Tail/Tale/Tell: The Transformations of Sedna into an Icon of Survivance in the Visual Arts Through the Eyes of Four Contemporary Urban Inuit Artists

Kathryn Florence

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
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

September 2019

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Kathryn Florence Math

Entitled: Tail/Tale/Tell: The Transformations of Sedna into an Icon of Survivance in the Visual Arts Through the Eyes of Four Contemporary Urban Inuit Artists

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

Master of Arts (Art History)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final examining committee:

_____ Chair

_____ Examiner
Dr. Johanne Sloan

_____ Examiner
Dr. Anne Whitelaw

_____ Thesis Supervisor
Dr. Heather Igloliorte

Approved by _____
Dr. Kristina Huneault, Graduate Program Director

_____
Dr. Rebecca Taylor Duclos, Dean of Faculty of Fine Arts

Date _____

Abstract

Tail/Tale/Tell: The Transformations of Sedna into an Icon of Survivance in the Visual Arts Through the Eyes of Four Contemporary Urban Inuit Artists

Kathryn Florence

Inuit visual arts have been a feature of Canadian popular culture since it was thrust onto the world stage in 1949. Vibrant owls, dancing bears, and drumming shamans have pervaded museum galleries and trade showrooms for seven decades. One popular, recurring figure is Nuliajuk—also known by other names throughout the circumpolar world—epithetic-ally called the Sea Woman and colloquially referred to as Sedna. Qallunaat (non-Inuit) have constructed their own narrative around these images and their art history, which can ignore the role that art plays in the lives of the artist resulting in a skewed narrative and misinterpretation. In this thesis, I interview four contemporary Inuit artists to reveal how the figure of Sedna has transformed morphologically and semantically since she first appeared on the art market nearly 70 years ago. The results of my research propose that Sedna has become an icon of Inuit identity as well as a symbol of survivance against the tides of colonialism and attempts at cultural extermination. These contemporary artists are reclaiming her in their work, asserting her importance to their identity as Inuit and her ongoing influence in their world. Exploring her story in their art is a way for artists raised in the variety of situations and combinations of living within and outside of Inuit Nunangat to anchor their identity as Inuk.

Acknowledgements

My birthplace of Indianapolis, Indiana is on the historical lands included in Cession 99, which involved what is now the Miami Nation of Oklahoma. As Montreal has been my home for the past two years, I would also like to acknowledge that the lands and waters on which the city is located are unceded Kanien'kehá:ka territory called Tiohtiá:ke. Both Indianapolis and Montreal are home to diverse populations of Indigenous and other peoples. I respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in my ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within these communities.

Warm thanks to Dr. Heather Igloliorte for leading me to Concordia University and being my advisor for this project. I am forever thankful for your guidance and instruction. You are an incredible woman who does so much for so many, and yet you found time to take me on as a student (Seriously. What project *aren't* you involved with? When do you sleep?). I can only hope that I will inspire others the way you have for me.

This project would not have been possible without the participation of Michael Massie, David Ruben Piqtoukun, Heather Campbell, and Glenn Gear. This manuscript is as much theirs as it is mine. I will keep your stories with me, always.

I am grateful for Concordia University for supporting my academic career these past two years and for the Inuit Futures in Arts Leadership SSHRC Partnership Grant for letting me participate as a student co-ordinator.

Thank you to my family for bearing my absence; my cohort for their comradery and support; the board/staff/volunteers of The People's Potato for their friendship and meals; everyone at Native Montreal for providing me with community and belonging; and the board/members of the Canadian Latin American Archaeology Society for their acceptance as I write a thesis completely lacking in Mesoamerican archaeology.

Dedication

For my mother, Julie, and my ancestor, Grandma Rumor (a.k.a Sarah Callie Thompson). You put me on the path and held my hand as I took the first steps. Because of you, I know I am never alone.

Table of Contents

Lists of Figures

Introduction

On October 18th, 2018, I had the privilege of touring the Art Sales Division of the Nunavut Development Corporation (NDC) and the wholesale gallery of Canadian Arctic Producers (CAP), both located in Toronto, Ontario. The showrooms were packed with sculptures and glimpses behind the scenes revealed many more waiting to be displayed (figs. 1, 2, 3). Walking between the shelves and pedestals felt almost disorienting, as the same subjects were featured across communities and artists. Many figures were recognizably iconic: vibrant owls; dancing bears; drumming shamans. Something about their suggestion of motion is hypnotizing.

But the one figure that caught my eye in CAP was the sleek form of an aquatic woman, her piscine tail curling behind her (fig. 4). Her hair—wrapped in braids and spirals—ripple over her shoulders like ocean currents. Her face is angular, distant and serene. This is Nuliajuk, epithetically called the Sea Woman and colloquially referred to as Sedna. She is found in the oral history of all Inuit Arctic societies, a tremendous feat given the constantly shifting and localized nature of mythology.[1] She has many names across Canada and the arctic: Sedna (anglicization of *Sana* "one down at the sea bottom", Franz Boas); Nuliajuk ("the poor or frightful one", Central Canadian Arctic), Arnaqquassaaq ("old woman from the sea" literally "old woman, hag", Greenland), Sassuma Arnaa ("Woman of the Deep", Western Greenland), or Immap Ukuua ("The Sea's Mother", East Greenland), Amakaphaluk/Arnapkapfaaluk ("big bad woman", Coronation Gulf), Takánakapsâluk ("the terrible one down there", Iglooik), and Takannaaluk Arnaluk ("the woman down there", Igloolik).[2] As a result, she is one of the more readily recognizable inua. She is a spirit; born from violence to become the mother of sea mammals and a central figure of Inuit culture. I will use Sedna in this paper rather than switching between regional variations, as it is the more commonly recognized name and the one I originally encountered.

---

[1] Kimberley McMahon-Coleman, "Dreaming an Identity between Two Cultures: The Works of Alootook Ipellie," *Kunapipi* 28, no. 1 (2006): 119.

[2] Daniel Merkur, *Powers Which We Do Not Know: The Gods and Spirits of the Inuit* (University of Idaho Press, 1991), 97; Hans Mol, "Religion and Eskimo Identity in Canada," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 11, no. 2 (1982): 120; Andreas Roepstorff, "Clashing Cosmologies: Contrasting Knowledge in the Greenlandic Fishery," in *Imagining Nature: Practices of Cosmology and Identity*, ed. Andreas Roepstorff, Nils Bubandt, and Kalevi Kull (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2003), 118; Nelda Swinton, "The Inuit Sea Goddess" (Master of Arts, Concordia University, 1985), 23.

Sedna in Popular Culture and Art

Today, Sedna is no longer a stranger to qallunaat[3] in common southern Canadian culture. She is, for example, the namesake and logo (fig. 5) of the Sedna Epic research project, an all-women team that operates polar dives and snorkel expeditions to the High Arctic, scouting, documenting and recording disappearing sea ice.[4] A minor planet at the edge of our solar system was named "90377 Sedna" as a metonym for the planet's frigid composition.

She is just as ubiquitous in the gallery. Looking around the galleries of the NDC and CAP I saw images of Sedna everywhere. Igah Hainnu of Clyde River recounted carving over a hundred Sedna figures on the requests of nurses in Iqaluit.[5] At the 2018 ImagineNative Art Crawl,[6] a black and white line drawing of Germaine Arnaktauyok's *Sedna* was printed on give-away bags, postcards, and the interactive digital painting station (fig 6). In fact, according to the extensive research by noted art historians Frédéric B. Laugrand and Jarich G. Oosten, she's one of the only named cosmological figures to be depicted widely across the spectrum of Inuit visual culture.[7]

---

[3] Non-Inuk, referring often to white southerners, Europeans, or settlers.

[4] Two Roads Marketing, Inc., "Home," Sedna Epic Expedition, 2018, https://www.sednaepic.com.

[5] Jill Barber, "Carving out a Future: Contemporary Inuit Sculpture of Third Generation Artists from Arviat, Cape Dorset and Clyde River (Nunavut)." (Master of Arts, Carleton University, 1999), 75.

[6] The ImagineNative art crawl was sponsored by RBC. Thank you to Kelly Bokowski (Regional Marketing and Sponsorship at RBC) for taking the time to talk to me about the choices surrounding the artwork used at the digital painting station.

[7] See the following sources for more. Ann Fienup-Riordan, "Compassion and Restraint: The Moral Foundations of Yup'ik Eskimo Hunting Tradition," in *La Nature Des Espirits Dans Les Cosmologies Autochtones/Nature of Spirits in Aboriginal Cosmologies*, ed. Frédéric B. Laugrand and Jarich G. Oosten, trans. Alice Rearden (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Universite Laval, 2007), 239–53; Frédéric B. Laugrand, "Sedna crucifiée: Les Inuits et la part animique du christianisme," *Théologiques* 20, no. 1–2 (2012): 453; Frédéric Laugrand and Jarich Oosten, "Canicide and Healing. The Position of the Dog in the Inuit Cultures of the Canadian Arctic," *Anthropos* 97, no. 1 (2002): 89–105; Frédéric B. Laugrand and Jarich G. Oosten, "When Toys and Ornaments Come into Play: The Transformative Power of Miniatures in Canadian Inuit Cosmology," *Museum Anthropology* 31, no. 2 (2008): 69–84; Frédéric B. Laugrand and Jarich G. Oosten, "Transfer of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in modern Inuit society," *Études/Inuit/Studies* 33, no. 1–2 (2009): 115; Frédéric B. Laugrand and Jarich G. Oosten, *Inuit Shamanism and Christianity: Transitions and Transformations in the Twentieth Century*, McGill-Queen's Native and Northern Series 59 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010); Jarich G. Oosten, "The Symbolism of the Body in Inuit Culture," *Annual for Religious Iconography* 1 (1982): 98–112; Jarich G. Oosten, "Cosmological Cycles: Continuity in Inuit Society in North Eastern Canada," in *Parts and Wholes: Essays on Social Morphology, Cosmology, and Exchange in Honour of J.D.M. Platenkamp*, ed. Jos D. M. Platenkamp et al. (Zurich: Lit Verlag, 2016), 377–94; Jarich G. Oosten, Frédéric B. Laugrand, and Cornelius Remie, "Perceptions of Decline: Inuit Shamanism in the Canadian Arctic," *Ethnohistory* 53, no. 3 (July 1, 2006): 445–77; Jarich G. Oosten and Frédéric B. Laugrand, "Representing the 'Sea Woman,'" *Religion and the Arts* 13, no. 4 (November 1, 2009): 477–95; Julie Rodrigue and Nathalie Ouellette, "Inuit Women as Mediators between Humans and Non-Human Beings in the Contemporary Canadian Eastern Arctic," in *La Nature Des Espirits Dans Les Cosmologies Autochtones/Nature of Spirits in Aboriginal Cosmologies*, ed. Frédéric B. Laugrand and Jarich G. Oosten (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Universite Laval, 2007), 175–92; Laugrand, Frédéric B., and Jarich G. Oosten. *La femme de la mer: Sedna dans le chamanisme et l'art inuit de*

The authors take particular interest in Sedna and « les images que l'on pensait être Sedna, la femme de la mer, représentaient souvent d'autres êtres, tels que des sirènes ou des esprits auxiliaires. »[8] They suggest that her iconography might be drawing upon the forms of other marine spirits; such as tuutalit, qallupilluit, lumaajut, or taliillajuut, which will be discussed later in this thesis.

However, while her popularity has been acknowledged in the art world and there have been a number of exhibitions, catalogues and small publications around her image, many discussions by qallunaat locate her as an old god dying at the dawn of modernity.[9] The majority of the literature has been written by qallunaat and becomes romanticized, misinterpreted, and misunderstood because of Western biases,[10] which are often perpetuated by paradigms of art history and culture that present art objects as passive records of events or beliefs without granting agency to the institutions and persons that created them. This places her within a historicized narrative that does not reflect her continued presence in contemporary Inuit culture. As Alena Rosen has argued, "When considering myths and legends in Inuit art, qallunaat critics tended to reduce the content to preserving a memory of a past that is gone, rather than focusing on continued importance."[11] While mythic themes and stereotypes are referenced in contemporary art, we cannot assume that they are the only meanings being invoked. Therefore, it is necessary to not only concede Sedna's presence in the present, but actively explore its meanings and ramifications.

The turn to oral history and myth is worth explaining here before diving deeper into Sedna's story within the visual arts. According to the Oral History Center at the University of Manitoba, oral history is "a method of historical and social scientific inquiry and analysis that includes life histories, storytelling, narratives, and qualitative research. Most commonly, interviewers sit down together with narrators to help them tell, record, and archive their life stories or their

l'Arctique de l'Est. Carrefours anthropologiques. (Montréal: Liber, 2011), this last text was especially valuable. The source itself is a catalogue of sculptures and prints that feature the Sea Woman, primarily made between the 1960s and 1970s and discussing her relation to shamanism.

[8] Laugrand and Oosten, *La femme de la mer*, 7.

[9] Oosten, Laugrand, and Remie, "Perceptions of Decline," 445.

[10] Barber, "Carving out a Future," 38; Oosten, Laugrand, and Remie, "Perceptions of Decline," 445.

[11] Alena E. Rosen, "Inuit Art, Knowledge and 'Staying Power': Perspectives from Pangnirtung" (Master of Arts, University of Manitoba, 2013), 98.

memories of a specific event, person, or phase in their life."[12] This practice as a whole is as old as humanity itself. For instance, the Tjapwurung (Southern Australian Aboriginal) have passed down accurate accounts of megafauna that went extinct over 10 millennia ago, demonstrating not only continuity between generations, but also the legitimacy of Indigenous forms of knowledge and oral transmission.[13] As Carla Taunton has explained, "Part of my reason for highlighting storytelling is that colonial processes worked towards delegitimizing oral histories—that is, the act of storytelling—as a legitimate means of writing and documenting histories in Aboriginal communities. Furthermore, historic and contemporary colonialism in Canada marginalizes and has tended to ignore and erase Indigenous experiences, voices, and stories. The result is that Indigenous stories, until recently, have not been recognized as legitimate histories, and therefore are not incorporated into the writing of Canadian histories or acknowledged as documents of history."[14]

The Inuit term unikkatuat/unikkaatuaq roughly translates to 'a legend' or 'story.'[15] This genre falls between oral history and myth. It is a narrative that often incorporates preternatural beings, but also denotes historicity. The relation between unikkatuat and myth itself needs some explanation. Myths can be categorized as a feature of oral history, though they also exist as a separate form in their own right. They vary notoriously between the connotations of truth and falsehood depending on the position of the speaker in relation to the story being told.[16] In practice, outside of Classics myth is applied to denote the fictive stories told by the 'Other'; within the field, *mythos* would only cover stories of sacred importance; and these terms are overall taken from a Western paradigm. Myths and unikkatuat, in this thesis, are narratives, often containing preternatural actors, which serve the role of explaining the order of the world, why things are the way they are and what our purpose is within it. Neither have an author nor an

[12] University of Manitoba, "What Is Oral History?," Oral History Centre, 2013, https://www.oralhistorycentre.ca/what-oral-history.
[13] Patrick D. Nunn, "The Oldest True Stories in the World," *Sapiens*, October 18, 2018, n.p.
[14] Carla Jane Taunton, "Performing Resistance/Negotiating Sovereignty: Indigenous Women's Performance Art in Canada" (Doctor of Philosophy, Queen's University, 2011), 63–64.
[15] Government of Nunavut, "Qilaut 2017," Nunavut Department of Culture and Heritage, 2017, https://www.gov.nu.ca/culture-and-heritage/information/qilaut-2017-0; Keavy Martin, *Stories in a New Skin: Approaches to Inuit Literature*, Contemporary Studies on the North 3 (Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2012) 142.
[16] John S. Gentile, "Prologue: Defining Myth: An Introduction to the Special Issue on Storytelling and Myth," *Storytelling, Self, Society* 7, no. 2 (2011): 85.

'original' form, though sometimes a name is associated with a specific retelling (such as Homer is with the Odyssey). While the tale is recounted as a specific event in the history of the people, it has no set place within that timeline.[17] Both are timeless, whereas oral history is definitively tied to the narrator. This allows for the story to shift and change, adapt and innovate to fit the expectations of the audience and the needs of the teller. Sedna's story is thus more easily called a myth than oral history in theory because of its function as an Inuit cosmogony and how it is adapted by the storyteller in relation to the context within which it is presented.

That being said, it is necessary to remember that these stories (however fantastical they may seem) themselves are a means of conveying and recording knowledge.[18] As Elizabeth Bird notes, "the unusual is not merely explained away randomly but is explained in legends that have cultural salience—that deal with particular concerns and fears."[19] They are more than stories of spirits and seasons, but rather, explain systems of understanding, the relationship between persons and landscapes by exposing a collective narrative of the cosmos that is inaccessible through independent interviews.

The connotations of Sedna's story have changed not only because of time, but also because Inuit are shifting from being the subjects of art history, to the authors of it. It is therefore necessary to re-examine the figure of Sedna within northern society as analyzed through the art of today. Here I show that contemporary artists are practicing cultural reclamation by depicting Sedna in their work, asserting her importance in their identity as Inuit and her ongoing influence in their world. The unintelligibility of her meaning to qallunaat audiences asserts resistance to the colonial disruption of Inuit cultural continuity. As such, this thesis proposes that Sedna has become an icon of Inuit identity and a symbol of survivance against the tides of colonialism and attempts at cultural extermination. Telling her story, through stone and ink and frame, is a way for artists to reconnect with their culture and identity as Inuk.

---

[17] Jimmie Killigivuk Asatchaq, *The Things That Were Said of Them: Shaman Stories and Oral Histories of the Tikiġaq People*, trans. Tom Lowenstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), xxxv.
[18] Joseph Epes Brown, *Teaching Spirits: Understanding Native American Religious Traditions* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 16–17; Taunton, "Performing Resistance/Negotiating Sovereignty," 67.
[19] S. Elizabeth Bird, "It Makes Sense to Us: Cultural Identity in Local Legends of Place," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 31, no. 5 (October 2002): 528.

Methodology

My academic training in two disciplines compels me to straddle both art history and anthropology. This multi-disciplinary stance allows for a self-reflexive critique that current methodologies cannot properly grapple with the ideas concerning Indigenous art, because these concepts do not fit within Western paradigms. Academia has usually been more comfortable dividing these disciplines than addressing them as symbiotic players, although several important scholars, such as Ruth B. Phillips, Janet Catherine Berlo, and Evelyn Payne Hatcher have blazed trails in bringing these two disciplines together, and their work significantly informs my approach.[20] Carol E. Mayer in particular positions that, "objects, studied within an anthropological context, exist in at least three historically and often geographically distinct realities in which the use of different criteria attaches different meanings and names to them."[21] In this case, art history benefits from anthropological approaches to inform such adaptational and semiotic shifts, primarily, because anthropology recognizes the specificity and localized conditions that surround the creation and function of art, whereas art history is concerned with the meanings produced for an audience.[22] "We must also take into account how the reception of objects changes over time in accord with changes in [the object's] social relevance, and how [their reception] runs the risk of cultural misinterpretation."[23] Culture is not static, it is fluid, and adaptation lends to persistence. Employing this symbiotic approach is necessary when tackling a topic such as this; where the subject and the people involved are examined through multiple perspectives between history, culture, and place. In this thesis I deploy a multi-disciplinary rather than inter-disciplinary approach to the study of my subject matter, as the later concerns itself

[20] Ruth B. Phillips, "Fielding Culture: Dialogues between Art History and Anthropology," *Museum Anthropology* 18, no. 1 (1994): 39–46; Janet Catherine Berlo, "Anthropologies and Histories of Art: A View from the Terrain of Native North American Art History," in *Anthropologies of Art*, ed. Mariët Westermann (Clark Conference (2003: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute), Williamstown: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2005), 179–92; Evelyn Payne Hatcher, *Art as Culture: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Art* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985).
[21] Carol E. Mayer, "'We Have These Ways of Seeing': A Study of Objects in Differing Realities," in *Making and Metaphor: A Discussion of Meaning in Contemporary Craft*, ed. Gloria Hickey, Canadian Museum of Civilization, and Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, Mercury Series Paper 66 (Hull, Quebec: Canadian Museum of Civilization with the Institute for Contemporary Canadian Craft, 1994), 141–42.
[22] Berlo, "Anthropologies and Histories of Art," 186.
[23] Susan Ann Croteau, "'But It Doesn't Look Indian': Objects, Archetypes and Objectified Others in Native American Art, Culture and Identity" (Doctor of Philosophy, University of California, 2008), 24.

with the loci of intersecting interests and methods while the former allows for a holistic coverage from several angles.

Methodology is not only about *what* knowledge is shared, but *how* and *by whom* it is kept and shared.[24] To practice a more ethical art history I have endeavored to give considerable space in my thesis to let the artist speak for themselves, by foregrounding their direct words while avoiding paraphrasing or speaking for them.[25] Michael Robert Evans asks scholars to question who really gets to speak, who really gets to be heard?[26] Alena Rosen reiterates that, "Citing your sources is not the same as thoroughly thinking through how the voices are being represented, your relationship to those voices, and most poignantly, how your own voice is embedded."[27] This thesis acknowledges that qallunaat interpretations of Inuit art have been the prevailing narrative within Canadian art history to date and have therefore, to some degree, influenced how Inuit art is perceived by and conceived of by some Inuit artists who grew up in the south, whose primary exposure to their own art history is mediated by those qallunaat texts. These distortions are perpetuated in part because of a lack of Inuit voices within positions of arts leadership and a resistance on behalf of related disciplines to change their methodologies to account for the colonial biases that have been built into their foundations. Attempts to reconcile non-western objects as "art" have primarily consisted of trying to insert them within the established Western canon of classification.[28] Noted anthropologist and art historian Ruth B. Phillips points out that "Confining the problem within these parameters, however, puts us in danger of validating the very terms that require deconstruction."[29] Further compounding the problem, the absence of

[24] Lianne Mctavish et al., "Critical Museum Theory/Museum Studies in Canada: A Conversation," *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region / Revue d'histoire de La Region Atlantique* 46, no. 2 (2017): 225.
[25] Each interview is transcribed in full in Appendix B. At the beginning of the interview, the artist and I reviewed the Informed Consent form; included within the interview procedures was the right for the interviewee to pause or stop the interview at any time, revoke their participation, decline discussing any topic, or to have responses removed from the record. Participants were sent a transcript of the interview to review and grant approval for use. Interviewees were allowed to change, edit or remove their interviews until February 4, 2019.
[26] Michael Robert Evans, "Frozen Light and Fluid Time: The Folklore, Politics, and Performance of Inuit Video" (Doctor of Philosophy, Indiana University, 1999), 179.
[27] Rosen, "'Staying Power,'" 16.
[28] Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher Burghard Steiner, eds., "Art, Authenticity, and the Baggage of Cultural Encounter," in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 7; Constance Classen and David Howes, "The Museum as Sensescape: Western Sensibilities and Indigenous Artifacts," in *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums, and Material Culture*, ed. Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Gosden, and Ruth B. Phillips, English ed, Wenner-Gren International Symposium Series (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2006), 210.
[29] Phillips and Steiner, "Art, Authenticity, and the Baggage of Cultural Encounter," 5.

contemporary voices creates the appearance of perpetual antiquity, when the artists are standing next to us. Thankfully, several leaders in Canada such as Heather Igloliorte, Reneltta Arluk, Jessica Kotierk, Alethea Arnaquq-Baril, Taqralik Partridge and Jesse Tungilik are combatting this by creating initiatives to include Inuit voices.[30] I hope that by foregrounding Inuit voices in my work, this thesis will provide a new perspective on understanding the complex role of Sedna within Inuit art today, providing a resource where Inuit can see their own voices reflected in our shared art history, by talking to the artists themselves.[31] These interviews allow the artists to foreground their own voices in Inuit art history.[32]

Given that the art being studied is itself Indigenous, an Indigenous method of research and knowledge should be prioritized. Carla Taunton, from her doctoral dissertation concerning Indigenous performance work, defines Indigenous methodology as, "a theory of inquiry that incorporates Indigenous methods, such as storytelling, drama, poetry, and critical personal narratives. In this way, Indigenous research methods are performative practices making Indigenous life visible—on Indigenous terms and represented through Indigenous lenses."[33] Taunton's work has been a crucial guide for me as she is also a non-indigenous[34] researcher approaching an undeniably Indigenous topic. Underscoring this thesis is the performative aspect of research as a whole, and the agency enacted both by the artists in creating art, and by myself as I interpret it. Presenting their words and voices treads the line between storywork, oral history,

---

[30] John Geoghegan, "Jessica Kotierk Leads Iqaluit Museum as Manager and Curator," *Inuit Art Foundation* (blog), March 29, 2019, http://iaq.inuitartfoundation.org/jessica-kotierk-leads-iqaluit-museum-as-manager-and-curator/; Andy Murdoch, "Heather Igloliorte's New Project: Radically Increase Inuit Participation in the Arts," *Concordia.ca* (blog), June 19, 2018, http://www.concordia.ca/cunews/finearts/2018/06/heather-igloliortes-new-project-radically-increase-inuit-participation-in-the-arts.html; "OCAD U'S INVC Program Hosts Inuit Futures in Arts Leadership Meet-And-Greet," *News* (blog), November 9, 2018, https://www2.ocadu.ca/news/ocad-us-invc-program-hosts-inuit-futures-in-arts-leadership-meet-and-greet.

[31] Shannon Bagg, "Artists, Art Historians, and the Value of Contemporary Inuit Art" (Doctor of Philosophy, Queen's University, 2006), 32.

[32] Taunton, "Performing Resistance/Negotiating Sovereignty," 12.

[33] Ibid, 57.

[34] Although my Great-Great-Great Grandmother Sarah Callie Thompson is known in our family as a member of the Blackfoot Teton Sioux, choices she herself and the following three generations made to hide her affiliation has undeniably cleaved my family from the tribe. Although my mother and I are now trying to reconnect in honor of her, the threat of forced relocation, residential schools, racism, and internalized bigotry left us with few means of official documentation, and we are unable to present a case for recognition with the Standing Rock Council. Indigeneity is seen as resulting from growing up within a community, being raised as an Indigenous person, not something officiated by blood quantum or certification. By contrast, I was raised by my father to see myself only as a white Jewish American. Therefore, while I cherish my lineage to a First Nation and am active in learning the aspects of that heritage, I am not Indigenous.

and interview. Having these conversations with the artists was a performance, as listening requires the participation of the listener.[35] This relationship ensures the continuation of the performance through the expectation that the listener will in turn share the story with others.[36] Thus performance is a way of producing knowledge and a way of knowing.[37] One aspect of my duty as a listener and participant, according to Taunton, is to put forth the perspectives of the artists, and create a space of witnessing to the histories and testimonies of the Indigenous experience.[38] In this way, storytelling itself can be a bridge between Indigenous and non-native communities.[39] It is not my intention to speak through or for the artists, but to create a space where they can be brought into conversation with each other and contest, corroborate, and respond to my research. Joseph Epes Brown's *Teaching Spirits: Understanding Native American Religious Traditions* (2001) and *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* by Shawn Wilson (2008) further supply instructions for practicing Indigenous methodology and restructuring the surrounding frameworks to make it intelligible; specifically stressing the notion of interconnectedness. From my experience in the scholastic system, Western research idolizes the controlled, the objective, that attempts to remove subjectivity by distancing the researcher from the subject being researched. Shawn Wilson points out, "We cannot remove ourselves from our world in order to examine it."[40] As such, an Indigenous methodology is not only about product, but also the process itself and how it creates relationships. More precisely in Wilson's words, "Rather than viewing ourselves as being in relationship with other people or things, we *are* the relationships that we hold and are part of."[41] Interactions between the researcher and community or community members should not be one-time encounters, but rather, the emphasis should be to build and maintain those relationships. Throughout this research I not only made contacts, I made friends and community that I will cherish and sustain long after the completion

[35] Taunton, "Performing Resistance/Negotiating Sovereignty," 5.
[36] Jo-ann Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit.* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 3; 26.
[37] Taunton, "Performing Resistance/Negotiating Sovereignty," 5.
[38] Ibid, 7.
[39] Ruth B. Phillips and Mark Salber Phillips, "Double Take: Contesting Time, Place, and Nation in the First Peoples Hall of the Canadian Museum of Civilization," *American Anthropologist* 107, no. 4 (2005): 6; Allison Katherine Athens, "Arctic Ecologies: The Politics and Poetics of Northern Literary Environments," (Doctor of Philosophy, University of California, 2013), 102.
[40] Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Pub., 2008), 14.
[41] Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony,* 80; Joel S. Kahn, "Encountering Extraordinary Worlds: The Rules of Ethnographic Engagement and the Limits of Anthropological Knowing," *Numen* 61, no. 2/3 (2014): 237.

of this thesis. Moreover, when I enter into these relationships I take on the obligations of responsibility and accountability for the products of my presence and my position within the settler nation of Canada.[42] For my own part, I recognize that I am able to study Inuit art history because I am a qallunaat that has had the privilege of a higher education in anthropology and art history; I have trained under experts in these fields and have access to the networks and relationships they also sustain.

The previous methods are found in both First Nations and Inuit teachings. I use Indigenous methodologies from First Nations teachings—and as I will explain next, also specifically Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ)[43]—because these institutions and beliefs are embedded within this framework and cannot be faithfully understood without it. While some aspects of culture and worldviews are closed to outsiders such as myself, these practices provide a positive means to approaching and understanding how knowledge is made and shared. IQ can be practiced by anyone with careful guidance and respect. Frank James Tester and Peter Irniq, of UBC and the Arctic Institute of North America respectively, promote the use of IQ by qallunaat. They propose that, "IQ, by definition, should be identified as a space, a context within which respectful dialogue, discussion, questioning, and listening can take place. The questions need to flow both ways. In recognizing this, non-Inuit must understand Inuit social history and *Inuit/Qablunaat* relations. This knowledge reveals why it is important, at every opportunity, to create a *kappianannginittuq* 'a safe, or non-scary, place' where these matters can be discussed across cultures."[44] Furthermore, as IQ is a living knowledge, it necessitates the living practice. Following Tester and Irniq, I practice the six tenets of IQ in the following manner: *Pilimmasarniq*, or mentorship, is accomplished through the advisor-student relationship between

[42] Taunton, "Performing Resistance/Negotiating Sovereignty," 14.
[43] For further reading see: Heather Igloliorte, "Curating Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Inuit Knowledge in the Qallunaat Art Museum," *Art Journal* 76, no. 2 (April 3, 2017): 100–113; Frédéric B. Laugrand and Jarich G. Oosten, "Transfer of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in modern Inuit society," *Études/Inuit/Studies* 33, no. 1–2 (2009): 115; Francis Lévesque, "Revisiting Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Inuit knowledge, culture, language, and values in Nunavut institutions since 1999," *Études/Inuit/Studies* 38, no. 1–2 (2014): 115; Nunavut Department of Education, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Education Framework for Nunavut Curriculum* (Nunavut Department of Education, Curriculum and School Services Division, 2007); Shirley Tagalik, "Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: The Role of Indigenous Knowledge In Supporting Wellness In Inuit Communities In Nunavut," Child & Youth Health (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, n.d.), https://www.ccnsa-nccah.ca/docs/health/FS-InuitQaujimajatuqangitWellnessNunavut-Tagalik-EN.pdf; Frank James Tester and Peter Irniq, "Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Social History, Politics and the Practice of Resistance," *Arctic* 61 (2008): 48–61; George W. Wenzel, "From TEK to IQ: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Cultural Ecology," *Arctic Anthropology* 41, no. 2 (2004): 238–50.
[44] Tester and Irniq, "Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Social History, Politics and the Practice of Resistance," 58–59.

myself and Igloliorte; *Angiqatgiinniq* is building consensus and decisions in a communal manner so as to benefit the collective over the individual. The data I will acquire through interviews and research belongs to the Inuit community, and the participants will be given authority over the completed data and ownership of the proposed digital exhibition after the thesis is accepted; *Pinasuqatigiinniq*, working together for the common good; and *pijitsirarniq*, the concept of serving, are also accomplished by returning control over the narrative to the artists themselves. This in part requires *qanurtuuqatigiinniq*, resourceful and inventive problem solving. As I have already shown, the current paradigms and methodologies utilized in art history and anthropology are flawed; I hope to employ the proposed means of working around the ethical and systematic issues to bring forth a more holistic practice. The final tenet, *avatimik kamatsianiq*, the concept of environmental stewardship, is slightly different from the simple promise to be 'green.' It has already become clear that both the spirits and their stories are inseparable from the landscape. In a sense, I am taking these stories from the land in the process of research, and in order to fulfill the role of the steward, I must give them back in a way that will ensure they will survive for several more generations. In turn, I intend, with the artist's permission, to turn over the ownership of the transcribed and audio interviews to the Inuit art community, via the new Inuit Art Centre at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, opening in 2020 or to the Inuit Art Foundation's Artist profiles.

