larger deception was how explorers, publishers, and newspapers represented the Arctic to the reading public. Archival examples like these demonstrate that Qallunaat[3] traversing the Arctic region and Inuit Nunangat have long been interested in and observed the environment's tundra and flowers.[4] Despite this, explorers, publishers, and newspapers represented the Arctic to the reading public almost exclusively through the more typical imagery of icebergs and snow. Central to this thesis are concerns about differing ideas of land in Arctic history. Yet this collision between viewpoints and worldviews remains persistent today through the perception, use, myth, title, exploitation, and the capacity to form relationships with the various lands that make up the territory now known as

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[1] British Whaling and Missionary Expedition 1857-1858, MS 1424;D, Penny, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

[2] James Green Stewart Diary, Addenda M3, E.272/1 microfilm, Manitoba Archives-Hudson Bay Company Archives, Manitoba, Winnipeg.

[3] Qallunaat is an Inuktitut term that has come to mean "southerner" (plural).

[4] Inuit Nunangat is an Inuktitut term which translates to "Inuit homeland" or "the places that Inuit live" since time immemorial. The concept includes the lands, waters, and sea ice of Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut, Inuvialuit, and other international Inuit territories like Greenland and Alaska. Throughout this thesis, Inuktitut or Inuttut terms used will be consistent with their source material and their original dialect. "Map of Inuit Nunangat (Inuit Regions of Canada)" *Inuit Tapirit Kanatami*, last accessed February, 19, 2019, https://www.itk.ca/maps-of-inuit-nunangat/.

Canada. For many Qallunaat like myself, [5] we may imagine the Arctic landscape as a "flat, white nothingness."[6] At the historic roots of this perception is the visual culture of Arctic exploration which deliberately represented the Canadian Arctic as devoid of its diverse flora.

The romantic Victorian fixation with the Arctic had many motivating factors and stakeholders: whalers such as the Aberdeen Arctic Company; fur traders like the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC); naturalist-explorers motivated by discovering "new" flora and fauna such as George Back or John Richardson; and those surveying or searching for the Northwest Passage and its glory like John Franklin. The bulk of Arctic exploration and the most popular iterations occurred in the mid 1800s. This thesis therefore spans a 'long nineteenth century,' beginning with Sir Alexander Makenzie in 1770 and ending before the 1913 Canadian Arctic Expedition. It draws on an assortment of images typical of the genre and sourced from collections, printed texts, and a number of archival fonds I visited and/or studied during my research, but this endeavour was not exhaustive; I therefore encourage future researchers to challenge and continue this work.[7] I cannot comment on the entire history of Western representations of the Arctic but rather attempt a framework of categorizing these dominant representations into two overlapping iconographies based on their thematic priorities, *terrain* and *presence.* This thesis draws on

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[5] I am a queer, white, Qallunaak-*zhaganash*-Settler, first generation "Canadian" of Scottish and Italian descent, born and raised on *Nanzuhzaugewazog*, Dish with One Spoon, Head of the Lake Treaty no. 14 (1806), Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg territory. Doug Williams, *Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg: This is our Territory* (Winnipeg: ARP Books, 2018); Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); "Treaty Text: Upper Canada Land Surrenders" Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1370372152585/1370372222012#ucls14.

[6] TJ Demos, *Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology* (New York: Sternberg Press, 2016), 93.

[7] It is important to acknowledge that the archival collections that fueled this project were amassed and curated while subject to the same myths this thesis addresses; therefore, there is no way of knowing if and what information has been lost to previous generations of archival collecting and curating that demonstrated the abundant vegetation of the tundra.

selected images, works, and archives to challenge the ideological underpinnings of these depictions of the Arctic as 'barren' or vacant, rereading them against Indigenous knowledges and Inuit technologies.

The hegemonic body of scholarship on Arctic exploration is largely uninterested in the specifics of the polar environment. Contemporary attention to the polar environment exposes both the grim impacts of the anthropogenic climate crisis and the scramble for the new resources exposed by thaw and melt.[8] Academics engaged with the visual culture of the Arctic have thus far largely failed to address the blinding homogeneity of ice and snow. However, explorers' fixations with exotic spectacles like the Aurora Borealis and towering icebergs are consistent. The dominant discourse on Arctic history fixated on the scientific and geographic achievements of a small canon of white-masculine figures. Writer Ken McGoogan interjects another understanding into this narrative, reminding Arctic enthusiasts that behind every successful white man was an Inuk interpreter (Ouligbuk or Tattannoeuck), Dene hunter (Keskarrah and Matonabbee), or Métis voyageur (Peter Waren Dease).[9] Until recently the Arctic's Indigenous inhabitants did not have institutional platforms to be heard, or were suspiciously absent and de-emphasized in this history.[10] Historians have thoroughly interrogated Arctic exploration, yet scholars have paid little critical attention to explorers' sketches, prints, and other disseminated material beyond the genre's established canon. I posit that "New Art History" and the entrance of Indigenous knowledges into Western academic institutions are needed for a richer understanding

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[8] Klaus Dodds and Mark Nuttall, *The Scramble for the Poles: The Geopolitcs of the Arctic and the Antarctic* (Hoboken: Wiley Publishing, 2016).
[9] Ken McGoogan, *Dead Reckoning: The Untold Story of the Northwest Passage* (New York: Harper Collins, 2017), 147, 94, 141.
[10] McGoogan, *Dead Reckoning*.

of images, visual, and material culture related to the Arctic's colonial encounters and resource extraction.[11] Thus, from this absence of knowledge we do not know why explorers and other Arctic visitors often traveling in the summer months, misrepresented the Arctic as desolate and white, when iconic and vibrantly coloured tundra plants like mamaittuqutik[12] (Labrador tea), suputaujalik[13] (cottongrass) or paunnak[14] (river beauty flower) are in full bloom. I argue that these tropes are a misrepresentation of a complex seasonal ecosystem, particularly because of the important ideological work they perform in communicating both an economically motivated environmental inaccuracy in addition to creating and perpetuating socio-cultural myths around accomplishment and superiority.[15]

Throughout this thesis I argue that this misrepresentation was done at the expense of environmental accuracy or complexity in favour of a narrative of Western-Qallunaat technological superiority and to exaggerate white-masculinity's accomplishments. This construction of barren-ness bolsters explorers' narratives of survival in the Inuit homeland, while the perception of vastness simultaneously excuses Qallunaat extractive industries of fur trapping, whaling and fishing or the furtherance of colonial-Imperial interests like territorial sovereignty.

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[11] Phillip J. Hatfield, *Lines in the Ice: Exploring the Roof of the World* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016); Edward J. Larson, *An Empire of Ice: Scott, Shackelton, and the Heroic Age of Antarctic Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

[12] Marcel Blondeau, Claude Roy, Alain Cuerrier, *Plants of the Villages and Parks of Nunavut* (Montreal: Avataq Cultural Institute, 2010), 549.

[13] *The Botanical Knowledge of the Inuit of Kangiqsualujjuaq, Nunavik* (Montreal: Avataq Cultural Institute 2011), 55.

[14] Ashleigh Downing, Alain Cuerrier, Luise Hermanutz, Courtney Clark, Anita Fells and Laura Siegwart Collier, *Community of Nain Labrador: Plant Uses Booklet* (Department of Biology, Memorial Univeristy, St. Jonhs, 2013) 96.

[15] Russel A. Potter, *Arctic Spectacles: The Frozen North in Visual Culture, 1818-1875* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007); *Arctic Artist: The Journal and Paintings of George Back, Midshipman with Franklin*, 1819-1822, ed C Stuart Houston (Montreal: McGill-Queens Press, 1994); *To the Arctic by Canoe 1819-1821: The journal and Paintings of Robert Hood, Midshipman with Franklin*, ed C. Stuart Houston (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974).

The presence of these industries extracting natural resources demonstrates the fallacy of the "barren" Arctic narrative. Understanding the effect that the "lifeless Arctic" depiction had on the public imaginary in the past, helps us comprehend perceptions of it today, which is crucial since climate change renders the polar region increasingly important in Qallunaat-Settler geopolitics and extractivism. Another rationale could be that the Northwest Passage was never conceived of as a destination, but rather a gateway, a transitory obstacle to somewhere more valuable. Yet at the same time, the Arctic was crucial to British imperial claims and scientific advances like cartography and polar geomagnetism.[16] The polar region in the imaginary of the international Qallunaat public was deliberately exoticized and made alien to bolster public perception of explorer's basic survival and occupancy.

In this thesis research I have endeavoured to both uncover unpublished images from the archives of these Qallunaat men, as well as analyze a few samples of the hegemonic print and high art representations to conceptualize a framework of thematic priority with which to reread the popular dominant imagery. Both types of art are crucial since sketchbooks and diaries reveal intimate thoughts captured for personal reflection, while disseminated images communicate outward ambition, grandiosity, and play to consumers' expectations. The body of images associated with this hegemonic narrative includes personal sketches, print culture, published narratives after returning to port, and fine art paintings, all resulting in reductive variations on the theme of snow and ice. The myth of an eternal Arctic snowscape, as represented in the works of such artists as George Back, Robert McCormick, and W.T. Mumford that this thesis will explore, stems from the dissemination of these reductive images made by explorers from 1818 to 1876.

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[16] Trevor H. Levere, *Science and the Canadian Arctic: A Century of Exploration 1818-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 198, 278.

This thesis is also a practice in the periphery talking back to the metropole,[17] and problematizing that hierarchal relationship through Indigenous knowledge production. I purposely take a trans-national and inter-disciplinary approach to this art history, since the history of Arctic colonialism has not been restricted by national borders or academic boundaries. I blend a wide set of tools such as "settler-colonial art history," whiteness, masculinity, and Indigenous studies with environmental history and writings on Indigenous knowledge like Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit to understand past perceptions of the landscape. Europe first dominated writing the narrative of this region, and Canada has since continued. I instead want to foreground Indigenous peoples, their knowledge, and their relationships with this land as a driving force to challenge misrepresentation.

Discourse on the Arctic region is plagued by a long historical narrative about who is allowed in 'the North.'[18] When enslaved Africans were imported for labour in Canadian history, the governors of New France condescendingly pondered if they could survive the northern woodland climate.[19] These racial ideologies on climate and belonging would influence racist immigration policy after the colonies formed a confederation in 1867.[20] Legislation like the

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[17] Coll Peter Thrush, *Indigenous London: Native Travellers at the Heart of Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

[18] Sherrill E. Grace, *Canada and the Idea of the North* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), XVI.

[19] Indigenous and African slavery was practiced in Canada in New France, the Maratimes, Upper, and Lower Canada from 1689-1833; Marcel Trudel, *Dictionnaire des esclaves et de leurs propriétaires au Canada français* (LaSalle: Hurtubise HMH, 1990); Marcel Trudel, and George Tombs, *Canada's Forgotten Slaves: Two Centuries of Bondage* (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 2013).

[20] Eva Mackey, "Settling Differences: Managing and Representing People and Land in the Canadian National Project," in *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 30-31.

Chinese Head Tax of 1885 positioned northern European peoples advantageously, enabling primarily Qallunaat, the most desirable immigrants, to continue settler-colonialism.[21]

Apart from colonial processes, Qallunaat conceptions of a monolithic 'North' have had disastrous impacts for the region's Indigenous inhabitants. Government relocations of Inuit between 1934 to 1953 were carried out under the paternalistic guise of 'saving' Inuit from the corrupting/colonizing influence of western culture, to solve perceived issues such as conservation policy for animals thought to be over hunted, to open up land for resource extraction, or to bolster Canadian settler-sovereignty in the high north as "human flagpoles."[22] These forced relocations to different ecosystems across the Arctic were disastrous, traumatic, and rooted in a false logic of sameness. Despite the colonizing and assimilative influences of the government imposing sedentary life and the severed connection to broad territories, Inuit today are actively reclaiming, asserting and foregrounding their Indigenous knowledge or Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (also known as "IQ.") For some, IQ is undefinable as it permeates every aspect of living, it "encompasses all knowledge and many things in Inuit culture."[23] Heather Igloliorte, building on the work of Inuit elders, scholars and political figures, defines Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit as "a living technology […] knowledge embedded in practice" that has been

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[21] Mackey, "Settling Differences," 32-33.

[22] Chelsea Vowel, "Human Flagpoles: Inuit Relocation," in *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues in Canada* (Winnipeg: Highwater Press, 2016), 191-193; John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residental School System, 1879-1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999); Carol Brice-Bennet, *Dispossessed: the Eviction of Inuit from Hebron, Labrador* (St. John's: Labrador Institute of Northern Studies, 1994).

[23] Arnak, J. "What is Inuit Qaujimjatunqangit? Using Inuit family and kinship relationships to apply Inuit Qaujimjatunqangit." *Nunatsiak News*, August, 2000.

maintained and preserved.[24] This knowledge, and the Inuit technologies predicated on IQ, were sought after and crucial for expedition success.

Much of Arctic historiography portrays camaraderie and cooperation between Inuit and Qallunaat explorers, yet I must foreground that this was not always the case in colonial encounters, which cannot occur without physical, biological, or psychological violence. Alootook Ipellie demonstrates that Inuit Nunangat has experienced waves of hostile influence from outsiders like traders, whalers, missionaries, government agents, Cold War military, and explorers.[25] Arctic exploration was not a military pursuit, but it was commended for military reasons since it maintained the Royal Navy's form during peacetime.[26] While not being militaristic in the traditionally wartime sense, colonial expeditions in what is now Canada were not strangers to violence. For example, in 1766 while surveying Newfoundland and Labrador, Joseph Banks recorded killing and scalping local Beothuk over fishing disputes.[27] George Back recounted the killing of three Inuit men during the Arctic Land Expedition of 1833-1835.[28] This extra-judicial violence far away from 'civilized society' draws attention to the colonial-masculine behaviours, intentions or means by which exploration was carried out.

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[24] Shirley Tagalik, "Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: The Role of Indigenous Knowledge in Supporting Wellness in Inuit Communities in Nunavut," in *Child and Youth Health* (Ottawa: National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2009–10), 1–2; Heather Igloliorte, "Arctic Culture / Global Indigeneity," in *Negotiations in a Vacant Lot: Studying the Visual in Canada,* eds. Lynda Jessup, Erin Morton and Kirsty Robertson (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 151.

[25] Alootook Ipellie, "The Colonization of the Arctic," in *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives*. ed Gerald McMaster and Lee-Ann Martin (Madeira Park: Douglas and McIntyre, 1992).

[26] Janice Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative : Arctic Exploration in British Print Culture, 1818-1860* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 130.

[27] For more Beothuk-Settler relations in art history see Kristina Huneault, "Absence: Henrietta Hamilton, Demasduit, and the Settler-Colonial Encounter," in *I'm Not Myself at All: Women, Art, and Subjectivity in Canada* (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2018), 25-64; JBK/2/7, "Joseph Banks Journal of a voyage to Newfoundland and Labrador, April 7th -November 17th 1766", Royal Botanical Society Library and Archives, Royal Botanical Society, Kew, England.

[28] Back, Natural History Notes, MS 395/77;BL, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

Prioritizing and re-centering Indigenous peoples and their generations of knowledge about the land that Qallunaat visited, exploited, and continue to occupy is paramount for me in this thesis. In tandem with this is Damian Skinner's call for a "settler-colonial art history" which exposes and disrupts colonialism that continues unbated, and foregrounds how the shared histories of these lands inform both Indigenous and Settler cultural production.[29] "Settler-colonial art history" calls on us to hinder the psychic mechanisms that are foundational to sustaining violence and scrutinize all aspects of Settler subjectivity.[30] This call to action is useful in countering fabricated understandings of our history as well as the environments and landscapes we continue to occupy. While this narrative involves critique, I do not seek to write another whitewashed narrative of the Arctic, but instead aim to foreground Indigenous peoples and their relationships with the land. Specifically, I examine Indigenous peoples' use of plants as a method to understand and challenge dominant understandings of the north as 'barren' terrain.

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[29] Damian Skinner. "Settler-colonial Art History: A Proposition in Two Parts," *Journal of Canadian Art History* Vol. 35 Issue 1, ed. Martha Langford (2014).

[30] Skinner calls for the use of psychoanalysis to unearth and disrupt psychic mechanisms that sustain and are foundational to Settler violence, "Settler-colonial Art History," 165; Scott L. Morgensen, "Cutting to the Roots of Colonial Masculinity," in *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration,* eds. Kim Anderson, Robert Alexander Innes (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015); Although I was wary to bring sexuality into the fold, masculinity's embodied nature as argued by Steve Garlick may require an understanding of what was proper behaviour for the Qallunaat masculine body. Archival evidence points to this as well in that Dr. Thomas Colan, documented three cases of syphilis on board the H.M.S. Alert. Whether these were acquired before, during, or after expedition, the sexual scrutiny of the white-man's body already exists in military and Arctic discourse. John Rae while searching for Franklin received second hand accounts that the expedition succumbed to cannibalism from a group of local Inuit. Upon reading this in published press, the British public lashed back with racist comments. In response to defend his own credibility Rae attempted to prove that he had no interest in protecting the Inuit commentators citing *publicly* that unlike expeditions before him no men of his were known to have had intimate relations with Inuit or Indigenous women. During Franklin's first expedition, Irish artist and navy man Robert Hood was killed by Mohawk voyageur Michael allegedly over an argument about a Native woman. Perhaps sexuality needs to enter the discussion at some point as it already seems present just below the surface in the Arctic discourse; Steve Garlick, *The Nature of Masculinity: Critical Theory, New Materialism and Technologies of Embodiment* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2016); Medical and Surgical Journal of H.M.S. ALERT, Thomas Colan, M.D., Fleet Surgeon, MG12-ADM101 microfilm B-5378, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario; Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative,* 218-219; Ken McGoogan. *Dead Reckoning*, 104.