The People

The Inuit as identified today are the heirs of a history over six thousand years old beginning with the Pre-Dorset culture around 2500 BCE.[45] Qallunaat only occupy a small period on the long timeline of Inuit history, but their interference resulted in several caustic changes in Northern

[45] See the following authors for a more comprehensive overview of Arctic history: Bogliolo Bruna Giulia, "Shamanism Influence in Inuit Art-Dorset Period," *Journal of Literature and Art Studies* 5, no. 4 (April 28, 2015): 271–81; Patricia D. Sutherland, "Shamanism and the Iconography of Palaeo-Eskimo Art," in *The Archaeology of Shamanism*, ed. Neil S. Price (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 135–45; Kelly Sandra Elizabeth Karpala, "Adapting to a World of Change: Inuit Perspectives of Environmental Changes in Igloolik, Nunavut" (Master of Arts, Carleton University, 2010); Renée Fossett, *In Order to Live Untroubled: Inuit of the Central Arctic, 1550-1940* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2001).

life.[46] Missionaries were some of the first contact, later positioning themselves as mediators between Inuit and qallunaat and setting into motion the first steps of colonization.[47] Starting in the eighteenth century, trading companies began setting up posts in the high arctic for access to seals, whales, and furs.[48] Early in the twentieth century, exchange between Indigenous and European groups increased as the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) and others began to actively seek out Inuit for fur trapping.[49] The Canadian Government's policy towards the Inuit following the end of the gold rush and uptake of whaling industries "advocated a traditional, self-sufficient way of life for Inuit, insofar as that was possible."[50] In the eyes of federal operatives, the solution was to encourage the manufacturing of perceived traditional Inuit crafts.[51] It is important to note, however, the trading companies, most prominently the HBC, saw Inuit congregating by trading posts as detrimental to the 'native' nomadic lifestyle, and would strain the faunal population levels leading to further dependence on the South.[52] Even so, their presence in the Arctic led to seasonal camps congregating around posts. The government similarly held the position that Inuit, as nomadic peoples, had no special attachment to the land and could easily be transplanted elsewhere in the arctic circle.[53] A Policy of Dispersal began, which without federal supervision

[46] Janet Mancini Billson, *Keepers of the Culture: The Power of Tradition in Women's Lives* (New York: Lexington Books, 1995), 106.
[47] Melanie Cabak and Stephen Loring, ""A Set of Very Fair Cups and Saucers": Stamped Ceramics as an Example of Inuit Incorporation," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 4, no. 1 (2000): 4; Karpala, "Adapting to a World of Change," 49; Carol Ann Prokop, "Written in Stone: A Comparative Analysis of Sedna and the Moon Spirit as Depicted in Contemporary Inuit Sculpture and Graphics" (Master of Arts, University of British Columbia, 1990): 5; Kanada and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The Inuit and Northern Experience*, vol. 2, 6 vols., The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (Montreal, Kingston, London, Chicago: McGill-Queens University Press, 2015), 13.
[48] William Barr, "The Eighteenth Century Trade between the Ships of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Hudson Strait Inuit," *Arctic* (1994): 236.
[49] Karpala, "Adapting to a World of Change," 51.
[50] Sarah Bonesteel and Erik Anderson, eds., *Canada's Relationship with Inuit: A History of Policy and Program Development* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2008), v; Kanada and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools*, 10.
[51] Nelson H. H. Graburn, "Authentic Inuit Art: Creation and Exclusion in the Canadian North," *Journal of Material Culture* 9, no. 2 (July 2004): 143.
[52] David Damas, *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic.* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 42; Heather Igloliorte, "'We Were so Far Away': Exhibiting Inuit Oral Histories of Residential Schools," in *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Places*, ed. Erica Lehrer, Cynthia E. Milton, and Monica Eileen Patterson (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011), 26.
[53] Qikiqtani Inuit Association, *Nuutauniq: Moves in Inuit Life*, Qikiqtani Truth Commission: Thematic Reports and Special Studies 1950–1975 (Iqaluit, Nunavut: Inhabit Media Inc., 2014), 15; Alan R. Marcus, *Relocating Eden: The Image and Politics of Inuit Exile in the Canadian Arctic*, Arctic Visions (Hanover: Dartmouth College: University Press of New England, 1995), 4.

or regulation led to more than a quarter of the total eastern Canadian Arctic population being relocated to unfamiliar and inadequate areas, causing a great deal of strife and loss.[54]

By the twentieth century, their lands were claimed by the dominion of Canada, meaning an alien government was now imposed upon the Indigenous population. Following World War II, more policies of assimilation, relocation, and residential schools were enacted across the arctic community. It was an act of ethnocultural genocide aimed at violently destroying Inuit identity. Traditions were outlawed, language was suppressed in order to turn the Inuit into Canadians. Residential schools separated over a hundred thousand Indigenous children from their families and cultures between 1860 and 2000. Between 1949 to 1960, 6,877 of these children were recorded as Inuit.[55] The experience of Inuit families and children under the system required its own recompense under the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.[56]

Increased exposure to qallunaat allowed for the transmission of the infectious bacteria responsible for Tuberculosis (TB) to a population entirely lacking immunity. Current estimates are that a third of the Inuit population was infected.[57] Following World War II, the government made concentrated efforts to halt the epidemic. Quarantine was (and still is) an effective tactic for curbing the spread of the disease, but in practice, "Evacuees were not allowed to go ashore to collect belongings, to say goodbye, or to make arrangements for their families or goods."[58] One out of every seven Inuit were essentially scooped from the north and dumped in southern sanatoriums for treatment that could last anywhere from six months to years.[59] To this effect, the largest year-round Inuit community was the Mountain Hill Sanatorium in Hamilton, Ontario.[60] Some who were taken never returned north. Others who wanted to return had no way of doings so because of the language barrier and the absence of any regulated form of documenting just

[54] Damas, *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers*, 38; Qikiqtani Inuit Association, *Nuutauniq*, 16; Billson, *Keepers of the Culture*, 106–7.
[55] David Paul King and Aboriginal Healing Foundation (Canada), *A brief report of the federal government of Canada's residential school system for Inuit* (Ottawa, Ont.: Aboriginal Healing Foundation = Fondation autochtone de guérison, 2006), 5.
[56] The full Truth and Reconciliation Report is available at http://www.trc.ca/about-us/trc-findings.html.
[57] Pat Sandiford Grygier, *A Long Way from Home: The Tuberculosis Epidemic among the Inuit*, McGill-Queen's/Hannah Institute Studies in the History of Medicine, Health and Society 2 (Montreal ; Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), xxi.
[58] Ibid, 96.
[59] Ibid, xxi; 9.
[60] Ibid, xxi.

who they were and where they came from. In addition, both the disease and its treatment left TB patients with physical disabilities that made it profoundly difficult to return to their previous lifeways.[61] Surprisingly, staff encouraged carving and sewing among patients as a new means of collecting income. "Soapstone carving was sometimes frowned upon because it created a fine dust that was bad for the lungs, and the carvers had to wear masks. But it was the preferred medium, and by 1958 the patients of the Mountain Sanatorium were turning out about 200 carvings a month…"[62] As already discussed, this burgeoning market for Inuit crafts was a part of a larger economic incentive to make the North self-sufficient after the fall of the fur market.

The Sixties Scoop saw First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children ripped away from their families and placed into foster care for adoption by qallunaat. The last of these Scoop policies was repealed in 1996. Officially, these operations lasted until the 1980s, but in ongoing practice, Indigenous children are still over-represented in the child welfare system.[63] These events severed countless children over generations from their cultural roots, which would impact their concept of identity and belonging.

The past few decades have seen the rise of a Fifth Region of Inuit occupation. Coming from the four regions that make up Inuit Nunangat (Inuvialuit, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut), the unofficial fifth region refers to the population of Inuit in urban locales across southern Canada.[64] Some come for jobs, education, or opportunity. While these migrations are more voluntary than the scoops of the twentieth century, they are still prompted by economic inequality resulting from involuntary management and interference from outside forces. Relocation to the south still carries emotional distress for those leaving and those left behind. There is a difference in worldview between those who come to the South as adults and those who are born there, however, "All Inuit, in the North and the South, have both cultural and ethnic identities. But most urban Inuit encounter serious difficulties in realizing their cultural identity."[65] There are few milieus for an Inuk to gain access to their community's wealth of social and traditional

[61] Ibid, 12.
[62] Ibid, 113.
[63] Raven Sinclair, "Identity Lost and Found: Lessons from the Sixties Scoop," *First Peoples Child & Family Review* 3, no. 1 (2007): 65.
[64] Glenn Gear was the first to introduce the term to me through his participation in the film titled *The Fifth Region* (2018).
[65] Nobuhiro Kishigami, "Inuit Identities in Montreal, Canada," *Études/Inuit/Studies* 26, no. 1 (2002): 184.

knowledge both as a result of moving and the lack of transmission from the previous generation. Recent generations still live under the shadow of the scoops and residential schools, leaving descendants to reconnect the loose ends created from the abrupt loss of culture experienced by their parents or grandparents.

The Artists

This thesis opens a conversation with four urban artists to examine how they have tackled the rift between dislocation, cultural loss, and identity produced from the history just discussed through their art and specifically through their use of the image of Sedna. A list of 74 Inuit artists was compiled from the *Inuit Art Quarterly* database alongside an extensive literature review of catalogues and artbooks (Appendix A), which demonstrates the ubiquity of her presence amongst all Inuit artists and in all media. Artists were chosen for invitation if their oeuvre included figures identified as "sea spirit," "mermaid," "Sea Woman," or any regional variation of the figure Sedna. Of those 74, several were excluded due to being deceased; just five had means of contact publicly available. Four of those five responded to the invitation to be interviewed for this thesis. Although they came from different communities and upbringings, all four had vested conceptions of Sedna that they wanted to share through this thesis.

It is also worth discussing how this thesis came to stress the urban aspect of their lives in relation to their art. As explained in the selection process, I had no requirement for the artist to be living in the Fifth Region in order to be considered. This uniting feature only came to attention after the interviews had taken place. The experience of these artists, both as artists and as Inuit, have been shaped by their localities in the south. Specifically, Sedna serves as a means of mending the physical and cultural disconnection resulting from being residents of the Fifth Region.

"Piqtoukun is what I added to my name when I started carving," David Ruben Piqtoukun told me over a cup of tea at his home in Colborne, ON, on September 22nd, 2018. "Piqto is my Inuit Eskimo name. *Piqto* means the wind. Like the blowing wind. Very harsh wind. […]I've lived my name out well. Over the years. Different types of wind conditions, different types of different types of David conditions." The winds of change have been a constant in his life; always

blowing, always pointing him elsewhere. Piqtoukun was born in 1950 on a hunting camp across from Darnley Bay eight miles out of Paulatuk, NWT. “They were geese hunting. And the first sound I heard was the sound of snow geese.” Piqtoukun was raised by his grandparents alongside his younger brother, Abraham Anghik Ruben. Both were a part of the residential school program until the age of 18. We did not talk about his experience in the residential school system beyond basic discussions of how it related to his sculptural work. He summed up those years with, “…at an early age I can mention that, and I received an education in forgetting.” Forgetting, as he said, his language, his heritage; all of it. His artistic career began in 1972 when visiting Vancouver with Abraham, who had studied carving at the University of Fairbanks in Alaska. Unlike his brother, Piqtoukun received no formal training. He is, in his own words, “literally, self-taught.” Instead, he honed his talents over the next five years by copying from exhibition catalogues and learning techniques from his brother. “It was freeform, so, subtle and simple […] There's the trouble with that, with looking at books; is that you, at least once, want to start copying all these images. And [in order] to not copy, I had to stop reading all these art books and exhibition books. And it felt really important. It felt really important for me to develop my own style…and to do that I had to close these books. And just develop things on my own.” During this time, he came into contact with Dr. Alan Gomer from North Battleford, Saskatchewan, who encouraged Piqtoukun to gather stories from his home village. It proved to be a crucial mission for Piqtoukun. “My age group, we're the elders of the village now. Yeah, like my brothers, cousins, relatives. The very old Inuit people that originally settled into Paulatuk, helped built the hamlet have all—have all passed away. And with them also all the stories. But I was a very fortunate. […] Since the early 70s I started collecting stories from my village.” He worked these stories into his sculpture as a way of recording and reconnecting with them. After selling his first work for $56, Piqtoukun decided to make carving his career. He built a name for himself by participating in carving workshops and group shows through the 1970s and 80s. Now he has pieces in galleries and museums across the continent. He has not stopped teaching himself despite his slowly fading eyesight. “And I still do a lot of fun detail work on my carvings. I can't get away from that because it’s just part of it. That's what's required to present the sculpture or the carving in the proper manner. Especially in the matter of finishing it. Having been introduced to metal I can incorporate metal and stone—in a way that takes my work into another time zone, that takes it into another dimension.”

I had just missed the chance to share a cup of tea with the second artist, Michael Massie, while he was in Ottawa to receive the Order of Canada. We settled for a phone interview after he returned home in Kippens, NL, on September 10th, 2018. Massie was born in 1962 in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL. "Up until the age of fourteen, our families were really close. My mom's brothers. We were really close with our cousins. And the same with my father's. So, we spent a lot of time more with family than we did with the other kids I grew up with on our street. That's a lot to relate to with my work in regard to the family stories and stuff like this." Massie had an attraction to art from a young age. "It's always been an enjoyable thing, even when I was in school. I started drawing. From what my mom tells me from around when I was 8 or 9 […] and it all stemmed from when one of our uncles used to live with us and he just did this little goofy sketch on a piece of paper one day. I don't know, I wish I still had the drawing, but I just saw and watched him do it and then I just thought, 'Well, that looks like fun. I think I can do that.' So, it just started from there…" After graduating from a high school in St John's in 1981, he enrolled in the visual art program at West Viking College in Stephenville between 1986 and 1988 and then studied at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax between 1989 and 1991. Massie started the NSCAD program in printmaking and painting, but soon decided to switch majors to metalwork and jewelry. "And it wasn't until the second semester I was there. A friend of ours that we were sharing an apartment with was doing the jewelry program. And she came home one evening with a bunch of jewelry she was working on and I was kinda fascinated with it […]. And, you know, I could relate with what she was doing. […] So, I decided to go down to the jewelry studio with her. As soon as I walked in, I knew it was in a place I'd rather be." Later, around 1991 or 1992, the Inuit Art Foundation hosted workshops under the Inuit Artists' College program which Massie took part in to further expand his network and career following graduation.[66] Massie points to the subsequent profile about him in a 1992 issue of the IAQ as the start of his artistic career. For the next four years he traveled across the country as an instructor for carving and jewelry-making lectures and workshops in Ottawa, Toronto, Halifax, Iqaluit, Gjoa Haven, Goose Bay, and Port-aux-Basques. In 1997 after applying for a bursary, Massie set up his own studio in Kippens, NL. He has since been featured in exhibitions across the globe for his metalwork (most notably his whimsical teapots). "The teapot idea came back in

[66] Inuit Art Foundation, "Artists' Education," *Inuit Art Foundation*, n.d., https://www.inuitartfoundation.org/artists-education/.

November of 1990. My grandmother had passed away in October that year and in November we were given a project where we had to make a hollow vessel. And it could of been anything from a mug, to a beer stein, to a candelabra, or something like this. And I just happened to choose a teapot because my grandmother was on my mind quite a bit. And she, you know, always had a teapot on the stove. One with steeping tea and one with water. And that was never taken off the stove. Only to fill. […] I made it after my grandmother. So, it also has a play on words, like, May was her name and tea. May-tea. Which I am part—partly." He prefers to keep his metalwork whimsical, as expressed through punny titles, but maintains a seriousness when it comes to mythological subjects in sculpture.

Heather Campbell is an artist of mixed Inuit and qallunaat ancestry.[67] She was raised in Rigolet, Nunatsiavut, although—like all of her community members—was born at the nearest hospital at Northwest River, NL in 1973. Campbell was raised by her grandparents; her grandfather was a traditional hunter, giving her a unique perspective of the land. "We always had, like, a long trip from town to our summer place by boat. You know, I spent my whole summer on the water." She attended the School of Fine Arts program at Memorial University of Newfoundland in Corner Brook, graduating with a BFA in 1996. She moved to Ottawa the next year. Campbell had some difficulty connecting with the Inuit community in Ottawa as, "the differences between Labrador Inuit culture and more northern cultures meant she often felt like an outsider."[68] Despite feeling a sense of disconnection there, Campbell soon became a curator for the Inuit Art Centre of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, then curatorial assistant in the Indigenous Art Department at the National Gallery of Canada, before taking on her current position as an Indigenous Researcher/Archivist with Library Archives Canada.[69] Although she has worked professionally as a curator, her passion lies in her painting practice. In her artistic career, Campbell works primarily in watercolor and oil paints. "[Oil paint] was my favorite in university. But I just don't have the time to do it here. Then so I started doing watercolor and drawing on top with various media; pencil-crayons, but pen and ink as well." Campbell creates

[67] MICH, "Heather Campbell," *Nunatsiavut: Mobilizing Inuit Cultural Heritage*, n.d., http://www.michnunatsiavut.org/heather-campbell.html.
[68] Rosa Saba, "Heather Campbell Explores Labrador Inuit Identity through Painting, Drawing," *Ottawa Life Magazine*, October 25, 2018.
[69] Inuit Art Foundation, "Heather Campbell," *Inuit Artist Database*, n.d., https://iad.inuitartfoundation.org/artist/Heather-Campbell/bio-citations.

tides of watercolor that flow beneath jellyfish and over faces scratched out in ink. She considers art as a way of expressing her political opinions, her most recent topic being the hydroelectric dam at Muskrat Falls. “And it's one of the ways that I can show my displeasure with things that have been happening within the Inuit world in general, I think. So, it's now finding that balance between having something that I really want to say and creating it in such a way that I still have that freedom and fluidity in the technique.” Keeping in mind her busy schedule, we decided to have the interview over the phone on October 10th, 2018.

“Cat sitting lead into all this,” Glenn Gear laughed as my own cat, Sweetgrass, sniffed at his offered hand in my home in Montreal on October 11th, 2018. “It happens. […] Many of my friends sort of stop by Montreal and love the city and then end up staying here for a while.” Rewinding a few decades, Gear was born and raised in Corner Brook, NL. His father is an Inuk from the Hopedale area of Nunatsiavut, and his mother is a Newfoundlander. He attended Memorial University of Newfoundland at Corner Brook, for his BFA in Photography in the same program as Campbell. During his final year, he visited Montreal under the pretense of cat-sitting with his partner and wound up staying, going on to complete a degree from Concordia University. He currently lives in Montreal while attending residencies across the country. “Over the years I've worked in, I guess, different kinds of media. My Masters was in installation. My Bachelors was actually in photography. And I went on to work in animation, which, as I sort of see it, it's kind of a combination. Especially stop-motion animation. It's a combination of sculpture and little sets and photography. So, I’m able to apply those skills.” Gear has produced multiple animations, both independent shorts and collaborations for outside projects; the most recent being his work for *The Fifth Region* (2018) which premiered at ImagineNative Film Festival in Toronto the week following our interview. He has also done mural work and beadwork pieces, these mediums seemingly only in black and white. “For me [making art is] a really, visceral personal connection to making and to, having a sense of pride in making something that's well-crafted. The sort of love of the making itself and I think that's a very personal kind of connection to materials and to building and to making.” I see that love and pride whenever he waltzes into craft circle at Native Montreal.

Sedna

There is one last individual to introduce; Sedna herself. In order to do so I must first explain what she is more thoroughly in the ontological sense. Inuit cosmology does not fit within Western notions of pantheons or gods, though they still have a cosmological system.[70] That is to say "there is a difference between saying Aboriginal societies have religious belief and practices and saying that there is such a thing as Aboriginal religion which is the same category of thing as the Christian religion."[71] There is no unified dogma, though some beliefs or practices may be shared among groups. Historical accounts of the Inuit belief system make no distinction between the natural and supernatural world.[72] Erica Hill, an arctic anthropologist, puts this knowledge into the physical realm by directly addressing the place of such "nonempirical" or "other-than-human" persons within the landscape.[73] *Inua* (pl. *inue*) references the essential spirit/soul/force that resides within a conceived entity, a metaphysical "Indweller" that controls an existence, including nature itself.[74] As well, these are not personifications, metaphoric representations of nature's powers, but are the powers that constitute nature itself.[75] Nature, being untameable and generally unaccommodating to the will of humans, belies a disinterest on behalf of inue.[76] It is the shaman (angakkuq; pl. angakkuit) who creates and then maintains a relationship with the inua of concern. Though, Hill warns against relegating "interacting and communicating with other-than-human persons to the realm of the religious or the supernatural."[77] Because of the permeability between the preternatural and natural it would be inaccurate to discuss inua as removed from this world.[78] Inue are generally invisible, but in representation they can be anthropomorphic[79] though I decline to do so for the same reasons I do not describe the dancing

[70] Roepstorff, "Clashing Cosmologies," 117. "Cosmology is here conceived as the conceptualisation of what is out there (an ontology), a method to validate and examine it (an epistemology) and a prescription for how people should ideally relate to it (an ethics)."
[71] Howard Morphy, *Becoming Art: Exploring Cross-Cultural Categories* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2007), 8.
[72] Laugrand and Oosten, *La femme de la mer*, 37.
[73] Erica Hill, "The Nonempirical Past: Enculturated Landscapes and Other-than-Human Persons in Southwest Alaska," *Arctic Anthropology* 49, no. 2 (January 1, 2012): 46.
[74] Laugrand and Oosten, *La femme de la mer*, 39.
[75] Erica Hill, "Animals as Agents: Hunting Ritual and Relational Ontologies in Prehistoric Alaska and Chukotka," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 21, no. 03 (October 2011): 415; Lindsay Ellen Swinarton, "Animals and the Precontact Inuit of Labrador: An Examination Using Faunal Remains, Space and Myth" (Master of Arts, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2008), 11.
[76] Daniel Merkur, *Becoming Half Hidden: Shaminism and Initiation Among the Inuit* (Stockholm: Taylor & Francis, 1992), 302.
[77] Hill, "Animals as Agents," 411.
[78] Ann Fienup-Riordan, *Boundaries and Passages: Rule and Ritual in Yup'ik Eskimo Oral Tradition* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 63.
[79] Hill, "Animals as Agents," 408, 415; Swinarton, "Animals and the Precontact Inuit of Labrador," 140.

bear sculptures of the gallery as anthropomorphic. Anthropomorphic assumes that the animal is taking on exclusively human traits, but this categorization is not present in Inuit ontological frameworks. They are not human-like because they are still acting within their capabilities as animals. "Animals were afforded "their own ways" with social circles, inner motivations, and preferences of their own."[80] They had agency, intentionality and sentience—features qallunaat are not keen to associate with wild fauna.[81] In the gallery, helping spirits and nameless *inua* can be found in sculpted serpentine (fig. 9) and in colorful prints (fig. 10).

Inua are playful yet possess a dangerous air about them. We (as in the collective humanity) fear what we do not understand, and there is a great deal of fear surrounding inue. Knud Rasmussen recorded a now famous quotation from Aua, an angakkuq in Iglulik:

> We fear the weather spirit of earth, which we must fight against to wrest our food from land and sea. We fear Sila. We fear death and hunger in the cold snow huts. We fear Takfinakapsfiluk, the great woman down at the bottom of the sea, that rules over all the beasts of the sea. We fear the sickness that we meet with daily all around us; not death, but the suffering. We fear the evil spirits of life, those of the air, of the sea and the earth, that can help wicked shamans to harm their fellow men. We fear the souls of dead human beings and of the animals we have killed. […] We fear what we see about us, and we fear all the invisible things that are likewise about us, all that we have heard of in our forefathers' stories and myths.[82]

For some, Sedna continues to be a force of nature deserving of respect and reverence just as Aua describes. Several voices have come forward to attest to her presence in the northern waters.[83] At the same time I must concede that she is someone beyond my perception. I cannot speak to her. I cannot prove her existence. I do not believe in her. And yet, without hesitation, I say she is as

[80] Joslyn Cassady, "'Strange Things Happen to Non-Christian People': Human-Animal Transformation among the Iñupiat of Arctic Alaska," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 32, no. 1 (2008): 92.
[81] Cassady, "'Strange Things Happen to Non-Christian People'," 84; Hill, "Animals as Agents," 407.
[82] Knud Rasmussen, *Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos*, vol. 2 (Ams Press, 1976), 56.
[83] See: Peter Suvaksiuq in Laugrand, "Sedna crucifiée," 454; Iyola Kingqatsiak in Laugrand and Oosten, *La femme de la mer*, 142; Irniq, "The Staying Force," 28.

real as you or I. We cannot dismiss one role she plays just because she is non-literal in another. That is why I will speak about Sedna as metaphorical, symbolic, and as a real being.

Sedna's biography has just as many variations as she has names; and although the details change from place to place, the key elements are consistent throughout the circumpolar world. Here is the version told by Taqqut Productions, an Inuit-owned film production company founded in 2011 by Louise Flaherty and Neil Christopher, headquartered in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada:

> Long ago when there were no seals walruses or any other animals in the sea and when the Inuit were the only people on the land, there was a young and beautiful woman named Nuliajuk. She was so beautiful that men all over the North wanted to marry her. But she was not attracted to any of them.
>
> "You must choose a husband soon, my daughter, before people think you're fickle and keep the young man away"
>
> "No not until I find the man I have seen in my dreams father. Until then I am perfectly content not to marry."
>
> "Why, my daughter? Why must you wait? listen to me, soon I will have to marry you to one of my dogs."
>
> But Nuliajuk was determined to wait. This did not please her father. She often wandered for days out on the land, walking with her dog, picking berries and collecting lichen or moss.
>
> One day while Nuliajuk's father was away hunting, a young handsome man came to her father's camp. He was dressed in magnificent clothing and held a harpoon carved from a single bone. "I have heard on the wind that there was a beautiful woman here. A beautiful woman who is waiting for a husband. I see that must be you. come with me and be my bride."
>
> "But what will you offer me if I leave my father's igloo behind?"

“You should be the mistress of my home on the island of birds. There, the lamp is always filled with oil and the pot with meat. There, the wind is always warm, and the skins are always soft. come Nuliajuk. Come.”

Nuliajuk was filled with excitement at the promises made by this handsome stranger, but she needed to hear her father's words before she could make a decision and he had yet to return. This kayak man was very attentive, very persistent. He continued to make many promises to Nuliajuk, tempting her to follow him. Was this the man from her dreams?

“I will give you necklaces of bone, Nuliajuk. I will give you warm bear skins to sleep on. The birds will wake you gently and sing you to sleep. Nuliajuk, come, Nuliajuk.”

But Nuliajuk’s father was still hunting and she could not leave while he was away. And yet she felt compelled to follow this handsome man, to be with him. But the days went by and her father had still not returned. And as the wind grew stronger so did Nuliajuk’s desire.

“Ayakte, ayakte! Today, I will go with you. Oh, my handsome man here. Here's my hand.” And so Nuliajuk gave in to her desire. Kayak man cried with joy and let her towards his umiak. Nuliajuk wanted to take her dog with her. But the dog howled and barked. He could feel a bad spirit was near. He wanted to protect Nuliajuk but was unable to get close to her. He howled and he whimpered and although Nuliajuk urged him to come, he ran far away.

And so, it was that when her father, returned to the camp he saw the umiak in the distance, and he cried for the loss of his daughter. He feared he would never see Nuliajuk again.

Nuliajuk and Kayak man travelled for five days and five nights. On the sixth day they entered a harbor which was guarded by two giant polar bears, yellow white

and heavy with fat. The shore was covered with flocks of birds and high the sky more circled and cried. This was the island of birds.

“Here you will be my bride, Nuliajuk. you will be happy and content. Do not yearn for your home.”

But Nuliajuk was not happy and not contented. She was lonely and she missed her father. She missed her father's face. Many months went by then one day her husband went to catch tuktu and forgot to take his amulet. Nuliajuk knowing how much he would miss it decided to follow him so she could give it to him. But she came upon him, suddenly, without him knowing. And then she saw that handsome man she knew only as her husband, he was changing into a bird. His arms now black as Ravens wings. His legs now clawed as talons. Her husband was changing himself into a bird before her eyes. Nuliajuk turned and she ran and she ran. “Ay, now what have I done? I have married a bird spirit. Oh, father. Oh, help me. What will become of me?”

Meanwhile Nuliajuk’s father had spent many days and nights calling for his daughter. she left behind the dog she loved the most. Surely this was not right? Surely something was indeed wrong? And so, he vowed to find his daughter. And after many days of searching on his kayak he came to the island of birds. And there running along the shore Nuliajuk’s father found his daughter running and weeping.

“My daughter, why are you so frightened? Here, come now. Leave this island. I will take you back to our land. Come with me. Now.”

But just as Nuliajuk was leaving the island of birds with her father, her husband came running towards the shore. “No. No. Don’t take her away. No. She’s mine. Please don’t take her away! Come back. No.”

“Quick, Nuliajuk! Harder. Harder. Faster. You must get out of here.”

“Return her to me or pay with your life!”

But father and daughter kept on paddling faster and faster.

But Kayak man flew high into the air, his bird spirit set free and wild. Now he flew as a Black Raven, screeching and crying, beating his giant wings like thunder. The winds and waves slashed and boomed against the tiny boat. He dived. He swooped. He dived again down, down, down, and down to the boat, whipping the waters into a frenzy. Swooping and diving again while the father and his daughter struggled to keep the boat from capsizing.

“I have offended the great scourge of the sea. Please forgive me, my daughter. They are calling you back and I must make peace with them. I am afraid, my daughter. I am so afraid. Oh, my daughter, I have no choice. No choice. I have to throw you into the sea. Yes, into the sea. Please forgive me.” And so, the father threw his daughter, whom he loved so much, into the cold thrashing waters.

Nuliajuk struggled and fought to get back in. Her hands reaching and clawing at the boat. But her father kept pushing and pushing her back into the water. As her hands reached up, he would chop at her fingers. And as each part of her hands fell into the water, they became part of all creation. And as Nuliajuk sank to the bottom of the cold frigid waters, she met two spirits who told her to go to the sea Mountain and there she would find her answers.

“Aye…now I understand. Now, I see my destiny. I have been chosen by the great spirits to fill the oceans with the sea mammals. I have created the seals, the walruses, the narwhals, the whales, and all the other great sea animals for all Inuit.”

> And sometimes when the sea wind blows in a certain way you can hear the voice of Nuliajuk, the great sea goddess who gave us all creation.[84]

This is one of many versions. A similar story is presented in *Keeveeok, Awake!* and reprinted by Health Nexus for service providers in Ontario.[85] In the version told by Peter Irniq from Nunavut, Sedna is abandoned on an island with dogs, one of which she takes as a husband and has children with thereby creating different races.[86] Mariano Aupilaarjuk, from Kangiq&iniq (Kangiqsujuaq) told a version that combined the two by having the bird husband court the girl directly after she has given birth to the dog-children and sent them away.[87] Aupilaarjuk's story extends the Sedna story to the present by explaining that when the hunt is scarce, it means that Sedna is angry with humanity. She needs to be placated by a shaman, who will travel down to her home at the bottom of the waters and comb the tangles in her hair. Once her rage is soothed and the wrongs righted, she releases the animals from her hold.[88] Piqtoukun depicts one such scene in *Journey to the Great Woman* (fig. 6). It is a sweeping sculpture featured on an exhibition poster in his home. Piqtoukun carved out the gaping center of the sculpture to symbolize the passing of Sedna's story from one generation to the next.[89]

I must highlight that the very nature of oral history is to adapt, to change, and yet remain undeniably true despite such reiterations. In "The Acculturative Role of Sea Woman: Early Contact between Inuit and Whites as Revealed in the Origin Myth of Sea Woman" (1990), Birgitte Sonne accounts for the insertion of qallunaat into the unikkatuat of Sedna from the emic

---

[84] *The Legend of Nuliajuk (Audio Only, English) | Taqqut Productions*, video (Taqqut Productions, 2016), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tn1nz-2J3wI.
[85] Best Start by Health Nexus, "Atuaqsijut: Following the Path Sharing Inuit Specific Ways. Resource for Service Providers Who Work With Parents of Inuit Children in Ontario" (2019), 21-23, https://resources.beststart.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/K84-A.pdf; Victoria Mamnguqsualuk, Ring House Gallery, and Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, *Keeveeok, Awake!: Mamnguqsualuk and the Rebirth of Legend at Baker Lake : An Exhibition Held at the Ring House Gallery, November 20, 1986 to January 11, 1987, in Conjunction with the 25th Anniversary of the Boreal Institute for Northern Studies.* (Edmonton: The Institute, 1986).
[86] Peter Irniq, "The Story of Nuliajuk (Inuit)" (n.d.), https://www.historymuseum.ca/history-hall/origins/_media/Nuliajuk-EN.pdf.
[87] Bernard Saladin d'Anglure, ed., *Cosmology and shamanism*, vol. 4, Interviewing Inuit elders (Iqaluit, Nunavut, 2001), 70.
[88] d'Anglure, *Cosmology and shamanism*, 150–51.
[89] Sara Angel, "Northern Lights," *Sara Angel* (blog), March 30, 2011, http://saraangel.ca/project/northern-lights.

side as an expansion the cosmology to cite her as the mother of qallunaat as well as Inuit.[90] From the etic end, Keavy Martin prods into the simplification of Sedna's story by qallunaat in "Rescuing Sedna: Doorslamming, Fingerslicing, and the Moral of the Story" (2011). Martin finds that southern audiences desire a story that aligns to Aesop structures with a tidy moral at the end.[91] These texts shine a light on the complexities of depicting a story that is read from several positions, and the enculturated knowledge that belies each interpretation. "In this sense, the performance of storytelling is a process that can be used to interrupt and intervene in colonial histories, to re-establish self-determined representations, and to provoke political resistance."[92] Clearly, simple interpretation is not feasible nor reliable for this thesis because it does not take these factors into account. This thesis is about that transfer of heritage and cyclical regeneration depicted in the Brazilian soapstone as each of these biographies—histories and stories—contains a journey; from leaving home to finding the way back to their culture. The next step is to look at what making art means to these artists and how they are using art as a way to make their journey.

Making Art

Indigenous art has been studied between three unique disciplines: archaeology, anthropology, and art history. From an archaeological perspective, art is a medium of communication; a mode for us to convey emotions, ideas, events, etc., from the emic (the insider's) point of view to the etic (the outsider) observer. Therefore, through the study of art, we can attempt to reconstruct that emic stance and the pieces of life that are not captured in legers or archival documents.[93] Anthropologically, art still holds that formative place in the construction of culture, however, the discipline donates more attention to the function of the object in the social environment. It is concerned with the interaction between art and humans than with the relevance of any one

[90] Birgitte Sonne, *The Acculturative Role of Sea Woman: Early Contact between Inuit and Whites as Revealed in the Origin Myth of Sea Woman*, Meddelelser Om Grønland Man & Society 13 (Copenhagen: Commission for Scientific Research in Greenland, 1990), 19.
[91] Keavy Martin, "Rescuing Sedna: Doorslamming, Fingerslicing, and the Moral of the Story," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée* 38, no. 2 (2011): 191.
[92] Taunton, "Performing Resistance/Negotiating Sovereignty," 69.
[93] Kathryn Florence, "A Holistic Approach to Using Art to Understand a Historical Human Experience: Uncovering Meaning in Teotihuacan Murals," *Forum for World History Connected*, no. Articles on Using Art to Understand and Teach World History (October 2019).

particular work of art. As a result, Art history has been deeply impacted by both of these disciplines, though they are rarely considered as intimately connected as I do.

Of importance for this thesis is the way in which archaeology has been used to create a hierarchy of value between art/artifact/object within the museum that has since spilled over into the contemporary gallery. For instance, "Whenever objects of Inuit art (or artifacts) are displayed, whether in an art museum or in an ethnological museum setting, a story is told about Inuit."[94] It creates a narrative about the stories, cultures, and communities included in the exhibition, even if these stories are told from the curator's outsider perspective.[95] Anthropology is also culpable in contributing to the pervasive de-valuation of Indigenous art through overused, stereotypical trope that Indigenous scholars such as Nancy Mithlo have fought against, such as, "There is no word for art in [my Indigenous] language."[96] The notion that there is lack of a word for 'art' has crafted a perception that the historical products made by Indigenous hands are inherently not 'fine art' in the same way that, for example, a Rodin sculpture now is. Such a framework is undeniably Eurocentric at best and blatantly racist at worst.[97] Howard Morphy explains that, "The Eurocentrism of much art history of the past has created the impression that there are two kinds of art – art that is part of art history and art that is not. The implicit questions that this raises but which are seldom directly addressed are: if the objects concerned are outside the province of art history are they art at all? or if they are art in what sense are they art? and if they were absent from art history where were they present?"[98] Inserting pieces of Indigenous art into the canon is not beneficial to the study of art history, nor does it assist in decolonizing the discipline.[99] Such practices only recreate hierarchies of art without giving room to question and

[94]Rosen, "'Staying Power,'" 105.
[95] James Wyatt Anton, "Moccasin Tracks: Reading the Narrative in Traditional Indigenous Craft Work" (Master of Arts, University of Calgary, 2018), i.
[96] Nancy Marie Mithlo, "No Word for Art in Our Language?: Old Questions, New Paradigms," *Wicazo Sa Review* 27, no. 1 (2012): 112.
[97] Ibid, 113; 115. "From one perspective, the "no word for art" descriptor indicates an Indigenous rejection of how Native arts are perceived in non-Native contexts such as museums, cultural centers, galleries, and scholarly texts—contexts that imbue fine arts with the Western values of individualism, commercialism, objectivism, and competition, as framed by an elitist point of reference."; "Another construct is provided by Sally Price, who observes that the category "art" is a convenient and exclusively Western construct, for it gives westerners complete control over the aesthetic judgment of the world's art."
[98] Howard Morphy, *Becoming Art: Exploring Cross-Cultural Categories* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2007), 1.
[99] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "Imperialism, History, Writing, and Theory," in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Second edition (London: Zed Books, 2012), 29.

critique the attributes being used as the measure of value. It does not address the systematic barriers that prevented these artists and objects from being considered fine art in the first place. That is the urgency of returning actions to context and implications as I am attempting to do here.

To address these issues, I take a multidisciplinary approach as outlined in my methodology to present a more lateral art history. An approach that considers both art history and anthropology is beneficial to this topic because culture is not easily compartmentalized, nor is it possible to completely isolate art from its context without obliterating the framework that supplies it with meaning and function.[100] It is a gentle practice of uncovering art to unearth humanity. Because art has not—nor has it ever been—a passive mirror of the environment in which it was created but is an active agent in constructing and contesting culture. *Agency* is the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make choices. However, when I say that art is an agent, I mean that art is an active player in the shaping of culture and the humans within said culture. It tells us what to think, what to feel. It informs *how* we see, just as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis defends that one's lexicon informs *what* we think.[101] Furthermore, as art historian Fred R. Myers argues, re-centering the construction of identity in contemporary Indigenous life highlights, "the activity of representation itself becomes an important object of study."[102] It is necessary to force our discipline to reconsider the capacity of the relationships between art, society, artist, and subject matter to change pervasive cultural perceptions. Michael Robert Evans, now associate dean of journalism at Indiana University, painted the situation beautifully by saying:

> No human act of creation takes place in a social vacuum. No matter how isolated, no matter how aloof, no matter how profoundly ostracized or revered or shunned, no artist works purely within the realm of individual genius. The act of creating

[100] Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Clarendon Press, 1998). Following Hatcher, Alfred Gell conceived that "the aim of anthropological theory is to make sense of behavior in the context of social relations. Correspondingly, the objective of the anthropological theory of art is to account for the production and circulation of art objects as a function of this relational context" (11). Within Gell's paradigm art is not simple a means, but an action that extends agency beyond the producer, to the object produced (ix; 6).

[101] Edward Sapir and David G. Mandelbaum, *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture and Personality*, 2. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985), 69; Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Science and Linguistics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Technology Review, 1940), 213-14.

[102] Fred R. Myers, *Painting Culture: The Making of an Aboriginal High Art*, Objects/Histories (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2002), 12.

> involves both a personal dimension and a social one. […] So the artist can choose from a broad array of options presented to him by nature, by other artists, and by life experiences but that choice—and the array itself—reflect societal forces at work. In turn, the artist gives to society works that express his values, his ideas, his passions, his world view.[103]

There is no such thing as neutral art, and therefore no corresponding neutral art history. It is necessary to recognize the circumstances that fostered the production of art in order to understand how those very influences can be manipulated or interpreted. Fred Myers has argued specifically regarding Australian Aboriginal art, "that the availability of meaning *in* the paintings is not an adequate answer. One must show how the paintings were *made* to have a meaning in practice."[104] By extension, we only get a partial understanding when we do not consider the outside forces that placed Inuit groups into the positions they were in or that pushed them towards the art market. Almost four decades have passed since Nelda Swinton's in-depth look at subject matter in Inuit art and its role in the relationship between Inuit and qallunaat. This framework enforces a reconfiguration of the role of art in society and culture, specifically as a medium of enacting demonstrations of survivance and messages of resistance. Indigenous artists are quite capable of using their art for their own ends.[105] Building on this platform, my thesis aims to show the agentive role of art in contemporary Inuit society as a means of resistance and a demonstration of survivance as understood by four urban Inuit artists.

One of the first questions I asked the artists was; *what does making art mean to you?* This is slightly different than asking *why do you make art?* The latter is revealed through the former while also opening the conversation for interviewees to discuss both their personal motivations and the emotional aspects of their practice. As explained independently by Indigenous scholars Joseph Brown and Shawn Wilson, the intangible products of relationships—the process of creating those networks of connection—are just as important as the eventual outcomes. This

---

[103] Evans, "Shades of Stone: Facets of Identity among Inuit Carvers" (Master of Arts, Indiana University, 1998), 122.
[104] Myers, *Painting Culture*, 7.
[105] Molly Lee, "'How Will I Sew My Baskets?': Women Vendors, Market Art, and Incipient Political Activism in Anchorage, Alaska," *American Indian Quarterly* 27, no. 3/4 (2003): 590; Victoria Nolte, "The Feminist Sedna: Representing the Sea Woman in Contemporary Inuit Art," *Aboriginate*, March 2005, 56.

question focuses on the journey from idea to finished piece. Piqtoukun, Massie, and Gear are all full-time artists, while Campbell has held numerous arts-adjacent positions such as her work in museums and archives. Piqtoukun said outright that it was the aspect of financial independence that really sold him on making art. “My first paycheck was $56. And from there I realized, ‘Geez, if I got to make $56 on 8 small pieces, I was on my way to being self-employed.’” Massie also praised the freedom that comes with making art, stating, “I know what I have to do, and I just do it, enjoy it. But then there’s of course…where it doesn’t become fun. It becomes work and that’s where it’s not any good. I turn on back. I’m just coming out of that.” His metalwork in particular feels more playful than his stone carving and he is looking forward to returning to the more punny titles he gives his teapots. “Humor is a great way of embracing some things. You know, getting rid of tension and that too.”

Campbell agreed with Massie about the process being an outlet for stress relief, calling her practice, “A way to express myself, but also a way to relax.” Yet, even in her meditative pastel washes and sinuous circles, there is a serious message. “I find that more recently I've been becoming much more political in my life than in my art. And [art is] one of the ways that I can show my displeasure with things that have been happening within the Inuit world in general, I think. So, it's now finding that balance between having something that I really want to say and creating it in such a way that I still have that freedom and fluidity in the technique.” *Methylmercury* (fig. 7) is a visually powerful statement about the eponymous chemical pollution resulting from the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric dam. The black cloud of toxic contaminants, filled with screaming faces and jagged scrawl, grabs Sedna by the throat. She chokes on a second tainted appendage that evokes a more disturbing notion of sexual violence. The painting calls out ecological poisoning as a direct assault upon the inua of the ocean. As a curator, Campbell is well aware of how the personal becomes political, especially in how narratives are constructed through and around art. Similarly, Gear thought of his practice as a process of connecting to the community. “It's personal and it's broader reaching out to community, but also creating space, where different things can be held at the same time. So, I'm really thinking about history and resilience and how that connects with personal stories that speak of something broader” For all four artists, making art in part was a process through which they could feel free to explore their heritage and express it to a wider unfamiliar audience.

I asked, *what subjects do you focus on and why?* Piqtoukun, Massie, Campbell, and Gear all mentioned that their art was a way of connecting to the past through oral stories and unikkatuat; of finding a way back to their heritage, lineage, or history that stemmed from an absence of the culture traditionally passed down through oral history and storywork. Storytelling is valuable but fragile. It is a constantly emerging narrative that is as infinite as the mind, changing over the generations; maintaining the threads of narrative that allow us to follow them back through the retellings. Yet this continuity is threatened by the loss of Indigenous languages and Elders to share those stories.[106] During the era of colonial assimilation, stories were forcibly silenced. And yet, it endures by the efforts of that relentless human refusal to fade into oblivion. Taunton observed in her own research that "In many instances, Aboriginal histories that have been mitigated by colonial erasures and agendas, such as residential schools, are being recovered through oral histories and remembered through the Indigenizing and re-contextualizing of the visual archive."[107] As such, each artist expressed the need to tell a specific story about recovering those roots through their art.

For instance, Gear's animation work is more focused on the discussion of the larger regional history of his home. "I'm really focused on archives; photo archives from Labrador, photo archives of sort of early Labrador settler and Inuit life, and Inuit life." His attention is on how such institutions as the fur trade, fisheries, and whaling shaped and were shaped by costal life in Labrador. Through animation, he is reviving history into the present, connecting with the people he never knew, but shared the land with across the centuries.

From the perspective of Susanne Dybbroe, Piqtoukun was using his sculpture as a "way of creatively getting to 'know' one's past means coming to terms with one's own cultural roots, instead of having to rely on the images created by foreigners."[108] For Piqtoukun himself, it is a means of looking back to move forwards; of preserving and reconnecting with the facets of his heritage that he was denied and even creating new interpretations. "That's the bottom line; is trying to interpret mythology, the stories, the legends. Well, these mythological stories they're teaching me about my culture—about my identity." The tactile nature of stone carving gives

[106] Marcel Detienne, *The Creation of Mythology* (University of Chicago Press, 1986), 36.
[107] Taunton, "Performing Resistance/Negotiating Sovereignty," 46.
[108] Susanne Dybbroe, "Questions of Identity and Issues of Self-Determination," *Études/Inuit/Studies* 20, no. 2 (1996): 40.

Piqtoukun a more physical presence in the story as he takes part in the alternative means of storytelling. He sees translating the oral legend into stone is the story's way of exposing itself to him, like how archaeologists gently peel back the layers of time with each bucket of dirt.

Massie expressed similar motivations, as he also did not grow up with these stories. Once he started learning traditional stories through books, he could not stop. "You know, it's fascinating some of the stories that I've heard about transformation and shamanism. And I still know I know I have a lot to learn about it. I can't wait to get more stories. I'm always looking for different stories." And again, he too incorporates his own interpretations and iterations in his work. When he is unsure if he got something right, he attributes it to his own imagination. His passion is in the experience of retelling the story and recovering versions that have not been told yet.

Campbell's motivations landed somewhere between Massie's and Gear's. According to her, making art with mythological subject matter was a way to explore her Inuit heritage in a city that was not as comforting. She explained how, "in an urban environment it's hard to, you know, feel the same connection that you feel when you're, you know, in your home town, but learning about Inuit spirituality really helps me." In Ottawa, Campbell is physically distanced from her community and her heritage, but through artistic experimentation and exploration, she has found a way to bring a sense of belonging down south.

(Re)Telling a Tale

The question that originally sparked this research for me was; *why does Sedna have a tail?* Several texts explicitly refer to Sedna as half-human, half-sea creature; sometimes a beluga, sometimes a seal, mostly a generic sea mammalian, despite this imagery not being given in the oral history.[109] I planned to trace the depiction of Sedna with a tail from Prehistory to Present using a similar computational statistic model as I did with the Feathered Serpent in

[109] Julie Michelle Decker, "Contemporary Art of Alaska: Found and Assembled in Alaska, and, John Hoover: Art and Life." (Doctor of Philosophy, The Union Institute & University, 2003), 354; Peter Irniq, "The Staying Force of Inuit Knowledge," in *A Will to Survive: Indigenous Essays on the Politics of Culture, Language, and Identity*, ed. Stephen Greymorning (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 23, 28; Laugrand and Oosten, *La femme de la mer*, 29; Laugrand, "Sedna crucifiée," 455–56; Prokop, "Written in Stone," 50.

Mesoamerica.[110] It only took a few days of scouring collections and catalogues to realize that it was an impossible task. It is impossible for me to account for every visual representation of Sedna in Inuit art; her image is so prolific that I cannot keep track of them all for reliable data-mining. Moreover, prior to 1949, there simply were, to my knowledge, no artworks depicting Sedna.[111] This is possibly part of a larger aversion to portray inua figures before this time.[112] One explanation—albeit by a qallunaat—ascribes it to a belief that making her image would be seen by Sedna as a sacrilegious attempt to steal her soul.[113] The suggestion being that the historic trend of aniconism—and the fear to even say her name—spurred the creation of a referential figure that could stand in her place. A more prominent notion is that the tail is a product of the human woman's transformation into the inua named Sedna. However, it bears noting that concepts of transformation vary greatly, just as any other component of a story. What was said by one community might not be regarded in the same way by another. The purpose of this discussion is to give context for the worldviews that could be applied to Sedna but are not authoritative fact.

The act of transformation is ascribed to the movement of souls,[114] such as that of the shaman's trance mentioned in Piqtoukun's sculpture. In the ontology relayed in nineteenth- and twentieth-century ethnographic accounts there is little division between the supernatural and natural world, ontological boundaries were crossed as a simple fact of life.[115] The line between human, animal, and inue populations is also quite permeable. Gear has thought deeply upon this shifting nature:

> Generally, I'm interested in stories of people and place, stories of people and animals. I love this idea that maybe there's a spirit that—especially within Inuit culture—there's a

[110] Kathryn Math, "Fang and Feather: The Origin of Avian-Serpent Imagery at Teotihuacan and Symbolic Interaction with Jaguar Iconography in Mesoamerica," *The Journal of Purdue Undergraduate Research* 7, no. 1 (2017): 4.
[111] The closest account I could find came from Edward William Nelson, *The Eskimo about Bering Strait* (US Government Printing Office, 1900), 447. It is a "cord handle of ivory from Sledge island. It is carved to represent a mythic creature, half seal and half human, that the Eskimo of Norton sound and Bering strait claim exists in the sea. They are said to be caught in nets or killed by hunters at times, and when this happens the one who is responsible for it is presumed to suffer many misfortunes." I do not believe this account was referring to the figure known as Sedna, otherwise the hunters would have identified her as such.
[112] Prokop, "Written in Stone," 31.
[113] Decker, "Contemporary Art of Alaska," 354.
[114] Cassady, "'Strange Things Happen to Non-Christian People'," 86.
[115] Cassady, 85.

> spirit that can move from easily from person to animal to, say, plant or a tree or some other thing. That there's this guiding or connecting thing or spirit that ultimately can shape-shift into those different forms, but still hold that similar energy. I love humans and animals and that kind of relationship. I think I'm fascinated by stories where humans and animals interact in different ways or humans and animals become these hybrid creatures. So, that's kind of an underlying *theme* of mine.

In stone and print, these hybridities present a sinuous shift between forms, a snapshot of the wonders that humans are capable of doing. According to Joslyn Cassady in "'Strange Things Happen to Non-Christian People': Human-Animal Transformation among the Iñupiat of Arctic Alaska" (2008), "The capacity to transform was considered part of the endowment of humanity or personhood, rather than acquired through ritualistic activity or learned through practice." [116] There is also an ethical attribute to transformation and there are costs of shifting between forms. Cassady discusses the transgressions which lead to transformation and the connotations that such a metamorphosis has on the Iñupiat community.[117] While these beliefs are not interchangeable between communities, the overarching connotations that link transformation and transgression unite a majority of variations in her story. For instance, "Stories also relate that people might change into animals after abuse or to avenge themselves on those who had mistreated them."[118] Sedna's story is a rather obvious example having been betrayed, neglected, and ultimately physically mutilated.

Alternatively, her transformation could signal her shift between roles. Since transformation is sometimes "more closely tied to the 'bush,' including the tundra or ocean, rather than the town or village"[119] Sedna gained a tail to signal her shift into the inua of the sea.[120] This is the reasoning Massie gave.

Piqtoukun, Campbell, and Gear had differing opinions. They see the hybrid form as more of a metaphoric and aesthetic choice, than a literal transliteration from her story.[121] Piqtoukun's

[116] Ibid, 87.
[117] Ibid, 85.
[118] Oosten, "Cosmological Cycles," 384.
[119] Cassady, 87.
[120] Decker, "Contemporary Art of Alaska," 354.
[121] Darlene Wight, "Nulijajuk / Sedna Oral Histories?," November 23, 2018.

perspective stems from practicality, suggesting not only is it more aesthetically pleasing, but also functional, "You just look better in the carving. Well, as an extension of being a sea creature you have to realize that to get around and move around you need a tail."[122] It is a means of easy movement in the depths befitting an inua whose home is the bottom of the ocean. Campbell pointed out the environmental advantage to having a tail as well. Sedna remains elusive because she has ideal camouflage; she looks like her sea mammals, "And in my mind the most common creature that we see in Labrador or in our area is the seal. So…she would be described as half-seal." Campbell has switched between what animal the tail comes from, citing that she deliberately chose a beluga fluke for the symbolic associations with white and the strong feelings the public has towards belugas. Given how many dancing bears I saw amid the shelves of CAP, I agree that there is a strong affinity towards arctic fauna by the public. Gear suggested that depicting Sedna with a tail emphasizes "this real connection to animals and reverence for the animals. So, maybe that carries over into Sedna having a tail." This cycles back to Piqtoukun's sentiment that "Cuz she is part animal and part human. So, the animal part of her creates that tail image." It is symbolic of her dominion over the animals. These responses indicate that she has a tail, simply because she can.

However, my interview with Gear brought up another possible origin for her tail. Just after answering the previous question he mused, "I can't help but think that maybe…maybe long, long ago before mermaids, maybe she didn't have a tail. Maybe it was…something else." When qallunaat came into the North in search of a passage they left with myths of an inhumane landscape populated by beings beyond their comprehension. In the process of colonization, they stole these stories, twisting and breaking them apart to fit them into the folklore they knew. Obviously, mermaids have different axiological meanings that are too numerous to describe in great detail here; not to mention their implications in popular culture and coastal tourist paraphernalia. Gender and sexuality are more often than not prioritized when mermaids appear in literature and Western arts where they are the beautiful oceanic maidens who lure sailors to their watery death with their hypnotic song. They represent something otherworldly, something in-human. They swim between the lines of playful spirit and vengeful soul. Some artists have cited

[122] Which is a fair reason.

the European mermaid as inspiration for how they depict Sedna.[123] The morphology could have been transmitted at contact and over their long exposure to whalers. "It has been suggested that these creatures were inspired by the figureheads (mermaids) on the prows of visiting sailing ships and that they are not really part of the Inuit belief system, although stories were constructed around them by the Inuit."[124] While, this theory is possible, I cannot present it as a definitive answer. Assigning the origin to Europeans takes agency away from the people who are making the image itself. Furthermore, the nebulous Inuit cosmology contains a variety of folkloric creatures similar in morphology to mermaids including; "Iqalu nappaa;"[125] "kunuqnizaq;"[126] "lumaajut" and "taliillajuut;"[127] and "taliillajuuq."[128] Notably, the story of "Lumaajuaq" explicitly includes the fact that the mother was transformed into "an entity that was half human, half whale."[129] This just leads back to the same conundrum.

When I show qallunaat an image of Sedna they immediately identify her as a mermaid because they do not have the cultural consciousness of who Sedna is as an inua or her position within the arctic ontology. Simply labeling the figure as Sedna does not supply enough information for them to understand. And as humans, we hate the unknown. We despise not having answers, because we cannot control what we do not know. To fill in that horrifying void, we ascribe our own meanings, our own cultural values and interpretations.[130] Thus, the knee-jerk instinct is to categorize her as the mythical creature they know from Western popular culture, when Inuit do not consider her "mythic" at all.

---

[123] Lyola Kingwatsiak in Laugrand and Oosten, *La femme de la mer*, 142. « J'avais entendu parler des sirènes, alors je m'en suis inspirée. Juste en en imaginant une, parce que je ne suis pas sûre de I ce à quoi elles ressemblent. C'est sorti comme cela, comme je l'avais imaginé. Mais il y a une légende derrière ça (Sedna) »
[124] Prokop, "Written in Stone," 55.
[125] d'Anglure, *Cosmology and shamanism*, 51.
[126] Ernest S. Burch, "The Nonempirical Environment of the Arctic Alaskan Eskimos," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 27, no. 2 (1971): 153.
[127] Laugrand and Oosten, *La femme de la mer*, 135.
[128] Oosten and Laugrand, "Representing the "Sea Woman"," 488.
[129] S. Heyes, "Recovering and Celebrating Inuit Knowledge through Design," 2011, 3.
[130] Jørgen Trondhjem, "Representing Identity: Cultural Continuity and Change in Modern Greenlandic Art," in *Building Capacity in Arctic Societies: Dynamics and Shifting Perspectives : Proceedings of the Second IPSSAS Seminar, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada, May 26 to June 6, 2003*, ed. François Trudel and International Ph. D. School for Studies of Arctic Societies, IPSSAS Seminar (Québec: Ciéra; Faculté des sciences sociales, Université Laval; University of Greenland, 2005), 135.

In conjunction, I asked the artists, *do you think qallunaat mistake Sedna for a mermaid* to gauge what they think of this perpetuated misinterpretation and how they make sense of the recategorization. All four readily agree that an understanding of mermaids is the basis for the understanding of Sedna. Campbell and Gear had even more to say on the matter. Gear sympathizes that the misattribution as the mermaid symbol is one more recognizable to qallunaat as opposed to the culturally specific figure of Sedna. He even describes her as the original mermaid in terms of the morphology, yet with the caveat that, "she's so much more powerful than what we think of as a siren or a mermaid. Maybe closer to siren, but she's even more powerful than a siren. But Sedna is *so* not a mermaid." Campbell expressed exasperation when potential buyers would identify Sedna as a mermaid. In her words, "I have to explain 'she's not a mermaid.' But it's a good jumping off point for letting people learn about her more."[131]

It is this notion of learning through art, both by the artists and by the audience that draws this thesis closer to the core inquiry about Sedna's role in contemporary society. All four artists agreed that qallunaat found the story fascinating. From the art industry side, stories like that generate more engagement with the viewer as a window into the culture. The Sea Woman is not popular because she is a mermaid or is in the process of transformation, it is the story itself that NDC general manager, Yusun Ha, believes makes her popular to the clients. CAP showroom manager, R.J. Ramrattan, asserted that the buyers did understand the story and the galleries they work with invest in that knowledge of the piece. For instance, Florence Duchemin-Pelletier recounts how artist Alec Lawson Tuckatuck gave no explanatory details for *Facing Forgiveness* (2010) (fig. 8) on his website. Instead, "All he did was recount the myth; the meaning behind the work was not explicitly shared."[132] Piqtoukun also agreed that "[…] They understand that all my carvings come with stories. That's what they're familiar with. They're expecting a really good story from me. And most artists, they don't do that, but I do. I see an image and I really relate that image to what they call a good storyboard. That's a selling feature of every sculpture." Basically, stories sell, and Sedna's story sells well.

[131] Malia Campbell would like it to be known that she thinks Sedna is a god that is a mermaid; a "God of mermaids." She is also quite young as of 2019 and has not been instructed in the more nuanced differences between the two. Hopefully this text will be of help to her when she is older.
[132] Florence Duchemin-Pelletier, "Catharsis in Inuit Art: A Way to Heal Wounds," *Public* 25, no. 49 (2014): 83–85.

Yet, the story itself is rarely depicted in the works. Massie observed that, "Most of the time it doesn't talk about that. About who she is and why she's there kinda thing. And how she became there. Most of the time it doesn't really tell you why she ended up losing her legs and getting a tail." These scenes take place after the story, after the beautiful woman has become the inua. The violence inflicted on her hands is downplayed. She is always given exceptional grace even when in a furious rage. It is understandable then that there is a split between whether or not qallunaat actually understood Sedna or the ramifications of her story. "It's important that the story keeps its integrity, and that the artist is free to tell the story how they want to. Sometimes southerners involved in the Inuit art world, while well intentioned, have different ideas about how art should be made and what stories should be told. This often has to do with marketing. Further, many Southerners simply do not know the stories."[133] Similarly, graphic artist Kananginak Pootoogook of Kinngait has said, "A white man, if he is going to buy a carving, buys it purely by the appearance of the carving. The white people do not consider the meaning of the carving, simply the appearance of the carving."[134] Kaiwik agreed, saying, "I think that [qallunaat] don't really understand the traditional ways of the Inuit, even when we show them."[135] He was steady in the hope that they understood, but admitted that it might not be a complete understanding. Before I began this project, even I was not fully aware of just what her story was about.

Making Meaning

The interviews revealed that I was asking all the wrong questions about Sedna. Instead of focusing on the tail, I should have been focusing on her tale and what that meant for the audiences. What I recovered was a far more important narrative about the Sedna story told through the graphic arts and sculptural practice.

Through visual arts, the artists interviewed are not just receiving, reviving, and reiterating old knowledge or creating and ascribing new meanings to the image of Sedna, their actions are changing the framework of their entire worldview. Jørgen Trondhjem (2005) explored the

[133] Rosen, "'Staying Power,'" 78.
[134] Kananginak Pootoogook in Bagg, "Artists, Art Historians, and the Value of Contemporary Inuit Art," 36.
[135] Kaiwik in Bagg, "Artists, Art Historians, and the Value of Contemporary Inuit Art," 80.

relationship between art and identity in "Representing Identity: Cultural Continuity and Change in Modern Greenlandic Art." While Greenland lies beyond the scope of my own research, Trondhjem's analysis of the pressures experienced by Non-Western/Indigenous artists negotiating the tensions to produce original art while also upholding popular conceptions of traditional craft practice is invaluable to the study of arctic art as a whole. [136] Trondhjem approaches art as a measure of societal change and cultural record that is incited and experienced on both sides of contact. Similarly, Nataša Karanfilović and Biljana Radić-Bojanić investigate how mythology forms the foundations of social norms and cultural systems in "Images of Women in Inuit Mythology" (2009). The authors place Sedna within the cannon of other female figures who are not similarly favored as artistic subject matters, thereby eliciting my thesis to probe why this is so and the resounding importance of Sedna's story to modern audiences. The article informs the attitudes within the base story that allows for interpretation in how artists translate these underlying cultural messages in the artwork. Kaitlyn J. Rathwell and Derek Armitage (2016) examined Nunavut artists from Cape Dorset and Pangnirtung and how they were using art as a tool of knowledge bridging.[137] Both of these texts are grounded by the notion that art is a valid means of studying society and culture, as it weaves between "ontology, epistemology, axiology, methodology, and knowledge-practice-belief."[138] This section moves beyond those three texts to interrogate how Sedna weaves between all of these facets of culture and creation. Talking with artists has reaffirmed that the veracity of the story is negligible compared to what the story means and Sedna's role in the world.[139]

Specter

Spirits such as Sedna are not platonic ideals, but real beings with physical presence within the experiential world. They are ontological entities that must be acknowledged. Humans, animals, and spirits are all agentive beings with wants, needs, and obligations to be honored. These beliefs are underpinned by the acknowledgment of a reciprocal relationship between the human, the

[136] Trondhjem, "Representing Identity," 135.
[137] Kaitlyn J. Rathwell and Derek Armitage, "Art and Artistic Processes Bridge Knowledge Systems about Social-Ecological Change: An Empirical Examination with Inuit Artists from Nunavut, Canada," *Ecology and Society* 21, no. 2 (2016): 1.
[138] Rathwell and Armitage, "Art and Artistic Processes," 2.
[139] Jessica L. Horton, "Indigenous Artists against the Anthropocene," *Art Journal* 76, no. 2 (April 3, 2017): 50.

animal, and the spirits, a theme that appears concerning all of the subjects discussed in this section. “Such activities remain important for maintaining Inuit social relationships and cultural identity, as well as in reinforcing people’s relatedness to the living world upon which they depend.”[140] One could call this an "ecocentric" identity; an identity built from the relationship to the environment and land.[141] Gear stressed that inue can also be manifestations of the land itself, or in Sedna’s case, the sea. The sea is a temptress. The horizon calls to adventure, to explore. But you have to be careful because the sea can be cruel. You do not tease the waves or the currents. Just like her domain, she can give and take life. She is repeatedly called “dangerous”, “ambiguous”, even “vengeful” or “evil.”[142] Possibly it is because her oral history evokes, “the primal fears of hunger, cold, and mutilation. Perhaps the greatest fear was the fear of separation from family, community and the human world.”[143] Gear put it succinctly: “She's scary as hell.” But she is respected in equal parts. While straight notions of reciprocity—for instance, wherein an inue might be offered a gift in return for a favorable hunt—might not be acted upon after the incursion of missionaries and Christianity has tempered belief to varying degrees according to the individual,[144] their legacy is alive and well according to Campbell and Massie who affirm Sedna’s presence in the North.