Thus, this thesis traces historical Qallunaat perspectives, before concluding with contemporary Inuit understandings of the natural world.

Colonial travel texts and explorers' accounts were commonplace and were formatted to form a composition or specific perception in the reading public. The genre arose after the Napoleonic wars concluded and the reading public needed new national heroes like Officer Horatio Nelson.[31] The arduous Arctic expedition was a romantic, noble, and scientific pursuit linked to classist morality. The proletariat men of the navy became dignified through Arctic exploration, "in the midst of hardship far beyond that ordinarily endured by men of their class."[32] Masculinity throughout industrialization became increasingly connected to paid work and the performance of gender needed both validation and recognition. As Martin Danhay noted of Victorian men, "to not work was to leave the category of man."[33] Aristocratic men had their gender securely bestowed upon them whereas for others "manhood" in the European imaginary was a perishable trophy of achievement, meaning one could be "unmanned."[34] These questions around labour and class differentiate the Orkney-Scot lad from the London men of the HBC Board of Governors.[35] However, aristocratic men could still gain glory by filling in the blanks on the map of the North Pole and Northwest Passage. For the eager commonwealth readership, these brave tales of a diverse crew of men spoke beyond class lines to the national psyche.

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[31] Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative,* 118-119.

[32] Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative,* 127-129.

[33] Martin A. Danahay, *Gender at Work in Victorian Culture: Literature, Art and Masculinity* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 27.

[34] Morgensen, "Cutting to the Roots of Colonial Masculinity", 41.

[35] McGoogan identified a fixation with "hearty" Orkney islanders during Arctic Expedition recruitment like Franklin's. These expedition crews were far from homogenous, and more than the sum of their parts with men coming from diverse regions in the British Isles, different levels of socio-economic stature, and Indigenous nations. While I regret that I cannot fully tease out these complicated parts, the heroic lineage and the myth making of certain figures is still a fitting point of analysis to counter hegemonic representations and understandings. McGoogan, *Dead Reckoning,* 92-94.

Readers of explorers' narratives and international expedition news formed expectations through the consumption, while the traveler himself had his pre-existing ideas met or challenged.[36] Much like the advent of Orientalism, scholar Robert David argued that "Europeans were, in effect prisoner of their own cultural creation" when it came to exotic stereotypes and the cliched short-hands operating in British print culture.[37] Northwest-Passage expeditions led by the admiralty brought back a great deal of "visual materials," which in turn fueled public interest and substantiated further exploration.[38] Books, newspapers, pamphlets, and both scientific and popular magazines circulated widely as editors went to great lengths to retrieve information on expedition progress.[39] As Janice Cavell notes, the narrative arc of Arctic news included seasonal silences that heightened readers' anticipation.[40] If rare "adequate representations" existed in newspapers and pamphlets, they were either altered in editing or went unnoticed amidst a vast hegemonic frozen trope.[41]

Self-authored travel narratives were mediated heavily by time, written in second or third drafts and published after the expedition outcome was already known.[42] For example, correspondence between John Richardson and John Franklin from July 21st, 1823 discusses the narrative progression of their forthcoming publication on their completed Coppermine

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[36] Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative,* 15, 16.

[37] Robert G. David, *The Arctic in the British Imaginary: 1818-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 28-29; "Orientalism" was a cultural myth coined by Edward Said about how the West imagined and depicted the Middle East; Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative,* 40; "with arctic art, however, there was a close correlation between expedition activity and the newsworthiness of the Arctic and the production of canvases. Images created by expedition artists were obviously related to expedition activity. Imaginative paintings created by metropolitan-based artists who had usually never visited the Arctic were inspired by newsworthy events." 30.

[38] Potter, *Arctic Spectacles*, 8.

[39] Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative,* 28-30, 167-169.

[40] Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative,* 30.

[41] Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative,* 41.

[42] Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative,* 31.

Expedition (1819-22).[43] Illustrations in these printed texts usually drawn from explorers' sketches reached a wide reading public; explorers also delivered lectures accompanied with images to auditoriums of keen listeners.[44] These representations of the Arctic land were rarely completed on site since the cold made creating detailed renderings hard, winter was too dark for domestic subjects, below zero temperatures froze watercolour and other viscous oil mediums, and summer brought swarms of mosquitos.[45] Instead, small portable sketchbooks and rough drawings were often turned into etchings, watercolour and oil paintings from the comfort of home.[46] The necessity to rework images impacted the restricted bank of subject matter as artists had to rely on their memory, generalizations, or preliminary studies instead of specificity and detail.

Such misrepresentations hold contemporary significance for us. In the space now called Canada, these environments and natural resources have long been linked to ongoing processes of land dispossession by colonialism and capitalism. Particularly, they affect how we construct and consume images of the natural world, which landscapes we deem important or aesthetically pleasing to conserve, and what others we designate to be sacrificed for industry.[47] Today, this is crucial to the polar region as climate change renders it increasingly important in Qallunaat-Settler geopolitics and economics. Overrepresented images of the Arctic continue to arise in

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[43] J. Richardson letters to J. Franklin 1823-1842, Royal Botanical Society Library and Archives, Royal Botanical Society, Kew, England.
[44] David, *The Arctic in the British Imaginary,* 25.
[45] David, *The Arctic in the British Imaginary,* 30.
[46] David, *The Arctic in the British Imaginary, 3*0-33; I do not include photography in my analysis since it was 1870 when photography equipment was brought north, early chemicals froze, and the medium was largely a scientific pursuit rather than an artistic one.
[47] Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism and Climate Change* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014).

contemporary terms with new tropes developed by outsiders like satellite images of shrinking ice sheets or the prolific image of a nanuq (polar bear) hunting on what remains of the ice flows. These representations emotionally galvanize Qallunaat who have yet to commit to action on global warming; meanwhile Inuit are more concerned with the safety of traveling on ice, hunting and food security, or the less fashionable issue of declining Caribou populations.[48]

The first section of this thesis addresses the two iconographic themes of *terrain* and *presence* through popular and archival images and rereads the common narrative of the Arctic hero against the reliance on Indigenous material culture. I then contrast the Qallunaat mindset to Indigenous knowledges and perspectives on the environment. The second section outlines the interconnections between the Empire's botanists and the military men working Arctic expeditions. This chapter engages with these botanists, environmental knowledge, and the significant body of scientific images that were extracted as part of Qallunaat exploration alongside personal drawings to determine why these representations and understandings were eclipsed for easily consumable tropes. Lastly, this thesis concludes by engaging contemporary Inuit art and artists to question the still prevailing misconceptions by centering Inuit voices in the representation of their home land. The art practices of Asinnajaq and Inuuteq Storch—whose interviews inform my thesis—as well as a wide variety of other Inuit cultural products that utilize Arctic botany and floral motifs challenge the stereotype of the "barren" North with an experience of "plenty." The artists and artworks foreground the botanic ecosystems of Inuit Nunangat while emphasizing historic and contemporary Inuit artistic expression about their homeland. By asserting Inuit cultural production and Inuit voices into Arctic historiography, it

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[48] *Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change,* Zacharias Kunuk (Isuma TV, 2010).

allows the artists and art objects to challenge a hegemonic history of dominant and persistent tropes and representations made by outsiders.

Terrain, *Presence*, and Recovering Indigenous Knowledge

Captain John Franklin wrote in an excerpt during the 1819 Coppermine expedition to his surveyor George Back about two things. First, the awe of the Aurora Borealis and second, their ascent into history as part of the elite circle of men engaged in the excitement of Arctic exploration,

> the service on which we are engaged seeing of a nature highly interesting and calculated to excite the most active execution of duty including connection with the pursuit of its objects-this can stretch the rare occasion for me to say any thing more.[49]

Franklin was taken with the exotic landscape and the rigour or labour that it demanded. The heroic ambition of Imperial pursuits is spoofed by the fictional "Qallunaat Studies Institute" created in the reverse ethnography documentary by Mark Sandiford and Zebedee Nungak among others.[50] In the film a pair of Qallunaat bravely drudge down the road of Iqaluit hauling their equipment in pursuit of machismo-triumph. Historically Qallunaat traversed the Canadian Arctic for Imperial sovereignty, raced Russia searching for polar shipping routes,[51] and extracted resources like fish, furs, and whales. In doing so, they rose in the ranks of Victorian men having

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[49] 1819-1820 Expedition correspondence between Back and Franklin, MS 395/70/ 1-5; BL, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

[50] This project takes seriously the inquiry of "Qallunatt Studies" spoofed by Mini Aodla Feedldman, and the Qalunaat Studies Institute created by Mark Sandiford and Zebedee Nungak; Mini Aodla Feedldman, *Life Among the Qallunaat* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015); Mark Sandiford and Zebedee Nungak, *Qallunaat! Why White People are Funny* (2006), https://www.nfb.ca/film/qallunaat_why_white_people_are_funny/.

[51] Levere, *Science and the Canadian Arctic*, 79-80.

secured their role in a heroic lineage. More importantly, they became generators of testimony to their experiences and adventures in the remote region to an eager consuming public.

The distant lands of the Arctic region were understood as ominous and threatening, with ferocious creatures, strange raw meat-eating inhabitants, but most definitively the dangerous terrain and unforgiving climate. At the environmental level, the Arctic was "wildly other" and any "dissimilarities outweighed similarities" that might have brought comfort to an intrepid explorer.[52] The iconography of the *terrain* routinely showcases immense horizons, lifeless vistas, towering cliffs, and icebergs which dwarf the Qallunaak subject if he is pictured. Whether on land or water, the bank of Arctic images revolved not around the specificity of the new exotic environment, but around the ability of Europeans to be there and to manipulate the elements to their own gain: exploration and extraction. The discourse and misunderstanding of the north contrasted starkly from other fabrications in the European imaginary like Orientalism which was characterized by warm desert scenes, a pre-industrial Mediaeval nostalgia, and a cleansing landscape since sands buried old monuments.[53] In extreme opposition to this the Arctic discourse imagined the environment as the most commendable, alien terrain since the Indigenous inhabitants resembled "pre-history" and the cold climate preserved rather than hid "gruesome reminders of recent disaster and human tragedy."[54] In the European imaginary the Arctic's cold waters and frozen keepsakes were a physical as well as psychic obstacle to be conquered.

John Ross demonstrates this prowess in his drawing-turned-etching *Passing Through the Ice* dated June 16th, 1818 (fig. 1). The first Ross expedition was initially privately funded but

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[52] David, *The Arctic in the British Imaginary,* 29.
[53] David, *The Arctic in the British Imaginary,* 29-30.
[54] David, *The Arctic in the British Imaginary,* 29-30.

grew in popular attention as Britain searched for the Northwest Passage and eventually a public grant raised the nationalist stakes on Arctic navigation.[55] Ross was a Scottish Navy Captain who would pass his explorer's spirit on to his nephew, James Clark Ross, bringing him onboard the expedition at just eighteen years old.[56] John Ross illustrated his travel narrative with this naval scene in a romantic style with ships navigating through monstrous floating icebergs in ominous inky black water, and grey clouds opening to a vast blue sky over the sailor's heads. While Ross portrays the icebergs with drama, shadow, and detail, other explorer-artists utilize the icon of the ship differently like Edward Adams. His sketch is not a published refined print, but rather a personal drawing and watercolour made in the margins of his diary (fig. 2). Adams kept the journal while serving as Assistant Surgeon on the First Franklin Search Expedition led by James Ross in 1848.[57] Adams reserved the attention and focal point of his composition to the most foregrounded ship of the fleet, intricately rendered on a corner of the page and surrounded by floating ice. Adams' depiction is rendered in a more preliminary state and the palette is limited and softer with crisp, cold blues of floating ice mirroring the expanse of sky. Both men portray the Arctic environment itself as a challenge to overcome. The polar environment itself was the hostile obstacle, and as the men persevered the waters and lands were seemingly open for them to explore with carte blanche. Images like these of European men heroically navigating the Arctic seas or depicting an icy lifeless tundra are a ubiquitous occurrence in popular culture, fine art images, personal sketches, and the diaries surviving in the archives.

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[55] Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative,* 167.
[56] Levere, *Science and the Canadian Arctic*, 44.
[57] Levere, *Science and the Canadian Arctic*, 208.

Arctic landscape images are continually and deliberately disrupted by the *presence* of men and their ships which act as a visual footprint of achievement and perseverance. John Ross and Edward Adams interrupt their representations of the Arctic waters with their ships the same way H.W. Fielden and Ross depict cliffs adorned with men in the act of ascent (fig 3, 4). Fielden was an Irish Army Officer, naturalist, and explorer on the 1875 Northern Polar Expedition.[58] In a drawing dated March 27th, 1876, he depicts a climber in great detail ascending a stylized cliff face of layered geology, likely near Floeberg Beach between Elsemere Island and Greenland, about 83 degrees south of magnetic north.[59] The subject matter of rock or the mountain range were not worthwhile subjects on their own such that Fielden rendered the accomplishment with a climber to be a visual marker of occupation. Art historian Charmaine Nelson has noted that artistic training in the military curriculum was designed so men could "identify and recreate objects, man-made and natural, of strategic significance, and to impart the ability for direct and simplified renderings."[60] For Fielden and others in the Arctic genre, there is an additional ideological motivation at play. It necessitates the use of the explorer's body as a symbol for representing the experience beyond the artist's body which is not commonly pictured in the military landscape topographical genre. The cliffs and climbers of John Ross and H.W. Fielden demonstrate a desire to imprint the Arctic landscape with a colonial footprint that is more obvious and consumable beyond the artist's presence. While other movements rely on the artist's eye and rendering to assert their place in the exotic locale, Arctic subject matter routinely ideologically claims conquest through the overt addition of ships and men into the scenery.

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[58] Levere, *Science and the Canadian Arctic*, 269.
[59] Levere, *Science and the Canadian Arctic*, 284.
[60] Charmaine A. Nelson, *Slavery Geography and Empire in Nineteenth Century Marine Landscapes of Montreal and Jamaica* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 161.

The treacherous Arctic *terrain* confronted explorers with jagged cliffs, vast blinding horizons, and "icebergs of impressive size."[61] For example, during the 1875 British Arctic Expedition on the HMS Alert, First Lieutenant Pelham Aldrich represented a foreboding cliff edge of rough dark stone blanketed in snow as far as the eye could see from a dizzying height with blue water below (fig 5). These prolific motifs of the towering and monstrous landforms are found in explorers' writings just as much as their images. American naturalist Edward Payson Hopkins marvelled at "icebergs almost 150 feet in height" on expedition to Greenland and Labrador in the summer of 1860.[62] The naturalist-explorer George Back, who first ventured into the Arctic with Franklin's first expedition, mirrors these observations with the image *HMS Terror…off a Spectacular Iceberg* (fig 6) typical of the frozen visual stereotypes and limited iconography of Arctic exploration visual culture. The combined tactics of the *presence* of European men and the scale juxtaposition of the *terrain* heightened the romance, threat, and perceived accomplishment of exploration around the poles. The warm sky draws attention to the icy floating tower that eclipses the men and the wildlife teaming in the waters. These unique natural phenomena would certainly be exciting to Qallunaat visitors and audiences seeing their likeness recreated. The Arctic spectacle of immense rugged terrain was captivating because of its sublime scale, a quality which fit neatly into the popular Western romantic aesthetic tradition of the time.[63]

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[61] Penny Journals from 5 July 1857 to July 7 1858, winter in Cumberland sound, MS 1424;D, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.
[62] Edward Paysons Hopkins, MS 1027; D, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.
[63] Potter, *Arctic Spectacles,* 12.

The *terrain* and *presence* elements heighten explorers' accomplishment, grandeur, and technological merit since environmental specificity is de-emphasized and the region's botany was deliberately erased. The perception of sterile land is a reoccurring theme in Arctic visual and textual collections. Orkney-Scot surgeon Dr. John Rae became an accomplished naval explorer and overland navigator with the help of Inuit dogsleds.[64] On his third expedition searching for John Franklin, Rae exemplified this strategic botanic awareness. On June 22nd, 1851, he wrote while heading down the Kendall and Coppermine rivers: "The place at which we landed and its neighbourhood were barren in the extreme. Scarcely a vestige of vegetation, and not a bit of drift wood were to be seen; nothing but a level tract of light grey coloured limestone."[65] Scholar Robert David remarked in his analysis of Arctic images that bare unvegetated rock was a "conspicuous feature," along with flora because of its rarity, colour, and the variety it often added in the landscape.[66] John Rae continued his diary entry in August 1852, reflecting on what he perceived as barren lands and Inuit starvation: "the absence of the Natives caused me some anxiety, not that I expected any aid from them, but because I could attribute their having abandoned so favourable a locality, to no other cause than a scarcity of food."[67] In the same year, apprentice-carpenter and volunteer-explorer W.T. Mumford executed a series of watercolours while employed on Nova Scotia Captain Edward Belcher's Franklin search expedition, the last publicly funded search for the doomed crew. Only one of his compositions eliminated the ships to focus on an isolated cliff formation. Although watercolour was convenient for depicting

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[64] David, *The Arctic in the British Imaginary, 37*.
[65] Records relating to Dr. John Rae's third Arctic expedition, 4M124, E.15/8/67, Manitoba Archives-Hudson Bay Company Archives, Manitoba, Winnipeg.
[66] David, *The Arctic in the British Imaginary,* 37.
[67] Records relating to Dr. John Rae's third Arctic expedition, E.15/9 1852-1855, Manitoba Archives-Hudson Bay Company Archives, Manitoba, Winnipeg.

variations in texture like tundra flora such as moss, lichen, and shrubbery, Mumford's terrain is a smooth glassy wash with some shading suggesting variations in topography rather than botanic variety (fig 7). And yes, while scarcity and the elements were a constant reality for Indigenous people and Qallunaat visitors alike, there also were cycles of bounty and lushness. I believe that in popular culture, we cling to the idea of barrenness and the monotony of the white Arctic because it was—and remains—a simple and convenient cliché; we prefer this easy interpretation rather than attempting to understand the nuance and agencies of the environment. Whether it be on land, sea ice, or water, the bank of Arctic images revolves not around the specificity of the new exotic environment, but around the ability of Europeans to be present and to manipulate the elements to their own gain and glory.