Provider

Before southerners came in and changed their life-ways, the Inuit lived with what offered itself to them. The seals. The whales. The fish. The creatures of the ocean. The children that Sedna would guide towards the hunters. She determined if the hunt will be successful or if the community will starve.[145] As Gear stressed, “The sea can give you so much and so, the figure Sedna can give you so much. You just have to remember where your food is coming from where

[140] Milton MR Freeman, “‘Just One More Time before I Die’: Securing the Relationship between Inuit and Whales in the Arctic Regions,” *Indigenous Use and Management of Marine Resources* 67 (2005): 60.
[141] Arlene Stairs, “Self-Image, World-Image: Speculations on Identity from Experiences with Inuit,” *Ethos* 20, no. 1 (1992): 119.
[142] Laugrand and Oosten, *La femme de la mer*, 40, 110; Nataša Karanfilović and Biljana Radić-Bojanić, “Images of Women in Inuit Mythology,” *Annual Review of the Faculty of Philosophy/Godisnjak Filozofskog Fakulteta* 34 (2009): 273; Aupilaarjuk in d’Anglure, *Cosmology and shamanism*, 88–89.
[143] H. Seidelman and J.E. Turner, *The Inuit Imagination: Arctic Myth and Sculpture*, Arctic Myth and Sculpture (Douglas & McIntyre, 1993), 78.
[144] Cassady, “Strange Things Happen,” 84.
[145] Irniq, “The Staying Force,” 28; McMahon-Coleman, “Dreaming an Identity,” 118; Mol, “Religion and Eskimo Identity in Canada,” 120.

that bounty is coming from. How that's giving you your livelihood, like, through traditional, like, clothing. It's feeding yourself, your family, your community."[146] When you live off of the sea, you better respect it.

However, a vast majority of Inuit no longer subsist off of her domain after the South came into the arctic and enacted programs of settlement, relocation, and legislation. The Inuit were cornered into relying on qallunaat goods to survive during policies of dispersal, relocation, and assimilation. "Ideological systems perform the basic integrative function within a culture and therefore do not remain static. Thus, a link between the environment and an ideological system is a given, and environmental change will always coincide with changes in the ideological system."[147] Sedna sent the seals, whales, and fish, but they could no longer get to her people through corporate nets and red tape. And yet, she is still revered as a provider for her people, just as she always has been. The south took a liking to the ivory miniatures of walruses and polar bears that Inuit carvers whittled out. Over time, the sculptures of animals became a new source of income. [148] The Sea Woman's children were still providing for her people through their image. It is no matter that it is the image of the animal instead of flesh and blood.

Protector

The interviews revealed a deep connection between Sedna and the protection of knowledge. Piqtoukun especially viewed her in this manner, saying, "Well, the sea goddess is symbolic of someone who watches over. She's like a protector of our people. Our people, the animals and, the land, sea, and sky. And she protects the mythology of the Inuit people […] Cause she's got that capacity to protect the knowledge of the Inuit people. I call it protecting the pearl of wisdom. Even wisdom is very important to protect. Once it's lost, it's lost forever." Knowledge is power,

---

[146] Edmund S. Carpenter, "Changes in the Sedna Myth among the Aivilik," *Anthropological Papers of the University of Alaska* (1954): 85. This is supported by the quote found within "Every creature was thought to contain its whole ancestry, back to those 'huge and mighty forms that do not live like living men.' Eating sea mammals (once Sedna's finger-joints), meant communion with her."

[147] Lydia T. Black, "Religious Syncretism as Cultural Dynamic," in *Circumpolar Religion and Ecology: An Anthropology of the North*, ed. Takashi Irimoto and Takako Yamada (University of Tokyo Press, 1994), 213.

[148] Anton, "Moccasin Tracks," 78; Rathwell and Armitage, "Art and Artistic Processes," 9; Naho Maruyama, "Experience of Producing Tourist Art Among Native American Artists: A Qualitative Investigation" (Master of Science, San Jose State University, 2003), 12; Croteau, "But It Doesn't Look Indian," 2; Charlotte Townsend-Gault, "Translation or Perversion?: Showing First Nations Art in Canada," *Cultural Studies* 9, no. 1 (1995): 104.

whoever controls the production of knowledge controls the narrative. Thus, there is no denying the fact that unikkatuat such as hers have shaped our history. Her children are now protecting that knowledge through art making.[149] Art has served as one of the most effective means for Indigenous people to express their culture and values.[150] "Just as a name held the spirit of its past owner, so stories, which brought past lives into the present, were vehicles of souls."[151] As long as the image of Sedna exists, as long as her story is told, then the knowledge will not be forgotten.[152]

For Piqtoukun, Massie, and Gear specifically, it is a means of reconnecting with the heritage they did not have. As Piqtoukun said, "At an early age I can mention that, and I received an education in forgetting. Yeah. At an early age that I spoke perfect Inuktitut. Now it's gone. Customs, traditions. All gone." Gear specifically likened it to a second coming out, "So, yeah, I didn't really come into my indigeneity until much later in life. You know, as an adult basically. And it's very different from learning it in the beginning. I mean there were traces and hints of it there, but it was…it was opaque. It was invisible to me for a while. So, anyway that's a little bit more about my background and…So, I feel like a new Inuk kind of coming out." None of them grew up with these stories, having only heard them well into adulthood. It was through the depiction of Sedna and other unikkatuat that they were learned. What their works depicting Sedna illuminate is how stories are used to help construct identity, values, and customs.[153] Carving and visual arts became a medium to preserve this knowledge for the next generation.[154] It is how they express their practice of culture even when dislocated from their traditional homes and communities.[155] Hence, her image recalls tradition and insinuates continuity between the past and present.[156]

---

[149] Nancy Gay Campbell, "Cracking the Glass Ceiling: Contemporary Inuit Drawing" (Doctor of Philosophy, York University, 2017), 152.
[150] Jennifer Gibson, "Christianity, Syncretism, and Inuit Art in the Central Canadian Arctic" (Master of Arts, Carleton University, 1998); Yuka Izu, "What Do Inuit Drawings Mean to Nisga'a Children?." (National Library of Canada = Bibliotheque nationale du Canada, 2004), 30; Evans, "Shades of Stone," 73.
[151] Asatchaq, *The Things That Were Said of Them*, xxxv.
[152] Candice Hopkins, "Making Things Our Own: The Indigenous Aesthetic in Digital Storytelling," *Leonardo* 39, no. 4 (2006): 342.
[153] Anton, "Moccasin Tracks," 58.
[154] Barber, "Carving out a Future," 4; Rathwell and Armitage, "Art and Artistic Processes," 4–5; Rosen, "'Staying Power,'" 55.
[155] Barber, "Carving out a Future," 96; Rosen, "'Staying Power,'" 85.
[156] Joy Hendry, "Creativity as Evidence of Having Persisted Through Time," *Cambridge Anthropology* 25, no. 2 (2005): 36.

The retelling of her story in Inuit visual arts is just as important. As Ruth Phillips points out, "Sometimes, however, there is more to a story than its simple subject or even the storyline. Quite often, how the story is told is every bit as important as what the story is about because the way of telling influences so many of its aspects."[157] Sculpture can be cold, distant. The stone presents concepts that we cannot delve into because the medium prevents interaction in this manner. Indigenous art has the ability "to be about things that the public does not get, and is not meant to get. They are oppositional, being about ways of measuring and expressing values that are significantly different from those common in the dominant society."[158] In this way, sculptures of the Sea Woman are both clear depictions of a belief system and a reminder that qallunaat are incapable of understanding it. The story is not theirs to speak, to own in its totality. At least that is my interpretation. Whether or not that was the intention of the artist is not for me to say.

Mother

Extrapolating from Brigitte Sonne's analysis of the acculturative force of the Sedna tale, Sedna could be said to be such a prominent figure in Inuit work because she is the one who defines who is Inuk and who is not due to her role in several variations as being the literal mother of the Inuit through her coupling with the Dog Husband.[159] "From within this self-referential framework, it is clear that artists took to representing Sedna in their works out of respect [for], and acknowledgement of, her important maternal position."[160] In some prints and sculptures, she is presented as a mother to similarly tailed children, perhaps in reference to this facet of her identity (fig. 11). Gear's video work, *Kablunât* (2016) (fig. 12) tells of the creation and settling of qallunaat in Labrador using archival photography, collage, and animation, in addition to the story of Sedna's liason with her faithful dog. Connection to the land is a visceral proponent to Indigenous identity. Gear's piece reinserts the historical into an imagined and very real coastal landscape, asserting the priority of Inuit over the settler qallunaat while still tying the latter's origin to a figure of the land. Underlying his motivations is a need to connect to the sea as an

[157] Robert Alvin Phillips, "Native Art as Seen through Native Eyes: An Examination of Contemporary Native Art from a Storytelling Perspective" (Doctor of Philosophy, Trent University, 2015), 49.
[158] Charlotte Townsend-Gault, "If Art Is the Answer, What Is the Question? — Some Queries Raised by First Nations' Visual Culture in Vancouver," *RACAR: Revue d'art Canadienne/Canadian Art Review* (1994), 105.
[159] Sonne, *The Acculturative Role of Sea Woman*, 19.
[160] Nolte, "The Feminist Sedna," 54.

entity itself but also a mother to humanity. Massie furthered this connection to her role as protector of knowledge by saying, "It's quite interesting because [she's] like a mother. You know? It's in a sense [she's] like a mother to all of us. About learning things. Because we learn most of our stuff in life from our mothers."

In another interpretation, Sedna is a symbol of women's strength.[161] Campbell explained, "She's one of the most powerful beings in Inuit belief system and the fact that she was female, and I was a girl—it was [a] very empowering story that she was the one that had the control. So, it's fitting that I would use her as the symbol of gaining power and control. You know, as Inuit and then women." Sedna was abused, abandoned, mutilated, and ultimately murdered, but in the end, she came out on top in terms of status. She became a goddess through her struggles. There is no equivalent figure for men.[162]

Survivor

According to Gerald Vizenor, survivance is "an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name."[163] It blends resilience, endurance, and the reclamation of self-identity beyond the notion of survival into the place of thriving.[164] "The heritage provides the groundwork for successful adjustment, not leaving the past behind, but building on it to give a firm base for exploration outwards. This direction does not mean adhering slavishly to the dictates of yesteryear, but taking what is useful and valued and adding on to it."[165] It is taking a field burned-over and growing a forest. It can mean taking that righteous anger, holding it tight in your hand—tight enough to forge diamonds and obsidian—

[161] Billson, *Keepers of the Culture*, 120; Nolte, "The Feminist Sedna," 59.
[162] "I can't think of any for men except Kiviuq but I don't remember hearing that story. That's probably because Nuliajuk's story is so much easier to tell because you can do it in such a short version of it" (Campbell).
[163] Gerald Robert Vizenor, Literary Chance: Essays on Native American Survivance, Biblioteca Javier Coy d'estudis Nord-Americans (València: Universitat de València, 2007), vii.
[164] Kate Morris, "Crash: Specters of Colonialism in Contemporary Indigenous Art," Art Journal 76, no. 2 (April 3, 2017): 77.
[165] Dale S. Blake, "Inuit Autobiography: Challenging the Stereotypes" (Doctor of Philosophy, University of Alberta, 2000), 169.

and knowing that you are alive in spite, in hope, in fact. Survivance, in this manner, is about living, about adapting and reclaiming. It is transforming history into presence and today into the future.[166] Gear gave an eloquent vista of Inuit survivance in practice:

> And there's a big movement right now with Inuit who are born in the south or born in the city. Urban Inuit. And how they are connecting; sometimes for the first time or reconnecting to their roots in a more traditional fashion. So, there's this space that's opening up where you have really exciting and contemporary ideas around art and art making, and even crafts and printmaking and digital work that has its roots in maybe, more traditional ideas of Inuit culture that's opening up a space where there's a dialogue between the North and the South. Between the urban and say the rural, or there's the urban and the wild. I think that's really fascinating and there are a lot of young urban Inuit who are opening up that space right now. […] That urban population which is growing. It's growing more. And it's really, really interesting time to see urban Inuit kind of articulate that space for themselves. And again that comes with it comes with urban knowledge and it's mixed with traditional Inuit knowledge and values. It's neat to see. Plus, within that, there's a more and more sort of queer spaces that are opening up. And I think for many indigiqueers, that's really important. I think right now, it's really important for Inuit in particular to articulate those queer spaces. And to kind of maybe reclaim a lot which has been lost through Christianity and through colonialism but also, to create something maybe new that is, you know, comes out of queer politics, comes out of urban indigenous—kind of resilience and resistance and creates something that is kind of new and life-giving.

That is something the suppression, appropriation, and finally, resurgence of Sedna in visual arts illustrates beautifully. Specifically, the attribution of her tail as a transference from European mermaid imagery. The Western imagination categorized the Mistress of Sea Animals as a common mermaid, diminishing her importance in the arctic landscape and consigning her to the European ontology. Through this categorization, qallunaat shaped Sedna into an exoticized

[166] Rita L Irwin, Tony Rogers, and Yuh-Yao Wan, "Reclamation, Reconciliation, and Reconstruction: Art Practices of Contemporary Aboriginal Artists from Canada, Australia, and Taiwan," *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education* 16 (1998): 61.

creature, an object to be owned, a representation of a people that were held as inferior for respecting her. Yet, these days, Sedna is almost always depicted with a tail, not out of concession to qallunaat influence, but in reclamation by reconnecting it with Inuit identity and the land.[167]. The artists gave all manner of reasoning for why Sedna is depicted in this way, but none of them signaled that the form was predicated on European concepts of mermaids, as offered by Trondhjem. Her tail now carries culturally specific connotations that can only be deciphered with the comprehension of her story in addition to the facets embedded in the beliefs surrounding inua. It is this reinterpretation—reattribution—that reclaims her from the South and reiterates her continued presence and socio-cultural value today. That is why the surface unintelligibility of Sedna to qallunaat is so worthy of attention. The unintelligibility of her meaning to qallunaat audiences asserts resistance to colonial disruption of Inuit continuity. When the Dominion tried to erase her story, she was transcribed into stones that could not be broken. Against every force of nature and spite, she refused to fade into oblivion. It is a statement that her children will not be erased nor defined by outside forces. Their work is more than art, it is a deliberate act of resistance to colonialism.

Thus, through these five roles, Sedna is shown to have become an icon of survivance and a major foundation of the artist's understanding of their identity as Inuk. As Piqtoukun, Massie, Campbell, and Gear have shown in their art and interviews, Sedna has not been diminished under colonialism even today. She is still swimming in the northern waters. She is still providing the means of subsistence to her fold. She is still the maternal source of knowledge and belonging. She is still here.

Conclusion

The crucial part of storytelling happens after the tale is finished, wherein after we learn how to listen to the story, we are expected to continue its existence by sharing it.[168] Massie's Sedna (fig. 13) lounges on her side. Her expression is wide and open, a gentle curl in her lip. This sculpture

[167] Izu, "What Do Inuit Drawings Mean to Nisga'a Children," 30.
[168] Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork*, 3.

invites you to listen to a story spoken through the stones with its title; *"I have a tale for you"*. It is not a question. It is a clean direct fact. Sedna is telling the viewer to listen, and as this thesis has demonstrated she has many important lessons to teach us.

I ended each interview with a deceptively simple question; *what do you want qallunaat to learn from your art?* These are the artist's responses in their entirety.

Piqtoukun said, "I want the [qallunaat] to understand. Well, I have a similarity to the [qallunaat]. I was taught in their schools. I lived in their cities. I know how they live. Type of foods they like. Materials, they like to eat materials. The books that they like to read and everything. And I know how they talk. How they act. But I'm still—deep down I'm [trying to] identify myself as still Inuit, Eskimo. What I say is once an Eskimo, I'm always an Eskimo. And for me, to this day, is like a selling feature of my work. […] I want that [qallunaat] learn that what I'm learning is learning how to through the creation of production of these works. I'm learning how to understand who I am as human being. I was born here. As I'm learning the slow history of our people. I wasn't learned that I came from here. I went through their schooling system, but I'm going back. I'm resorting back to the use of stone carving. I'm learning about, not from books, but from stone carving. And learning who…what my background is. That gives me identity. I've been known in that early ages as W31119. I was given that number because that's who I was. I was just a number and most people in society are just numbers. Numbers that are mobile and people that kept numbers that can be manipulated. And [through] stone carving and identity I'm developing a name that the people might be familiar with and once they see an image, 'o-okay it's definitely a Reuben…smells like a Reuben'. […] I want people to identify me as a good carver. This guy knows his carving. He's got good techniques."

Massie emphasized, "That it doesn't make a difference really, where you come from. So that was always a bit of a beef on both sides. I mean, […] like when I was home, nobody ever questioned what I did or what images I chose. But I didn't choose much Inuit images back then. But when I was at school I had that instructor that questioned me on the imagery I chose. And even when I was up north teaching I had other people question me about, you know, taking the work. For me what I want people to understand is that I love humor. I love making teapots and stone carvings mostly. But I think art is about freedom. What you—how you feel. It about art, no matter who

the artist is or what type of medium they work with, [there] is always a bit of themselves put into it. Doesn't matter. You might not even see it. […] It doesn't matter. It's still yours. So, I mean, it doesn't matter where you come from uh, you know, never, never let anybody restrict you and tell you that you are only allowed to do certain things. And that's the only ones we chose. […] When I do something, I'm going to make something I've researched. If I don't understand, then I'll research it so that I do understand. Not so that I can put it in-into my work knowing what I'm making. If I'm making like a tool like they used to use—like a copper-pick or anything. A harpoon. Doesn't matter."

Campbell stated that, "I want them to know that we are living in contemporary times and that we're intelligent and aware. It seems like for so long there's been a certain amount of victimhood or victimization and some quietly, you know having a fatalistic attitude about things, I think. But I feel like that's changing now. Maybe it's just me because I'm in my forties now, but I'm starting to get this attitude of wanting to fight back on some level. Maybe it's this generation or maybe it's this time, but…reconciliation can be about fighting with us."

Gear asserted, "I want [qallunaat] to learn that being Inuit isn't one thing. I want them to get away from preconceptions that they have of Inuit and of the north. Because I think that those have been really damaging. I want them to really consider the multiple spaces, I guess, that we all hold whether it's your culture or sexual identity or tradition or religion—those different spaces that we can occupy or stand within at the same time. Even when those spaces seem contradictory. I want them to think of Inuit culture as something that's contemporary, something that's really vital, something that's shifting. That's really important, really important for me. So, again, getting away from this idea of Inuit as a link to, you know, igloos and vast kind of vast ice wasteland and to think about Inuit culture as something that's much more diverse. Much more about dialogue between north and south and about contemporary aesthetics; kind of urban culture and technology in addition to, I guess, traditional ways of living and knowing."

This thesis has sought to re-center the voices of artists. Doing so has given me an intimate look into the motivations and values the four artists inscribe into their work. Yet it is also important to note that they draw the symbols through which to communicate from a larger collective worldview. Each conversation I had with Massie, Piqtoukun, Gear, and Campbell illuminated

how making art was more than something they do; it was a process embedded in their concept of identity; a space for navigating their relationships with past/present, here/there, and self/community; a platform for expressing discontent and disconnection alongside their resilience and return. Moreover, these interviews provided a perch from which to peer at the broader landscape of communities still handling the dispossession from colonialism, without letting that trauma overwhelm the discussion.[169] While these forces continue to shape Inuit/qallunaat encounters and discussions,

Final Thoughts

By examining how Sedna's tale is told within art history, this thesis has revealed the power of owning the narrative. For a little over a century, qallunaat art historians, ethnographers, and art leaders have talked about Inuit visual arts—and specifically Sedna in the more recent decades—in exoticizing tones and distant terms. These texts assigned Sedna to European ontological categories, which has assisted in perpetuating the misinterpretation of Sedna's role to Inuit identity in addition to historicizing the ideological system. More importantly, the systematic encumbrance of Indigenous scholars and voices means that for the most part, the only interpretations that we have had about Sedna, were written by those who have no emic comprehension of the figure. That misunderstanding (deliberate or not) has been and will continue to be a tool of continuing colonial agendas as art history and the discourse around it is directed by Western paradigms. Because our words are not inert, they have power. Because distortion fosters ignorance that results in biased assumptions that are projected onto Inuit today and chip away at cultural dignity, as reiterated directly by Piqtoukun and Massie. It undermines the agency of both the artist and the society. It becomes a force of erasure to heritage because it brushes aside the changes that can happen within the span of decades as Campbell and Gear explained.

That is why it is our responsibility as listeners and witnesses to understand Sedna and Inuit art. As such, Norman Vorano suggests that, "Appreciating modern Inuit art helps us move beyond the old colonial lens, when Inuit were seen as belonging to a distant past, living outside the present...Acknowledging the vitality, relevance and importance of modern Inuit art is also a tacit

[169] Morris, "Crash," 71; Taunton, "Performing Resistance/Negotiating Sovereignty," 43.

acknowledgement that both Inuit and non-Inuit live in a shared world, experiencing a shared present, occupying a shared globe."[170] This thesis demonstrates that the depiction of Sedna is more than merely recapitulating an old tale about a long-vanished god with a beautiful piscine tail. Her depiction braids together culture, identity, society wrapped in continuity and the embrace of commonality. Sedna's tale is one of tradition; of holding on to the ways of one's people; of valuing the blood that runs in your veins because it connects you to your community and the land, no matter how distant those may feel. Her tail is one of transformation; of rising to face the hardships of environment and colonialism; of becoming something greater despite the loss. Sedna is an expression of contemporary urban (and rural) Inuit endurance, resurgence, and self-determination through art, and of reclamation and resilience as unrelenting as the tides.

[170] Norman Vorano in Campbell, "Cracking the Glass Ceiling," 62.

References

Angel, Sara. "Northern Lights." *Sara Angel* (blog), March 30, 2011. http://saraangel.ca/project/northern-lights.

Anton, James Wyatt. "Moccasin Tracks: Reading the Narrative in Traditional Indigenous Craft Work." Master of Arts, University of Calgary, 2018.

Archibald, Jo-ann. *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit.* Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014.

Asatchaq, Jimmie Killigivuk. *The Things That Were Said of Them: Shaman Stories and Oral Histories of the Tikiġaq People*. Translated by Tom Lowenstein. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

Athens, Allison Katherine. "Arctic Ecologies: The Politics and Poetics of Northern Literary Environments." Doctor of Philosophy, University of California, 2013. http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/5jf3d1kx.

Bagg, Shannon. "Artists, Art Historians, and the Value of Contemporary Inuit Art." Doctor of Philosophy, Queen's University, 2006.

Barber, Jill. "Carving out a Future: Contemporary Inuit Sculpture of Third Generation Artists from Arviat, Cape Dorset and Clyde River (Nunavut)." Master of Arts, Carleton University, 1999.

Barr, William. "The Eighteenth Century Trade between the Ships of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Hudson Strait Inuit." *Arctic*, 1994, 236–46.

Berlo, Janet Catherine. "Anthropologies and Histories of Art: A View from the Terrain of Native North American Art History." In *Anthropologies of Art*, edited by Mariët Westermann, 179–92. Williamstown: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2005.

Best Start by Health Nexus. "Atuaqsijut: Following the Path Sharing Inuit Specific Ways. Resource for Service Providers Who Work With Parents of Inuit Children in Ontario." Toronto, Ontario, 2019. https://resources.beststart.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/K84-A.pdf.

Billson, Janet Mancini. *Keepers of the Culture: The Power of Tradition in Women's Lives*. New York: Lexington Books, 1995.

Bird, S. Elizabeth. "It Makes Sense to Us: Cultural Identity in Local Legends of Place." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 31, no. 5 (October 2002): 519–47. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124102236541.

Black, Lydia T. "Religious Syncretism as Cultural Dynamic." In *Circumpolar Religion and Ecology: An Anthropology of the North*, edited by Takashi Irimoto and Takako Yamada, 213–20. University of Tokyo Press, 1994.

Blake, Dale S. "Inuit Autobiography: Challenging the Stereotypes." Doctor of Philosophy, University of Alberta, 2000.

Bonesteel, Sarah, and Erik Anderson, eds. *Canada's Relationship with Inuit: A History of Policy and Program Development*. Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2008.

Brown, Joseph Epes. *Teaching Spirits: Understanding Native American Religious Traditions*. Oxford University Press, 2001.

Burch, Ernest S. "The Nonempirical Environment of the Arctic Alaskan Eskimos." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 27, no. 2 (1971): 148–65.

Cabak, Melanie, and Stephen Loring. “"A Set of Very Fair Cups and Saucers”: Stamped Ceramics as an Example of Inuit Incorporation.” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 4, no. 1 (2000): 1–34.
Campbell, Nancy Gay. “Cracking the Glass Ceiling: Contemporary Inuit Drawing.” Doctor of Philosophy, York University, 2017.
Carpenter, Edmund S. “Changes in the Sedna Myth among the Aivilik.” *Anthropological Papers of the University of Alaska*, 1954, 69–73.
Cassady, Joslyn. “‘Strange Things Happen to Non-Christian People’: Human-Animal Transformation among the Iñupiat of Arctic Alaska.” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 32, no. 1 (2008): 83–101.
Classen, Constance, and David Howes. “The Museum as Sensescape: Western Sensibilities and Indigenous Artifacts.” In *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums, and Material Culture*, edited by Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Gosden, and Ruth B. Phillips, English ed. Wenner-Gren International Symposium Series. Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2006.
Croteau, Susan Ann. “‘But It Doesn’t Look Indian’: Objects, Archetypes and Objectified Others in Native American Art, Culture and Identity.” Doctor of Philosophy, University of California, 2008.
Damas, David. *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic.* Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014.
Decker, Julie Michelle. “Contemporary Art of Alaska: Found and Assembled in Alaska, and, John Hoover: Art and Life.” Doctor of Philosophy, The Union Institute & University, 2003.
Detienne, Marcel. *The Creation of Mythology*. University of Chicago Press, 1986.
Duchemin-Pelletier, Florence. “Catharsis in Inuit Art: A Way to Heal Wounds.” *Public* 25, no. 49 (2014): 74–89.
Dybbroe, Susanne. “Questions of Identity and Issues of Self-Determination.” *Études/Inuit/Studies* 20, no. 2 (1996): 39–53.
Evans, Michael Robert. “Frozen Light and Fluid Time: The Folklore, Politics, and Performance of Inuit Video.” Doctor of Philosophy, Indiana University, 1999.
———. “Shades of Stone: Facets of Identity among Inuit Carvers.” Master of Arts, Indiana University, 1998.
Fienup-Riordan, Ann. *Boundaries and Passages: Rule and Ritual in Yup’ik Eskimo Oral Tradition*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1995.
———. “Compassion and Restraint: The Moral Foundations of Yup’ik Eskimo Hunting Tradition.” In *La Nature Des Espirits Dans Les Cosmologies Autochtones/Nature of Spirits in Aboriginal Cosmologies*, edited by Frédéric B. Laugrand and Jarich G. Oosten, translated by Alice Rearden, 239–53. Montreal: Les Presses de l’Universite Laval, 2007.
Florence, Kathryn. “A Holistic Approach to Using Art to Understand a Historical Human Experience: Uncovering Meaning in Teotihuacan Murals.” *Forum for World History Connected*, no. Articles on Using Art to Understand and Teach World History (October 2019).
———. “How the Museum Is Killing Its Collections and How We Can Save Them.” Conference presented at the Purdue HGSA 8th Biennial Graduate Student Conference: “Institutions and Interactions,” Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, March 2, 2019.
Fossett, Renée. *In Order to Live Untroubled: Inuit of the Central Arctic, 1550-1940*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2001.

Freeman, Milton MR. "'Just One More Time before I Die': Securing the Relationship between Inuit and Whales in the Arctic Regions." *Indigenous Use and Management of Marine Resources* 67 (2005): 59–76.
Gell, Alfred. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Clarendon Press, 1998.
Gentile, John S. "Prologue: Defining Myth: An Introduction to the Special Issue on Storytelling and Myth." *Storytelling, Self, Society* 7, no. 2 (2011): 85–90.
Geoghegan, John. "Jessica Kotierk Leads Iqaluit Museum as Manager and Curator." *Inuit Art Foundation* (blog), March 29, 2019. http://iaq.inuitartfoundation.org/jessica-kotierk-leads-iqaluit-museum-as-manager-and-curator/.
Gibson, Jennifer. "Christianity, Syncretism, and Inuit Art in the Central Canadian Arctic." Master of Arts, Carleton University, 1998.
Giulia, Bogliolo Bruna. "Shamanism Influence in Inuit Art-Dorset Period." *Journal of Literature and Art Studies* 5, no. 4 (April 28, 2015): 271–81. https://doi.org/10.17265/2159-5836/2015.04.005.
Government of Nunavut. "Qilaut 2017." Nunavut Department of Culture and Heritage, 2017. https://www.gov.nu.ca/culture-and-heritage/information/qilaut-2017-0.
Graburn, Nelson H. H. "Authentic Inuit Art: Creation and Exclusion in the Canadian North." *Journal of Material Culture* 9, no. 2 (July 2004): 141–59. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183504044369.
Grygier, Pat Sandiford. *A Long Way from Home: The Tuberculosis Epidemic among the Inuit*. McGill-Queen's/Hannah Institute Studies in the History of Medicine, Health and Society 2. Montreal ; Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994.
Hatcher, Evelyn Payne. *Art as Culture: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Art*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1985.
Hendry, Joy. "Creativity as Evidence of Having Persisted Through Time." *Cambridge Anthropology* 25, no. 2 (2005): 36–49.
Heyes, S. "Recovering and Celebrating Inuit Knowledge through Design," 2011.
Hill, Erica. "Animals as Agents: Hunting Ritual and Relational Ontologies in Prehistoric Alaska and Chukotka." *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 21, no. 03 (October 2011): 407–26. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774311000448.
———. "The Nonempirical Past: Enculturated Landscapes and Other-than-Human Persons in Southwest Alaska." *Arctic Anthropology* 49, no. 2 (January 1, 2012): 41–57. https://doi.org/10.1353/arc.2012.0021.
Hopkins, Candice. "Making Things Our Own: The Indigenous Aesthetic in Digital Storytelling." *Leonardo* 39, no. 4 (2006): 341–44.
Horton, Jessica L. "Indigenous Artists against the Anthropocene." *Art Journal* 76, no. 2 (April 3, 2017): 48–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.2017.1367192.
Igloliorte, Heather. "Curating Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Inuit Knowledge in the Qallunaat Art Museum." *Art Journal* 76, no. 2 (April 3, 2017): 100–113. https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.2017.1367196.
———. "'We Were so Far Away': Exhibiting Inuit Oral Histories of Residential Schools." In *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Places*, edited by Erica Lehrer, Cynthia E. Milton, and Monica Eileen Patterson, 23–40. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230319554.
Inuit Art Foundation. "Artists' Education." Inuit Art Foundation, n.d. https://www.inuitartfoundation.org/artists-education/.