While the plants that have called the Arctic home since time immemorial are erased from these images, Qallunaat and technologies like their ships are suspiciously overrepresented, to the point that the naval presence is naturalized. Navy-surgeon Robert McCormick was working alongside Mumford on the HMS North Star, one of five ships used during the above-mentioned Franklin search party led by Belcher in 1852. McCormick enlists a vantage point from the sea looking back at the mountainous coast to complete his sketches in a military surveyor perspective.[68] Puzzling, however, are the five detailed ships pictured in the foreground of compositions such as the one dated May 31st 1852 (fig. 8). The sketch labels the impressive fleet from left to right: HMS Resolute, HMS North Star, HMS Assistance, and the steam tenders Intrepid and Pioneer. They are shown navigating a narrow fjord surrounded by bare mountains except one textured geometric rock shaded with shadow. This was not a finished piece for the

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[68] Robert McCormick fonds, A-1710, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

eager readers of the Franklin search to consume, but even as a personal sketch Robert McCormick included more ships than what he could see from standing on deck. He included his own.

This detail suggests the composition and the image is fabricated to some degree. Perhaps it is a memory, or an imagining of the heroic fleet together. The mountain range seems to intrude into the foreground with a possibility that the view was real if McCormick were standing on the shore to capture the scene of the ships together. The fleet could be anchored in a bay making the scene less of a fictitious glory and more of a believable sketch. However, it is highly unlikely that all five ships would have remained together as a common expedition practice was to separate ships and supplies in strategic places in the event that weather, sea ice, or a shallow bay threatened one ship there would be reinforcements around. Fellow sailor W.T. Mumford captures this strategy in his watercolour series from the same expedition featuring *Resolute and Intrepid in Winter Quarters* (fig 9), and T*he North Star Forced on Shore by the Ice, The Site of the Winter Quarters of the Erebus and the Terror* (fig 10). McCormick's representation is also not probable on account of the icebergs obstructing the view which would be uncommon in a narrow inlet away from the ocean tides, unless an inland glacier was calving the floating ice. McCormick seemed to prioritize glory over accuracy even in these personal representations by imagining the heroic fleet as a relentless convoy.

Scholars like Richard Dyer and Scott Morgensen both centre white-colonial masculinity around achievement and enterprise, yet expedition success for Qallunaat was dubious and required Indigenous knowledge and labour.[69] Primary source documents reveal that the

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[69] Richard Dyer, *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 147; Morgensen, "Cutting to the Roots of Colonial Masculinity," 41.

accomplishments of Qallunaat continually came with the aid of Indigenous technologies and people, which disrupts not only the notion that the lands were devoid of life—plant or Indigenous—but also the idea that white-men succeeded in exploration by their own will, hard work, or technological means.

In an 1836 interview about his upcoming ground expedition from Lake Winnipeg to Slave Lake, George Back confessed: "this track is well known to the Chipewayan Indians, whose authority is much more to be depended upon than the public hitherto been led to believe."[70] Indigenous people did not only perform unofficial labour as hunters, traders, seamstresses, and interpreters but were most frequently hired members of expeditions as well. For example, the Rae-Richardson Arctic expedition from 1848 features several "paid Indians" on the registers and logs.[71] McGoogan outlines the unequal, sometimes fatal, distribution of labour that Métis voyageurs endured in comparison to their European counterparts on some expeditions.[72]

Steve Garlick has theorized that masculinity itself must be understood as a technology of domination over the natural world and other genders: "Technology is associated with the masculine because masculinity itself is a (modern) technology for the embodiment and control of nature."[73] Beyond gender, I expand that white-Qallunaat-Settler men could claim only their own tools as technology. The Royal Navy was concerned with men "going native" for survival,

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[70] Newspaper cuttings kept by the Governor and Committee, A.71/10, Addenda M10 microfilm, Manitoba Archives-Hudson Bay Company Archives, Manitoba, Winnipeg.

[71] 121193, Sir John Richardson's and Dr. John Rae's Arctic expedition, 4M23, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario; Franklin Search E.15/4 1848-1854, 4M123 (HBC ADD M2), Manitoba Archives-Hudson Bay Company Archives, Manitoba, Winnipeg; Lists 1846 to 1854 details of provision used on expedition, 1846-7, 1848-9, 1853-4, MS 787/9/1-2;D, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

[72] McGoogan, *Dead Reckoning,* 109.

[73] Garlick, *The Nature of Masculinity,* 200.

insisting that British clothing and technology were "far better than anything 'savages' could devise."[74] Yet, within expedition culture, explorers constantly relied on Indigenous people, their tools, and knowledge for Qallunaat success and survival. John Richardson left advice to the departing Franklin search expeditions in 1853 that European boots would be inadequate for the elements and he recommended trading for kamik (waterproof sealskin boots), hide socks, and learning how to fashion snow googles.[75] John Rae navigated much of his 1846-48 expedition by doglsed.[76] George Back's inventory during the first Arctic Expedition included cloth, coloured thread, and beads for trading along with the goods he received through barter, including "Indian shoes", a sealing knife, and a moose skin.[77] Likewise, George Cartwright's Governor Surgeon perished in the cold of 1771 northern Labrador, while Cartwright later marvelled at the warmth of an iglu lit only by the qulliq (stone oil lamp).[78] This re-reading of technology and knowledge is a major intervention into the orthodox Arctic historiography and attempts to centre Indigenous knowledges and material practices.

Beyond material culture and technologies, Qallunaat explorers benefited from less tangible forms of technology and embodied knowledge like hunting, diet and medicine. Dr. Thomas Colan, the Surgeon General of the British Arctic Expedition of 1875, brought 105

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[74] Potter, *Arctic Spectacles,* 112.

[75] Kamiik are a valuable waterproof seal skin boot made by Inuit; Arctic Exploration: Correspondence, Reports, etc., MG12-ADM7 microfilm B-5333/801, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario; "the feet are to be especially attended to… If the perspiration freezes on the coverings of the feet, or the shoes are permitted to become wet, a cake of ice is formed, which speedily induces lameness. This evil is best avoided by using the moccasins and socks universally worn by the native population of Rupert's Land."

[76] 121193, Sir John Richardson's and Dr. John Rae's Arctic expedition, 4M23, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

[77] Records relating to George Back's first Arctic expedition, 4M123, E.15/2, 1832-1835, Manitoba Archives-Hudson Bay Company Archives, Manitoba, Winnipeg.

[78] Qulliq/Kudlik are stone lamps fuelled by rendering animal fats which are used for heat and light, the wick is commonly cottongrass or dried moss; Letters from George Cartwright, R13263-147-8-E, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

ounces of lime juice to treat scurvy. Inevitably the import ran out and the surviving medical records suggest at least 85 cases haunted the crew, incapacitating some on the voyage.[79] Contrary to this, earlier John Rae's 1846-54 provision lists show he encouraged his men to adopt an Inuit diet rather than subsisting off the prepared rations. The nutrient rich meats kept them relatively healthy save for constipation which his two Inuit guides did not experience as they consumed more blubber and organ meat.[80] This move to replicate an Inuit diet is noteworthy since nineteenth-century military rations were focused not on nutrition, but on caloric energy and self-indulgent pleasures often including alcohol.[81] Provision lists commonly included things like pemican or salted meat (sometimes moldy), flour, salt, lard/grease/suet, biscuits, tobacco, sugar, rum, port, and brandy.[82] Sustenance, being a life or death matter, was more crucial than providing good bodily fuel. When food was rancid or ran out many expeditions assumed hunting could accommodate the losses. John Rae and others pointed out that when game was needed they were nowhere to be found: "we had looked to kill deer or seal on the above journey (Fort Sledge Journey, 1847, 22 miles a day) but got none of either."[83] Even the most experienced Inuit hunters

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[79] Medical and Surgical Journal of H.M.S. ALERT, Thomas Colan, M.D., Fleet Surgeon, MG12-ADM101 microfilm B-5378, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

[80] Rae Papers, MS 787/9/1-2;D, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England; "In addition to the above we had tea, sugar, and chocolate *but no vegetable of any kind* (emphasis mine)-some of the above pemican was given to the dogs [such as is with service as they -hauled course their own food] but to make up for this we got some seal flesh and fat from the Eskimeaux which we lived for 8 days -it is palatable enough but so extremely tasteless …covered with salt…this diet had an unpleasant effect by inducing extreme constipation on all but the two Eskimo, who ate more of the blubber than we did -labor of the moving the sledge and pulling food but the eskimo."

[81] Nelson, *Slavery Geography and Empire*, 72-73, 86.

[82] Excerpts from the journal kept by Lieutenant Bedford C. T. Pim of H.M.S. Resolute, B-5336, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario; Records relating to John Franklin's second Arctic expedition, 4M123, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario; Lists 1846 to 1854 details of provision used on expedition, 1846-7, 1848-9, 1853-4, MS 787/9/1-2;D, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

[83] Lists 1846 to 1854 details of provision used on expedition, 1846-7, 1848-9, 1853-4, MS 787/9/1-2;D, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

who follow their teachings and protocols have experienced scarcity. The consequences were dire for John Franklin's mismanaged expedition which eventually experienced starvation for several days before the next log in his diary lists nine of his men deceased on July 5th 1822.[84] More men perished before Chief Akaitcho and other Yellowknife found the party in a decrepit state, delivering deer meat and nursing them to health.[85] The role of Indigenous technology, embodied knowledge, and material culture were deliberately employed for white-Qallunaat-Settler survival. The consequences otherwise were fatal.

Beyond the faulty construction of heroism, Arctic explorers also undermined the "barren" north myth with their own observation's unintentionally preserving the region's plants in their writings and some images. Flora and botany enter the Qallunaat perception of the Arctic in explorers' times of desperation. John Rae continued his diary entry of scarcity later finding sufficient amounts of driftwood to maintain their fire for warmth.[86] A year later in August 1852 he records that the majority of the crew were constantly collecting fuel for the fire.[87] Robert McCormick's obsessive rocky cliff sketches from the same year, which will be addressed momentarily, are represented without tundra detail while his writings identify that "A few mosses, lichen…were scatted over the flat surface of the mountain top which is plutonic formations."[88] During Welsh Officer George Nare's British Arctic Expedition of 1875, Kew botanist Joseph Hooker gave collecting instructions to the crew even with speculation that no

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84 Franklin Journal 1820-1822 - April 16 to June 13 1820, MS 248/ 277; BJ, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.
85 McGoogan, *Dead Reckoning,* 107.
86 Records relating to Dr. John Rae's third Arctic expedition, E.15/8/67, Manitoba Archives-Hudson Bay Company Archives, Manitoba, Winnipeg.
87 Records relating to Dr. John Rae's third Arctic expedition, E.15/9 1852-1855, Manitoba Archives-Hudson Bay Company Archives, Manitoba, Winnipeg.
88 Robert McCormick fonds, A-1623, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

new species were to be discovered; instead he wanted data on distributions, climatic conditions and life cycles.[89] Prior to this the Admiralty thought natural history could unofficially be handled by naval men since many were amateur naturalists and training could be redirected to navigation or astronomy.[90] Naval explorers more concerned with the geological makeup of the Arctic identified and preserved tundra flora in their writings, even if they refused them representation in their images.

John Franklin and Scottish botanists John Richardson and Thomas Drummond experienced starvation during their 1819-1822 expedition, resorting to lichen for food.[91] Written after returning from the disastrous expedition, John Richardson's appendix to Franklin's travel narrative is titled "Lichens of the Barren Grounds."[92] The irony herein is that the lifeless tundra rocks somehow playing host to four species of lichen which preserved the men from starvation. This experience may have influenced more realistic images like *Discovering the Coppermine River*, which shows men traversing a steep slope with a tufted texture suggesting tundra vegetation (fig 11).[93] The image that was engraved for Franklin's publication was based upon a drawing by Robert Hood which he made before he was killed during the expedition by a fellow crew member. The engraving based on Hood's depiction is all the more remarkable for being one of the few popular and published images to even suggest vegetation in the high north. At the same time, it attempts some differentiation in the tundra environment through the strokes and

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89 Levere, *Science and the Canadian Arctic*, 272.
90 Levere, *Science and the Canadian Arctic*, 268.
91 John Franklin, *Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea* (London John Murray, 1823); Levere, *Science and the Canadian Arctic*, 108.
92 *To the Arctic by Canoe 1819-1821.* appendix.
93 Franklin, *Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea*.

scratches of the engraving plate. Rare images like this demonstrate a limited familiarity, but a closeness none the less to the land and terrestrial ecosystems.

Images like some of George Back's landscape sketches demonstrate a different way of looking at the land, not out at the horizon to conquer, but down at the tundra capturing its diverse textures, grasses, moss, and flowering plants. As part of this research I consulted six separate Back sketchbooks with a variety of detailed studies, contour drawings, and preliminary landscapes labelled with a colour legend to be referenced for later canvases. Two landscape sketches from Great Slave Lake August 28th and 31st, 1833, capture the wide expanse of the land and sky juxtaposed with immense detail on the ground (fig 12, 13).[94] These are not studies of specific plants, but instead function as remarkably rare and accurate landscape images that render instead of erasing the botanic presence and specificity. The attempt at detail extends out from the foreground well into the middle ground before those details are lost to Back's eye. Back's mindset appears attentive rather than simplistic. He refuses reductionism or hastily washing over these symbiotic clusters of the Arctic environment; instead he emphasizes them in great specificity. While the landscape representation is not grand, sublime, or romantic in its scale or use of colour, Back's dedication to contour line and shape give the tundra a detailed character and variety rarely seen in representations by historic Qallunaat.

This attention to contour and detail is demonstrated elsewhere in Back's sketchbook. The forms and contours capture immense detail in a variety of scenes, but also act as lines to be filled in later. Some sketches like May 22nd 1833, *Falls of Kakabikka* [sic] feature a colour code with small letter clues labeling elements of the composition: "grey slate, left shade NTB, Green trees,

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[94] George Back Sketchbook 1833, MS 869, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England, 91, 97.

water reddish brown to O green."[95] Back created this legend to use at a later date to accurately fill in these images with the appropriate colours. The time to make this reference list demonstrates a rare integrity to the scene, if not the land, since it would be easier to simply guess filling in the water as blue for example. Back's artistic attention in these personal sketchbooks is unique, these landscape images portray a different worldview or thought process about the land. Rather than being an obstacle to be traversed or sailed past, the firm land of the Arctic region is captured for its beauty, specificity, and complexity.

The land's deliberate cycles and choices seem like an obvious influence as to why Arctic flora is absent, explaining the overrepresentation of ice and snow in Qallunaat explorer's images. The region has a short growing season and snow lingers at the high latitudes of the Arctic circle. Of course sailors navigating the seas will be confronted by rock cliffs and the harsh costal zones unprotected from the elements. Hidden inland tucked in the valleys or plateaus of the Arctic world are pockets of shrubs, mosses, seasonal berries and flowers. Alexander Mackenzie exemplifies this in the summer of 1789 writing "not a tree to be seen, except a few willow which are not above three feet high", followed by "close by the land is high and covered with short grasses and many plant which are in bloom, and has a beautiful appearance…an odd contrast the hills covered with flowers and verdure and the vallie full of ice and snow, the earth is not thawed." (sic)[96] John Franklin in his June, 1827 correspondence with George Back animates the land while describing summer botany collecting conducted as the expedition descended south at Fort Cumberland (Cumberland House, Saskatchewan). He states that the elements have caused

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[95] Captain Back Sketchbook 1833, MS 869, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England, pg 37-May 22.

[96] Sir Alexander Mackenzie journal, 1789, MG21-StoweMSS.793. Volume/box number: 1, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, 52-53.

the "withering of fortification where the land has permitted them."[97] Explorers in the enlightened, rational European mindset recognized the power of the natural world and the land's agency.

Whalers like James Anderson also help explain why many historic Qallunaat had structural barriers to relationship forming or familiarity with the Arctic land. His diary included scrolls of maritime measurements, zodiac mapping, planetary alignments, and lunar calendars.[98] Along with McCormick's reoccurring mountain range sketches, his accounts confirm the impression that most time allotted to observation and recording the landscape occurred at sea (fig. 14). His prolific mountain motif sketches populate his journal and are characterized by simple thick lines and dramatic jagged contour. The prolific nature of data entry, topography, mapping, and landscape sketching to naval duty, explains the proliferation of vast images from a distance or what was observable from the sea. Based upon the remaining archival records, I speculate that leisure time—when the opportunity arose for sketching—occurred predominantly on board the ship and not on land. Naval navigation did not require constant labour but offered stretches of repose in comparison to the demands of camp life, surveying, and dog sled overland expeditions. Coastal scenes like cliffs, fjords, inlets, and icebergs are what the eye had available instead of detailed renderings of the tundra and its life.

This fixation on scenery and subject matter in the territory of Canada is a common thread in Qallunaat/Settler perspectives that manifested in the tradition of landscape art. The Settler-country's identity was forged from the abundance of stolen land and the exploitation of those

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[97] 1825-1827 expedition correspondence Back and Franklin, MS 395/74/1-28; BL, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

[98] James Anderson, 1856-1858, 4M132, Manitoba Archives-Hudson Bay Company Archives, Manitoba, Winnipeg.

natural resources, or as Prime Minister John Diefenbaker put it, Canada's "northern destiny."[99] Canada's colonial status was always tied to the Empire's mercantilist economic policies extracting raw resources from the lands and waters. This colonial status is echoed in the fetishism of landscape art production in Jody Berland's "staples theory […] as though every cod holds the seed of its own commodity and labour marked."[100] This understanding of geographic determinism theorizes that nature influences human economic patterns and political structures. This theory naturalizes colonial plunder as the resources from the landscape of Turtle Island became expendable in a wider extractive imperial and mercantile economic system.[101] Geographic determinism justified colonial extraction and played out in the immense and barren imaginings of empty landscape representations, industries like the fur trade, fishing, whaling, and the heroic conquest of the horizon. While economic extraction is a major factor in human interactions with the natural world, we must also consider the defence mechanisms, and behaviours built into the environment. The land's agency coupled with human persistence and capital production were major factors for Qallunaat limited perceptions and restrained relationships to the natural world.

The attentiveness and intimate familiarity with the land that is embedded in Indigenous knowledge systems like Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is based on a close relationship and physical proximity to the land. This is counter to the Qallunaat portrayals, motivations, and understandings of the Arctic environment. For Qallunaat, the relationship with the tundra was formed at a distance in a macro scale of trans-Atlantic navigation and the British Empire's

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[99] O'Brian, *Beyond Wilderness*, 5-6.
[100] O'Brian, *Beyond Wilderness*, 90.
[101] O'Brian, *Beyond Wilderness*, 90.

grandeur. Qallunaat were refused the time or mindset to develop a meaningful relationship with the land on account of the long duration of naval voyages or the distance-heavy goals of overland expeditions. Robert McCormick embodied this when he projected himself to the bird's-eye view of the cartographer, sketched the inlet with all five ships of the Belcher expedition, the coastal camp, and what appears as an additional smaller schooner (fig 15). The vantage point, the geographic specificity, and the ability to position all five or six ships—including the one McCormick would have been on—in the perspective of the image are completely impossible. The viewpoint of images like this which aesthetically resemble the mapping tradition utilize a fictitious viewpoint distanced and alienated from the ground up into the sky. While McCormick demonstrates an interest in and repeated exposure to the cliffs and ranges of the Arctic, the relationship is superficial and strained by proximity. Qallunaat-Settler explorers motivated to traverse great distances can never learn, practice, or embody a fraction of Indigenous environmental knowledge even if that appropriation were possible.

Outside of human interaction—Indigenous or settler—the environment itself is a protagonist continually shaping these experiences. Potawatomi botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer speaks of the hierarchical worldview embedded in European languages like English and how this impacts both the land's perceived animacy and how humans see themselves removed from nature. She states "when we (teach) that the tree is not a *who*, but an *it*, we make that maple an object; we put a barrier between us, absolving ourselves of moral responsibility and opening the doors to exploitation."[102] Fixtures of the land like animals and plants conduct themselves with

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[102] Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013), 57.

"self, intention, and compassion."[103] This is echoed in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit recorded from Louis Angalik from the Kivalliq region: "All animals were respected and were not to be treated as toys, as Inuit relied on them for survival. It is still true today that animals are not to be disrespected."[104] Environmental historian Donald Worster shares that the land's agency, these mechanisms of nature must not be taken for granted but revered. The characteristics of nature are "to be viewed as an integral part of the natural world, akin to the fur coat of the polar bear" that lends itself warmth, which in turn can be used as a readymade technology by humans.[105] These tools of the environment need to be understood as "adaptive mechanisms functioning within ecosystems," which challenges the culture/nature and human/animal dichotomies.[106] These understandings of life in many Indigenous worldviews extend to animate the rocks and waters of the natural world. This agency is understood partially in orthodox environmental history in the ways in which climate, geography, plants, or animals have their own histories or impact the human narrative.

Considerations of the land's agency rose in Western thought through environmental history and later non-human actors in contemporary Object-oriented ontology, but both were predated by Indigenous epistemologies and worldviews. Métis anthropologist Zoe Todd contests that this ontological turn, the "'more-than-human' sentience and agency, and the ways through which to imagine our 'common cosmopolitan concerns'" is not a new post-humanist endeavour

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[103] Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass,* 57.
[104] Joe Karetak, Frank Tester, and Shirley Tagalik, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: What Inuit Have Always Known to Be True*, (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2017), 85.
[105] Donald Worster, "Doing Environmental History," in *The Ends of the Earth: Perspectives on Modern Environmental History*, ed. David Freeland Duke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 8.
[106] Worster, "Doing Environmental History," 8.

but rather an Indigenous practice since time immemorial.[107] At its core, environmental history may still be useful for its focused understandings of the past that "reject the conventional assumption that human experience has been exempt from natural constraints."[108] Understanding how even Qallunaat-Settler populations negotiate the natural world can take the form of perceptions, ethics, laws, myth, or other ways of meaning making that enable groups and individuals to dialogue with nature and construct protocol.[109] Using environmental history in tandem with Indigenous knowledge to view the Qallunaat landscape traditions of the Arctic region illuminates the agency of the environment itself and the shortcomings of extractive populations to overlook, simplify, and reduce.

Inuit knowledge on the workings and changes of the Arctic environment have become increasingly important for not only Inuit, but for everyone else concerned with the effects of anthropogenic climate change on the polar regions, biodiversity, thawing permafrost, species adaptation, and other issues.[110] It is this environmental knowledge that Qallunaat science currently mines,[111] just as explorers, traders, and whalers relied on this same information for their survival and navigation. While Indigenous peoples still adapt to, subsist from, and observe these changes in the land, they evoke the teachings and protocols that have been passed down in their communities. Alice Ayalik from Kugluktuk talks about that transmission of pedagogy, "our

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[107] Zoe Todd, "An Indigenous Feminist's Take On The Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' Is Just Another Word For Colonialism" in *Academic Freedom and the Contemporary Academy*, Vol 29, Issue 1, March 2016; Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "Land as Pedagogy: Nishinaabeg Intelligence and Rebellious Transformation," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society*, Vol 3, No 3 (2014).

[108] Worster. "Doing Environmental History." 2.

[109] Worster. "Doing Environmental History." 4.

[110] *Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change,* Zacharias Kunal (Isuma TV, 2010).

[111] Frank Tester, and Peter Irniq "Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Social History, Politics, and the Practices of Resistance," *Arctic,* Vol. 61*, Supplement 1: Arctic Change and Coastal Communities* (2008): 48-61.

parents passed down Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit beliefs and they also commanded us to pass down our knowledge about IQ to our children."[112] One such teaching was to keep the environment clean, "We were instructed to make sure that we never left any caribou parts in the path where the caribou migrated after we butchered our catch…We made sure we kept the lakes clean. As we had been commanded, we put the bones inland, not in the lake."[113] Similarly, Jose Angutinngurniq from Arviligjuaq recalled taboos about the land instilled in him by his grandparents: "I cannot neglect laws about the land and rivers that were laid down by our ancestors, even though they are not with us anymore, as these laws were to be revered by all of us."[114] Through oral history, the traditional knowledge and protocol is maintained for cultural continuity and community well-being.

While Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit or "what Inuit have always known to be true" has diverse implications and teachings, its preservation of the ecosystem and environmental conduct is a continuous theme.[115] Alice Ayalik continues,

> we were also given instructions about how to hunt and look after ourselves on the land. My father used to tell me that, when out on the land to pick berries or to hunt caribou, always look around.…Even when going uphill, he said we are to look around and look back now and then. The grizzly bears are usually lying around in places where you can't really see them. As for the caribou, they might see you before you see them.[116]

Meanwhile the teachings that Angutinngurniq shared were less about the hunter or berry picker's preservation but that of the environment with regards to harvesting. He said, "The laws pertaining to fishing have been created with the fish harvesting season in mind. In the latter part

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[112] *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: What Inuit Have Always Known to Be True*, 89.
[113] *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: What Inuit Have Always Known to Be True*, 99.
[114] *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: What Inuit Have Always Known to Be True*, 74.
[115] Tagalik, "Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: The Role of Indigenous Knowledge in Supporting Wellness in Inuit Communities in Nunavut".
[116] *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: What Inuit Have Always Known to Be True*, 90.

of the summer and in the fall when fish started to come upstream, back to the lakes for the winter, that is when Inuit catched fish for the winter supplies."[117] Protocol continues beyond hunting and animal conduct, but extends to plant life and the other seemingly inanimate fixtures of the tundra environment. Angutinngurniq continues, "There were many laws pertaining to the tundra that we had to follow diligently or else the environment would not flourish as it should. We could not even break rocks, not even the smallest of rocks. Moss was absolutely forbidden to be burned because when it became dry, for fear of fires."[118] Environmental conservancy, sharing, or taking only what is necessary are fixtures to Inuit knowledge that is passed down between generations.[119]

In sharp contrast to this is an imperial history of extraction, plundering the waters of the north, and a national economy that continues to pillage occupied territories. Canadian identity is "inseparable" from the stolen land it inhabits and re-represents.[120] Movements like the Group of Seven's "wildcentrism" was symbiotically linked to capitalism, the conscious omission of technology, and a deliberate framing of the environment which has functioned differently in Arctic subject matter.[121] Audiences would have recognized established conventions of landscapes, that these images are more appropriately "re-presentations" mediated through both the maker and the viewer.[122] This Foucauldian perspective demands a viewer to critically

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[117] *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: What Inuit Have Always Known to Be True*, 74.
[118] *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: What Inuit Have Always Known to Be True*, 80.
[119] Heather Igloliorte, "Curating Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Inuit Knowledge in the Qallunaat Art Museum," *Art Journal*, Vol. 76 Issue 2 (Summer 2017), 100-113.
[120] John O'Brian, *Beyond Wilderness: The Group of Seven, Canadian Identity and Contemporary Art* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2007), 3.
[121] O'Brian, *Beyond Wilderness*, 31.
[122] Marylin J. McKay, *Picturing the Land: Narrating Territories in Canadian Landscape Art, 1500 to 1950* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2011), 3-5.

examine the implied link between reality and the re-presented image with its social, cultural, political or economic meanings.[123] However, this analytical perspective was likely not practiced by readers of the British press eager to learn of expeditions through the authoritative mediums of news and print media.[124] To reiterate, technology and Qallunaat presence is the norm in Arctic landscapes, and tied to imperial interests and extractive economies. This convenient opportunity to represent the Arctic environment as lifeless was profitable for Imperial goals and historic industries. The same trope remains useful for contemporary resource extraction and Qallunaat-Settler indifference to the consequences of these exploitations.

Finding Flora

Masculinity as a technology of domination required enlightened European men to categorize the familiar and exotic natural world. Botany, zoology, and geology for instance joined navigation sciences and the search for polar geomagnetism in Arctic exploration. George Back exemplifies this in 1833 observing islands of granite rock, spotted with "northern berries, hern berries, (and) horn berries…birch was seen on others while many were totally destitute of herbage."[125] At the centre of imperial scrutiny was William J. Hooker and his son Joseph Dalton Hooker who both served as directors of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, London. Both men were well connected with the Victorian era Arctic explorers. European men could dodge the Victorian sensibilities that associated flora to the feminine through the guise of rationality and

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[123] McKay, *Picturing the Land,* 4.
[124] Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative,* 28-29.
[125] Back Published Notes 1833-35, MS 395/80/1-3;BL, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

the pursuit of scientific knowledge.[126] Ironically, artist-explorers omitted plant life from their images, even while they gathered botanical samples on these same voyages.

Explorers initially compared what they encountered to familiar species like Joseph Banks in 1766 Labrador, who compared the lichen, strawberry and currants to English varieties.[127] Similarly, in 1789, Alexander Mackenzie accounts throughout his inland expedition cranberry, strawberry, gooseberry, "south berry which the men call poires they are purple no bigger than a pea…another berry of a whiteish yellow colour resembling a raspberry"—possibly akpik (cloudberry/bakeapple)[128]—"and a number of plants and herbs which I am not acquainted with."[129] But eventually the scientific drive had explorers forfeiting comparisons and collecting specimens to be returned for scrutiny. James Ross in correspondence from October 1844 with Joseph Hooker commented on vegetation specimens collected during expedition.[130] John Richardson writing to American botanist William Mitten, November 1863 remarked on an array of lichen which were collected during the 1825 Great Slave Lake expedition.[131] Companies like the HBC were also involved in the salvaging and mining of Turtle Island for botanic collections. John Richardson in correspondence with John Franklin in March 1838 mentions specimens collected on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company.[132] A botanic drawing of Fernleaf Goldthread

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126 Levere, *Science and the Canadian Arctic*, 73-74, 132.

127 Joseph Banks Journal of a voyage to Newfoundland and Labrador, April 7th -November 17th 1766, JBK/2/7, Royal Botanical Society Library and Archives, Royal Botanical Society, Kew, England.

128 *The Botanical Knowledge of the Inuit of Umiujaq and Kuujjuarapik*, Nunavik (Montreal: Avataq Cultural Institute 2011); Christopher Fletcher, *Traditional Inuit First Aid: Based on Interview with Nunavik Elders* (Montreal: Avataq Cultural Institute: 2011); Blondeau, *Plants of the Villages and Parks of Nunavu*t, 55.

129 Sir Alexander Mackenzie journal, 1789, MG21-StoweMSS.793, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

130 Letters from Joseph Dalton Hooker, RM 5/60, folio 13, Kew Archives, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England.

131 Letters to W Mitten, Kew Archives, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England.

132 J Richardson letters to J. Franklin 1823-1842, Kew Archives, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England.

(*Coptis aspleniifolia*) which is native to northern British Columbia and Alaska, served as the backing for a letter between William Hooker and John Richardson (fig 16). Arctic flora despite its absence in the popular imaginary was entering the Qallunaat historical record through Imperial knowledge and natural history gathering.

Explorers interested in the curios of the "New World" were an open phenomenon of Imperial entitlement and colonial exploration.[133] Irish naturalist John Ball writing back to W. Hooker in 1859 recorded paying 25 pounds to transport specimens back for the Kew collection fresh from the Palliser Expedition on the Prairies.[134] Returning home from William Parry's expedition, James Ross boasted about his collection of plants to an unknown recipient on April 15th, 1828 describing moss, lichen, and some that had yet to flower.[135] Ross would later enlist William Hooker to help identify a flower Ross collected, "comparing it with specimens at the collection of Mr. Brown find it is nearer America than say any other found is in a remarkably rife state."[136] Among George Back's fonds in the Scott Polar Research Institute is *Directions for Collecting and Preserving Plants in Foreign Countries* authored by William J. Hooker in Glasgow in 1828. Steps to absorb moisture, apply pressure to prevent curling, and colour preservation are outlined, alongside detailed instructions for porous ferns, soft mosses, and seeds for cultivation.[137] Preceding this, John Banks in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1766 recorded in

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[133] Kay Dian Kriz, "Torrid Zones and Detoxified Landscapes: Picturing Jamaica, 1825-1840," in *Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies 1700-1840* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

[134] Canada Botanical Exploration reports, MR/617, Kew Archives, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England.

[135] James Ross, Letter unknown correspondent 15 April 1826, MS 621/2;D, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

[136] James Ross letters to William Hooker, 1827-40, MS 621/1/1-4;D, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

[137] Back, George, Published instructions for scientific collecting and observing, MS 395/109;BL, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

his diary the "acquisition of several valuable plants" alongside collecting seaweed specimens, fish, insects, and pelts.[138] Banks' ambition started early in the year to feed his desire for natural history collecting as early as May 19th recording "set out on foot to get as far into the country as possible; soon after we set out, began to snow, continued all the day, but did not cover the ground deep enough to hinder observing plants" and continued on the 27th "walked out this day; found a species of cotton grass, prickly fern, a species of lichen, a moss of the bryum kind."[139] Botany, at least for naturalists like Back and Banks, was not a secondary bonus to polar exploration but rather a motivating drive.

As contradictory as the Arctic and botany may seem, European men plundering the polar landscape were plugging these "discoveries" into wider scientific discourse. Explorers' notebooks, diaries, and official ledgers are filled with scrolls of meteorological, geographic, climatic, and geomagnetic data extracted from the region.[140] Engaging with the search for the Northwest Passage required studying the technologies and climate of the polar region such as Constantine Phipps British Arctic Expedition of 1773 and the natural history specimens of plants and animals taken from Spitsbergen north of Sápmi.[141] Scholars like the Irish General Edward Sabine engaged the Royal Navy in natural science pursuits like charting the earth's magnetism in remote northern locations.[142] In an 1842 correspondence with John Richardson, he outlines

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[138] Joseph Banks Journal of a voyage to Newfoundland and Labrador, April 7th-November 17th 1766, JBK/2/7, Royal Botanical Society Library and Archives, Royal Botanical Society, Kew, England, August 1-2.