———. “Heather Campbell.” Inuit Artist Database, n.d. https://iad.inuitartfoundation.org/artist/Heather-Campbell/bio-citations.
Irniq, Peter. “The Staying Force of Inuit Knowledge.” In *A Will to Survive: Indigenous Essays on the Politics of Culture, Language, and Identity*, edited by Stephen Greymorning, 18–31. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2004.
———. “The Story of Nuliajuk (Inuit).” Canadian Museum of History, n.d. https://www.historymuseum.ca/history-hall/origins/_media/Nuliajuk-EN.pdf.
Irwin, Rita L, Tony Rogers, and Yuh-Yao Wan. “Reclamation, Reconciliation, and Reconstruction: Art Practices of Contemporary Aboriginal Artists from Canada, Australia, and Taiwan.” *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education* 16 (1998): 61.
Izu, Yuka. “What Do Inuit Drawings Mean to Nisga’a Children?.” National Library of Canada = Bibliothe̲que nationale du Canada, 2004. /z-wcorg/.
Kahn, Joel S. “Encountering Extraordinary Worlds: The Rules of Ethnographic Engagement and the Limits of Anthropological Knowing.” *Numen* 61, no. 2/3 (2014): 237–54.
Kanada, and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Canada’s Residential Schools: The Inuit and Northern Experience*. Vol. 2. 6 vols. The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Montreal, Kingston, London, Chicago: McGill-Queens University Press, 2015.
Karanfilović, Nataša, and Biljana Radić-Bojanić. “Images of Women in Inuit Mythology.” *Annual Review of the Faculty of Philosophy/Godisnjak Filozofskog Fakulteta* 34 (2009): 269–78.
Karpala, Kelly Sandra Elizabeth. “Adapting to a World of Change: Inuit Perspectives of Environmental Changes in Igloolik, Nunavut.” Master of Arts, Carleton University, 2010.
King, David Paul, and Aboriginal Healing Foundation (Canada). *A brief report of the federal government of Canada’s residential school system for Inuit*. Ottawa, Ont.: Aboriginal Healing Foundation = Fondation autochtone de guérison, 2006. http://www.deslibris.ca/ID/204741.
Kishigami, Nobuhiro. “Inuit Identities in Montreal, Canada.” *Études/Inuit/Studies* 26, no. 1 (2002): 183–91.
Laugrand, Frédéric B. “Sedna crucifiée: Les Inuits et la part animique du christianisme.” *Théologiques* 20, no. 1–2 (2012): 453. https://doi.org/10.7202/1018867ar.
Laugrand, Frédéric B., and Jarich G. Oosten. *La femme de la mer: Sedna dans le chamanisme et l’art inuit de l’Arctique de l’Est*. Carrefours anthropologiques. Montréal: Liber, 2011.
———. “Transfer of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in modern Inuit society.” *Études/Inuit/Studies* 33, no. 1–2 (2009): 115. https://doi.org/10.7202/044963ar.
———. “When Toys and Ornaments Come into Play: The Transformative Power of Miniatures in Canadian Inuit Cosmology.” *Museum Anthropology* 31, no. 2 (2008): 69–84.
Laugrand, Frédéric, and Jarich Oosten. “Canicide and Healing. The Position of the Dog in the Inuit Cultures of the Canadian Arctic.” *Anthropos* 97, no. 1 (2002): 89–105.
Lee, Molly. “‘How Will I Sew My Baskets?’: Women Vendors, Market Art, and Incipient Political Activism in Anchorage, Alaska.” *American Indian Quarterly* 27, no. 3/4 (2003): 583–92.
Lévesque, Francis. “Revisiting Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Inuit knowledge, culture, language, and values in Nunavut institutions since 1999.” *Études/Inuit/Studies* 38, no. 1–2 (2014): 115. https://doi.org/10.7202/1028856ar.

Mamnguqsualuk, Victoria, Ring House Gallery, and Boreal Institute for Northern Studies. *Keeveeok, Awake!: Mamnguqsualuk and the Rebirth of Legend at Baker Lake : An Exhibition Held at the Ring House Gallery, November 20, 1986 to January 11, 1987, in Conjunction with the 25th Anniversary of the Boreal Institute for Northern Studies.* Edmonton: The Institute, 1986. http://books.google.com/books?id=2PdOAAAAMAAJ.

Marcus, Alan R. *Relocating Eden: The Image and Politics of Inuit Exile in the Canadian Arctic*. Arctic Visions. Hanover: Dartmouth College : University Press of New England, 1995.

Martin, Keavy. "Rescuing Sedna: Doorslamming, Fingerslicing, and the Moral of the Story." *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée* 38, no. 2 (2011): 186–200.

———. *Stories in a New Skin: Approaches to Inuit Literature*. Contemporary Studies on the North 3. Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2012.

Maruyama, Naho. "Experience of Producing Tourist Art Among Native American Artists: A Qualitative Investigation." Master of Science, San Jose State University, 2003.

Math, Kathryn. "Fang and Feather: The Origin of Avian-Serpent Imagery at Teotihuacan and Symbolic Interaction with Jaguar Iconography in Mesoamerica." *The Journal of Purdue Undergraduate Research* 7, no. 1 (2017): 4.

Mayer, Carol E. "'We Have These Ways of Seeing': A Study of Objects in Differing Realities." In *Making and Metaphor: A Discussion of Meaning in Contemporary Craft*, edited by Gloria Hickey, Canadian Museum of Civilization, and Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, 141–51. Mercury Series Paper 66. Hull, Quebec: Canadian Museum of Civilization with the Institute for Contemporary Canadian Craft, 1994.

McLean, Ian, and Institute of Modern Art (Brisbane, Qld.), eds. *How Aborigines Invented the Idea of Contemporary Art: Writings on Aboriginal Contemporary Art*. 1st ed. Australian Studies in Art and Art Theory. Sydney, N.S.W: Institute of Modern Art and Power Publications, 2011.

McMahon-Coleman, Kimberley. "Dreaming an Identity between Two Cultures: The Works of Alootook Ipellie." *Kunapipi* 28, no. 1 (2006): 108–25.

Mctavish, Lianne, Susan Ashley, Heather Igloliorte, Kirsty Robertson, and Andrea Terry. "Critical Museum Theory/Museum Studies in Canada: A Conversation." *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region / Revue d'histoire de La Region Atlantique* 46, no. 2 (2017): 223–41. https://doi.org/10.1353/aca.2017.0029.

Merkur, Daniel. *Becoming Half Hidden: Shaminism and Initiation Among the Inuit*. Stockholm: Taylor & Francis, 1992.

———. *Powers Which We Do Not Know: The Gods and Spirits of the Inuit*. University of Idaho Press, 1991.

MICH. "Heather Campbell." Nunatsiavut: Mobilizing Inuit Cultural Heritage, n.d. http://www.michnunatsiavut.org/heather-campbell.html.

Mithlo, Nancy Marie. "No Word for Art in Our Language?: Old Questions, New Paradigms." *Wicazo Sa Review* 27, no. 1 (2012): 111–26. https://doi.org/10.1353/wic.2012.0005.

Mol, Hans. "Religion and Eskimo Identity in Canada." *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 11, no. 2 (1982): 119–33.

Morphy, Howard. *Becoming Art: Exploring Cross-Cultural Categories*. Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2007.

Morris, Kate. "Crash: Specters of Colonialism in Contemporary Indigenous Art." *Art Journal* 76, no. 2 (April 3, 2017): 70–80. https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.2017.1367193.

Murdoch, Andy. “Heather Igloliorte’s New Project: Radically Increase Inuit Participation in the Arts.” *Concordia.Ca* (blog), June 19, 2018. http://www.concordia.ca/cunews/finearts/2018/06/heather-igloliortes-new-project-radically-increase-inuit-participation-in-the-arts.html.
Myers, Fred R. *Painting Culture: The Making of an Aboriginal High Art*. Objects/Histories. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2002.
Nelson, Edward William. *The Eskimo about Bering Strait*. US Government Printing Office, 1900.
Nolte, Victoria. “The Feminist Sedna: Representing the Sea Woman in Contemporary Inuit Art.” *Aboriginate*, March 2005.
Nunavut Department of Education. *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Education Framework for Nunavut Curriculum*. Nunavut Department of Education, Curriculum and School Services Division, 2007.
Nunn, Patrick D. “The Oldest True Stories in the World.” *Sapiens*, October 18, 2018.
“OCAD U’S INVC Program Hosts Inuit Futures in Arts Leadership Meet-And-Greet.” *News* (blog), November 9, 2018. https://www2.ocadu.ca/news/ocad-us-invc-program-hosts-inuit-futures-in-arts-leadership-meet-and-greet.
Oosten, Jarich G. “Cosmological Cycles: Continuity in Inuit Society in North Eastern Canada.” In *Parts and Wholes: Essays on Social Morphology, Cosmology, and Exchange in Honour of J.D.M. Platenkamp*, edited by Jos D. M. Platenkamp, Laila Prager, Michael Prager, and Guido Sprenger, 377–94. Zurich: Lit Verlag, 2016.
Oosten, Jarich G., and Frédéric B. Laugrand. “Representing the ‘Sea Woman.’” *Religion and the Arts* 13, no. 4 (November 1, 2009): 477–95. https://doi.org/10.1163/107992609X12524941450000.
Oosten, Jarich G., Frédéric B. Laugrand, and Cornelius Remie. “Perceptions of Decline: Inuit Shamanism in the Canadian Arctic.” *Ethnohistory* 53, no. 3 (July 1, 2006): 445–77. https://doi.org/10.1215/00141801-2006-001.
Phillips, Robert Alvin. “Native Art as Seen through Native Eyes: An Examination of Contemporary Native Art From a Storytelling Perspective.” Doctor of Philosophy, Trent University, 2015.
Phillips, Ruth B. “Fielding Culture: Dialogues between Art History and Anthropology.” *Museum Anthropology* 18, no. 1 (1994): 39–46.
Phillips, Ruth B., and Mark Salber Phillips. “Double Take: Contesting Time, Place, and Nation in the First Peoples Hall of the Canadian Museum of Civilization.” *American Anthropologist* 107, no. 4 (2005): 694–704.
Phillips, Ruth B., and Christopher Burghard Steiner, eds. “Art, Authenticity, and the Baggage of Cultural Encounter.” In *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, 3–19. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
Prokop, Carol Ann. “Written in Stone: A Comparative Analysis of Sedna and the Moon Spirit as Depicted in Contemporary Inuit Sculpture and Graphics.” Master of Arts, University of British Columbia, 1990.
Qikiqtani Inuit Association. *Nuutauniq: Moves in Inuit Life*. Qikiqtani Truth Commission: Thematic Reports and Special Studies 1950–1975. Iqaluit, Nunavut: Inhabit Media Inc., 2014.
Rasmussen, Knud. *Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos*. Vol. 2. Ams Press, 1976.

Rathwell, Kaitlyn J., and Derek Armitage. "Art and Artistic Processes Bridge Knowledge Systems about Social-Ecological Change: An Empirical Examination with Inuit Artists from Nunavut, Canada." *Ecology and Society* 21, no. 2 (2016).
Rodrigue, Julie, and Nathalie Ouellette. "Inuit Women as Mediators between Humans and Non-Human Beings in the Contemporary Canadian Eastern Arctic." In *La Nature Des Espirits Dans Les Cosmologies Autochtones/Nature of Spirits in Aboriginal Cosmologies*, edited by Frédéric B. Laugrand and Jarich G. Oosten, 175–92. Montreal: Les Presses de l'Universite Laval, 2007.
Roepstorff, Andreas. "Clashing Cosmologies: Contrasting Knowledge in the Greenlandic Fishery." In *Imagining Nature: Practices of Cosmology and Identity*, edited by Andreas Roepstorff, Nils Bubandt, and Kalevi Kull, 117–42. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2003.
Rosen, Alena E. "Inuit Art, Knowledge and 'Staying Power': Perspectives from Pangnirtung." Master of Arts, University of Manitoba, 2013.
Saba, Rosa. "Heather Campbell Explores Labrador Inuit Identity through Painting, Drawing." *Ottawa Life Magazine*, October 25, 2018.
Saladin d'Anglure, Bernard, ed. *Cosmology and shamanism*. Vol. 4. Interviewing inuit elders. Iqaluit, Nunavut, 2001.
Sapir, Edward, and David G. Mandelbaum. *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture and Personality*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985.
Seidelman, H., and J.E. Turner. *The Inuit Imagination: Arctic Myth and Sculpture*. Arctic Myth and Sculpture. Douglas & McIntyre, 1993. https://books.google.ca/books?id=MyUaAQAAIAAJ.
Sinclair, Raven. "Identity Lost and Found: Lessons from the Sixties Scoop." *First Peoples Child & Family Review* 3, no. 1 (2007): 65–82.
Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. "Imperialism, History, Writing, and Theory." In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Second edition., 20–43. London: Zed Books, 2012.
Sonne, Birgitte. *The Acculturative Role of Sea Woman: Early Contact between Inuit and Whites as Revealed in the Origin Myth of Sea Woman*. Meddelelser Om Grønland Man & Society 13. Copenhagen: Commission for Scientific Research in Greenland, 1990.
Stairs, Arlene. "Self-Image, World-Image: Speculations on Identity from Experiences with Inuit." *Ethos* 20, no. 1 (1992): 116–26.
Swinarton, Lindsay Ellen. "Animals and the Precontact Inuit of Labrador: An Examination Using Faunal Remains, Space and Myth." Master of Arts, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2008.
Swinton, Nelda. "The Inuit Sea Goddess." Master of Arts, Concordia University, 1985.
Tagalik, Shirley. "Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: The Role of Indigenous Knowledge In Supporting Wellness In Inuit Communities In Nunavut." Child & Youth Health. Prince George: National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2010. https://www.ccnsa-nccah.ca/docs/health/FS-InuitQaujimajatuqangitWellnessNunavut-Tagalik-EN.pdf.
Taunton, Carla Jane. "Performing Resistance/Negotiating Sovereignty: Indigenous Women's Performance Art in Canada." Doctor of Philosophy, Queen's University, 2011.
Tester, Frank James, and Peter Irniq. "Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Social History, Politics and the Practice of Resistance." *Arctic* 61 (2008): 48–61.
The Legend of Nuliajuk (Audio Only, English) | Taqqut Productions. Video. Taqqut Productions, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tn1nz-2J3wI.

Townsend-Gault, Charlotte. “If Art Is the Answer, What Is the Question? — Some Queries Raised by First Nations’ Visual Culture in Vancouver.” *RACAR: Revue d’art Canadienne/Canadian Art Review*, 1994, 100–110.

———. “Translation or Perversion?: Showing First Nations Art in Canada.” *Cultural Studies* 9, no. 1 (1995): 91–105.

Trondhjem, Jørgen. “Representing Identity: Cultural Continuity and Change in Modern Greenlandic Art.” In *Building Capacity in Arctic Societies: Dynamics and Shifting Perspectives : Proceedings of the Second IPSSAS Seminar, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada, May 26 to June 6, 2003*, edited by François Trudel and International Ph. D. School for Studies of Arctic Societies, 131–40. IPSSAS Seminar. Québec: Ciéra; Faculté des sciences sociales, Université Laval; University of Greenland, 2005.

Two Roads Marketing, Inc. “Home.” Sedna Epic Expedition, 2018. https://www.sednaepic.com.

University of Manitoba. “What Is Oral History?” Oral History Centre, 2013. https://www.oralhistorycentre.ca/what-oral-history.

Vizenor, Gerald Robert. *Literary Chance: Essays on Native American Survivance*. Biblioteca Javier Coy d’estudis Nord-Americans. València: Universitat de València, 2007. http://www.digitaliapublishing.com/a/35057/.

Wenzel, George W. “From TEK to IQ: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Cultural Ecology.” *Arctic Anthropology* 41, no. 2 (2004): 238–50.

Whorf, Benjamin Lee. *Science and Linguistics*. Cambridge, Mass.: Technology Review, 1940.

Wight, Darlene. “Nulijajuk / Sedna Oral Histories?,” November 23, 2018.

Wilson, Shawn. *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Pub., 2008.

Images

Figure 1. Nunavut Development Corporation (NDC) Showroom. Photo curtesy of author. 2018.

Figure 2. Canadian Arctic Producers (CAP) Showroom. Photo curtesy of author. 2018.

Figure 3. Nunavut Development Corporation (NDC) backroom. Photo curtesy of author. 2018.

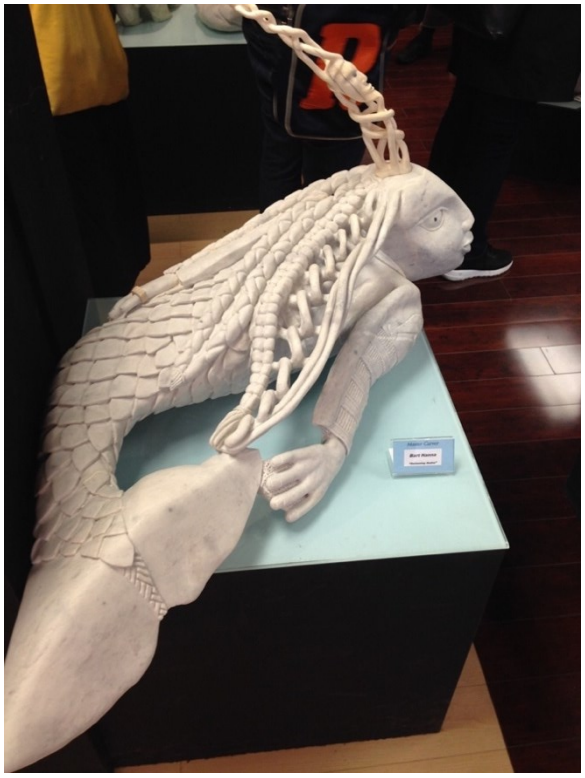

Figure 4. Bart Hanna's *Swimming Sedna* in the Canadian Arctic Producers (CAP) Showroom. Photo curtesy of author. 2018.

Figure 5. Sedna Epic Expedition logo. Photo curtesy of https://www.sednaepic.com.

Figure 6. David Ruben Piqtoukun, *Journey to the Great Woman*. 1995, Brazilian soapstone/wood. Image curtesy of artist.

Fgure 7. Heather Campbell, *Methylmercury*. 2017, pen and ink on stone paper, 20"x28". Image curtesy of artist; Heather Campbell. Image curtesy of artist.

Figure 8. Alec Lawson Tuckatuck, *Facing Forgiveness.* 2010. muskox horn and serpentine. Photo curtesy of artist

Figure 9. David Ruben Piqtoukun, Qalupilak. 1997, steatite, 5 x 7.5 x 5 inches. Image courtesy of Spirit Wrestler Gallery at http://www.spiritwrestler.com.

Figure 10. Kenojuak Ashevak, Rabbit Shaman with Bird Spirits. 1988-89, ink, coloured pencil, 20 x 26 inches. Image courtesy of Spirit Wrestler Gallery at http://www.spiritwrestler.com.

Figure 11. Abraham Anghik Ruben, Sedna with Children II, 2015, Brazilian Soapstone, 58.5 x 31.5 x 18.0 cm. Image curtesy of Kipling Gallery at http://kiplinggallery.com/.

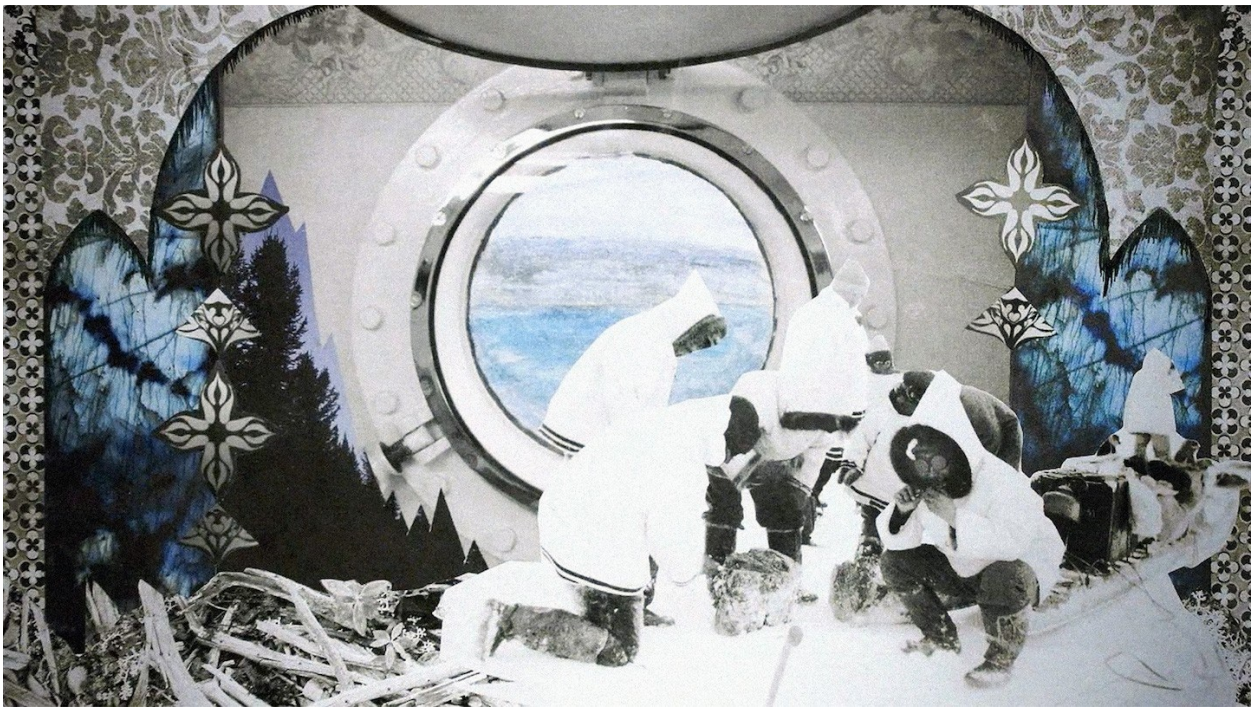

Figure 12. Glenn Gear, *Kablunât* (video still). 2016. Image courtesy of artist.

Figure 13. Michael Massie, *"I have a tale for you"*. nd. Anhydrite, bone, ebony and poplar, 5.25"x8.25"x4.5". Image curtesy of Spirit Wrestler Gallery.

Appendices

Appendix A: Artist Index

First	Last	M/F	Date	Alive?	Location	Media	Contacted
Agnes Nulluq	Iqqugaqtuq	F	1930-2006	No	Arviliqjuaq	Weaving	X
Annie	Kilabuk	F	1932-2005	No	Pangnirtung	Drawing	X
Aoudla	Pudlat	M	1951-2006	No	Cape Dorset	Carving	X
Davidialuk Alasua	Amittu	M	1910-1976	No	Pubirnituq	Carving	X
Davie	Atchealak	M	1947-2006	No	Iqaluit	Carving	X
Ida	Karpik	F	1939-2002	No	Pangnirtung	Drawing	X
Iyola	Kingwatsiak	M	1933-2000	No	Cape Dorset	Drawing	X
Johnny	Aculiak	M	1951-2008	No	Inukjuak	Carving	X
Jolly	Aningmiuq	M	1954-2000	No	Kinngait	Carving	X
Kaka	Ashoona	M	1928-1996	No	Cape Dorset	Carving	X
Kananginak	Pootoogook	M	1935-2010	No	Cape Dorset	Drawing	X
Karoo	Ashevak	M	1940-1974	No	Talurjuaq	Carving	X
Kenojyak	Ashevak	F	1927-2013	No	Cape Dorset	Drawing	X
Kiawak	Ashoona	M	1933-2014	No	Cape Dorset	Carving	X
Lipa	Pitsiulak	M	1943-2010	No	Pangnirtung	Carving	X
Lucy Tasseor	Tutsweetok	F	1934-2012	No	Ariviat	Carving	X
Mary	Pudlat	F	1926-2001	No	Cape Dorset	Drawing	X
Napachie	Pootoogook	F	1938-2003	No	Cape Dorset	Drawing	X
Nelson	Takkiruq	M	1930-1999	No	Gjoa Haven	Carving	X
Niviaksiak		M	1908-1959	No	Kinngait	Carving	X
Oviloo	Tunnillie	F	1949-2004	No	Montreal	Carving	X
Peter	Pitseolak	M	1902-1973	No	Kinngait	Drawing	X
Peter	Sevoga	M	1940-2007	No	Baker Lake	Carving	X
Pudlo	Pudlat	M	1916-1992	No	Cape Dorset	Drawing	X
Qaqaq	Ashoona	M	1928-1996	No	Kinngait	Carving	X
Qiatsuq	Shaa	M	1971-1998	No	Cape Dorset	Carving	X
Samson	Kingalik	M	1937-2010	No	Inukjuak	Carving	X
Tim	Pitsiulak	M	1967-2016	No	Kimmirut	Drawing	X
Victoria	Mamnguqsualuk	F	1930-2016	No	Baker Lake	Drawing	X
Syollie	Arpatuk	M	1936-1986	No	Puvirnituq	Drawing	X
Alex	Alikashuak	M	1952	Yes	Winnipeg	Carving	
Bart	Hanna	M	1948	Yes	Igloolik	Carving	
Billy	Gauthier	M	1978	Yes	Happy Valley	Carving	

David Ruben	Piqtoukun	M	1950	Yes	Toronto	Carving	Contacted
Floyd	Kuptana	M	1964	Yes	Paulatuk	Carving	
George	Arluk	M	1949	Yes	Arivat	Carving	
Germaine	Arnaktauyok	F	1946	Yes	Yellowknife	Drawing	
Heather	Campbell	F	1973	Yes	Rigolet	Drawing	Contacted
Irene Avaalaaqiaq	Tiktaalaaq	F	1941	Yes	Baker Lake	Drawing	
Isa	Aupalukta	M	1942	Yes	Inukjuak	Carving	
Mattiusi	Iyaituk	M	1950	Yes	Ivujivik	Carving	
Jacoposee	Tiglik	M	1952	Yes	Pangnirtung	Carving	
Jamasee	Pitseolak	M	1968	Yes	Cape Dorset	Carving	
Juanasi Jack	Itukalla	M	1949	Yes	Puvirnituq	Carving	
Joelee	Maniapik		1960	Yes	Pangnirtung	Drawing	
Kakulu	Saggiaktok	F	1940	Yes	Cape Dorset	Drawing	
Kavavaow	Mannomee	M	1958	Yes	Cape Dorset	Drawing	
Leo	Uttaq	M	1964	Yes	Taloyoak	Carving	
Looty	Pijamini	M	1953	Yes	Grise Fiord	Carving	
Lucien	Kabvitok	M	1962	Yes	Ariviat	Carving	
Maudie	Okittuq	F	1944	Yes	Talurjuaq	Carving	
Mayureak	Ashoona	F	1946	Yes	Cape Dorset	Drawing	
Michael	Massie	M	1962	Yes	Stephenville	Carving	Contacted
Ning	Ashoona	F	1979	Yes	Kinngait	Carving	
Ningeokuluk	Teevee	F	1963	Yes	Cape Dorset	Drawing	
Noah	Maniapik	M	1961	Yes	Pangnirtung	Drawing	
Nuna	Parr	M	1949	Yes	Cape Dorset	Carving	
Oopik	Pitsiulak	F	1946	Yes	Cape Dorset	Carving	
Pauloosie	Michael	M	1960	Yes	Kimmirut	Carving	
Phillip	Kamikpakittuq	M	1955	Yes	Gjoa Haven	Carving	
Pitaloosie	Saila	F	1942	Yes	Cape Dorset	Drawing	
Pootoogook	Jaw	M	1959	Yes	Kinngait	Carving	
Roger	Aksadjuak	M	1972	Yes	Rankin Inlet	Carving	
Ruben	Komangapik	M	1976	Yes	Iqaluit	Carving	Contacted
Sammy	Kudluk	M	1958	Yes	Kuujjuaq	Carving	
Suvinai	Ashoona	F	1961	Yes	Cape Dorset	Drawing	
Toonoo	Sharky	M	1970	Yes	Cape Dorset	Carving	
Lucassie	Echaluk	M	1942	Yes	Inukjuak	Carving	
Aisa	Amittu	M	1951	Yes	Puvirnituq	Carving	
Archie	Ishulutak	M			Pangnirtung	Carving	
Jusipi	Qaqutuk				Ajulivik		

Appendix B: Interview Transcripts

David Ruben Piqtoukun Interview

September 22nd, 2018 11:00 EST in-person at his home in Colborne, ON.

Kathryn Florence: So, you have read and understood this form?
David Ruben Piqtokun: Yes.
F: And you have the chance to ask questions now if you have any.
P: Okay. It's fine.
F: All right.
P: Proceed.
F: You agreed to participate.
P: Yep.
F: Alright.
P: Where do I sign?
F: Uh…[Laughs]
P: [Laughs]
F: I can send you this form again.
P: Oh. Yeah. you can send this form.
F: Print it out and then you can send it back to me.
P: That will send you I'll—I'll keep a copy and I'll send you…Okay. Fully understood.
F: All right.
P: No guarantee but I'll do what I can the best I can and that's all to the best of my knowledge.
F: So, to just get started; can you start by telling me you know where you're from like your community any family ties and your early history?
P: Mmm-Hmm.
F: As much as or as little as you're willing to share.
P: Okay…My name is David Rubin Piqtoukun. Piqto is my Inuit Eskimo name. Piqto means the wind.
F: Yeah?
P: Like the blowing wind. Very…harsh wind. There's different—many different forms of wind and piqto is just…like it's…severe blowing wind, you know? So, like the wind up had a checkered past. So, I-I've-I've lived my name out well. Over the years. Different types of wind conditions, different types of different types of David conditions.
F: [Laughs]
P: I come from a little village I-I was not born in Paulatuk I was born eight miles across—the across the bay called Darnley Bay. When I was born, I was born on a…hunting camp—in a hunting camp. They were geese hunting. And they…and the first sound I heard was the sound of snow geese, so, the place called Darnley Bay and Paulatuk was established it…the—the people established…slow course the town itself. Little village. More like a hamlet.
F: Yeah.
P: 350 some people. Even today. But I was—I was still a young-I was still a young-young child when they relocated the-the town to Paulatuk. missionaries had built Mich…had built their buildings and church in 1938 and…they only had the…church, a little garage storage area, and that was it. But the-the people considered Paulatuk as…as a good location for to establish the

larger community. But keep the-put the-put the-put the-put the people together. They built build-build a—build a place where they can call home. Shipping routes. Landing strips. It was ideal and except for one condition where Paulatuk is famous for its south wind.
F: Yeah.
P: If you're—very severe south winds come through there. A lot of-lot of many plane crashes because the-the winds are so, severe…they…they-they flip—a lot of airplanes have been flipped coming in for landings. It's called the south wind capital of the world.
[Laughs] That's what its famous for.
F: And that was the wind you were named after?
P: That's…I-I…my name is called 'the storm the winds.' Piqto, so…so it-it kinda reflects on that. It-It reflects on-on-on that situation. In the eastern they say Piqso. In the Western Arctic Piqto…but Piqtoukun is what I added to my name when I started carving.
F: Huh?
P: My name was too short.
F: [Laughs]
P: I was told that if you stretch your name a little bit further. Piqtoukun. The longer your name the more important that you might be in your life.
F: Okay. [Laughs]
P: But we grew up in the in the village…I-I was fortunate I grew up with my grandparents. I was still young enough that I could recall my grandparents…
But eventually people become pass away and-and now there's a new generation of my age group were-we're the elders of the village now. Yeah, like my brothers, cousins, relatives. They see all the-the very—they're very old Inuit with people that originally settled into Paulatuk, helped built the hamlet have all—have all passed away. And with them also all the stories. But I-I was a very fortunate to have collected—
Oh…since the early 70s I started collecting stories from my village. Not so, much about Sedna or Nuliajuk but—but other-other stories related to her mythology.
F: That's important work
P: Yes. So, I-I'm I'm what you say; I've been documenting from a different ballpark. You know, the-the-the mythology of my people through-through stone carving…and…to learn more about my people I-I-I learned it through stone carving because as I work I have a dialogue with my sculpture, the images, and from there…they teach me things, you know. I-I'm…I-I…absorb a lot of knowledge, not so, much knowledge, but a lot of the stories and other related to our own mythology and I…develop new stories and I-I…But I contemporized a lot of the old stories. My own interpretation of these stories and…which is they use newfound materials like this for instance.
[gestures to *Bear Man Protecting Pearl of Wisdom (2016)*] Alabaster, the white and many other materials use…so it helps me contemporize images and…and develop stories and images that I really enjoy.
F: So, you mentioned you learned to carve from your brother is…that why you choose to work in stone or you just—
P: Pardon?
F: You learn to carve from your brother.
P: My brother introduced me. Didn't teach me.
F: He didn't teach you, but he introduced you.
P: Yeah.