[139] Joseph Banks Journal of a voyage to Newfoundland and Labrador.

[140] Back Published Notes 1833-35, MS 395/80/1-3;BL, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England; John Ross Notebook, 1818, MS 486/9/1 BJ, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

[141] Description of plants and animals found in North Pole voyage 1773, MS 337; BJ, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

[142] Edward Sabine fonds, A-720, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

routes for future Canadian surveys and like Back above was concerned with preserving specimens of both fauna and flora. To dry specimens while traveling he recommends "when stationary he may dry the plants between sheets of brown paper placed under bags of warm dry sand. Packing them when sure dry between two/three books with multiple sheets of brown paper."[143] Arctic explorers satisfied their own curiosity about exotic natural worlds, and shared these findings with other Qallunaat intrigued by the polar region. Men of science like William and Joseph Hooker depended on these preserved specimens coming back to the metropole for the pursuit of knowledge and built their careers on the field work conducted by young men.

As previously noted, the Arctic had a wide readership with popular press coverage of Lady Franklin's search for her husband, international news, and the most innovative scientific findings. In the field of Imperial botany William Hooker was seminal with works like *Flora Boreali-Americana: or the Botany of the North Western Parts of British America* published in parts from 1829-1834. This type of arm-chair botany scholarship would have been impossible without the explorers Hooker credits such as Richardson and Drummond under Franklin's command and specimens from other colonial naturalists like David Douglas.[144] The book includes a wide range of exotic flora from the southern zones of exploration as well as some of the iconic tundra plants. The accompanying illustrations of *Arenaria Arctica*, *Saxifraga*, or *Anemone Richardsonii* are typical of the calculated, rational, and highly detailed tradition of botanical drawing (fig 17, 18, 19). Scientific botanic drawings by nature of the genre are paradoxical in that they try and capture the objective and intricate structure and appearance of

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[143] Edward Sabine fonds, A-707, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, 9.
[144] William Jackson Hooker, *Flora Boreali-Americana: or the Botany of the North Western Parts of British America* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1840), https://ia800307.us.archive.org/2/items/mobot31753000619665/mobot31753000619665.pdf

the vegetation. However, at the same time the plants are isolated from their environment visually on a blank background since specimens are physically removed and transported to different climates. Additionally, the surgical cross sections and differing angles are unnatural to how one would encounter these plants. But at the expense of accurate environmental context the subjects are re-presented for rational Imperial knowledge by being depicted sliced, isolated, and rotated varying degrees.

In the collection of the Royal Botanic Gardens archives at Kew exist a variety of drawings of marine flora as well. One by William Hooker I have identified is *Phyllophora pseudoceranoides*, a common red algae in Atlantic waters with a large range from the Hudson and James Bay to the shores of the British Isles (fig 20).[145] What makes these renderings unique in the series is the use of colour prioritizing the species' variation of rusty browns as well as its anatomical structure. A microscopic window shares with viewers the intimate texture and colours of the *lamina* or blade of the seaweed. These enlightenment findings culminated when Hooker delivered a paper to the Linnaean Society of London in 1860, "Outlines of the Distribution of Arctic Plants", which summarized a generation of Arctic exploration and sampling.[146] Just like polar geomagnetic readings, cartography, climate and navigational data, botany was another source of scientific knowledge extracted from the Arctic by Qallunaat.

But curious men of geographic exploration and natural history were not the only Qallunaat interested in the botanic world. Men of industry like William Penny, founder of the

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[145] Arthur C. Mathieson, Gregg E. Moore, and Frederick T. Short "A FLORISTIC COMPARISON OF SEAWEEDS FROM JAMES BAY AND THREE CONTIGUOUS NORTHEASTERN CANADIAN ARCTIC SITES." *Rhodora* 112, no. 952 (2010): 396-434. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23314700.
[146] Levere, *Science and the Canadian Arctic*, 132.

whaling enterprise the Aberdeen Arctic Company, were also experienced on terra firma.[147] Beyond extracting from the sea, they also knew how to survive and where to process whales on land. William Cass was surgeon general for a whaling expedition in 1824, and recorded the men learned to use moss and the harvested oils as lamps from local Inuit.[148] Surgeon R.H. Hilliard's published narrative of an 1859 whaling expedition to the Davis Strait is complete with etchings and over fifty pressed herbaria pages.[149] Plants like Arctic Hardbell/ Arctic Bellflower (Tolonnguaq/ Tikiujaq; *Campanula Uniflora*), Drooping Bulblet Saxifrage (Nunaraq qupanuap niqinga; *Saxifraga Cernua*), and Arctic Pyrole (Ingutsai niqingit; *Pyrola rotundifolia*) accompany the textual narrative of hunting and extracting from the sea (fig 21, 22, 23). Like Hooker's scientific botanic drawings the pressed keepsakes are isolated on blank backgrounds of the book pages and differ drastically from the butchered colonial specimens. Maritime men whose goals, ambitions, and intentions were the animals in Arctic waters demonstrated a familiarity, if not an intimacy or respect for the vegetation found on the tundra.

George Back's contoured tundra landscape, addressed in the previous chapter, demonstrates an innovative thought process on how to re-present the wide horizons of the tundra landscape. He continues this attention with small scale studies of the micro elements that make up the big picture. The small watercolour sketch *Stone at Fort Enterprise* (1819-1820) is an anomaly in the Arctic historical and archival record unlike anything I had previously encountered. The lone rock is depicted in colour, textured by lichens in the cracks and a diverse

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147 Penny Journals from 5 July 1857 to July 7 1858, winter in Cumberland Sound, MS 1424;D, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.
148 William Eden Cass fonds, MG24-H69, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, 154 March 26-27.
149 Journal kept kept by R.H. Hilliard, ship's surgeon, on voyages aboard the S.S. Narwhal of Dundee, M-717, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario (microfilm, original at the Glenbow Museum).

array of mosses adding colour to the top plane of the stone (fig 24). The rock is decontextualized from the vast horizon or ominous cliff and the ecosystem that it supports is represented on its own as if this colony of life is important enough to be depicted. Back continues this work in a page study of tundra flowers from 1819-1820. Two species depicted may be the white Glacier Buttercup and the blush coloured *Dispensia* cluster (fig 25). Like the stone, these flowers stand alone as subjects and differ from the representations of both Hilliard and Hooker because they seem to have been painted in situ, *en plein air.* The flowers are isolated visually but their stalks remain rooted in the sand, their environment, their home. They are not dried, pressed, or dissected, but appear to be rendered while still alive in the places that birthed them. George Back's sensitive and scientific attention to botanical detail is captured in intimate sketches like these, some of his less famous compositions.

Representing *Inuit Nunangat*

In this final section, contemporary Inuit art production is foregrounded to reclaim and assert the power of Inuit to represent their own territory, their relationships with the land, and in the process replace interpretations of the Arctic made by outsiders. In these passages the art and artists' voices take over and take precedent. I consciously saturate the text with quotes or visual analysis of art objects. The artists of this new generation make important innovations with their mediums and subject matter. New platforms like political organizations or art institutions disseminate Inuit perspectives about the Arctic landscape, which is crucial for Inuit cultural authority which destabilizes Qallunaat misrepresentations. This momentum is not isolated to the

arts as larger Inuit self-determination contests Western perceptions of Inuit Nunangat as well as the associated extractive intentions and ideologies.

Inuit have been—and remain—cultural stewards as well as territorial stewards of their lands since time immemorial. At colonial contact, the power of representation was shared between Inuit producing cultural artifacts from new experiences and Qallunaat whose interpretations had the most access to Western cultural influence. At this juncture is John Sakeouse (Sackheouse), an Inuk who left Greenland in 1816 with sailors and established himself in Edinburgh before acting as interpreter on the first John Ross expedition two years later.[150] He survives within the archival record with his curious rendering *First Communication with the Natives of Prince Regents Bay as Drawn by John Sackheouse and Presented to Captain John Ross Aug. 10, 1818* published in Ross' narrative representing the first contact the Royal Navy had with Inuit apart from himself (fig 26).[151] The engraving is unaccredited on the print but other plates from Ross' narrative are recognized as the work of Harvell and Sons. Although Sakeouse's drawing might differ from the final product, the engraving falls into the same tropes as his Qallunaat counterparts with monstrous icebergs, the ships HMS Isabella and Alexander featuring prominently, and caricatures of the Nunavummiut.[152] According to Ross' description described through the voyeurism of his telescope, the rendering is factually accurate as Sakeouse was sent out first to offer gifts such as beads, shirts, and knives after meeting on an ice sheet on August

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[150] McGoogan, *Dead Reckoning,* 67-73.

[151] John Ross, *A voyage of discovery : made under the orders of the Admiralty, in His Majesty's ships Isabella and Alexander, for the purpose of exploring Baffin's Bay, and inquiring into the probability of a North-West Passage* (John Maury, 1819), https://archive.org/details/voyageofdiscover02ross/page/86, 88;FIRST COMMUNICATION with the NATIVES of PRINCE REGENTS BAY as drawn by JOHN SACKHEOUSE, C-025238, (1819), Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

[152] The Inuktitut word to refer to Inuit from Nunavut.

10th, 1818.[153] The Inuit are eventually coaxed on board offering Ross vital information and "drawings", most likely mapping or navigational knowledge.[154] While Sakeouse represents the icy surroundings that Ross describes he also represents himself, likely the figure in the top hat with the darker complexion and kamiik mirroring his Nunavummiut counterparts. Sakeouse's innate talent is applauded by Ross since his artistic training had been "limited to copying such prints on single figures, or ships, as he could procure."[155] Since Sakeouse was accustomed to replicating the European images he could access in Scotland, Ross's disclosure sheds light on compositional choices. Details like the intricate ships, towering cliffs, and stylized Inuit figures were an Inuk regurgitation of colonial motifs and visual tropes from prior expeditions' visual culture.

Inuit artists have long challenged Qallunaat understandings and worldviews in order to wedge Indigenous perceptions of their history and land into dominant narratives. An early example from the visual arts is Ulayu Pingwartok's print *Springtime* (1976) with what I have identified as kungulik (Sorrel) and aupaluktunnguat (Purple Saxifrage) framing the top left corner of the composition dominated by a young couple, their sled dog, and a child poking out from the mother's amauti (fig 27).[156] Flora and ecological knowledge continued to enter the Inuit

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[153] Ross, *A voyage of discovery,* 88.

[154] Ross, *A voyage of discovery,* 93.

[155] Ross, *A voyage of discovery,* 87; "the impression made by this ludicrous scene on Sacheuse was so strong, that some time after he made a drawing of it, being the first specimen we had witnessed of his talents for historical composition; his practice in the art of design, which we had cultivated, in addition to all the other branches of knowledge engrafted on his Eskimaux education, being hitherto limited to copying such prints on single figures, or ships, as he could procure. As he never recieved any hint, or assistance, in this performance, a correct copy has been subjoined, without the slightest variation from the original"

[156] An Amauti is an Inuit women's parka in the eastern Arctic with an large hood for carrying a child; Ulayu, *Springtime*, stone cut, 1976; "Dorset 76: Cape Dorset Annual Graphics Collection 1976," (Toronto: MF Fehley Publishers Limited, 1976); "Plant Life" Arctic Watch Wild Lodge, http://www.arcticwatch.ca/whale-watching/plant-life.

art world with the print *Two Geese Eating Grass* (1985) by Paukosie Sivuak, Thomassie Irqumia, Eliassie Aupaluk (fig 28).[157] These early artistic pioneers, the elders, and knowledge keepers who have continued to harvest from the land paved the way for a newer generation of artists to explore themes rarely seen in Inuit art. Tony Anguhalluq's almanac of a site-specific landscape drawing *River Flowing Down Between Two Mountains in July (*2007) and *Mountain and Frozen River in December* (2007) conceptually portray the familiarity and devotion of Indigenous ways of being and stewarding land (fig 29, 30). Pitseolak Qimirpik memorializes the act of summer berry picking in his serpentine sculpture *Woman Picking Berries* (2014), which puts harvesting from the land centre stage (fig 31). This is particularly important because the medium of carving is otherwise saturated with Arctic animals, shape-shifting, and hunting scenes.

Plants continue to play a critical role in Inuit life and the ecosystems of Inuit Nunangat. Thus, Inuit familiarity with the botanical world can be seen in various graphic and craft practices like beading motifs or making fabric dyes.[158] Along the Atlantic coast of Nunatsiavut, the unique practice of weaving salt water sea grasses like ivik (beach grass), ivitsukak (basket grass), and senngailik (dunegrass) into basketry was passed from artisans such as Druscilla Rich, to those still making grasswork today, like Fanny Broomfield, Garmel Rich, Sarah Baikie, and Josephine Jacque.[159] But beyond craft traditions, the flora of the coasts and tundra are a place of sustenance remembered by Paulossie Shauk in an interview conducted in 1985 reflecting on life in

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[157] Paukosie Sivuak, Thomassie Irqumia, Eliassie Aupaluk, *Two Geese Eating Grass*, print, 1985; *Povungnituk 1985: Print Collection*, ed May M. Craig, La Federation des Cooperatives du Nouveau-Quebecz, 1985.

[158] "Making plant dyes: Craft Centre Workshop" Makkovik Labrador; Makkovik - People and Plants Facebook Community, https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.579043625489054.1073741855.390594181000667&type=3.

[159] Heather Igloliorte, *SakKijâjuk: Art and Craft from Nunatsiavut* (Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 2017); Downing, *Community of Nain Labrador, 74; Baskets of Grass*, "Land and Sea," (CBC Newfoundland and Labrador, 2010) http://www.cbc.ca/landandseanl/2010/10/archival-special.html.

Kuujjuaraapik, Nunavik. She remembers, "there was plenty to eat in summer," picking quajautik (lichen), sweet airaq (beach grass), malissuagaq (sandwort), and ivik (sea lime grass) contrasting these memories of bounty with hardship and starvation in the winter.[160] Despite centuries of missionizing, assimilative policies, and the imposition of settlements, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit on botany is not lost and these gifts from the land remain appreciated.

Print maker Nicotye Samayualie works beyond the tropes of perceived 'authenticity' within her medium and the art market's southern tastes for scenes out of Inuit life which have been often absent of flora, or which focus on snowy winterscapes. Samayulie's drawing *Kinngait Summer Flowers* (2012) is exemplary of this as the vivid colours and whimsical shapes of blooming plants standout from the black paper background.[161] Her lithograph *Cotton Grass* (2013) is distinct for how it centres what might otherwise be conceived of as background or filler (fig 32). Samayualie conceptualized the big fluffy stalks as a symbol for summers and their bounty, noting, "all the animals gain weight. All the arctic flowers have grown bigger and I think it is time to eat black and blueberries."[162] The composition is natural and imperfect in arrangement with the white downy tufts against a backdrop of thickly textured grass, rolled bits of earth, and swirling wind above. The playful texture of the piece is fitting to mirror the iconic quality of suputaujalik (cottongrass). Other work like the drawing *Untitled* (2015), despite depicting a fantastical rocky coastline show an extreme intimacy and attentiveness in every rock,

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160 *The Botanical Knowledge of the Inuit of Kangiqsujuaq, Nunavik* (Montreal: Avataq Cultural Institute, 2011); Avataq Cultural Institute Archives, Oral History Project, ACI01/A01,003 Paulossie Shauk, May 1985, Kuujjuaraapik.

161 "Plants Objects Landscapes: Drawings By Nicotye Samayualie (February 21-April 4, 2015)", Marion Scott Gallery, http://marionscottgallery.com/portfolio-item/plants-objects-landscapes-drawings-by-nicotye-samayualie/.

162 "Cotton Grass, 2013: Nicotye Samayualie", Spirit Wrestler Gallery, http://www.spiritwrestler.com/catalog/index.php?products_id=8332.

boulder, and pebble compromising the whole (fig 33). Paul Machnik described the work's mood as "precision and calmness…which borders on the abstract."[163] In the seemingly mundane objects of the land like rocks and vegetation, Samayualie turns attention away from the vastness and human actors to the lessons encapsulated in these intimate zones of ecology nestled close to the earth. This is in line with IQ, in that every part of the land has a protocol and a way of being to respect. As Jose Angutinngurniq notes, "There were many laws pertaining to the tundra that we had to follow diligently or else the environment would not flourish as it should. We could not even break rocks, not even the smallest of rocks."[164] Samayualie foregrounds these unlikely subjects of the plants and rocks as the focal points of her compositions, reminding Qallunaat consumers that there is beauty in the Arctic landscape, and that practices of stewardship go beyond hunting and animal relations.

Seamstresses Fanny Algaalaga Avatituq and her elder mother-in-law Ruth Qaulluaryuk Nuilaalik boldly assert floral or ecological themes as their dominant subject matter depicting an attentiveness to the miniature natural world. They create Qamani'tuaq (Baker Lake) wall hangings which reiterate the presence of floral colour in the Arctic environment. While Avatituq's embroideries often resemble quilts with segmented designs of patch work in floral motifs, Qaulluaryuk's renderings read as abstracted landscapes devoid of any human or animal presence. The Marion Scott Gallery has said of Qaulluaryuk's embroideries, that they counter the "popular perception of the Canadian Arctic as a barren region devoid of growth and

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[163] Paul Machnik, "Artist to Know: Nicotye Samayualie," (December 4, 2017) http://iaq.inuitartfoundation.org/30-artists-nicotye-samayualie/.
[164] *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: What Inuit Have Always Known to Be True*, 80.

fecundity."[165] In works like *Summer on the Tundra* (2010) clusters of foliage and leaves stitched in the same shape, are piled in mounds of varying bright colours like growth on the land. The earlier panels *Four Seasons on the Tundra* (1991-92) feature different colour palettes and various stitches to replicate the textures and shapes of the seasonal environment (fig 34).[166] The spring wall hanging emphasizes vibrant colour, and young green growth contrasted with stark smooth surfaces like bare rock. By summer the colours of the botanic clusters are richly saturated; dark red and ripe purple cover the entire surface. The fall composition shows some of the seasonal plants have bloomed and gone dormant; the clusters are bigger, less diverse with muted dried tones of amber, rust, gold, and crimson. Lastly, winter's wall hanging features frosty blues and cosmic silver interrupted by swaths of warm pink as the sun lowers down the horizon. The piece swirls with energy reminiscent of icy water, drifting snow, and arsaniit (Northern Lights or Aurora Borealis) dancing in the night sky. The tetraptych format emphasizes a visual diversity of the landscape in Inuit Nunangat and ecological changes throughout the phases.

Asinnajaq is a contemporary Inuk film maker who is invested in sharing how she sees the circumpolar landscape not as a place of frozen scarcity, but rather a "plentiful" environment: "It's not always easy, but it can be and is like a treasure chest."[167] The reoccurrence of Arctic flora is not simply an aesthetic choice or an easy motif, but part of a conscious project of reframing:

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[165] "Ruth Qaulluaryuk", Marion Scott Gallery, http://www.marionscottgallery.com/ARTISTS/QaulluaryukR-1.asp (date of last access April 17 2015).

[166] Bernadette Driscoll-Engelstad, "A Woman's Vision: Inuit Textile Art from Arctic Canada" in *Inuit Art Quarterly* Vol. 9 No. 2 (Summer 1994), http://inuitartfoundation.org/wp-content/themes/u-design/images/Archives/1994_02.pdf

[167] Asinnajaq, Interview with Author, Tiohtiá:ke/ Mooniyang, Montreal QC, January 18, 2019, "So because of that history that has been created and all of the words that have been used to try to create an imagery of our land I try to—as often as I can—remind myself and the people that live on it and the people outside of us that it's plentiful."

> I think that one of the reasons that I do make sure that they're present is the knowledge that people from outside of us don't understand how full of life our land really is. Even many Inuit and people that live in landscape like ours fall into the pattern of copying the language people around us use, such as "barren."[168]

For her art practice, changing perceptions is not just about the visual associations but also language and naming: "we should stop calling our *nunaat* tundra, because tundra's not our word and we can easily use our word which would just be nunaat."[169] Collaborating with singer Beatrice Deer for visuals and set design she comments that "we really wanted to focus on the plants, the flowers, and berries from our land. It's beautiful, it's not just harsh."[170] In her film practice, the plants of Inuit nunaat—which she lovingly described as "belly botany"—are an ever-present theme.[171]

The words used to describe the Arctic were, and continue to be a powerful creative force in how it shapes perception. As Asinnajaq explains, "The language that you use shapes the way you think."[172] For her, "barren" has a frustrating and immediate connotation for the land, whereas "plenty" is a bit more abstracted and often withheld when people account their experiences:

> If you are listening then you will understand that it can be plentiful, but if you are not, then you have never actually heard the word associated directly with the land…But if I say plentiful then maybe you go more like to thinking of a clump of berries, or a clump of fish and its kind of like separate and removed from it in a way. But those are a part of the plentifulness. When you add them altogether it's a lot of stuff that people survived with for a long time.[173]

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[168] Asinnajaq, Interview with Author.

[169] Asinnajaq, Interview with Author.

[170] Asinnajaq, Interview with Author.

[171] Asinnajaq, Interview with Author, "you can't look at anything unless you're on your belly. Cause it's there and there's lots of it but it's little!"

[172] Asinnajaq, Interview with Author.

[173] Asinnajaq, Interview with Author.

In an earlier film work presented at *iNuit Blanche* (2016), personal photographs combined with archival footage, animation, and painting depicted Asinnajaq's viewpoint of all the Arctic's offerings. "The whole point of that film *Upinnaqursitik*: it means lucky. Its literally only about how plentiful our land is."[174] And seeing that perspective represented on screen, in a gallery was a shocking revelation for many:

> I had some really beautiful people be too kind to me and thanking me for the film because it's like that's what my home is like, that's it. The land, the fishing, the plentifulness of it, that's what that film was about. I think people were really not used to seeing our land shown that way, in a way that feels not just truthful but really happy. It's showing how I experience the land especially in the summer time. People were so shocked to see it that it made them so happy, they jumped onto you to say thank you.[175]

During our interview it dawned on me that this discourse of "plenty" is well preserved in the historical record in Qallunaat economic presence, fishers, whalers, and fur-trappers. Of course these resources could be exploited because they were present in the first place. It is completely exploitative and paradoxical to construct a region as environmentally empty but also take so much. "Especially for the whalers. But what we can, we will take but 'there is nothing'."[176]

Her most recent work *Three-Thousand* (2017) described as a "sci-fi documentary," is a time-lapsing Inuit-futurism video piece. In it, Asinnajaq blends archival footage of Inuit subjects from the National Film Board archive along with digital animations projecting what the future may look like in Inuit Nunangat.[177] At the beginning, a lichen colony clusters and procreates over the screen bringing the film to life. The reoccurring motif symbolizes safety, life, and growth on Inuit nunaat. As Asinnajaq describes, "because lichen is always the first form of life to form on

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[174] Asinnajaq, Interview with Author.
[175] Asinnajaq, Interview with Author.
[176] Asinnajaq, Interview with Author.
[177] "Three Thousand" *National Film Board of Canada*, https://www.nfb.ca/distribution/film/three-thousand.

land, if you want to make it safely you have to bring it…So that's why there is lichen at the beginning of the film."[178] Our conversation about lichen takes an unexpected turn when she informs me that lichen is one of the first life forms, along with tardigrades, to survive outside the space station.[179] Furthermore, this resilient and ancient plant recently surprised the science world by being comprised of not only a symbiotic relationship with fungus and algae—as was previously understood—but also the presence of yeast: "So it's actually three things that are all working together."[180] The botanic ecosystems of Inuit Nunangat are brought forward from the past represented in archival footage, and this ancestral knowledge is carried forward to sustain life in the future imaginary. Inuit futurity aligns with its Indigenous worldview where time operates as a fluid "continuum."[181] These interpretations of the future are crucial for Indigenous people to world build beyond the impacts of settler-colonialism. In the circumpolar context, this becomes increasingly important for Inuit to envision and mobilize alternative ways of being to combat anthropogenic climate change and environmental degradation.[182]

Inuuteq Storch, from Sisimiut Greenland, is another filmmaker whose work centres around the personal and in the process projects local experiences and perspectives outwards. "My work is about me. So I communicate with myself. Like specifically these videos (the series *Old Films of the New Tale*) they are created when I have frustrations or difficulties being in

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[178] Asinnajaq, Interview with Author.
[179] Asinnajaq, Interview with Author.
[180] Asinnajaq, Interview with Author.
[181] Tagalik, "Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: The Role of Indigenous Knowledge in Supporting Wellness in Inuit Communities in Nunavut", 2; *The Inuit Way: A Guide to Inuit Culture*, *Pauktuutit, Inuit Women of Canada* (Ottawa: 2006), https://www.relations-inuit.chaire.ulaval.ca/sites/relations-inuit.chaire.ulaval.ca/files/InuitWay_e.pdf.
[182] Heather Igloliorte, Julie Nagam and Carla Taunton, "Introduction: The Future Possibilities of Indigenous Digital and New Media Art," in *Indigenous Art: New Media and the Digital* Special Issue, PUBLIC 54 (Winter 2016): 5-13.

between of two—traditional life and modern life."[183] Exploring this tension between old ways and the present is cathartic:

> the schools I went to, we talk about what's going on in my photos. We were not talking specifically about how to make photos of nature or how to make things look differently. It's just we talk about which feelings we use and how they are visible in the art work… These videos are from archives so I don't really have control over how they are shot. But I can master the feelings so they can become my own stories. So I'm telling other peoples' stories into my own story. I edit the footages, I find other clips so it makes a different story.[184]

The backdrop for these deeply personal narratives is the land, which plays into how Inuit protocol mixes with outsider understandings. *As We Forget We Chase the Beginning* (2016) features soft footage of a woman's garden and an abundant greenhouse. "That specific video is about my grandfather who has dementia. My grandmother died a lot earlier than my grandfather and she used to be my best friend and she has a lot of flowers."[185] These portraits feature the Greenlandic landscape in addition to people and Storch's sentiments. "In that video [*The Finger in the Message,* 2016] because the landscape is so normal for me, the portraiture of these people is so strong I didn't even think about the tundra in the videos. It's first now that you say that, there's a lot of tundra here but that's how our town and villages look like.*"*[186] The footage rolls through frames of local kalaallit, Danish teachers and military with rolling hills of lush grassy landscape dotted with flowers and rock.[187] "At home I collect plants, different plants to make tea. So I think they are a part of the nature… For me nature is more like the mountains, the air, and

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[183] Inuuteq Storch, Digital Interview with Author, Tiohtiá:ke/ Mooniyang, Montreal QC, February 8, 2019.
[184] Inuuteq Storch, Digital Interview with Author.
[185] Inuuteq Storch, Digital Interview with Author.
[186] Inuuteq Storch, Digital Interview with Author.
[187] A Greenlandic Inuit word to refer to themselves

the animals, and the plants are there to help all those as well, like me. Getting tea, healthier than the one I buy from the grocery store."[188]

Our conversation tackles tropes and the contrasting viewpoints on acceptability. *Either Way That's Where We End* (2016) features a screen of branches to protect viewers unable to cope with Inuit realities.

> The one with tree leaves, for me it's like a censor for what's happening in the video. The video has very strong footage of a dog being killed so I wanted to put a layer between the viewer and the video itself…there's a lot of contrasted things going on in my life. Like shooting that dog is part of what we do when you have sled dogs, because they are very similar to wolves, so they fight a lot. When a dog is suffering from the fighting sometimes you just have to kill it because that's better for the dog. Or when you lift a huge seal or walrus from the neck it's because that's where the grip is the best and you just have to get it up so you can eat. Those are very difficult to handle for the normal modern life. But here it's normal and it's still in our modern life.[189]

Storch is kind when I ask about outsider's stereotypes. "I think, without coming over here, without understand what's going on, the only life that you can imagine is the life that you had. In that way it's acceptable that they think we can do exactly the same things, but it's unacceptable because its harming the way we live."[190] He continues, "we have a good relationship with Denmark… even though they don't really understand us as much as we want to be understood." I ask him if stereotypes exist for outsiders he encounters, "Generally they don't know a lot and they think we still live in igloos and stuff…But Disney plays for those opinions as well, with igloos. For all the parts of the world its romantic to have igloos, snow and ice, all the time…But we have the most beautiful summers."[191] I agree, as I have seen Greenlandic summer first-hand.

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[188] Inuuteq Storch, Digital Interview with Author.
[189] Inuuteq Storch, Digital Interview with Author.
[190] Inuuteq Storch, Digital Interview with Author.
[191] Inuuteq Storch, Digital Interview with Author.

Lastly, Stephen Agluvak Puskas and Taqralik Patridge continue this work of reclaiming representation and challenging dominant perceptions. Puskas' video-clip, counter-documentary piece *Ukiuktaqtumi: In the North* (2016) was made in response to Quebec filmmaker Dominic Gagnon's controversial film *Of the North* (2015) which used found footage from the internet and YouTube of Inuit, as well as other video content not of Inuit that he deliberately falsified to appear to be of Inuit origin, to support his film's thesis, as well as a track from Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq, compiled without consent. Gagnon's film used editing techniques to create visual associations that perpetuated harmful, racist, and sexist connotations.[192] Puskas, in researching Gagnon's source imagery, found that some of the film's footage was not even from the Arctic region. In response, *Ukiuktaqtumi* is a clip interpretation of diverse Inuit lands and practices across Inuit Nunangat. The documentary was made from an Inuit perspective for an Inuit audience, featuring Inuktitut that is untranslated for Qallunaat viewers.[193] Taqralik Patridge's spoken word poem *I Picked Berries* (2011) is a love letter to hunting on the land and careful attentive observation of harvesting berries.[194] She recalls preparing skins, traversing the "tiring mattress like" mucky tundra landscape dotted with flowers, orange, yellow, black, and light green lichen. She describes picking "buckets and buckets" of berries, with juice staining her lips. "Plants tend to taste bigger than they look," she recites to an audience of Qallunaat in a far off concrete jungle.

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[192] Ezra Winton interview with Alethea Arnaquq-Baril, "Curating the North: Documentary Screening Ethics and Inuit Representations in (Festival) Cinema," *ArtThreat.net* (December 17, 2015); Erica Comanda, "Stephen Puskas Compiles Ukiuktaqtumi, an Inuit Response to the Racist Of the North," *Muskrat Magazine* (September 8, 2017); Sarah Rogers, "Inuk filmmaker gathers online clips for his version of the North," *Nunatsiaq News* (November 1, 2016).

[193] *Ukiuktaqtumi: In the North,* Stephen Agluvak Puskas (Puskas, 2016).

[194] Tagralik Patridge, *I picked berries, "*Words Aloud", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fm6zyrwV4c.

Conclusion

On account of the Arctic's remoteness, its perception to outsiders has always been mediated heavily through second-hand accounts and visual re-interpretations like historic print culture or contemporary media like tv, film, and satellite images. George Back exemplifies the naturalist-explorer who perpetuated stereotypical, easily consumable and heroic images at the same time he detailed the plant life and intimate details of the Arctic landscape in his sketchbooks. Botany and flora do exist in the visual culture of Arctic exploration in the pages of George Back's six prolific volumes, scribbled in journals like the mountain range motif of Robert McCormick, and published images like those of Robert Hood in Franklin's first narrative. Although rare and hidden amongst a large body of frozen stereotypical imagery they have since gone "unnoticed amid so many derivative and false representations."[195]

The presence of both botanical scrutiny and Imperial extraction in the form of fur traders, fishing men, and whaling fleets demonstrated that Inuit Nunangat was always a place of "plenty" and bounty. The nature of the Arctic region existed, and in such abundance that it was to be exploited for the Empire's glory, as well as preserved and dissected by botanists at the heart of the metropole. Today for Qallunaat outsiders, the Arctic is an exotic canary in the coal mine of the anthropocene. Meanwhile for Inuit, Sámi and other circumpolar Indigenous peoples the environment still provides and is cherished and stewarded as it always has been.

Today the 'North' persists as a romantic symbol. Institutions like settler governments, mining, and petro-capital energy corporations continue to construct perceptions and discourse

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[195] Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative,* 41.

around an "Arctic Image Complex" that benefits their interests.[196] This selective understanding is represented in popular historic Arctic images and the discourse of "barrenness" allowed for the extraction of furs, fish, and whales from the region. Meanwhile, explorer-naturalists collected botanical specimens but depopulated their landscapes of these same treasures. Fabrications like this remain important today to constructed narratives complicit to inaction on climate change or the decline of caribou populations, settler-colonial nation state sovereignty, international shipping, resource extraction, as well as socio-political assaults on traditional and sustainable practices like seal harvesting. Despite the changing politics and climate, the polar region remains a vibrant Inuit homeland with a thriving and balanced animal and botanical ecosystem. One which was largely erased in the colonial landscape historiography.

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[196] TJ Demos, *Decolonizing Nature*, 93.

Plates

Fig. 1
drawn by Captain John Ross, engraved by R. Harvell and Son, *Passing through the Ice, June 16 1818*, etching, in John Ross, *A voyage of discovery : made under the orders of the Admiralty, in His Majesty's ships Isabella and Alexander, for the purpose of exploring Baffin's Bay, and inquiring into the probability of a North-West Passage,* (John Maury, 1819), https://archive.org/details/voyageofdiscover02ross/page/86, 48.

Fig.2
Edward Adams, watercolour ship in icebergs in diary, 1850, watercolours and ink,
Journal, 12 October 1850 to 3 July 1851 [Kept ashore in and near St Michael's, Alaska] 1 volume, holograph, MS 1115;BJ, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

Fig. 3
H.W. Fielden, *Geographical Sketch*, dated March 27, 1876, sketch, in Trevor H. Levere. *Science and the Canadian Arctic: A century of Exploration 1818-1918.* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 285.