F: So, where did you learn to carve?
P: Introduced me to stone carving. Told me 'these are the tools to basically use.' And-and we went shopping for soapstone…at the time we-we-we-we-we used Seattle steatite soapstone which is like a…like a glazed type of soapstone that…that-that was shattered. Every-every-every piece of stone is…to get this material in bulk they-they the-the mining companies just blasted it out of the ground. So, every-everything that-that we carve would just fall apart. They were just breaking in mid work and…
F: That-that had to be frustrating
P: Oh, it was, Yeah. A-a-a lot of raw materials went through the garage walls, they—at my regional studio have huge holes in…the drywall because of the frustration. Just this one broke again. The worst one I recall was it took me three months—
F: Ooooh.
P: Just a beautiful image and…and before I presented the work at—the delivery fell apart in half. 'holy moly'
F: Yeah?
P: Yeah.
F: Super glue ain't gonna fix that.
P: That was so, frustrating. And well, that-that-that was the start of—I was starting to…to afford to buy proper material.
F: Yeah.
P: Yeah. In the early 70s. So, I-I went about and bought good quality material and I've been doing that practice since. Now. But that early frustration…everything's collapsing and breaking upon ya. falls apart like a cheap suitcase and that she's…
F: [Laughs]
P: But that was a—that was an incentive to buy good quality material, good quality tools over that—over the course of time to the present. Now, I work with beautiful materials. Cause that also taught me how to study materials before I purchase. There's certain things that I look for and…make sure-sure—sure there's…anything has a major fracture I avoid, but eventually I-I can incorporate that fracture and it's gunna remove it, but I still have good chunks of material to work with. And…and I've been through the history of—I can write the history on the use of epoxies because of that too.
F: [Laughs] Yeah?
P: [Laughs] Yeah. The early days of epoxy…let's…there were 24-hour—24-hour epoxy. epoxy glues that we initially started with…then we learned how-how to heat up the glue so, that it can penetrate into any type of cracks that existed in the material. Or if I do inlay, I have to heat the wax up. Heat up the glue and so, it'll penetrate nicely and-and…and eventually they-they-they shave up with five-minute—five-minute epoxy and from five-minute epoxy they-they developed…Krazy Glue.
F: Yeah. [Laughs]
P: Which is the ultimate glue. It penetrates everything. And that bond so, well. It-It—bonding. If I do—I've done a lot of inlay work I use different materials to inlay eyes and mostly eyes, you know.
F: Yeah.
P: Red. Black. White. Any-any color of stone that I have and that might enhance the carving or enhance the image or highlight certain areas I…I've always used Krazy Glue. That and-and now

what I still use it after all these years because there's certain materials that really—because I collect—I'm what they call is a hoarder.
F: [Laughs]
P: [Laughs] I hoard raw materials. Even small pieces because I used them all often. They're tiny but they'll fit into…as an eye and enhance the works that's—its secret of—one of my secrets or techniques is to-to just almost enhance the image as best I can.
F: So, you didn't learn how to carve from your brother. Where did you learn how to carve?
P: Well…we-we were in Vancouver…1972 that's when he introduced me to stone carving. He was traveling. He studied in…University of Fairbanks in Alaska. It was very fortunate—his two years up on me stone carving techniques and design application and material…and material use. And in Vancouver…we…we…he introduced me to-to purchase raw material and taught me that you should buy these types of tools, because I required to start with…and…and he had to travel back to university. So, I just kept—I kept chipping away on the stone. I-I-I-I had to…
I am, literally, self-taught.
F: Okay.
P: So…
F: It's very impressive what you've done.
P: Yeah, I—I select materials right from the initial cutting selection. Cutting and designing. It took the better part of five years before I…before I started making the thing that looked decent enough and…to be—it became decent—I-I-I-I just kept plugging away and that suddenly everything started to develop in a proper manner. I learned about proportion. I learned about proportion and-and and new techniques I used…sometimes after. Used machinery like diamond bladed tools for cutting, for pre-cutting…and, for me, pre-cutting…any material is the secret. That's-that—to me, it's a secret of sculptures to remove things that should not be there. So, I-I've learned how to pre-cut that…like the…it's like the Bible of stone carving.
F: [Laughs]
P: You know? what to remove? how much to remove and—but it all has to do with control. Can't just barge in there with your eyes closed. The chip—you have to have an objective and I-I used that. I-I just refined the technique over the course of time, and I used the same technique all the time. And eventually everything gets completed once I'm happy with an image. Like say this for instance [gestures to *Bear Man Protecting Pearl of Wisdom (2016)*]
F: Yeah.
P: I have the shape so, I—there's a lot of lot of empty space there so, I had to remove all that. Chipping away sawing away and…its stone that-that may not fit. So, it gives you…just…has to be inlaid. Eyes have to be inlaid. This material—there's a pin in there and all the—all the stages of stone carving are in there. And I'm still looking at this—I mean—I may open this right up. I was just concerned that the top heavy so, if I removed this part…something that's going to happen in between it may damage the leg. So, I'm all ways carefully what I'm doing. But every technique right to the sanding. Core sanding. All—all carvings are—rough tools chiseling. I use I have a…my famous 16-Inch—16-Inch course rasp. It'll treat anything. So, everything is like—from coarse to fine.
F: Yeah.
P: Even with sandpaper now that—now we're —we're introduced to-to use 3000 grit.
F: Wow that's…
P: Which is used for the automotive industry. But is perfect for stone is the higher the sanding the higher the polish. But everything has to be…if there are any shortcuts, I'll find them.

F: [Laughs]
P: But otherwise you have to go through the whole ritual over and over. Yeah.
F: So, then what does making art mean to you?
P: Well for me it's—it's-it's become…When I first started I-I was copying books I was reading exhibition books, you know, other artists.
F: Yeah.
P: 'Oh, these guys are good'. I didn't know nothing but technique—techniques. But I-I noticed the images that they were creating and that the material they used which was mostly um…Eastern Arctic style would be…lots of serpentine
F: Yeah.
P: And I have carved—I-I did this—I did carve jade for a few years. I worked with a jade studio for three or four years. And jade is the hardest carving stone on the planet.
F: Yeah. That's-that's impressive.
P: And…from those techniques I applied that to other materials that…any hard materials and…but the-the question that ya asked 'what does art mean to me?'
F: What does making art mean to you?
P: Well, it's it-It's to me initially it's to—I-I didn't have a clue what to do but as…I learned…I-I began to realize—the first thing I noticed that I started to make—I started to make proper shape. It's an exercise in making…making images that are proportionate and the techniques to actually finish it start to finish. And the—I realized that it-It—I-I can make an income. I can make an income from-from this art form. My first paycheck was $56. And from there I realized, geez, if I got to make $56 on 8 small pieces, I was on my way to being self-employed. I was unemployable for many years. from the very start cause I'm—I don't like working with people or under other peoples.
F: [Laughs]
P: I-I have been fired from every job I've ever had so…and this is ideal for me. I don't—I want to ever—as long as I carve, I won't get fired anymore. It eliminates that.
F: You can't fire myself.
P: [Laughs] Can't fire myself. [Laughs]
So, I find a way to, —to make a living and when I started making the proper-proper living—I can buy—I can purchase new materials, new tools. The proper work went to proper working space. And it just—it kept developing from there. It started from that introduction of that first dome shape.
F: Yes.
P: My brother was carving. All the stone chips were under the worktable. And I then I started to touch and feel the material. 'Wow, there's something in this material' and that's how I started. It's that I've been developing techniques ever since. But in 1972 was the initial time…that's the initial year that I was introduced.
F: Okay so, you're self-taught then…you were drawing from what you saw from other artists through catalogues and stuff. So, what would you say the main influences on your work are?
P: The…as far as the artists that really influenced me there were big names like Tik Tak. An artist named Tik Tak, Barnabas, Andy Mickey. It was freeform, so, subtle and simple but—I've ever wanna copy—there's the trouble of—trouble with that, with looking at books is that you at least once want to start copying all these images. And I-I—to do that, to not copy I had to stop reading all these art books and exhibition books. And I felt really important. It felt really important for me to develop my own style…and to do that I had to close these books. And-and-

and just develop-develop things on my own. And it and—but that time, five years in the carving, I met Dr. Alan Gomer from North Battleford, Saskatchewan. And he told me that just nice-nice-nice carving but maybe…we should start collecting stories from your village, from the elders. I started collecting stories and legends and more stories and…and…and he explained to me that these—this-this was all about this—these all has to do with mythology and I never understood the meaning mythology, but he explained it to me and-and then it all started to make sense. I—I-I—you take these stories and…when I collected them, I reread. And if I close my eyes, I can see these images. Very clear. Clear images of all these stories. As the story is told I see all these images being created. And I-I realized that if you see these images you can duplicate them in stone. And from there an image keeps developing that it-it-it tells you about itself, why it's exposing itself. And expose the stone exposing these images. It's a learning process of stone carvings, learning about my own mythology.
F: Okay. So, then what subjects do you focus on? You…you primarily look at mythology? So?
P: That-that-that's the—that's the bottom line is trying to interpret mythology, the stories, the legends. And…and over the—over the course of my carvings career, I-I like to develop new…new-new techniques to present my work. Say for instance the National Gallery has a—has a—looks like a long piece of bread with an ulu on the back.
F: Yeah. I've seen that.
P: Yeah. So. I-I-I like abstract work. I like to present things in an abstract form. It doesn't always have to be rigid or that way or displayed that way. I-I—I incorporate ideas. And the most recent I was introduced to using metal. I'm incorporating metal into stone. That's to do with the presentation. And I use upright…upright metals with circular images. I've…I've worked with a metal company and I give them my designs for basis, you know?
F: Yeah.
P: To-to how best to…how best to display an idea. Like, inside the circle of metal there's a little pin that I can use to install stone inside. And from there I-I-I designed some sculptures that…that can rotate, or people can walk around, but they rotate.
F: Ah, okay.
P: And…and I-I—rather than just see one side of a sculpture. Say for a mask, I do both sides. I do both sides, so, you get two-two-two works. I create two works. And it gives it a whole new dimension. Into a whole new dimension. And um, and I can work—the last one that's in the studio's—you saw that big box in there? it's…a two-sided image. It's—the ring is—ring of metal that's seven feet tall. So, it's very imposing it's…
F: Yeah. That's…that's at least two feet taller than me.
P: Yeah. [Laughs]. And…I also worked with…before you leave, I'll show you my whale bone collection. I have one that 16-feet long.
F: Oh my gosh.
P: I've done a previous one that took me two years to complete. 16-foot long jawbone of a—of a finback whale. Purchase…material I purchased from Newfoundland
F: It still amazes me how big the creatures in the ocean can get. [Laughs]
P: This is—the last of the giants.
F: We have this idea there's just like 'oh Yeah it's probably, you know, 20 feet.' and then you're like 'No it's a lot bigger.'
P: [Laughs] Well, these whales were there…maybe, 89-feet. 89-feet long whales. Geez. I can imagine. That is the second biggest whales other than the blue whale.
F: Yeah.

P: But I have —I know that I have blue whale—blue whale rib bones and other materials…in my studio. But…but I always try and…whichever…
A lot of ideas come through in my head, so, I know I've got the tools. I've got the space then I can—I like to experiment with sculpture and how best to present the sculpture. I-I-I…I used to work in miniature.
F: Yeah?
P: 'Till my eye started failing me.
F: [Laughs, gestures to own glasses]
P: And the more of my eyes failed me that I had to start working larger and larger. And…I still do a lot of fun detail work on—work on my carvings. I can't get away from that because it-It's just part of it. That's what's required to present the sculpture or the carving in the proper manner. Especially in the matter of finishing it. And…but…Having a—having a—having…having been introduced to metal I can incorporate metal and stone and—in a way that a-a…it makes —that takes my work into another time zone, that takes it into another dimension.
F: Yeah.
P: Yeah, Yeah. Cuz I—cuz I-I because I…I do stone carving and sculpture full-time.
F: Yeah. Self-employed.
P: So, self-employed. I do full-time. And-and-and-and I can do things that just your average stone carver unable to do. Just…a lot of artists that have to do side jobs and…
F: Yeah.
P: [mutters] Then I have access to all the all the materials that are available from the planet. Imported materials. So, I have to be able to afford to purchase materials. And…that's my main objective is I like to stock up on…imported materials that are—that are carve-able. So, I have a nice wide range of materials that I can—that I can use—that are at my disposal.
And…and…once I have a collection of raw materials. It's called a healthy studio when you have—an artist has many materials to-to-to use.
F: Yeah?
P: It's…it's…it's like a story from a long time back is…how do you determine the wealth of—the wealth of a village. Or the wealth of a family. It's-it is to determine by how much…food stocks you have in storage but that's…
F: Yeah.
P: That determines your wealth and—cuz you're able to feed your family, other families, and yourself. But that's-that determines how wealthy you are. It's not money-wise but it's how healthy your freezer is. Your-your ice freezer—your food—your food cache. And…it's like the studio of it. Healthy studio's like 'ooh lots of material.'
F: Yeah…so…getting back to the subjects you focus on in the mythology. So, like what do these—what do these myths, these subjects mean to you? why do you feel so, connected to…
P: Run that by?
F: Um. Why do you—why do you focus on these mythological subjects? What do they mean to you?
P: Well it's the…this-thi-thi-this—these mythological stories they're-they're teaching me…they're—they're teaching me about-about my culture about my—about my identity. Which is really important because at an early age I can mention that, and I received an education in forgetting.
F: Yeah. Only if you're comfortable. Don't have to if you don't want to.

P: Yeah. I feel that…once you forget your language…as at an early age that I spoke perfect Inuktitut. Now it's gone. Customs, traditions. All gone. I-I…
They even told me that 'your parents don't exist'. That she—in the boarding schools and the residential schools they asked—keep asked me, just to torment me, like asked kept—asking me who my parents were. And to a child, like Jesus…comes here—comes across—like Jesus. But she—just— they keep asking me this maybe—I made me feel like I didn't know who they were. So, there was the loss of many things and-and now through stone carving and-and the —and-and learning through mythological images I-I-I can retrieve all this—all these lost items. Like I…cuz I noticed in the last 10 years I speak dialects that I did not understand when I'm working.
F: [Laughs]
P: Yeah, suddenly this word comes out. 'Jeez where did that come from?' and…and-and-and I…and-and I yeah—I realized that this is my own dialect. I knew these words from when I was a child, what they meant.
F: They've been coming back.
P: Yeah, coming back. I know for sure that this language is still in my DNA and just slowly seeping out. And that tell me that tell 'okay so, this is where it came from' because I-I did—it's locked up deep in a deep dark vault and slowly it-it's—that vault is opening so, that I'm able to…I'm able to speak it. I-I-I can scream these words out and write a sentence here and there. I don't—but I don't know what exactly—what it means but it sounds like this. Sounds like my-my-my true language. And I found it humorous and intriguing. And…and every now and then a certain sculpture will speak more than another sculpture to me. Cuz I have a silent dialogue with my works. And…I'm…questioning why am I doing this? and—and slowly, maybe an answer will come at me. It's a part of the carving technique and if I add this image maybe the story would…might become full. Or I take all these images all these parts and—and-and then they come and create.
F: Yeah.
P: Like —like a full story? [coughs]
There she is [gestures to print on the wall]. The great woman. Nuliajuk.
F: Yeah.
P: [Laughs]
F: [Laughs] So, then going off of that I have a few pictures—unfortunately, they're like thumbnail so, they're not that big but…
P: Okay. I like working from pictures. Okay.
F: [Mutters] Okay. So, I guess the question would be you know…we have a couple of these pictures, so, we can just scroll through. But, they're all of Sedna or the sea goddess.
P: Okay. Now I start to recall these.
F: Yeah. Again, I'm sorry they're very small.
P: Which one for instance?
F: [mutters] so, why did you—why did you create this piece [*Sedna the Sea Goddess (1987)*] or pieces like it that feature Sedna?
P: This one I created…about at the same time as I was—I came back from Indi-Indiana. Yeah—I—it was huge.
F: [Laughs]
P: It was a giant piece. I-I—it was a very, very large stone and the colors were so, nice, so-so rich and I was trying to present the sea goddess. And there she was just…in her full form.

F: So, the stone—you mentioned earlier that, you-you know, you just try and bring out what's in the stone—the story in the stone so, what this is.
P: This is —this is the image that I saw in the shape of the stone. So. It's quite large and I just kept it very simple. And…she's like…not an old Sedna but like…a in her 40s or 50s. And I just wanted to focus on some of the detailing.
F: Like the scales?
P: Yeah and the-the-the-the…
F: The braids?
P: The braids. And I know the for sure the eyes are very well, inlaid. It was just a mass—that was so, big and large that—that's the—a lot of the times that's the-the shape of that material that I—that I study will determine the outcome of the of the carving itself.
F: Okay…so I've been asking all the artists this, but would you mind telling me this story of Sedna that you know?
P: Well, the-the story that I-I know about the Sedna is…when she—how she was born. I haven't—somewhere in my collection is a carving of an old man in-In a boat.
F: Yeah?
P: Where he chops off her fingers.
F: Yeah.
P: Yeah. She didn't know that…her father was going to do that.
F: No, she didn't.
P: Just happened so, quickly and threw her overboard. I know what your—why that event happened. But anyhow, he didn't—the father didn't want anything to do with…with the daughter so, he took her out whale hunting and threw her overboard but…the carving itself was her holding…
F: She clung onto the side.
P: Holding on to the edge of the-the-the-the boat. Holding on to the gunnels or whatever it's called. And the father just wanted to get rid of her so, he just…just lobbed her lobbed her fingers off. And…and all her fingers and her and this…and…Nuliajuk they call her?
F: Yeah.
P: I call her the Sedna. That once they started sinking to the bottom of the sea all the fingers became…they-they got their own life and they became the animals of the sea—sea mammals and animals of the sea.
F: Yeah.
P: And the sea goddess settled to the bottom of the sea realized that her hands were lobbed off.
F: Yeah.
P: And creatures started coming alive around her and…and…and they helped her at the bottom of the sea. And she became the sea goddess. And…being…she'd…she's like the-the mother of the sea.
F: Yeah.
P: Ya know. And she's—she's in contact with all the other sea creatures. And she's…in herself she's acquired many, many skills and powers that she never knew existed. And that she was transformed. It's a very powerful image she-she-she can control—she can control and see many things that's spontaneously. But her main objective is to watch over her domain at the bottom of the sea. She knows what's happening up there, above the sea and below…and…and…she's still…she's…she's still part human.
F: Yeah?

P: So, she has human feelings…also. E-even Sedna, the sea goddess needs a spirit helper. That's why we have this beautiful image here. [*Sedna Lives (Dog-man Spirit Helper) (1997)*].
F: This one?
P: Yeah. This image is…is her spirit helper, her guardian.
F: Yeah?
P: Even someone that powerful as Sedna needs someone to protect her. So, he's—so I created this image so…this image is part human also, part dog.
F: Part-fish it looks like.
P: Part-fish. I used that Indiana limestone.
F: Does he fit into the story at all or is he just something that you drew out of the stone?
P: Well, after I carved it like…I-I went through a series of-of carvings and I realized it had to do with spirit helpers and guiding spirits and protectors. And um…and-and—and this image came out. It's just a big block of stone and I really—rather than carve a sea goddess, I carved an image that protects the sea goddess.
F: Okay.
P: It's part of my own creation.
F: Yeah. 'Kay. So, then…what does what does the figure of the Sedna mean to you? like um…in terms of story, in terms of art. What does her figure mean to you?
P: Well, she is—she's symbolic of…the sea goddess is symbolic of…someone who watches over. She's like a protector of our…of our people. Our people, the animals and, the land, sea, and sky. And she protects the…the mythology of the Inuit people. And…and she also —she's like a teacher. If you—if…you can ask her—ask the sea goddess like for instance…you can…you can…you can visualize asking her to help her understand the situation and she's capable of helping you. She's like…in this culture—in this modern culture you have—you have higher powers. You have God figures. You have all that Buddha…
F: Yeah.
P: You go to someone to pray to or someone to…let you have to some invisible image powerful enough that you-you-you can request this or that. Not directly for yourself but you-you—if you have a question or if you're stumped with something or if you need guidance at least. She was like a guiding image for our people. Which is…she's…her images transformed over the last I seen 25 years. Before it was just a carving.
F: Just a carving?
P: People didn't understand much about the Sedna. Just that once you have…would do Sedna carving it'll sell faster. That type of idea.
F: Yeah.
P: But if you go beyond just the carving and you reach beyond and find out who Sedna was. She was given special powers to watch over our-our people, the animals, creatures that live in the sea. And now she-she's capable of watching over what's on the land also. The land. The sea. The skies.
F: Everything.
P: Yeah. She's —she's—has multiple things that she does and that—she's like…she's like…a powerful image that-that you—that-that you can relate to. She might see your existence as-as an individual and…
F: So…
P: But she comes in many forms.

F: Yeah, you have lots of different forms but one thing that I've noticed is um…all of them have this…tail. So, in the myth especially a lot of the versions that I've heard, they don't specifically mention her being transformed to have a tail. So, why do you depict her with the tail?
P: You just look better in the carving.
F: That is a fair reason.
P: [Laughs]
F: [Laughs]
P: Yeah. Well, as an extension of being a sea creature you…you have to realize that to get around and move around you need a tail.
F: Yeah, feet—feet aren't exactly built for swimming.
P: Say—say like the great woman is Nuliajuk and…being…that's an evil spirit Tubilak[?]. She doesn't have the power to deal with this image because she's…she's like…having a human trait. She…she's—her hair is disheveled and-and she's not fully focused so…
And a lot of evil things are being perpetuated on the peoples. So, they contact the shaman and they search for her. find her. That's a shaman there that finds her and they-there-they-them-they've been when things are bad like Sedna the sea goddess is not taking care of herself. Because of—she's still part human. So, they after they find the shaman and the shaman grooms her back into…for…as a…They comb her hair. You know, take good care of her and then—and her powers restored.
F: Okay.
P: Like spontaneously and now she's able to—once she's properly human presentable she gets her power back and she's able to deal with the evil spirits that exist. They all—these evil spirits there that all just shrivel and disappear, and life is normal again for the people. The people always helpful.
F: Okay.
P: Are always great-grateful for-for —for her—for what she does for them. But her image is always changing. In here she's more of older-older more wise, but still very pretty and…and…
I saw this carving at the AGO recently. There back in July. I always thought it was maybe three or four feet high.
F: Yeah?
P: No, no. [Laughs]. It's shrunk.
F: [Laughs]
P: [Laughs] I have to do a larger image of her. She—just—well, its image itself is beautiful to create because you can do so, much with that dimension and…and-and…and…and
The better an artist creates these images…she'll —she'll find and—she'll find the artist in favor, you know.
F: Okay.
P: Oh Yeah. So, what you create, kind of information seeps back into the artist. Mine. Yeah. We tend to see the-the world differently but for me I'm always trying to
find…information…information that not written in books. So. But the image will tell me like…a little bit of extra information that I didn't know when I started the carving and suddenly 'okay'. Every little bit helps.
F: So, in regards to her having a tail do you think Qallunaat, the white people—do you think she's often mistaken for a mermaid and that's why she was so—she-she was so, popular?
P: I-I-I believe so. Like as a mermaid image, it's kind of an intriguing image. Having the…the nature of the mermaid. And she rep—without the tail like she'd look different. Wouldn't…

F: She would look very different. Yes.
P: Very, very, but the tail is an extension of her beauty just reflected…just…just an extension of her—of her beauty because she does in fact live in the sea. She's at the bottom of the sea.
F: She does.
P: And she has to be able to be mobile. Also, mermaids are mobile.
F: Yeah, they have a tail to get around.
P: So, that-that would be the relationship between the mermaid and her image. Cuz she is part animal and part human. So…the animal part of her creates that tail image.
F: Yeah. Okay.
P: And this one here [*Blonde Sedna with unkempt hair (ND)*] also is where she's—she's…she's…her hair is completely disheveled.
F: Yeah. With all the swirls.
P: Yeah, Yeah. And the tail. Her hair is all matted and twisted and…and things go wrong and Inuit people's…
And this one [*Seeking Out Sedna (2003)*] I'm not too sure. it's a completely different-different carving
F: Yeah…like I said I'm sorry for the quality of the thumbnails, but it was just called 'Seeking Out Sedna' and I believe that this would be Sedna, possibly.
P: Yeah. I thought that was a different image it's…it's…
F: Possibly. I apologize if it's not.
P: It's…it's…this image is like-like it like a seal. Witnessing a sham-shaman that flies—that flies to the moon. Yeah.
F: Ooh. Whoops.
Alright…so in terms of…her story, Sedna's story and how she's depicted and how she's received do you think that Qallunaat understand her story when they see her image?
P: Don't what?
F: Do you think that qallunaat, the white people.
P: Kablunaat
F: Oh. Ka-Kablunaat.
P: Well, they understand her more so, now than they did…even 10, 15 years ago.
F: Yes?
P: Cuz, it's been probably—it's been-been…been properly public published in books and images. And they can relate to all this new information and they're getting more interested in—what I've noticed…5-10 years, people are very curious about the mythology and the meaning of mythology, the meaning of the legend, the stories. People find them fascinating because they see the image and they can visualize well. It's a new way of—it's a new angle of visualizing images.
F: Yeah.
P: People often read about but…they-they…but once they started seeing the images 'okay it all starts to make sense' and they can relate to them. What they see, they can relate to the story. And I wish I could find that carving where she was created, with the creation of Sedna.
F: I can try and find…find that for the final—for the final.
P: Catherine would find it. But if you went into my website—the history of my website you could—we could probably find…
Did—Am I'm not making any sense to you?
F: Yeah. You're making lots of sense.

Um…so…I guess starting to look into the theme of artistic survivance. You mentioned that you-you sell your art independently, you're self-self…
P: Self-taught?
F: Self-taught, self-employed. I forget words too. So…
P: Yeah.
F: So, then how do you—how do you go about selling your art?
P: Showing.
F: Showing.
P: Okay. Well, the…[clears throat]…Right from the beginning, like once I started having extra works; I come to the ritual of photographing and sending the images to clients.
F: But how did you—how did you get those clients? how-how do you—how did you start selling your art to [clients]?
P: Well-well-well—I-I went to a…I did a lot of workshops. I do a lot of stone carving workshops in the early 70s, 1980s and…and involved—I'm involved in group shows. I've done a lot of my own solo exhibitions and people become familiar with who I am who I-I am at developing a name for myself. Developing it and creating my own design and style. And people become familiar with that; 'okay that looks like a Reuben, smells like a Reuben, must be a Ruben.'
F: [Laughs]
P: [Laughs]
F: I would love to read a dissertation where somebody talks about you can tell it's real by how it smells.
P: [Laughs]
F: [Laughs]
P: But it's through exhibitions and group shows. That's how—that's the nature of the marketing. And people get familiar and eventually we my wife and I, we developed a website. And we started showing images that were available on the website. You know. It's all archaic now, but we did that through faxing taking image photographic it, fax, and then we started getting responses. And-and it's also all part of starting at zero and would be—would be endless. The arrow would be endless. It's the cost of in—you have to understand that that's the cost is going to be how old the sculpture is, how many—how many it is, the dimensions, the quality of the stone, the quality of the image being presented. So, everything determines the value and people are 'okay.' people understand the value; it's escalating through the course of time and-and become fascinated with being a Ruben collector.
F: Okay.
P: We have clients that have lots of Rubens and we keep them posted as to new works. Which is good. Then they can say 'yes' or 'no.' and…like this…this…taking a little longer than normal, but this past week we sold two sculpture and three major prints. But there's still the-the wire transfer still hasn't come through yet. So, we live like-like-like every other artisan. It's either a feast or famine.
F: Ah yes. The starving artist. [Laughs]
P: Yeah, I know. [Laughs]
And we still experience that. And-we had that—my wife comes up with beautiful jokes every now and then. Cause we had a new job last night. We have—we're waiting for funds. The works are already sold but we're at the mercy of transfer people
F: Yeah.

P: Banks in the US and Canada. We call it the ABC a diet. [Laughs] We don't know how long this money is going to take. In the meantime, we just have to live on air and water. So, we're accustomed to that like most artists.
F: Yeah?
P: Yeah. So, we have to keep refining that that that-that…that segment in our business. You know, we have to make it easier for us in the future. This way we're…like most artists they always scramble.
F: Yeah.
P: Yeah. You talk to many artists?
F: Yeah. I've talked to a few. I've talked to Michael Massie so, far, and then I have a few more interviews set up for the following months.
P: They'll follow the same routine. Like they're either feast or famine.
F: [Laughs]
P: Yeah, Yeah. You have to keep refining things. But you have to laugh at it too. So…
F: Then you've also had a lot of group and solo exhibitions. So, what's the role in—of the museum in relation to how you're showing your work?
P: Well, the ah, ah—the-the-the first major museum—I know there-there's museums that to do collect my work. Say for instance the National Gallery as a number of works. And…it's… It—well—Yeah, well, it's taking all my efforts to a-a-another level. That's what it is. It takes the artist to another-another level and—which means the artist is started from here but is slowly progressing. And…and…the National Gallery is collecting other-other museums around the world. They are doing the same thing. In Germany, all—countries abroad. So, it-It-It gives the artist a special status, like you know. You have…you have…
F: You have a work in a national gallery.
P: You've met certain criteria concerning your work and people take notice.
F: So, you mentioned progressing. Progressing towards what?
P: It's a-a progression towards…being better known, you know. And…and also gives you a—if you're better known, you get artists will eventually—would hope in their lifetime to work on—take their ideas and-and present them and larger scale.
F: Yeah.
P: Yeah. Much larger scale than you normally would.
F: Like 16-foot—
P: I have a lot of ideas that I can create large scale but…the neighbors not quite big enough to…to transpose that so.
F: Larger than 16-foot…whale bone?
P: Yeah, Yeah. And price too. Like…you think…
In four years, I'll be—I'll be celebrating 50 years; stone carving, sculpture. But hopefully before then I actually do a few more big-bigger monuments. I have, but I've done the 60-ton boulders, collages and…but…the income doesn't reflect the nature of-of these sculptors.
F: Okay.
P: But eventually your income should-should balance that with the scale and—of your-your monument.
F: One would hope so. [Laughs]
P: [Laughs] We've been struggling for four hundred and some-odd years, so, scraping the bottom of the barrel. But at some point, you have to—you have to veer off from that and and…as an individual artist I'm hoping to have the capacity to-to-to veer off into another scale.

F: Okay. So, what makes an artist's work traditional versus what makes it innovative?
P: It's…
F: Because you're talking about veering off and…so can you—can you like…
P: Well, the influences of new materials, new tools.…new techniques…as opposed to traditional is…I-I would give for example like……I'd say like…this distant imaginary place…like…like…like let's say cape Dorset. And people are all familiar with Cape Dorset artists and their images. Eh, to me is…, traditional. It's…certain works are selling, for instance. So, you keep doing that over and over.
F: That's what makes it traditional?
P: Over the course of time. Like there are artists who do the same image for the rest of their life. I would transpose that as traditional.
F: Okay.
P: Or anyone that……because of the economic situation and the isolation factor, they-they-they can't really afford to be innovative, so, they create the same image over and over and over. And…and traditional is like…just keep—there are certain images that sell, better than certain ones. So, the economic factors plays very—plays a lot in traditional car—in traditional stone carving.
F: Would you say then…
P: It's all—the majority I'd say 99% is income-based influences. But for that maybe 5-10% of artists are being—becoming more treated, more innovative. It's having access to…having access to proper studio space. You'd be able to afford new materials on a larger scale, for instance, and different variety of materials that are accessible to you.
F: Yeah.
P: And different techniques to-to make it more—to make it—to present it in a more innovative fashion.
F: Yeah.
P: Also, the thinking has too.
F: The thinking behind it has to change?
P: Yeah. The thinking behind is very important.
F: So, the image of Sedna is done repeatedly, even you yourself, you have made multiple images of Sedna. Would that make her [a] traditional work or?
P: Her image is traditional.
F: Her image is traditional.
P: Yeah. Her image…
F: You—how you do it, is what it's innovated?
P: How you create it and present it.
F: Okay.
P: It could be either be traditional—traditional she's…like that…where she's flying or she's doing something. But I use her image—often I-I-I put—she's holding something.
F: Holding something?
P: Yeah. She's holding like a little piece of white stone.
F: Yeah.
P: And she's, like—she's protecting the knowledge of the people.
F: Okay.
P: Yeah. That's how I present that. Just being a little extra. A little—
F: Just a little extra detail.