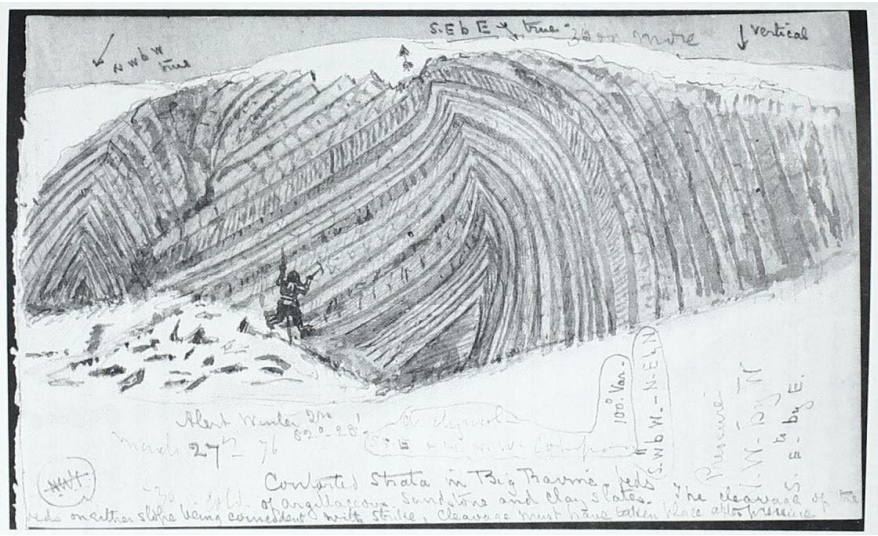


Fig. 4
John Ross, notebook sketch of climbers, 1818, graphite, John Ross Notebook, 1818, MS 486/9/1 BJ, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

Fig. 5
Pelham Aldrich, cliff watercolour in scrapbook, 1875-1876, watercolour, MS 633; BJ, 1875-1876 on HMS ALERT Arctic Expedition 1875-76". Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

Fig. 6
George Back, *HMS Terror and one of her boats off a spectacular iceberg, apparently in the Davis Strait, between Canada and Greenland*, 1838, watercolour, Canadian Museum of History.

Fig. 7
W.T. Mumford, *Union Bay Taken from Little Point James,* July 1854, watercolour, W.T. Mumford fonds, A640-02, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

Fig. 8
Robert McCormick, fleet sketch, 1852, graphite, Robert McCormick fonds, MG40-F9 microfilm M-1622, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

Fig. 9 and 10
W.T. Mumford, *Resolute and Intrepid in Winter Quarters* and T*he North Star Forced on Shore by the Ice, The Site of the Winter Quarters of the Erebus and the Terror*, 1854, watercolour, W.T. Mumford fonds, A640-02, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

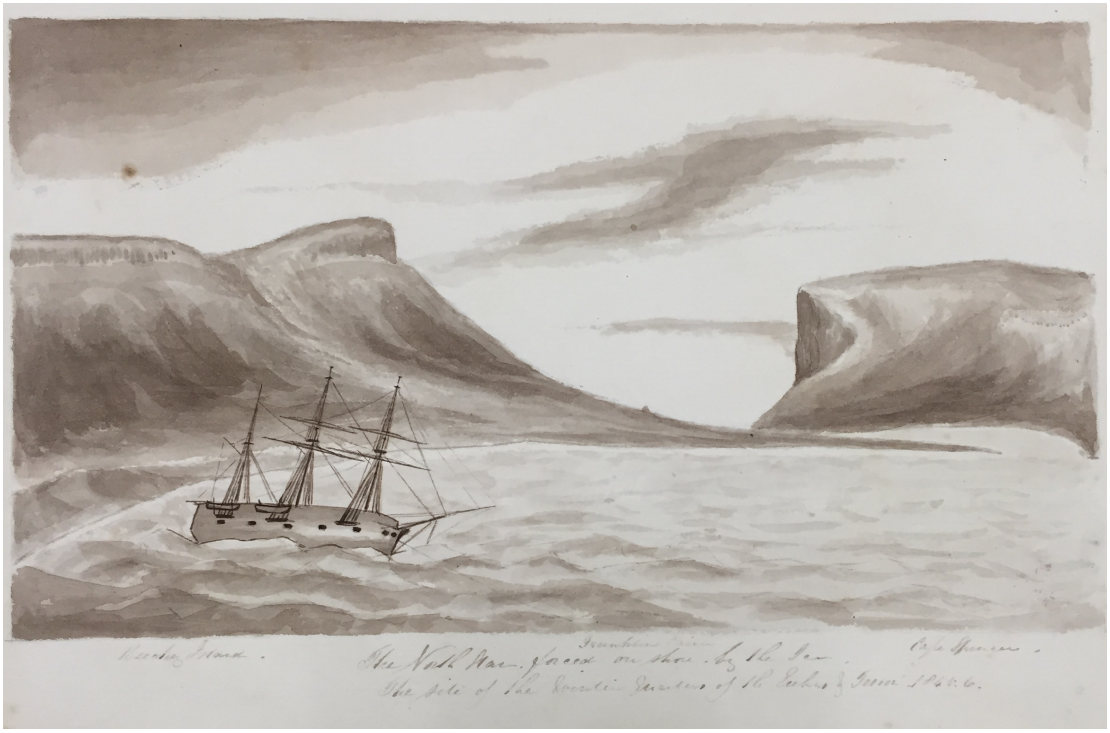


Fig. 11
Edward Finden engraver after Robert Hood's drawing, *Discovering the Coppermine River, John Franklin,* 1820, engraving, in John Franklin, *Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea* (John Murray, 1823).

Fig 12 and 13
George Back, landscape sketches, 1833, pen, George Back Sketchbook 1833, MS 869, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England, 91, 97.

Fig. 14
Robert McCormick, mountain sketch, 1852, graphite, Robert McCormick fonds, MG40-F9 microfilm M-1622, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

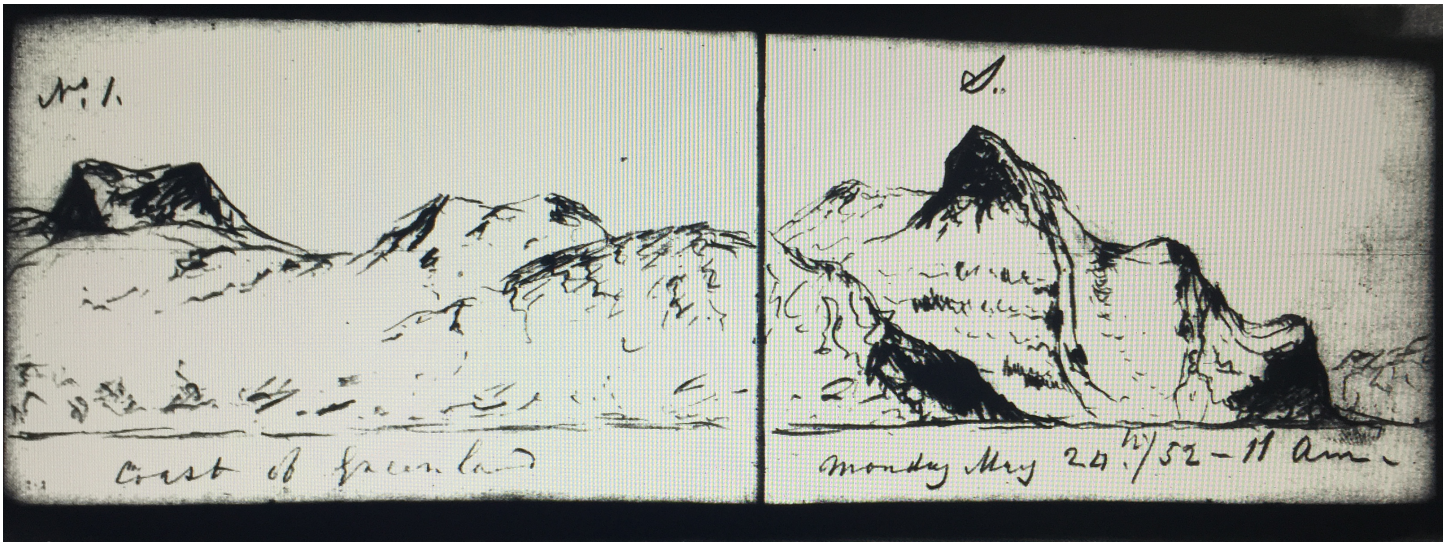


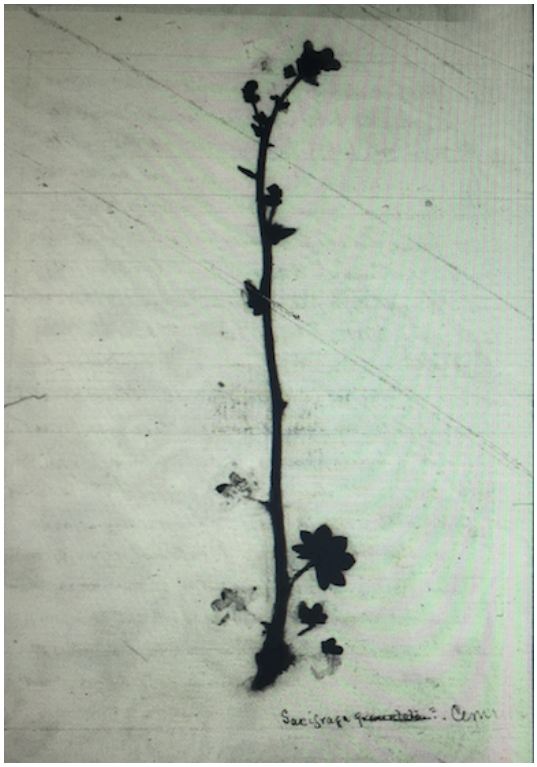
Fig. 15
Robert McCormick, birds eye fleet sketch, 1852, graphite, Robert McCormick fonds, MG40-F9 microfilm M-1622, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

Fig. 16
William Hooker, botanical drawing, letter dated May 6th 1819, print, Letters from William Hooker to John Richardson, 1819-1843, WJH/ 2/7, Royal Botanic Society Library and Archives, Kew Gardens, London, England.

Fig 17, 18 and 19
William Hooker, botanic drawing *Arenaria Arctica*, *Saxifraga*, *Anemone Richardsonii,* 1840, print, in William Jackson Hooker, *Flora Boreali-Americana: or the Botany of the North Western Parts of British America*, (Henry G. Bohn, 1840).

Fig. 20
William Hooker, botanic drawing *Phyllophora pseudoceranoides,* nd, print,
Drawings of a number of algae by sir WJ Hooker, WJH/3/4, Royal Botanic Society Library and Archives, Kew Gardens, London, England.

Fig 21, 22 and 23
R.H. Hilliard, *Campanula Uniflora, Saxifraga Cernua,* and *Pyrola rotundifolia,* 1859, herbaria pages, Journal kept kept by R.H. Hilliard, ship's surgeon, on voyages aboard the S.S. Narwhal of Dundee, M-717 microfilm, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario (microfilm, original at the Glenbow Museum).



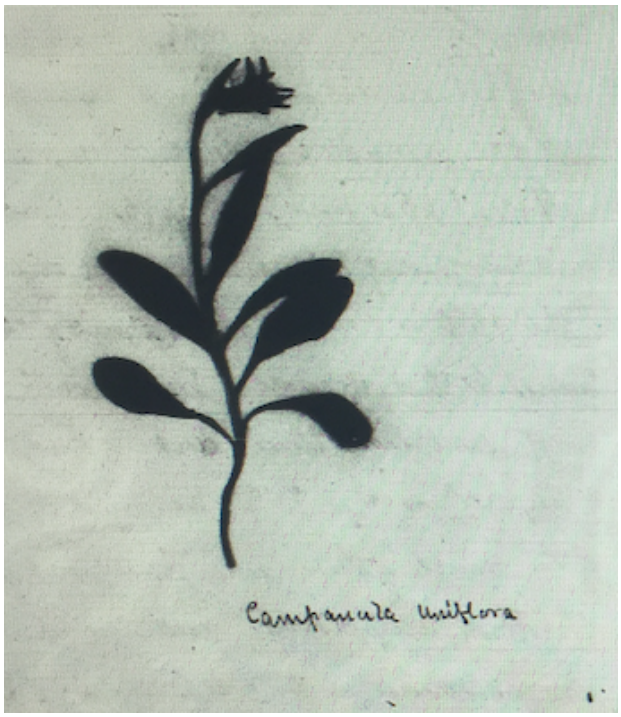


Fig 24 and 25
George Back, *Stone at Fort Enterprise*, 1819-1820*,* watercolour, and botany studies, 1819-1820, pastel, George Back fonds: Buchan Expedition George Back Sketchbook 1819-1820, R3881-0-6-e, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

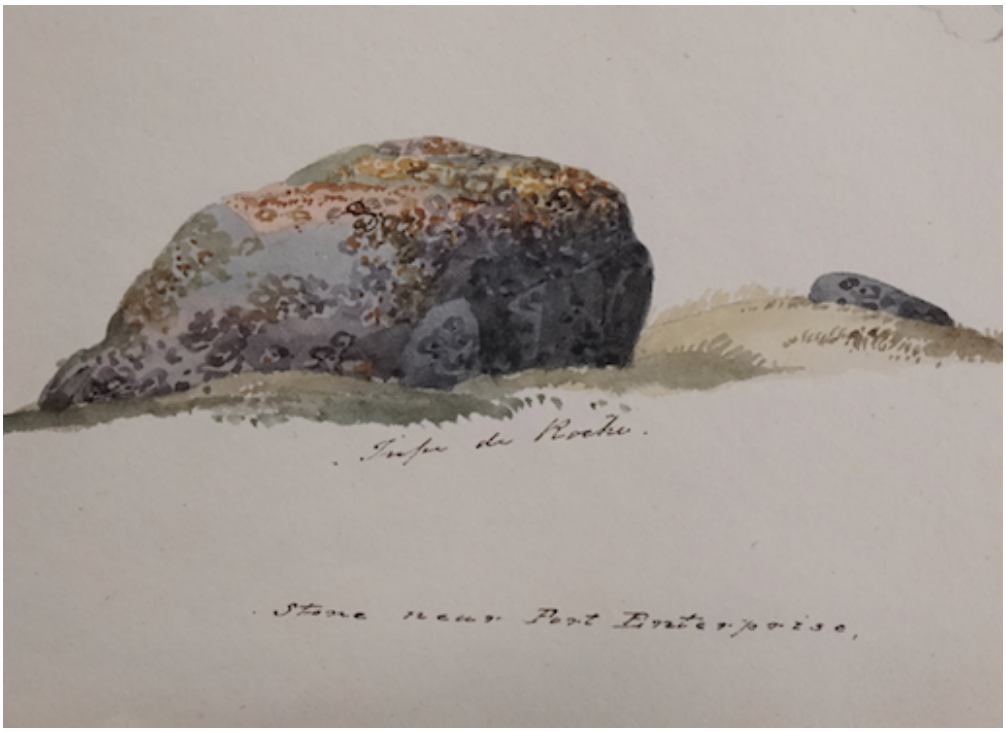


Fig 26
drawn by John Sakeouse etching by Harvell and Sons, *First Communication with the Native of Prince Regent's Bay*, 1819, etching, in John Ross, *A voyage of discovery : made under the orders of the Admiralty, in His Majesty's ships Isabella and Alexander, for the purpose of exploring Baffin's Bay, and inquiring into the probability of a North-West Passage,* (John Maury, 1819), https://archive.org/details/voyageofdiscover02ross/page/86, 88; FIRST COMMUNICATION with the NATIVES of PRINCE REGENTS BAY as drawn by JOHN SACKHEOUSE, C-025238, (1819), Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

Fig. 27
Ulayu, *Springtime*, stone cut, 1976, in *Dorset 76: Cape Dorset Annual Graphics Collection 1976* (MF Fehley Publishers Limited, Toronto, 1976).

Fig. 28
Paukosie Sivuak, Thomassie Irqumia, Eliassie Aupaluk, *Two Geese Eating Grass*, print, 1985, in *Povungnituk 1985: Print Collection*, ed May M. Craig (La Federation des Cooperatives du Nouveau-Quebec, 1985).

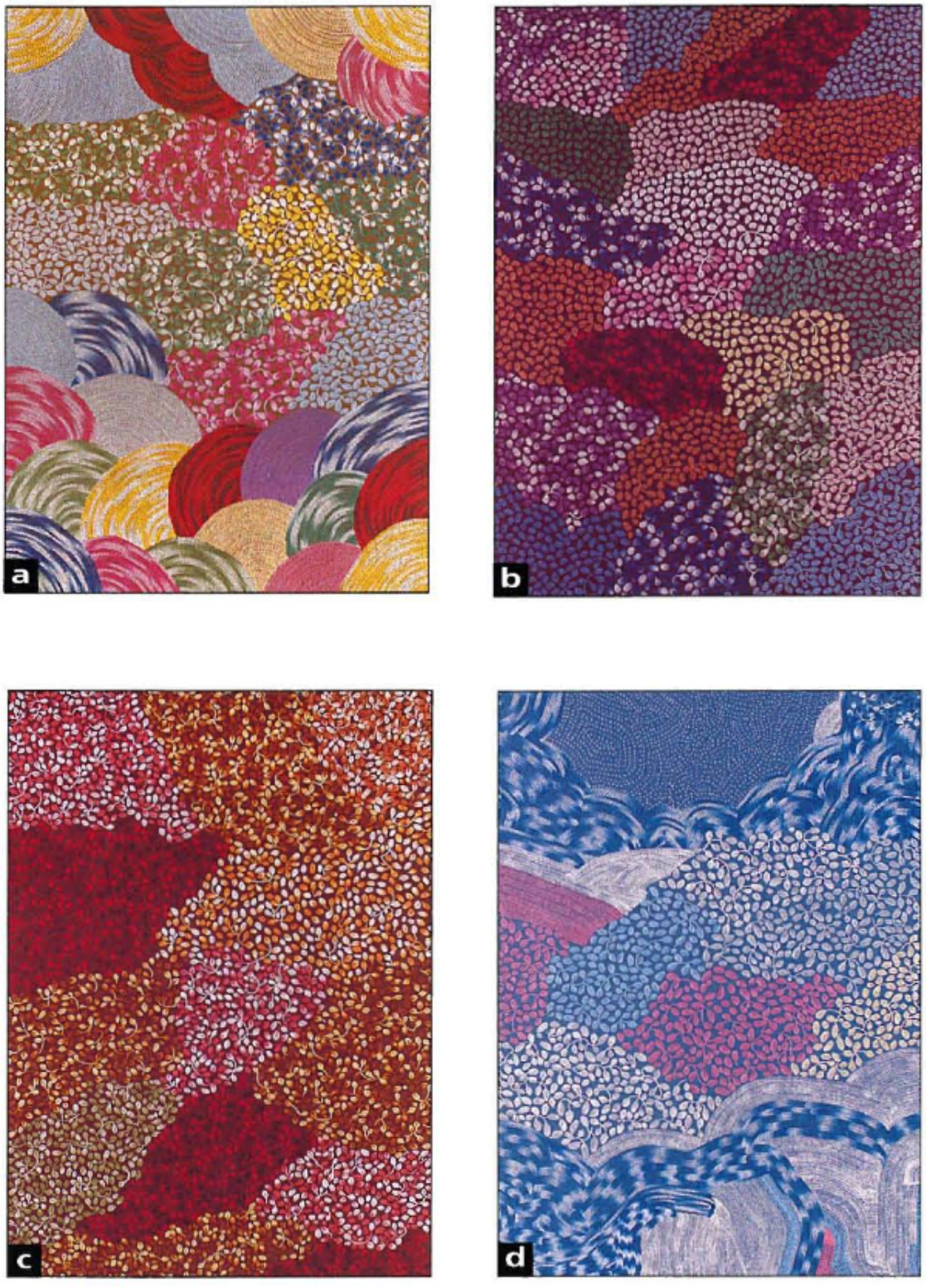
Fig 29 and 30
Tony Anguhalluq, *River Flowing Down Between Two Mountains in July* and *Mountain and Frozen River in December,* 2007*,* drawing, in "Tony Anguhalluq: Drawings was at the Marion Scott Gallery", Vancouver December, 1 2007-January 6, 2008 Reviewed by David Gordon Duke in IAQ Vol. 23 No. 2 Summer 2008.

Fig. 31
Pitseolak Qimirpik, *Woman Picking Berries,* 2014, serpentine sculpture, http://www.eskimoart.com/sculptures/D3939.html.

Fig. 32
Nicotye Samayualie, *Cotton Grass*, 2013, print, in Paul Machnik, "Artist to Know: Nicotye Samayualie", (December 4, 2017) http://iaq.inuitartfoundation.org/30-artists-nicotye-samayualie/.

Fig. 33
Nicotye Samayualie, *Untitled*, 2015, drawing, in Paul Machnik, "Artist to Know: Nicotye Samayualie", (December 4, 2017) http://iaq.inuitartfoundation.org/30-artists-nicotye-samayualie/.

Fig. 34 a,b,c,d.
Ruth Qaulluaryuk, *Four Seasons on the Tundra:* a) *Spring,* b) *Summer, c) Fall, d) Winter,* stroud, 1991-1992, embroidery thread, in Bernadette Driscoll-Engelstad, "A Woman's Vision: Inuit Textile Art from Arctic Canada" in Inuit Art Quarterly Vol. 9 No. 2 Summer 1994, http://inuitartfoundation.org/wp-content/themes/u-design/images/Archives/1994_02.pdf.



Asinnajaq Interview Transcript

January 18th, 2019

1. How did plants come to be in your art practice?

I think that one of the reasons that I do make sure that they're present is the knowledge that people from outside of us don't understand how full of life our land really is. Even many Inuit and people that live in landscape like ours fall into the pattern of copying the language people around us use such as "barren". In some like really hurtful writing to me, are kin of Indigenous writers use terms like tundra to mean something barren, and so it hurts a lot extra for me because it's like people that I hope are there to help us tell our story in a certain way or respect us and using the same kind of language that doesn't help to clear up our reality. And especially because it's people that are meant to take a lot of care with the language they use.

So because of that history that has been created and all of the words that have been used to try to create an imagery of our land I try to—as often as I can—remind myself and the people that live on it and the people outside of us that it's plentiful. It's not always easy, but it can be and is like a treasure chest.

Chris: Do you think those linguistic ideas about how people described the circumpolar region, do you think that has a lot to do with the importation of English and other colonial languages onto Inuit and Indigenous people?

The language that you use shapes the way you think. I haven't heard that many accounts of people describing their land specifically. Mostly people maybe talk about what they do. You talk about it but in a more abstract way. If you are listening than you will understand that it can be plentiful, but if you are not than you have never actually heard the word associated directly with the land. Whereas, when you say barren you understand it immediately, how it's connected. But if I say plentiful than maybe you go more like to thinking of a clump of berries, or a clump of fish and it's kind of like separate and removed from it in a way. But those are a part of the plentifulness. When you add them altogether it's a lot of stuff that people survived with for a long time.

With *Three-Thousand* is there anything you want to elaborate on about the use of floral, moss, or lichen imagery?

I would maybe start with *Upinnaqursitik* which is a short mostly animated film I made for Inuit Blanche, it is not in circulation because I do not have all the rights to archives I used it in but I showed it then. The whole point of that film *Upinnaqursitik*, it means lucky. It's literally only about how plentiful our land is. Because there were many Inuit that was there, I had some really beautiful people be too kind to me and thanking me for the film because it's like that's what my home is like, that's it. The land, the fishing, the plentifulness of it, that's what that film was about. I think people were really not used to seeing our land shown that way, in a way that feels not just truthful but really happy. It's showing how I experience the land especially in the summer time. People were so shocked to see it that it made them so happy, they jumped onto you to say thank you.

The other work, I am working a bit with Beatrice Deer. I made visuals for behind her when she is singing and we really wanted to focus on the plants, the flowers, and berries from our land. It's beautiful, it's not just harsh.

It's interesting while I am listening to this because the bulk of my thesis is about these Qallunaat, explorers, and fishers, and whalers, and fur-trappers And its like of course they were there because its so plentiful. I am just realizing now how completely paradoxical it is that they're saying theres nothing but also we are taking so much.

Especially for the whalers. But what we can we will take, but "there is nothing." It doesn't make sense when you put the two together.

2. Are there any teachings that have informed your art practice that you feel comfortable sharing?

I don't think there is anything in particular but for me as myself, I really love learning about so many different things in so many different ways. So when it comes to plants, I actually used to work on a cruise ship that was in the Arctic and there was a botanist with us. It was really cute she always called botany in the Arctic "belly botany", because you cant look at anything unless you're on your belly. Cause it's there and there's lots of it but it's little! Maybe that's when I started looking as an adult, looking at plants. I really love reading all the resources, theres a few different books some really technical ones from Avataq, and I try to see what could it be used for. I think as an Inuk I do not see too much people giving specific lessons associated with specific things. You learn to do your best in broader life things and maybe you will learn something specific about a thing but its not like a lesson.

Sometimes I think when I talk with friends who are Métis or Cree, maybe sometimes it feels like they do have something more in that way of like “this is a special thing about how you relate to this.”

For you its more like general overall well-being? And I might be wrong, but thats something that I have observed

When Heather and I met about this in the fall, she mentioned I think it was your dad or you, she was telling me this anecdote about I think lichen or moss and you would bring it to some rocks if you wanted to encourage life to thrive there

It’s if you wanted to arrive safely. That is something my dad taught me that I probably taught Heather. So thats why there is lichen at the beggining of the film. It was when I worked on that ship, my dad sent me with a stone covered with lichen, because lichen is always the first form of life to form on land, if you want to make it safely you have to bring it.

That’s beautiful, it’s the first life, and she was also saying the lichen would bring bugs, and the bugs would attract birds and it’s a way to encourage growth

I don’t know if you know, recently at some point it was one of the first life forms other than the tardigrades that lived outside of the space station. So it survived the vacuum of space. The other thing about lichen is that for people that try to figure out what everything is made out of they thought lichen was made out of a symbiotic relationship of fungus and algae. And after years and years and years and years of everyone looking at it through (little microscopes?) someone was like oh my gosh theres also yeast here. So it’s actually three things that are all working together, but for all of the years everyone thought it was two things and all of a sudden there’s yeast and people didn’t believe it.

So it’s even more complicated? than everyone thinks

3. What role do plants play, or how do you see plants in the land that you are familiar with?

I grew up in the West Island mostly, and after I was a baby in Kuujjuaq and I went camping and did beautiful things on the land. But when I was really becoming a person it was in the West Island. We always had a garden, my grandma still lives out there and she has a garden and we all garden together. We make cucumbers and carrots and tomatoes, always lots of tomatoes. The special one for me is the ground cherries, I love those. Recently I was thinking that I wanted to make a piece of that garden for any friends from around here that need tobacco or sage. So my

relationships with the plants around here in Montreal, Tio'tia:ke, Mooniyang, has always mostly been with the gardening and the cultivation of flowers and edible vegetables and fruits. And now where I am trying to change it is to also try and think of a way to include my friends with medicines that they might need.

When my brother was born, he's seven years older than me, my grandma filled her garden with tulips and she planted them all for him. And this year on his birthday, he and I planted all the tulips. New ones because I went to Amsterdam and brought them.

4. What is something you would like to communicate to Qallunat about the tundra? Do you think a false perception exists?

I think absolutely a false perception exists. Recently someone mentioned that we should stop calling our *nunaat* tundra, because tundra's not our word and we can easily use our word which would just be *nunaat*. So I thinks it's kind of things like that, if you can call it the way you call it, and then you can say what it is to you. I think it's the same thing we take back how we name lands, instead of calling it Hudson's Bay what do we call it? Like the place names? The place names, James Bay, what do we call them? We do take back the place names in Nunavik. Part of it is those relationships. It's a relationship. It's a relationship that was forced to go a certain way that changed, and it's still being changed, trying to fit in and succeed in this capitalism and that's a really hard thing. If we keep trying to do that and fit into that, that will dictate a lot about the relationship with it. For me it's like, if I think really seriously what do I want, it's less important to me to communicate anything to white people but mostly to ourselves to say *that* is the number one relationship. To not forget that and to really decide carefully how we make that work.

I was watching the advanced copy of Zacharias' next film, and in that its a lot about accepting to live as a capitalist in a very loose way. That's my interpretation of it. The struggle is when people were forced to live in settlements, what they were being forced to buy into was capitalism. So that the way that Canadians live, and you are a Canadian, the way that you live is as a capitalist. They don't use that word, but they'll say you have to go here, because then you're going to live in a house, and you're going to go to school, or your kids are going to go to school, and then they are going to go work in an office and then they are going to earn money. And it doesn't make sense from coming from living your whole life successfully on our *nunaat*.

Inuuteq Storch Interview Transcript

February 8th, 2019

1) How did plants come to be in your art practice or your film making? (*Old Films of the New Tale*)

The one with tree leaves, for me it's like a censor for what's happening in the video. The video has very strong footage of a dog being killed so I wanted to put a layer between the viewer and the video itself. (*Either Way Thats Where We End*)

There's also *As We Forget We Chase The Beginning* theres some shots of a garden and a greenhouse?

That specific video is about my grandfather who has dementia. My grandmother died a lot earlier than my grandfather and she used to be my best friend and she has a lot of flowers. The woman in it, and the flowers it's representations of my grandmother. For telling my grandfather I have to talk about my grandmother as well.

The other video that caught my attention, *The Finger in the Message*, a lot of the footage from what I understand is as is, but theres lots of really beautiful shots of the lush tundra of the Greenlandic landscape.

In that video, because the landscape is so normal for me, the portraiture of these people is so strong I didn't even think about the tundra in the videos. It's first now that you say that, theres a lot of tundra here but thats how our town and villages look like.

So it was just kind of the backdrop to these people? Ive been to a few places in West Greenland in the summer and it was beautiful to watch and it was more the vision that I got to see. Where were you? We flew into Kangerlussuaq, and we were in Itilleq, and Uummannaq for a little bit, Ah so you've been to the north, If that counts as the north I'm not sure. We kinda call it the north then we've got Thule, Qaanaaq like very far north. It was really beautiful I can't wait to come back hopefully. You should, its amazing! It's interesting that was really secondary to you, it was just the natural backdrop of those video or portraits as you said.

2) My second question was, are there any teachings that have informed your art practice that you feel comfortable sharing? Like specifically if there's any information that's been past on to you with plants, or how you work with the landscape as a subject?

I don't know how to address this but, the schools I went to, we talk about what's going on in my photos. We were not talking specifically about how to make photos of nature or how to make things look differently. It's just we talk about which feelings we use and how they are visible in the art work.

So you really kind of centre the feelings and the people of your film, and there happens to be this backdrop and landscape to it all?

These videos are from archives so I don't really have control over how they are shot. But I can master the feelings so they can become my own stories. So I'm telling other peoples' stories into my own story. I edit the footages, I find other clips so it makes a different story.

Can you maybe speak to the archive. I remember reading somewhere was it your family's personal film archive or did it come from somewhere else?

These are from inuiatisat.com an archive that Inuk Silis and Naomi Labaren worked on. I was so lucky that I got the access to the whole archive. I also donated my grandfathers films, works out.

3) We have touched on it a little bit, just as this background for you in your footage, but the third question I wanted to ask you was what role do plants play or how do you see plants in the lands you are familiar with?

At home I collect plants, different plants to make tea. So I think they are a part of the nature, the plants, the flowers are not specifically the nature, they are part of the nature we have. For me nature is more like the mountains, the air, and the animals, and the plants are there to help all those as well, like me. Getting tea, healthier than the one I buy from the grocery store.

Right so it's just kind of like a part of this bigger picture of…

being. But I think my understanding of flowers or trees—we don't have trees so I cant really say trees—but like flowers, plants, it gets very different when I go abroad. I used to live in New York and they are just their to humanize all the craziness or like a decor in the city. So it doesn't have the same nature feeling as here in Greenland. It's like assimilation of the nature. Also because you can pick which flower you want in that part of the city, so it's subtly controlled nature.

It's like a nature trying to be added in to the city as opposed to the nature just existing whole and as it should.

Because I have a feeling that they are living here as well in Greeenland, they are part of the livings. Theres human, animals, plants, we have a platform that is nature here, and we share that and we get energy from the same source. And we give each other energy as well.

4) That all makes absolute sense. The last question which is really at the heart of my research and at the heart of my interest, I'm asking all the artists if there is something you would like to communicate to Qallunaat about the tundra and if you think that a false perception for southerners does exists about the land? Thats very difficult, can I have it again. Yeah so is there anything that you would like to communicate to Qallunaat about the tundra? What is Qallunaat? Sorry, for Inuit in Canada, Qallunaat means southerner, so like white people. Is there something that you or your work tries to communicate to white people. Do white people see the arctic in an untrue way?

I don't know, my work is about me. So I communicate with myself. Like specifically these videos they are created when I have frustrations or difficulties being in between of two—traditional life and modern life. Greenland its been a few hundred years since we got colonized and after that we got our own government less than fifty years ago. So there's a lot of contrasted

things going on in my life. Like shooting that dog is part of what we do when you have sled dogs, because they are very similar to wolves, so they fight a lot. When a dog is suffering from the fightings sometimes you just have to kill it because that's better for the dog. Or when you lift a huge seal or walrus from the neck it's because thats where the grip is the best and you just have to get it up so you can eat. Those are very difficult to handle for the normal modern life. But here it's normal and it's still in our modern life. So basically it's communication to understand myself, but I am a human so any communication I have is understandable for all kind of human. For that answer, yes it communicates with human.

Just curious, to like push this last question a bit more- Go for it-just with your experience in New York and stuff like that do you think that southerners and other people who don't live in the Arctic kind of see it in a really simplified way.

I think, without coming over here, without understand what's going on, the only life that you can imagine is the life that you had. In that way it's acceptable that they think we can do exactly the same things, but it's unacceptable because its harming the way we live. In Greenland we have a different situation than Canadian Inuit. We have a good relationship with Denmark, even though it's not always calm theres a lot of drama, even though they don't really understand us as much as we want to be understood. But there's a lot of people who are understanding and stuff like that so its good.

Do you think that like the Danish—not that they understand what life is like—but do you think that they have an accurate image of what the land is like? Do they think of its as kind of always being winter? Or do they kind of know the complexity of it?

Generally they don't know a lot and they think we still live in igloos and stuff. But I have also met people who know a lot about Greenland and have been here many times. So I cannot, its very difficult to say how the Danish understand us because they're as humans can be very different in the knowledge of Greenland. Some people know a lot and some people know nothing. It's like me too, if I wanted to go to Jamaica or Azerbaijan. But Disney plays for those opinions as well, with igloos. For all the parts of the world its romantic to have igloos, snow and ice, all the time. Disney always show, or films actually do to that its always winter. But we have the most beautiful summers. Yeah I would second that, its pretty beautiful I cant wait to come back!

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