P: Yeah. Cause she's-she's got that capacity to…to protect the knowledge of the Inuit people. I call it protecting the pearl of wisdom. Even wis-wisdom is very important to protect. Once it's lost, it's lost forever.
F: Yeah.
P: So, it's important to show the image that-that she does protect our knowledge, customs and everything.
F: So, then the final question I have is; what do you want, um…I'm gunna mispronounce this again because I'm used to pronouncing it the eastern way—the-the qallunaat, the white people, to learn from your art
P: I want the-the kablunaat to understand.
F: kablunaat.
P: Well, I-I-I have a—have a similarity to—to the kablunaat. I was taught in their schools. I lived in their cities. I know how they-they live. Type of foods they like. Materials they like to eat materials the books that they like to read and everything. And I know how they talk. How they act. But I'm still—deep down I'm tryna…I'm tryna…identify myself as still Inuit, Eskimo. What I say is once an Eskimo, I'm always an Eskimo. And I'm…using that it's…for me, to this day, is like a selling feature of my work.
F: Yeah?
P: guys-guys go 'oh cool that's cool'. They call it Inuit art. But just to isolate myself a little bit not too much I am…I have…just my roots are native based. Inuit. Inuit from the Western Arctic. And what I trying to do is…I try to keep that-that kablunaat.
Now the thing we have the common is we would like to stay up to date with things that really present challenges, whether in scale, dimensions. That's our similarity. That's how I-I'd eventually like to-to present my works in a bigger more unique scale. And the kablunaat they love—they're fascinated by scale, detail, innovation, and…and location. You know? the more prestigious the-the location…okay.
F: [Laughs]
P: And they start to buy stuff. Like the Buddha, like-like the Dali Lama they—when they walk by them, they go 'hmm.' [Laughs]
F: [Laughs]
P: That's my imagination. [Laughs]
F: It's—it certainly seems that way in some museums.
P: Yeah. But-but kablunaat, they're fascinated by presentation innovation and-and the use of incorporating modern machinery to do things that they're not familiar with. And I get identifying—identifying the proper use of these tools, innovative factors.
F: But what do you want them to learn from your art, specifically?
P: mmm?
F: What do you want them to learn from your art, specifically?
P: I…my artwork is not affordable. We're only searching out segments of society that…just even recently I read that the people that make incomes of 50 million a year, those are the people I want to touch.
F: Why do…you want to—just to sell your work? [Laughs]
P: Just trying to pull your leg. [Laughs]
F: Okay. [Laughs]
P: Cause we're in the closing segment. Yeah, run that question by again.
F: What-what do you want the kablunaat to learn from your art?

P: I-I-I want that kablunaat learn to…is that what I'm learning is…learning how to…through the creation of production of these works I'm learning—I'm learning how to understand who I am as —as a human being. I-I was born here. As ah, I'm learning the slow history of our people. I wasn't learned that I-I am—I came from here. I went through their schooling system but I'm going back. I'm resorting back to the use of stone carving. I'm-I'm-I'm learning about…not from books, but from stone carving. And learning who…what my background is. That gives me identity. I'm-I-I've been known in that early ages as W31119. I was given that number because that's who I was. I was just a number and most people in society are just numbers. Numbers that are mobile and people that kept numbers that can be manipulated. And stone carving and identity that…I'm developing a name that the people might be familiar with and once they see an image, 'o-okay it's definitely a Reuben…smells like a Reuben'.
F: [Laughs]
P: [Laughs] But I want of them to identify images that are; 'okay well, we've seen this image. We've seen this style, so, it could be a Reuben.' And we're getting emails all the time and people are trying to identify certain works.
F: Yeah.
P: A lot of the times, we say…'this is someone's trying to imitate my work. They even imitate my signature and sorry but this…I wasn't born yet so, that can't be my work.'
F: [Laughs]
P: [Laughs] but um, I—I'm trying to…I want people to…identify me as a good carver.
F: Okay.
P: This guy knows his carving. He's got good techniques and he—I used multiple techniques and…and…
They understand that all my carvings come with stories. That's what they're familiar with. They're expecting a really good story from me. And…most artists they don't do that, but I do. I see a—see an image and I really relate that image to-to-to what they call—they insist on—that when—before people buy, purchase they insist on—the kablunaat, they insist on a good storyboard. That's a selling feature of every-every-every sculpture. And we said 'okay we'll comply. I'll send you a storyboard with that'. And that-that…that's how we close the sale. Just say there's a storyboard coming, please be expecting this within a week. But…and through the course of time, my wife and I, we learned how to do proper packaging.
F: That is a skill in and of itself.
P: Yeah, Yeah. We used to ship works to New York and we get photographs back. There's sculptors in a thousand pieces. Somebody's got pissed off and threw it off the Empire State Building by the looks of it. So, we're learning all those many things. You know?
F: Yeah.
P: Hope that's sufficient.
F: That is more than sufficient. So, that's all the questions that I have written down. Is there anything else you want me to keep in mind or have out there on the record?
P: It's…well, it'd become—if it comes to that, we would—you have our email in the questions or if I have any questions. And just leave your calling card with us.
F: Okay.
P: Let us know what you do with this information and…
F: I will let you know.
P: And…and…you plan to publish your-your-your thesis?
F: it is a possibility in the future.

P: Okay, there's the publication. If it comes to that maybe we'll request a few copies you should send, or anything related to that. And you see Heather often?
F: Yeah. [Laughs]
P: Send her our best regards. [Laughs]
F: I will do that. [Laughs]
P: Just tell her—just tell her I said, 'Hi.'

Michael Massie Interview

September 10th, 2018, 11:30 EST. Carried out via phone.

Florence: Before we begin I just have to verify for the record that you have read and understood the information and consent form, you have had the chance to ask questions and those questions have been answered, and you agree to participate in this research under the conditions described therein.
Massie: Yes. No problem.
F: Alright. Wonderful. [Laughs] How have you been?
M: I'm well. Thanks. Keeping busy, running around right now.
F: Yeah, you just finished that, uh, art project at, uh, Ottawa?
M: Ye—well, that was the Order of Canada. I received the Order of Canada there last Thursday.
F: Oh, wow.
M: Yeah, I knew since last year but the, uh, ceremony—I was finally able to take part in the ceremony last week.
F: That's very prestigious so congratulations.
M: Well, thank you very much. Yes, indeed it is. I'm quite, uh—I'm flabbergasted and humbled and honored. And all those things. For sure.
F: Alright, so…is it alright if we get started?
M: Sure, not a problem.
F: Alright, so, can you start by telling me a little bit about yourself. Where you're from…like your community, any family ties, or early history that you're willing to share?
M: Sure, uh…Well, let's see, so…was born and raised in Happy Valley Goose Bay, Labrador—You're recording this right?
F: Yes, I am.
M: Okay, good. Cause I wasn't sure if I could talk too slow or…cause you're gunna write it down.
F: No, no. I'm recording.
M: So yeah—born in Happy Valley Goose Bay in 1962. Uh…grew up there. Most of the time—I mean, just to give ya a little bit of a background, cause it does relate to my work—is that, uh, up until the age of fourteen, uh, our families were really close. My mom's brothers. We were really close with our cousins. And the same with my father's. So, we spent a lot of time…uh, more with family than we did with, uh, like the-the other kids I grew up with on the street, uh—on our street. And, uh, so that's a lot to relate to with my work in regard to the family stories and stuff like this. But, uh, so…I graduated high school in…my gosh, '81 I think?
… And then I went on to do a commercial art course in St John's, New Finland back in—graduated in '82. And then I took part in the visual art program here in Stephenville from '86 and graduated in '88. And took six months off…um…Went to Halifax in January of '89 and I finished up, uh, August of '91.
… And from there I did some workshop—I-I-uh took part in some workshops from the Inuit Art Foundation. That would of been 1991, 1992, I think. And, uh…so that's how my career started, it was right after that. That was when it started snowballing for me was, I took part in those workshops. And that all stems from the fact that they, uh…in their quarterly, that they put together, uh, they…included the artists that took part in the workshops. Plus, they included a photograph—or an image of, uh, a piece of theirs. And it just so happened that—I don't know if

you know this story or not—anyway they, uh, uh, put one of my ulu bowls in there. Sterling silver and wood. And cause it was those two mediums, uh…it kinda sent the Inuit artworld kinda not too pleased with the fact that the Quarterly or Foundation was—like Marybelle Mitchel at the time would even consider that Inuit art because it was those two mediums. And it wasn't stone carving, printmaking, or tapestry. Uh, that was what it was so that's, you know, where it snowballed. The image made it to the Quarterly. I used to take part in a number of symposiums, or lectures, uh…a few—I can't remember how to pronounce this; the, uh, festivals they used to have or the gatherings they used to have in Ottawa and Toronto, uh, where they get the artists to come and do workshops. And so, it-it-it was a lot of talk about how I felt about Inuit art saying that it was only, you know, one of those three. And not any other kind of medium. So, my—my opinion was that it was other mediums. It was the person who made it is what made the difference. It's not the medium itself, so.
… That's basically it. So, I taught for a few years, uh, after finishing up in Halifax I did four years teaching. Am I rambling for you too much?
F: No, you're not at all. This is fascinating. So…
M: Yeah, so—I just—I just tend to go on. Just wanted to make sure that that's okay. Uh, yeah, so after the Quarterly came out and that image made it, the Arctic College in Iqaluit, uh…trying to remember his name, uh, Mark Webber, apparently saw the Quarterly and where I was doing jewelry they were doing jewelry programs at the time in Iqaluit and they were looking to expanding by having artist or instructors go into other communities, anywhere from a couple of weeks to a few months or whatever. But it just so happened that they were trying to do it for a year in a community. And, you know, I just ended up getting the job and it was in Gjoa Haven, Nunavut now. And so, I taught there the first year and the second year, uh, I went to Iqaluit. So, and then the year after that it was Goose Bay, Labrador, where I'm from, at the college there, uh College of North Atlantic. And after that year I was still at the college of the North Atlantic, but it was in Port-aux-Basques, Newfoundland. And, uh, that was still teaching stone carving so—for the first two years that I, uh, taught at Gjoa Haven and Iqaluit they were jewelry programs and in Goose Bay it was stone carving. And, uh, in Port aux Basques it was mostly jewelry, but it was also some small bit of carving. But students weren't as interested in the carving as they were in the, uh, jewelry. So it was—when I was teaching in Port aux Basques that one of my students after Christmas [coughs] uh, of '97—it was January of '97 he went up—when we came back to class, he had a, um, uh…He was applying to get a, uh, money from a-a, uh—it's not a co-op but it's something similar. And, uh…to start up his own business. He was asking me if I could give him a hand with, um, filling out, you know, answering the questions, filling out the questionnaire. So, I said, 'Sure'. So, as I was looking through it and helping with the questions, I was thinking to myself like, 'Wow. These questions are pretty simple. Like I can answer these pretty easily myself.' And I said, "I think I might just actually do one up myself." And I decided to. And it was—I passed it in, uh, I think it was like March, February, March or something the same year; '97. And by May of '97 that's when I set up my own studio. And I've been on my own ever since. Uh…Worked for a gallery in New York, uh…it was in '96 that the Inuit Art Quarterly put my first teapot on their cover. And when they did that, uh…I heard—I got a call from a gallery in New York, another one in Connecticut, another one in Philadelphia. And so, I-I ended up working with the one—with New York for…almost seven years. And then I left that gallery and moved into—or moved with the gallery to Vancouver that I send my work to now and I've been with him since and that was '90—no, 2001, I think or—no-I—that was '91 or '98 I started dealing with Vancouver. So.

…And then, odd workshop here and there, teaching jewelry—well, not so much jewelry as teaching stone carving or doing some talks and lectures. But that's—and then—that's about it, really.
F: Alright.
M: Was that—for a very long introduction to a background [laughs]
F: [laughs] No, it's alright. There's a lot in there. So, going back, uh, to what you were talking about—you-you want to use other mediums. What medium do you prefer to work in and why is that?
M: Um…Well, to be honest, when I did the visual program here in Stephenville in '86, '88 uh… …was it—you're still there, right?
F: Yep, I'm right here
M: Okay, no. Cause I was just—my phone just started to ring and your number came up again and I wasn't sure. But, no. Back in, uh, '86 to '88 it was then to be a painter-printmaker. That were my two mediums I really got in touch with, I suppose you wanna call, put it that way. Uh…and when I left Stephenville and went to Halifax that's when I took—that's the main course that I applied for; were painting and printmaking. And it wasn't until the, uh, second semester I was there, a friend of ours that we were sharing an apartment with, um…she was doing the jewelry program. And she came home one evening with a bunch of jewelry she was working on and I was kinda fascinated with it because in Stephenville we did all mediums, um; painting, printmaking, sculpture, jewelry, photography, drawing, textiles. So, uh, we knew ceramics—we knew a little bit of everything. And, uh, you know, I could relate with what she was doing because we were at—where I had to take it. So, I decided to go down to the jewelry studio with her. As soon as I walked in, I knew I was in a place I'd rather be. Um…so…from there on until I completed the program in '88—no—'91, sorry, uh…that's all I did was jewelry. I took all the jewelry programs, all the silversmithing programs. Whatever I could in regards of metalworking. And so that happened there. I didn't do any stone carving up to that point. It wasn't until I, uh…finished in Halifax because there was a job that was supposed to be there for me in Goose Bay. I won't give names or anything. But, uh…three weeks before I went to go home, um…the guy that was gunna hire me decided he didn't—he didn't want to hire me anymore, but he didn't decide to call me. So, at that point my wife and I with our daughter; we either sold, gave away, or, uh, kept what we wanted of our household belongings and, uh. So then here we went to Goose Bay, and I had no job. But it worked out, cause that's when a really good friend of my father's at the time, um—he was the one that was in charge at the time to get people to take part in that Inuit Art Foundation carving program that they set up back in '91. And at first it was going to take place in Happy Valley…uh, where I was. But then the Foundation decided to move it up to Nain and I thought that was fantastic. So that's…when I, uh, first started carving. So that's the two main mediums I work with. And, uh…
…You know, I've done woodworking with—in NSCAD—at NSCAD. And, uh—not a lot, mind you, but I did a bit. And, so that's—I just find that wood and metal, well, are very complimentary to each other cause the wood warms up the silver. It-it, uh…it doesn't look so cold to me. Personally, myself, I have never made a silver handle for a teapot. Where there's a break in between wood or something, I prefer to have wood handles because it's just warmer to the touch and it just warms up the metal itself. So that's my choice for silver and, uh, wood. And then the stone carving, when I did the workshop in—I just really enjoyed it. And, uh, so then I just, you know, started getting my hands-on serpentine up in Labrador. And—supply right now is…

…I talk to a few other artists, um, and they're saying that the supply for serpentine is not the greatest right now. It's quite hard to come by. Down where I live, I have anhydrite, grey and whitish color stone. And I can get that at the quarry that used to be down about a half an hour drive from here. So that's the reason why you see me work a lot with that blue stone. Cause I can get it for nothing. And the serpentine isn't, uh, isn't easy to come by. But, uh, that's basically how they came about. And metalwork, just to let ya know…we did a lot of jewelry at NSCAD, like earrings and pendants and rings and things like this. But that wasn't what I wanted to get into. I knew when I was doing it. The-the teapot—I'm gunna get ahead of myself here—the teapot idea came, uh, back in October—not, no. November—sorry—of 1990. Um. My grandmother had passed away in October that year and in November we were given a project where we had to make a hollow vessel. And it could of been anything from, uh, from a mug, to a beer stein, to a candelabra, or something like this. And I just happened to choose a teapot because my grandmother was on my mind quite a bit. And she was a-a, you know, always had teapots—a teapot on the stove. One with steeping tea and one with water. And that was never taken off the stove. Only to fill. And anyway, uh…that's how I ended up getting into the teapots. When I started my first one—I made my first one as a project. I-I, uh, made it after my grandmother. So—and it also has a play on words, like May was her name and tea. May-tea. Which I am part—partly.

F: Ah, yeah.

M: So, then I decided that, well, you know, this is part of my nature to have a play on titles when it comes to teapots.

F: [Laughs] That's a very interesting story. Wow. Um, so, what does making art mean to you, then?

M: It's funny you ask that.

… It, uh…

…Well, there, uh…It's always been an enjoyable thing, uh, even when I was in school. I, uh, started drawing. I, uh, from what my mom tells me from around when I was 8 or 9, she's not exactly sure and, uh, she can never be sure now with the Dementia but—around 8 or 9 and it all stemmed from, uh…when one of our uncles used to live with us and he-he just did this little goofy sketch on a piece of paper one day. I don't know, I wish I still had the drawing but—but I just saw and watched him do it and then I just thought, 'Well, that looks like fun. I think I can do that.' So, it just started from there and from there I used to—I don't….

I'm not gunna ask you your age cause it's not polite to—but I don't think—you don't sound old enough to know what those little cartoon captions 'What Love Is'?

F: Uh, no. I do not.

M: Or, do you know 'Happiness is…'? 'Love is…' and all that stuff? Those little very simple drawings of, uh, a person, 'Love is being with your best friend' or something like that, this, or…whatever. It went on like that.

F: Ooh.

M: So, I used to copy certain ones. Eventually, 'Hot Stuff,' that's another, uh, comic, was a little devil in a baby diaper. This little kid devil. It was a good cartoon. Or anyway, so I started just—I used to just put the comic to one side, to my left, and then I would just redraw what I saw. I would copy that whole page. I would try to draw exactly what was there. And in high school it just when on. Things like all the super hero comics; Spiderman, Superman, and those guys, Conan. All them. And, uh…that's basically kinda drawing and also just sign painting are the first two things that I—that I were in doing before I went to, uh, Stephen—came to Stephenville. And

it wasn't until I came here that I truly learned how to draw. Um…and it was here that I learned how to draw. It was one of my teachers, Ray Mackey. Uh, it was in his—one of his classes that I-I found that it was one of my breakthroughs—through drawing. Through learning how to look and how to draw. And, uh, it was just for me as soon as I got into art school—we didn't have art since grade 6. When I was in high school, uh, there was no art program and the closest thing that we had was Drama. So, for me that was what I wanted to be in. I didn't want to be in sports. I wanted to be in something involved with the arts. Which, me, I didn't look at it as the arts. It was just something that to me was more exciting or fun. It was something I could fit into. Yeah.
… And then I came here, and it was just
… All a sudden I was in a program that taught you so many different mediums. Then, you know, you got to make what you wanted, use your own expression, which just felt great. And I knew I couldn't teach forever because I'm not really one for authority. Like I'm-I, uh have a hard time—it gets really difficult if it goes on for a long time. I have a hard time dealing with it because…
F: [laughs]
M: I don't mind. I get to a point where it gets to something I shouldn't say. And so I decided that setting up my own practice was the best because I-I control what I make. No one tells me to get up. No one tells me, you know, I have to have certain things done. I know what I have to do and I just do it, enjoy it. But then there's of course…
…where it doesn't become fun. It becomes work and that's where it's not any good. I—uh—It's not—I turn on back. I'm just coming out of that. I think I'm just getting back into metalwork. Cause I did so many teapots for such a long time and then I got tired of doing those. And that's when I started doing—well, I—there's another reason I started carving. But then when I started carving, I did a lot of those for a long time. And now I really want to get back into making teapots. You know—it's—uh—that was what I really enjoyed when I was a student, uh, was to make that. And, you know, it's just fun to create. It's much more fun than working…in all honesty, working in stone, or-or anything, any other medium. It's just the material itself. But don't get me wrong, I do enjoy working in stone, not near as much as silver, or brass, or copper.
F: Nah, no. I-I-I can see that, that love put—put into your work.
M: Yeah, I…
… You know, we learn certain things in school where, uh—when I did my research on the teapots, uh, the function of a teapot, uh, you know, how the handle, how to balance everything. And it-it might look easy to come up with a design, but you're trying to figure out the right shape for a spout or the shape of the handle that makes everything come together as a piece. And I like putting humor into my work with my titles. Excuse me, I've always enjoyed humor kinda thing. Humor is a great way of embracing some things. You know, getting rid of tension and that too.
F: Right. So then, what would you say were the influences on your work? Um, obviously with the teapots you have those memories of, uh, of May. So, what about some of the stone carving?
M: Carvings? Well, uh…it…
…I put, uh, I kinda put myself in my own experiences in the owls. Uh. Not all the time, but in-in pieces. Owls are meant to be more fun. Um. More humorous. Uh, but when I start getting to pieces that deal with transformation I-I…
…I'm not looking for the whim—sometimes there's a bit of whim-uh-whimsy in there, but most of the times there isn't. uh. I'm not trying to make fun of that. I was told not long ago that, uh, by this lady, uh, I was doing a magazine interview, uh, she said that she thought that I was insulting, uh, um, probably…Not that she figured I was, but probably was insulting to shamanism and the

culture because of what I do. And I said, "Well, you're reading it wrong." Said, "first of all, you should read about who I am, cause that's how I do my pieces." This…if I'm doing something serious, I try and keep it serious. I make it look, uh, what I think it would look like. I mean, I didn't grow up with these stories. Um. I've only learned a lot of these stories from teaching up north and taking part in…in lectures and symposiums and that. And, uh…you know, that's the thing.

…With-with my background, I-I didn't grow up in the Inuit culture. My grandparents did, uh, they-they lived off the land kind of thing. I—I—not—I don't think they had igloos. I'm pretty sure they didn't. But they did live from the land. They hunted. They trapped. My grandfather trapped for—even when I was still alive, when I was quite young, and, uh, it wasn't long before I was born but—lived in their cabins in a river, down in Mulligan. I don't know if you know where I'm talking about. Heather Igloliorte, who I'm sure you know, knows where I'm talking about and stuff. And, I mean, that's where I spent my summers. So, I learned about, uh…the importance of looking after things, you know? That's the kinda stuff I keep sacred or kinda keep true. This, uh—there's certain things that are meant to be serious. And there are certain things you can get away with that aren't serious. And with my works when I'm depict—like a story or a legend, I try to keep it serious even though there might be a little bit of humor in there. That's not—that humor's not is just kind of—when you're looking at something, when it gets too tense, uh…people's shoulders drop, their hair on their neck stands, and they get kinda tight up and everything else. And for me, that's not the type of person I am. I'm a person who prefers to be, you know, relaxed, calm. You know, there's a calmness to a piece. And if you're calm, you relate to things better instead of blowing your stack. So, I mean, that's basically how I look at things. Cause, you know—I've been criticized for, uh…

I remember in Iqaluit one time there was an ulu exhibition that came up. And I took my sketch book with me. And-and when I was there—cause at the time and even still now, I look for as many different ulu designs I can—and then I was just there sketching the design of a couple. And another, uh, Inuk fella came up to me. He said, "Aw, here we go again. Another white man stealing our designs." And so, I explained to him I'm not really stealing. And I told him that, "I am part Inuit myself." And I said, "I'm just learning." And I said, "this is one of the most fascinating knives that I've ever seen, and I-I know how they work. My grandmother used it. And things like this." So anyway, we had a debate about it. Or a talk about it, I really shouldn't say debate. And that was it. So…

I've always gotten questioned…at NSCAD when I first made a pair of earrings. It was in the design of the komatik [sled]. And my instructor at the time came up to me and said, "You know, you shouldn't steal images from other cultures." [Laughs] And I kinda chuckled and I told her the story, the background, and she apologized. That was it from there. Never ever questioned. And after that, nobody ever questioned me about my work because, well, the instructor we had that did question my earrings, she left on sabbatical after that semester. Then the other instructor that we had who was Brigitte Collette who, uh…she was very openminded. And that's what also, if I can go back to an earlier question, is what made going to school so great was that they let you be openminded with your ideas. You know, explain your ideas? And work out your idea. And then everything kinda falls together, you know? So, that's all part of it as well. I don't know if I went way off track there.

F: No, it's alright. And I completely understand that…disjunction where people assume things about you. I am a descendent from the, uh, Blackfoot tribe [Sihásapa] of the Sioux [Lakota] Nation. And I do—I very much do not look like it. [Laughs]

M: And you get, uh, questioned as well?
F: Yeah.
M: Wow, yeah.
…But I mean that—at this point, that's gunna happen a lot. There's a lot of people out there who of-of different—who, uh, different ancestries. You know, that's what it was like when I came into it. And we—there was—you know way back when and everything, there always will. But it's always gunna be questioned, I think. Well, uh, it's starting to lighten up, I think. A little more now I think than it used to be. It doesn't seem to be so much. You still hear the odd, I still read an odd article about, you know, people taking other culture's ideas, making their work and stuff. And I don't even bother finishing reading it, cause it's not worth finishing most of the time.
F: Yeah…
Going back to the more serious subjects you carve about, what-what makes you chose to carve about these legends and these stories?
M: Uhm. Well…a big reason would be—is a reason I mentioned earlier is that, uh, I didn't grow up with all these stories. Like I didn't grow up with, uh, Sedna. Uh. The only—the only thing I ever knew was the southern version, which would be, uh…what is it? The Little Mermaid? Or, actually I shouldn't say Little Mermaid, but a mermaid. Didn't know anything about Sedna. Uh. I didn't know about Inuit, uh, stories or myth-myths or legends. And then when I started reading about and learning about it through the people that I met I just thought them quite fascinating. And…
… Transformation, um…for me, I guess…
… I don't know about yourself, but I don't know if you've ever felt this way, but there's always been times when I was growing up where I would rather not be around people. I always wanted—I wished I could transform into something and-and you know, go somewhere else or become something else or whatever. Just so that I could be invisible for that. I just didn't want to talk to people or anything. I just wanted to do my own thing. For me, transformation is about that, I think. It was just how I feel sometimes is…you know I, uh, you're at a point where you wish you could just kinda disappear or become something else, so people don't recognize you. But it's also about story. You know, fas-fascinating some of the stories that I've heard about transformation and shamanism. And I-I still know I have, uh—I know I have a lot to learn about it. I can't wait to get more stories. I always looking for different stories.
And…so I just, ah, whatever comes to mind in the shape of the stone most of the time that will, uh…will depict what it's gunna be, what will it look like. A lot of the time—most of the time that's what the stone is. It's not what I put into the stone. Sometimes when I just, uh, have a certain, very plain shape like a rectangle, very flat around the sides that has been machine cut. Those become very, uh, you know, draw them out on paper most of the time. But when it's an irregular shape or—I look to see the rock, what's in there. And—cause when I did the workshop that was part of what it was. We had one instructor who was on the realism side, which is Charlie Ookpik, unfortunately he's no longer with us. And then there was Mitusi Ituk[?] who was more abstract, and he—I-I kinda lean more towards his abstract side. Because with abstract you can…you can have things transform very easy. They can blend into each other. They can become one another kinda thing. Or one side is a face and arms, and the other side is, uh, like—one side's a human face with arms and the other side could be a walrus with flippers and things. So, you can do lots. When you end up—with transformation you end up with more ideas…you're almost unlimited in what I can do with it. And at times I don't know if, you know, if I created something that is-isn't correct but it's coming from just my imagination of from a story that I

read or heard. So, I'm interpreting my way. Um. And not to insult anybody. There's never an intent to do that. And, uh, people would know if I was going to insult them, somebody because it would be in my work. We'd definitely know. [Laughs]
F: [Laughs]
M: They'd tell. That's basically why transformation is…
… Just because it leads you with so many ways you can do, you're—like—that's pretty much it, I think.
F: Yeah. I-I can definitely see that in—definitely abstracting helps—it definitely is the way to do that.
… So, you didn't grow up with these stories. So, can you tell me the story—the version of the story you know about Sedna?
M: I sure can. Ah…
The way it goes is—the one that I heard—is that there was a young girl, um, she was orphaned. Her parents had died. And she was left with her grandparents. And her grandparents already had, uh, there was a number of people in their group already. And they're all already having a hard time, uh…feeding themselves. There wasn't much, uh, food around. And they kept moving from place to place. She became an extra burden—or an extra mouth to feed or an extra person in the hold of the kyak or the umiak whatever. And so, what they—when they got so far out—actually the way it went was, uh…the, uh…grandfather decided that they were gunna get up early in the morning before she did. And they were gunna take off without her. And so, they did. But she woke up before they got too far out, and she was able to swim to them. And when she grabbed hold to the side of the boat, she, uh…or her grandfather started cutting off her fingers at the knuckles. And as they fell into the ocean, they became the different sea creatures. And, plus, the animals on the land. And so then as all of them were cut off, she sank to the bottom. And over time she lost her legs and, uh, and she had either—it was either, they used to say in the story I heard, was either a fish's tail or a whale's tail. And that's how, uh, most people that I know depict her is, uh, with a tail of-of-of one of those—or even flippers, I've seen flippers. That's how I've heard that one. And then, over time [coughs] excuse me, um, when people on the land—she always lived in the bottom of the sea, and when people on the land were, uh, being not nice to each other, meaning that they were hurting each other, they weren't sharing their food, um…then she would—her hair would be put into braid. And when her hair was braided, that's when all the sea creatures and land creatures were held. They were kept in her braid. And when the people were starting to get hungry enough, they would normally get a shaman, and they would get the shaman to go down, swim down to the bottom with a comb, and then he would comb her hair. It would relax her enough that she would let the braid out and let her hair free. And once she let her hair free, the animals were released and become plentiful again. And so that's how I—that's how I heard that story. That's the first time I'd heard of it.
F: Wow, that…that is fascinating. I, um, I've never heard that version of the story, actually.
M: No?
F: No, not that version. I've heard, um, the version where she married a bird and another where she married a dog, but I haven't heard—I haven't heard that version so…
M: Okay. There are a number of versions or—I know there is.
F: Yeah.
M: The one—the one when you mentioned that you didn't ever hear—or that you mentioned that nothing ever really written up about her having a tail, fish, or things?
F: Yeah.

M: Uh…
… I'm not really sure, uh…if I ever read anything, though there's a few things that I've read, I'm pretty sure did mention tails or something—but not—most of the time it doesn't talk about that. About who she is and why she's there kinda thing. And how she became there. Most of the time it doesn't really depict—tell you why she ended up losing her legs and getting a tail. But the one I was over time she lost her legs and they, uh, grew into a tail.
F: Yeah. So, what does Sedna mean to you? What does her figure mean for you?
M: Uh. Well…
… Well, she's like the center of everything, really. Because, I mean, uh, she was, uh, left alone to her parents dying. Uh. She was left with, uh, unfortunately left with, uh, her grandparents at a time when things were difficult. Uh. They were at the point where they were going to abandon her. She tried, uh, to swim and save herself by going to them. And for her to come, uh, to the ocean, to the bottom of the ocean and to take on—it is that kind of image. It's quite interesting because it's like a mother. You know? It's in a sense it's like a mother to all of us. About learning things. Because we learn most of our stuff in life from our mothers. Uh…and it's like a how to teach people with respect. And, you know, like, uh, comes to a point where everything—excuse me [coughs]
What, sorry about that.
F: Oh, it's alright.
M: But when it comes time to learn things we learn from, uh, our mothers. And how to respect stuff. So, I mean that's—I just think it's a fascinating story and, uh, it shows how powerful, uh, that story is. Because no matter where you go, the east or the west, she's in it. Their—she's in their stories that go way back, you know? I've heard there's a spot where she's supposed to live to this day. Uh. Unfortunately, I can't remember the name of it. Um. But there is—I think it—I'm sorry. I can't even—I won't even say if it's a lake or something. But she's supposed to be there. Um. But anyway. So.
F: Yeah. So. In terms of how she's depicted in art, do you think Qallunaat mistake her for a mermaid? Do they really understand her story?
M: Do I think what?
F: Think that qallunaat mistake her for a mermaid? Do they understand the meaning of her story?
M: I'm sorry—I'm…hearing the last part but who?
F: Qallunaat? Uh, the white southerners.
M: Oh! White people. Yeah—No. Because, I know they don't. Most of them have never heard of it. Cause I know through my friends myself. It's—actually, I have a friend, uh, when I first told him the story, he told me he'd never heard that and he's a teacher. And, uh, he's also a musician. And [laughs] the next thing you know he wants to write a song about her. I don't know if he ever finished it or not. That's—he-he really appreciated that story. So, he thought there was a good song in there somewhere, like a song with a guitar. Excuse me. And I think it was based on that kind of—that kind of version of Sedna. So.
I know there's a lot of people out there that don't understand that. There's—there—everybody I've come across has been quite fascinated with this story. I know a few other stories, but that's the way I know the leg—the Sedna one.
F: So then, this is my last question. Then afterword's you can say anything else you want me to have in the notes or, uh…as such. What do you—what do you want the white people to learn from your art?

M: Uh…that it doesn't make a difference really, where you come from really. So that was always a bit of a beef on both sides. I mean, like you say, when I went to school there were—I had an instructor, uh…that—like when I was home, nobody ever questioned what I—what I did or what images I chose. Uh, but I didn't choose much Inuit images back then. But when I was at school, I had that instructor that questioned me on the imagery I chose. And even when I was up north teaching, I had other people question me about you know being—taking the work. But I think it's—for me what I want people to understand is that I, uh, I love humor. Uh…I love making teapots and stone carvings, eh, mostly. But I think it's, uh…art is about freedom. What you—how you feel. It-it's about put—art, no matter who the artist is or what type of medium they work with, is always a bit of themselves put into it. Doesn't matter. You might not even see it as-as-as a…it might not look, you know, like you're—like you look, but there is something that you might—or they look, but a part of them is somehow in it still. Either movement through a shape or, uh, you see the way they sign. Anything. It doesn't matter. It's still yours. So, I mean, it doesn't matter where you come from uh, you know, never never let anybody restrict you and tell you that you are only allowed to do certain things. And that's the only ones we chose. It's not like that anymore, I think. Thank goodness. It could be in certain—nah, I can't even say it is. But anyway, that's basically it. Uh.
… You know I'm not trying to, um…
… When I do something, I'm going to make something I've researched. If I don't understand, then I'll research it so that I do understand. Not so that I can put it in-into my work knowing what I'm making. Uh. If I'm making like a tool like they used to use—like a copperpick[?] or anything. A harpoon. Doesn't matter. I try to get as close to real as I—it's smaller. I have a—I'm not one for major detail, like I know Billy Gauthier—I don't know if you know of him? He-he's the extreme of detail. Which is quite interesting.
F: Yeah. I've-I've seen his art.
M: Pardon me?
F: Yes, I've seen his art. It's very detailed.
M: Yeah. He, uh, quite the man for his work. His work, I've got to admit is, uh, very detailed and interesting. However, so, yeah. But, yeah, so that's what you know, I just want people to understand is that I'm having fun when I'm doing it. I hope people understand—get the humor. Uh, if they don't, maybe one day they will. Um. But that's about it really. Try and enjoy yourself.
F: I think that's a good—that's a good lesson to take from it.
M: Right on. That's-that's, uh well I hope that's—you know, to get off track, that's basically the reason why I got the Order of Canada. Because of my pushing Inuit art into a different direction. I shouldn't say "my pushing." My helping to push. There were other artists besides me who were doing different things. But like I say when I got into it, it was silver metal, or silver and wood. That was not—that was shunned upon than it was accepted. And that was from everything, from galleries to collectors to other artists. Uh, it was amazing, um, but now it's significantly changed. Which is great to see. Uh, and pretty much for the years that I've put into the art. And that's the reason why I end up getting the, uh, order of Canada. So.
F: It-it is truly amazing. And once again, congratulations on that.
M: Thank you very much for saying that. It was very nice doing this I must say. It's nice to talk to someone about art
F: [laughs] That's very nice to hear. I'm glad I could be a good interviewer. [laughs]
M: [laughs]

F: Um. I wasn't sure if there were any other last questions you wanted me to answer or to expand upon in terms of what's going to be happening with this interview and the transcription obviously?
M: Yeah! Well, you mentioned in the write up that I get a chance to read through it or something? Or get—is that how it works? I don't know. I'm—I think I read it right.
F: Yeah. Um…I'm going to take the audio, I will transcribe it. Um, I will then send you the transcription and you're going to be allowed to look over it. And if there's, you know, a comment that you don't want in there, then you make a note of it and I strike it from the record and it's like you never said that.
M: Right. No problem.
F: Yeah.
M: That sounds good. Um. So, when do you have to have this—when is your thesis due?
F: Uh, my thesis has to be turned in mid-February. Uh, so…
…No. I turn in my thesis mid-March, but the cut-off date for having these transcriptions approved and edited is the beginning of February.
M: Oh, okay. So, you'll find out I guess after March about that?
F: [laughs] Hopefully.
M: So, you'll end up with your Masters then?
F: Yes, this will be my Masters degree.
M: So, you've been working in what field? What-what depart—or what part?
F: Oh! I'm Art History.
M: Oh, okay.
F: I'm actually, um—Heather Igloliorte is actually my advisor for this thesis.
M: Ah, okay. Right on. Just to let you know too, is that, uh, when I was in NSCAD it was my last—my last summer there. I think it was. It-it doesn't really matter which one. It was either my last one or my second last one that I was in Halifax, uh, they were introducing an Inuit Art History course. And so, there were about five of us that—myself and four other friends of mine—we wanted to get into it. And so, we did, and it was quite—there weren't many people at the time that applied for the course. I remember our instructor. Her name was Marilynn, but I cannot remember her last name. But anyway, she was the instructor. So, first day we got there, we're sitting in the auditorium and there were only about twelve of us maybe at the most, and-and the instructor. And she started talking about the program and what her intent was to do with it. But then she said, "the only problem we have is that there's not much written up in books about Inuit art." She said, "so I'm gunna go by a lot of my own interpretations and…the bit that I can find." And-and then she looks at me and then she goes, 'Well, maybe Michael can help us out'. [laughs]
F: [laughs]
M: But for me, I didn't really know much about it at that time. Started doing a little bit of research. Uh, Kenojuak Ashevak was the first artist I came across. And—no—her—and, uh…uh… Karoo Ashevak. Uh, Kenojuak, you-you've heard of her I'm sure. The owls. Very famous lady. And then Karoo—K-R-O-O—Ashevak, he died back in the seventies, unfortunately. Apparently, he only had like five years of art making. But it was written—I read it written in one of the books I had that he was considered the Picasso of the North and it's true. My opinion is that I totally one hundred percent agree with that because he was the most fascinating artist. But I saw his work. Was totally drawn to it. Um. Do you know his work?
F: Uh, I don't think I do but I can certainly look into it more.

M: K-A-R-O-O. Ashevak. A-S-H-I-V-A-K. I think is correct. Mostly bone work. You can see some of his stuff at the National. Uh, I don't know what—you're in Montreal, correct?
F: Yes, I am.
M: I don't—I'm sure you can come across something in Montreal with him for sure you will. Well, um, all the—all the main galleries have him. Like I know the National does, the AGO does, uh, the ROM does, um… but yeah, you check him out. He…like her, because of the owls, I've always been fascinated by them. Even when I was really young. I saw my first one when I was twelve, a bit young. Uh, when I started—when I took, uh, when I took the workshops with the Inuit Art Foundation back in 90s, that's when I started learning about him. And, uh, but Karoo or, uh—Kenojuak I learned—I started to learn about her when I was at NSCAD. It wasn't until I did workshops up in that I learned about Karoo Ashevak. That's when…I was like totally fascinated. I tried to read up as much as I could, you know, about him and stuff. I tried to get as many images. And when I went to one of the galleries I always try and see the Inuit art section, what they have of his and look at it. And whenever I can see one it's like I really don't care if I see anybody else's. It's not true. I do care it's just I can spend all day just looking at his because I love his work so much. But there are a number of other arts. Like even Mitusi. Mitusi Ituk[?]. I guess he was the instructor at—in Nain. Uh. Charlie when he was alive, his work was quite—he's a lot like—a lot like Billy Gauthier. Uh, very detailed. Uh. Him and Billy would of hit it off big time if Charlie was still alive. Um…Uh…Trying to think who else.
… Uh. The older guys in Inuit art were, uh…might be—I'm really bad with names.
F: I-I understand. It happens to me all the time too.
M: And it-it-it—if I go to my western side it was like Miro was one that I enjoyed. Miro. He was the first one that I, uh, um…did a—did a paper on for history. And I—because I was going through the book, just leafing through books I came a—I came across—I said, 'That's the one I wanna pick'. And it was his. But then as time went on there's been like Van Gogh, uh, Picasso, all those guys that goes way back and further back and so. But there's certain areas, certain times that really interest me. In Inuit art there's a number of them. Like, uh…I'd have to get my books out to remember their names. I know a lot of them work off—and Judas Ulluaq, uh…
Central north was always a draw to me. Like Gjoa Haven, Tallybay, Spence Bay. Those areas were a draw to me because their work was spiritual. I saw their work. It was…more honest. And that they were putting their feelings truly into it. They-they—these guys knew the stories. They grew up on the land. They knew all these stories. Um. I—a few of them are always there. Fantastic to meet. Like Judas and Nelson. And, uh, you know just to be able to see—actually Nelson, uh, uh…I can't remember it. He's from Gjoa Haven. Passed away in 1999. He's kinda surreal as well. And same with Judas Ulluaq. But there's another one there too. I forget his name. but it was those guys who really drew me because of their style of work. It was kinda…well not to use—I don't like to use this word, but they were—they were kinda goofy looking. Were really well made.
F: [Laughs]
M: They were just fun to look at. They had so much humor into. They had so much feeling and life in them. They were—they seemed like little objects that would move any minute. And I swear there's times when I've seen some of them—when I take my eye off them it's like they've moved just a little bit as soon as I take my eye off of them. It's just that that's how I find they-they give off that kind of—so it's quite interesting. They're the main ones I think that really had an influence. And there's a number of—don't get me wrong—there's female artists too that have interested me in art history. In fact, like Georgia O'Keefe and, uh [coughs] oh my god, Louise

Nevelson. And they were more in—like Louise Nevelson was big for me. I really appreciate her structural form, cause I was into that at the time. And, uh, Georgia O'Keefe, uh, her work went kind of very simplistic and almost abstract and the same—but, there's almost—there's so many…
And silversmithing there's Lois Betteridge…um…you know, there's a story…
…Do you want me to tell you?
F: Uh, if you're…if you want to tell me, sure.
M: Well if you don't have the time, I don't mind.
F: Um. I have all the time in the world.
M: Okay. Well. I studied Lois Betteridge, uh…in Halifax through my jewelry courses and through Brigitte Clavette. Brigitte teaches down at the…Mountain School of Art and, uh, still today, and, uh, anyway…uhm, we studied Brig—Lois Betteridge in school through her—to her metalwork…um, and like she was part of our craft studies. Like she was one of the bigger names in craft history Canada present today. And…
… I know but seven years ago maybe now at least, uh, she was having her eightieth birthday and exhibition. And she got in touch with—her idea was to put together the exhibition so that—she got in touch with some of her students she really enjoyed working with. Like—I can't say that they were her favorites, cause she never used that word—just they were the ones that really caught her eye kinda thing. Like how they pushed things and stuff. And anyway, so she got in touch with them and asked them if they were interested. If they were interested…the ones that she had asked were then asked to take three of their students that they would also like into the students—to be in the exhibition. And it didn't matter if they were in class now or if she had taught them twenty years ago, whatever. So that's what her plan was. So, she asked Brigitte Clavette, and I was one of her students, but Lois said, 'Don't ask Michael, I'm gunna ask Michael.'
F: [Laughs]
M: And when she told me that, I was totally blown away because here I had one of the ladies that I truly appreciated for her work and she's a Canadian silversmith very famous amongst craft people for sure, uh, more so than the artworld which I think is a shame, but, uh, she asked me to be part of her exhi—she called me up and asked me. And I go just—and then, well I said, 'Yes, of course.' Not saying no to that. And then I—when I was down in Ontario a few years back, I ended up staying with her and her husband for a couple of nights. Which was also quite fascinating. Older lady, but still to this—I don't know—actually I've been thinking about her the last few days because I haven't talked to her in a couple years and I'm wondering how she's doing. But, um, and when I was there—this was around five years ago—she was still, about eighty-two I guess at the time or eighty-three, but she was still making silver teapots and silver objects. Hammering them out. I was totally amazed she was still doing it. And, you know, she—I'm still—still fascinates me as a story. I love that story. I love that fact that I got to meet her. And I did get to meet Kenujuak Ashevak in—I was actually lucky enough to get a kiss on —I-I kissed her on the cheek, and she kissed mine. So that made me happy too. Just to let you know.
F: It's wonderful to hear that. [Laughs]… Alright.
M: But I think—I don't know if there's anything else you'd like to ask or…but…
F: No, I believe I've run through the, uh, interview questions that I've had drawn up or were able to answer without needing to ask since you already talked about it.
M: Okay. I have a tendency to do that.
F: [Laughs]

M: I do ramble on. I hope it's not—I hope it's not gunna be too hard for you to decipher this.
F: No, it shouldn't be.
M: Cause of my—
…
F: Oh, did I lose you?
M: No, I'm still on here.
F: So, thank you so much for this. I am very appreciative. Thank you for sharing your story and your time.
M: Not a problem. I'm—ju—do you have my email, in case you ever want to ask anything?
F: Yes, I do.
M: Okay. Perfect. Well if you have any other questions—of course you do. What am I saying about email?
F: [Laughs]
M: Yeah, so if you do have any questions, you know, just don't hesitate to ask them. I know what you're working on. I know how much work goes into those. If you do ever say, "Oh, I should have asked this!" Go ahead and send me if you ever think of it or that.
F: alright. Thank you so much.
M: You're quite welcome and good luck with this too by the way.
F: Thank you. Have a good day.
M: You too. Thanks.

Heather Campbell Interview

October 10th, 2018 20:30 EST, via phone

Kathryn Florence: So…just for my record, 'cause this is standard protocol; you have read and understood the information and consent form I sent you and you've had the chance to ask questions and those questions have been answered, and you agree to participate in the-this research under the conditions described.
Heather Campbell: Yes.
F: Wonderful. [laughs] Like I said, it's—it's just standard procedure.
C: Sure.
F: Alright so to start off can…you start by telling me a little bit about where you're from? your name, community, any—any-any other information you-you feel would be necessary.
C: Um, okay. Well…my name is Heather Campbell and I—like anybody—everyone from my community I was born in Northwest River, Labrador because that's where the hospital was. But I was actually raised in Nunatsiavut. I went to university at—
Is there some kind of weird feedback here? can you hear that?
F: Uh…no?
C: Okay. I think it's just …oh…it's like, a…a delay.
F: Oh! probably because of the program I'm using.
C: Sorry, what's that?
F: It-it might be the program I'm using. You might be hearing your voice filtering through the program as it's recording.
C: Yeah, I think that might be it.
F: Uh…I'll try and…uh…okay…I can't promise that it will go away completely but I can try and mitigate it.
C: Okay. Let's see if that's—well I think it already sounds better. I don't hear anything now.
F: Alright. [laughs]
C: Okay. Oh. I—[laughs]—so I went to university in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. I have a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Memorial University of Newfoundland there. Sir Wilford and Grenfell College campus. So, I graduated in '96. And I moved out here to Ottawa in '97.
F: Alright. Ottawa is a very beautiful city.
C: Oh, it's lovely this time of year now because of the…changing of the leaves and everything. So, nice.
F: Yeah.
C: [Talks to daughter, Malia] Sorry. She's distracting me. [laughs]
F: [laughs]
C: We're sharing the same charger thingy. So…
F: [laughs]
C: She doesn't want to move cuz she doesn't want the tablet to die.
F: Ah, yes. The struggles.
C: Yep. Anyway. Let's give it a try.
F: Yeah. So, uh…most of the works I've seen from you are painting, but is that the only medium you choose to work in?
C: I did a lot of, um, mix media work before I figured out this, um, pen and ink and watercolor sort of technique I'm doing now. Often times—I used to love oil. It was my favorite in

university. But I just don't have the time to do it here. Then so I started doing watercolor and drawing on top with various media; pencil-crayons, or…um…yeah, but pen and ink as well.
F: Yeah.
C: But it was on watercolor paper, but then I discovered this Terraskin paper. Like, uhm…it's uh…mineral paper. So, it's a mixture of resin and stone dust mixed together so it's really, really smooth. When I start—when I started playing around with the uh…with the ink and doing very fluid washes, worked perfectly with that paper because it doesn't bleed, it doesn't soak in, it stays on top. Dries on top like that.
F: Oh. Okay. So, why do you choose to work in that or…is it just…it-it-it produces the kind of image you want?
C: It's partially that. And I really like the idea that it's more ecofriendly than regular paper.
F: Okay.
C: And um…yeah. It was just—I think after I had my daughter, it was just hard for me to find the time to do anything. And I was feeling very paralyzed by…how I was working before that. Because I was doing a lot of very controlled concentric circles in my work. And it just…became too stifling. Which is why I started doing this…very fluid…technique. Like, get rid of white paper was kinda—the whole point of it was at the beginning. Then it became, like, an automatic type drawing exercise. And I really like it.
F: Okay. Yeah. So, what does making art mean to you?
C: Uh…
A way to express myself but also a way to relax and…and to explore my-my Inuit heritage as well. So, it—in an urban environment it's hard to um…you know feel the same connection that you feel when you're-you know in your home town, but learning about Inuit spirituality really helps me.
F: Yeah. I-I can see that in your work. It's very…it's very intermeshed in that way.
C: Oh, thank you.
F: [laughs]
C: Got the feedback again.
F: You getting it again?
C: Yeah, a little bit. Yes. It's a sharp kinda uhm…I don't know. I don't know how to explain it.
F: Yeah? what would you say the main influences are on your work?
C: In terms of other artists? or…
F: In terms of artists, in terms of styles, um, you know…uh…in-in terms of motivations even too.
C: Oh my! [laughs]
F: [laughs] I ask—I go from easy questions to hard questions.
C: [laughs] Yeah. Really. Um…I guess that it's a way for me to connect and…to express myself. I find that more recently I've been becoming much more political in my life than in my art. And it's one of the ways that I can…um, show my displeasure with things that have been happening within the Inuit work in general I think. So, it's now finding that…that balance between having something that I really want to say and creating it in such a way that I still have that…freedom and fluidity in the technique.
F: So, stemming from that, what…you're very involved with, uh, talking about the uh, politics of the Inuit world. So, what kind of subjects do you focus on? and why do you choose these subjects? what do they mean to you?

C: Um…most recently it was musr-Muskrat Falls uh, hydroelectric electric dam and also missing and murdered Indigenous women.
F: Yeah.
C: It's in the news all the time. It's…and on my own Facebook feed from people that I know, people that have family members that have gone missing or here in Ottawa and other people that have been found dead and no-one knows exactly what's happened so…it's always in the back of your mind especially in the city; you don't know. I mean, it's always there, that fear that something's gunna happen, you know? you can't get away from it.
F: Yeah…it is a big deal.
C: Yeah…One way to help—art is the way to kinda work through a lot of that stuff. As I get older I think I'm less inclined to stay quiet, you know? [laughs]
F: Yeah [laughs]
C: What's happening with the government and…our tolerance for this kinda stuff goes down. [talks to daughter] You can say hi if you want.
Malia Campbell: hello!
F: [laughs] Hello!
C: [talks to daughter] She goes everywhere with me. She's my little shadow.
F: [laughs] Uh…yeah.
C: [talks to daughter]
F: So, as I've—as I explained in my introductory email uh, I'm focusing on the figure of the sea woman Nuliajuk.
C: Yeah?
F: So, uh, a couple of your paintings have focused on this including Methylmercury, and one that literally is Nuliajuk swimming.
C: Yep!
F: So…So, why did you make these pieces?
C: She's been one of my favorite subjects since…probably…my second year of art school. We were asked to do a project um…based on, like, a literary theme. And she was the one that came to mind. Not because I had—not because she was part of the book, but because she was part of the story that you know we all grow up with in the Inuit community. And I remember imagining that I was her or that I was a creature and I could live under the sea, you know things like that. We always had, like, a long trip from town to our summer place by boat. So, you were—you know I spent my whole summer on the water. So…she's—there's always reminders of-of her and that story.
Malia: Nuliajuk?
C: Yeah!
F: [Laughs]
C: [Talks to daughter] [Laughs] She knows it's my favorite theme. She knows who she is. She recognizes her in artwork. [laughs]
F: [laughs]
C: But um…so she's also I think, what captured—what captures my imagination even as a child was the fact that she is a *god*. You know?
F: Yeah.
C: She's one of the most powerful, um, beings in Inuit…um, in the Inuit belief system and the fact that she was female, and I was a girl. It was…very empowering story that she was the one

that had the control. So, it's fitting that I would use her as the um…as the symbol of gaining power and control. You know, as Inuit and then women.
F: So, to you…her fig—the—her as a figure is this embodiment of…the power of women and control?
C: Exactly.
F: Alright.
C: I mean that's the mercury piece, it was that I was feeling so powerless at that time that…that's why I had this image of her you know being…
F: Being strangled by…by the chemicals.
C: Yeah, and by-by the system that…that whole project represents.
F: Yeah.
C: But the other one is just something beautiful, it's more like an image from my childhood. It's just an image of her being herself you know?
F: Yeah. So…
C: But it's changed over time and I've depicted her in different ways. I know, I think you were…were kinda—I'm wondering about that. How people represent her?
F: Yeah. That is one of the things I'm looking at and…you know, uh, how is she understood both from within the Inuit community and from the-the-the qallunaat, uh, vantage point as well.
C: Yeah. I don't…
… the very first time I depicted her was in art school and she was actually, um…it was a wood cut or a Lino print. I forget now. But it had her hair flowing and I had her as a half-seal. So, I did her as half-seal and half-human for years and years. Even when I was out here—for the first couple of years I was out here in Ottawa. Then I remember I was doing her more as a mermaid figure. And most recently with methyl mercury I had her as half-beluga. But I did that purposely because I wanted uh, the symbolism of white and I wanted to make that association with the beluga because I knew that people had such…um…strong feelings towards belugas. I wanted it to kinda play in the back of their minds just to feel compassion and outrage for what was happening to her in that piece.
F: Yeah. So, why do you depict Nuliajuk with a tail?
C: I don't know? [laughs]
F: [laughs]
C: I feel you. Like, I can't remember why I've always had her as half-fish or half-sea creature. I think it's because…there's this idea that no one ever sees her. So, she must have a really good way of camouflaging herself. And in my mind the most common creature that we see in Labrador or in our area is the seal. So…she would be described as half-seal.
F: Okay.
C: We don't actually have beluga that far…far south. I've only heard of one beluga thing in our area. That was a few years ago.
F: Oh…yeah. So, going off from that do-do you think that qallunaat mistake her for a mermaid?
C: Oh, yeah definitely. All the time. They used to have my artwork at different um, festivals and uh, events here in Ottawa. Like, for national aboriginal day or aboriginal awareness week for the government. And almost always people would say 'oh I love this mermaid piece. Can you tell me a story about the mermaid?' and I have to explain 'she's not a mermaid.'
F: [laughs]
Malia: But she is a mermaid!
C: But it's a good—a good jumping off point for letting people you know - learn about her more.

M: But mommy, she is! she is a mermaid.
C: Not really though. She's a goddess.
Malia: A God [that]'s a mermaid. God of mermaids. Can you hear me?
F: Yes, I can. [laughs]
Malia: Uh, oh.
F: Well, then since…[laughs] it's—I think this is a perfect transition for the next question. Which, I've been asking every artist to um, tell me the story of Nuliajuk that you know.
C: Oh god, must you? [laughs]
F: [laughs]
C: [Malia talks to Campbell]
C: Okay I'll try. Um…Nuliajuk was a beautiful young woman that didn't want to get married. And there were so many men that her mom and dad wanted to set her up with, but no one was ever good enough for her. Until one day, a beautiful young man came to their igloo. And he had beautiful long black hair. And she was, like, 'oh, man! that guy is really cute!' [laughs]
F: [laughs]
C: Say, I'll marry this one. So, she goes off with this man. And they go up into a—high up into a cave. And every day he would go off by himself and come back and bring her fish. And every day she's like, 'what's going on why is this guy only giving me fish?' so one day she decides to kinda follow him to see what's up. And she finds out that he isn't a man at all. He transforms into a…I think what we call it back home is a fishhawk. Yeah. So, he would dip down into the ocean and catch fish and bring them up to the cave for Nuliajuk. So, this got her very, very afraid and she wanted to go back to her parents. So, one day she decides to run away. I don't know how—none of them say now that I'm thinking about it how did her dad and her…did her brother came to get her and
Malia: It was her dad.
C: And her dad, and put her in the boat. So, they were—they were going in the boat back to her parent's place. And her husband finds her. And he transforms into a big giant bird and starts to flap his wings. And the wings make a huge, huge storm. And the waves are so big that the dad is afraid that the boat's gunna capsize. And he knows that it's all Nuliajuk's fault.
Malia: Wait, no! [inaudible].
C: Yeah. [laughs] can you hear that?
Malia: You tell her. You tell her that. [inaudible]
C: Okay. [talks to daughter] [Sighs] Okay. One second.
F: [laughs] No problem.
C: [laughs] [talks to daughter]
C: Okay, so anyway. They were getting afraid. So, they try to throw her overboard, but…she hangs on to the sides of the boat. And the dad's very afraid so he takes the oars, and he chops off her fingers. And she slides into the ocean. And her fingers become all of the creatures of the sea. And she sinks to the bottom of the ocean. So, now…her hair gets all tangled and the animals are trapped in her hair. But the…shamans have to appease her by going down to the bottom of the ocean and combing her hair. Make her happy. So, that she will release the animals to the hunters. There.
F: [laughs]
Malia: Good story, huh?
F: Yeah, it is a good story. [laughs]
C: [laughs]

Malia: It's a scary story.
C: [laughs]
F: So, do you think uh…do you think qallunaat understand the meanings behind her story and the importance of her story when they look at your art?
C: Probably not. Um…I think…I make it for myself in some ways, but I also make it as a conversation piece, a way to…to…to start conversations between you know myself and a buyer or it could be between Inuit and non-Inuit when they're looking at the piece. I understand that they're not going to get it right away but…hopefully they will. I give them something to go on.
Malia: Hello.
C: [laughs]
F: Hello. [laughs]
Malia: My name is Malia.
F: Hello, I'm Kathryn.
Malia: hello Kathryn. I know a baby that's named Kathryn.
C: [Heather talks to Maria]
Malia: Bye-bye!
F: Bye.
Malia: See you later!
F: [Laughs]
C: [laughs]
F: Definitely one of the more fun interviews. [laughs]
C: [laughs]
F: So…moving on to um…a slightly different topic. This…I'm also looking at artistic survivance and how…um, the figure of Nuliajuk, her symbolism, her-her story kinda helps in creating that. So, this is gunna be—these last few questions are gunna be very open ended. And that's fine. So, you can—you can answer with as much or as little detail as you want.
C: You're a bit muffled so I missed the first part of that. What? [inaudible]
F: Sorry, uh, I was saying that uh, the-the last part of,, uh, my-my thesis is looking at, um, how the figure of Nuliajuk works to promote artistic survivance uh…
C: Artistic survivance?
F: Maybe that wasn't…uh…uh…kinda as a symbol of survivance through-through art, uh, for identity?
C: For what? sorry?
F: Sorry. I'm trying to make myself clear but sometimes I have trouble with words. Like…
C: No, no. It's your phone cause it's, um—it's um, yeah—it's, um, smushing things togeth—I don't know. It's not working properly. Not clear.
F: I'm looking at the figure of Nuliajuk as a symbol of survivance.
C: Okay.
F: Yeah. Um…and how that integrates with you know what kind of work is created and how it's presented.
C: Uh, survivance as in survival?
F: Survival um, resistance, uhm…uh…and in-in some cases as a symbol of identity. As uh, as an Inuk.
C: Okay.
F: So. Do you understand…
C: [indistinct words]

C: Sorry. I cut you off.
F: Do you understand the question? What I'm asking now?
C: Yeah. I just missed that sentence when you went all muffle-y again.
F: Uh…um…ah…how-how she—her symbolism and her-her-her presence in art as um…a kinda of a way of serviv—survivance, survival resistance and identity as an Inuk.
C: Okay. Yeah. I think it's important especially for Inuit women. Because um…the fact that she is that symbol of strength and power and um…we really need that right now in this day and age. Uh, it makes you wonder though in terms of men? if they have that—the same symbol as we do, you know. You know? Cause it seems that women are doing so much better in terms of adjusting to this…new reality that we have. And maybe men aren't doing as well in a lot of ways. You really got me thinking about that. [laughs]
F: Well, can you expand what you mean by this new reality?
C: Um…that we're living in this…you know, consumerism and…uh…once upon a time men had a role of providing for the family with hunting and fishing and trapping. But all of that changed when we had to move into communities and were expected to have office jobs now. But I think women—our communication abilities make it more easy to adapt to, um, office work and managerial positions and things like that. So, it wasn't such a huge transition for women as it was for men.
F: Do you think that…Nuliajuk functions through that transition? That she still maintains her prominence even though there is this new reality?
C: I think so. Because we have that role model. You have a role model of strength and…um…yeah. I can't think of any for men except Kiviuq, but I don't remember hearing that story. That's probably because Nuliajuk's story is so much easier to tell because you can do it in such a short version of it.
F: Yeah.
C: Uh. Yeah. Interesting to think about it like that…
F: Alright.
C: I'm thinking, wasn't answering.
F: No, it's completely fine. It's a very—this is a semi-structured interview so it…it…conversation is meant to come up. You're allowed to think of things and if you think of something else you want me to know you can just email me later. It's completely fine.
C: Yeah, no. It's a huge one. I would have to, like, think on that for a while I think. I hope that gives you something to go on.
F: It does give me something to go on. That's a very good point that I should look into.
C: [laughs] Give you another thesis?
F: [laughs] Uh…so…
C: Have you found out that my old school has got an MFA program for the first time. 2019 is gunna be their first year.
F: Yay!
C: I'm like, I'm very tempted now.
F: My Mom is doing her-her, uh, master's in nursing after 35 years, so, I mean, anybody can do it.
C: Wow! That's pretty good.
F: Yeah.
C: [laughs]
F: Alright. I have one last question.

C: Sure.
F: And it's a very open-ended question so…what do you want qallunaat to learn from your art?
C: Ooh. I want them to know that we are living in contemporary times and that we're intelligent and aware and…that…I don't know. It seems like for so long there's been a certain amount of victimhood or victimization and…some quietly, you know being—having a fatalistic attitude about things I think. But I feel like that's changing now. Maybe it's just me because I'm in my forties now but [laughs] I'm starting to get this attitude of wanting to fight back on some level.
F: I think that's a…a good urge to have no matter your age.
C: [laughs] Yeah. Maybe it's this generation or maybe it's this time, but there's…reconciliation can be about fighting with us.
F: Yeah. Uh, do you have any questions or comments you want to have on the record or anything you want me to answer that wasn't clear?
C: Oh god, I don't know. Um…so when is your paper gunna be done?
F: Uh I will submit my paper for…for uh, for-for candidature, uh, in March. And then there's a two-month period for uh…oh what's it called? what's it—what would…oh, it's not grading it's…it's like grading but it's-it's uh…oh god, what's it called?
C: I know what you mean though. [laughs]
F: Yeah. Okay. [laughs] when it gets graded I guess in-in-in March, so I'll know by April if I passed or not.
C: Wow. Okay that's good. Will we get a chance to read it?
F: Yes, you will. Before I submit my final draft uh, all-all interview participants are allowed to, uh, you know look over the thesis and if they want something, you know corrected or stricken out they're allowed to. And, uh, within a week I'll have—as in…next week I'll have a transcript of this interview for you to look over and you can either add something or you can, you know, strike things out that you don't want on the record and…uh, yeah.
C: Okay. So, did you already have most everything written? Like, the academic portion of it and the interviews are sort of a way to illustrate the point that you had already thought about making? or how—how did you come about the interviews?
F: The interviews are going to make up a substantial portion of the text because it's about uh…giving the narrative back to the artists and seeing how, uh, this figure is interpreted within the community as it's juxtaposed with the qallunaat um…interpretation of her.
C: Oh, okay. So, can you tell me now if there—if any large discrepancies have popped up?
F: Uh…aside from a lot of confusing her for a mermaid not quite. Uhm, but I still have a fair bit of reading to do and there does seem to be a difference in…the kind of associations are given to her. How she's viewed as a figure versus as just a symbol.
C: Huh. Okay. Um, it's so funny that we're talking about this right now. Because at my work, at library and archives, I'm going through the file of the Canadian Eskimo Art Council.
F: Ah yes.
C: So, we have—they have a file there of a bunch of Nelson Graburn articles and papers and things like that.
F: Yeah?
C: And it—the one that he did about mythical creatures that he presented at um…a conference about Sasquatch. [laughs]
F: [laughs]
C: Like, really? wow. But it was—I think it did get published somewhere else in the end, eh? I can't remember what it was called. But he does talk about this idea of the different types of kinda

half-human half-animal or half-creature um…in Inuit culture. And there is this id—there is a specific type of creature that is half-woman and half-fish, that is not Nuliajuk. They're their own you know species of creature.
F: Yeah. I think that's come up. Uh… I think they're called Ta-talelayu? it starts with a T that much I'm sure of.
C: Yeah. I remember reading about them before. I don't remember hearing about them in our community, but…I was really intrigued by that. Maybe there are pieces that we've seen as Inuit artists and reinterpreting them ourselves as well. Especially those of us that don't have as…um…rich of culture or mythology as other…um…other regions. Because we've had— in Labrador we've had the Moravian missionaries that came over in the 1700s, so everything had to go underground or else you were gunna burn in hell, you know?
F: Yeah.
C: It makes you wonder how much is lost from…in that time period of occupation.
F: Yeah.
C: It's kinda fun. It's very serendipitous today.
F: Yeah [laughs] well,
C: Anyways, I'm up online so if you want to check it out, because I don't know how long it's gunna take.
Maria: Mommy, I want to talk to her.
C: I think this is the end. Is it?
F: Yeah.
C: Yeah, it's pretty much the end. What do you want to say?
Malia: Hi, my name is Malia.
F: Hi.
Malia: I'm watching YouTube, um…and I think Nuliajuk is a mermaid.
F: [laughs]
Malia: I think so.
F: That will be noted in the record.
C: [Laughs] It will be captured.
[distorted audio as Malia continues]
C: Yeah, I can't think of anything else right now.
F: Well, thank you so much for doing this. Thank you so much for your time and…everything you've told me. It's been very wonderful to hear.
C: Oh great. I can't wait to read it.
F: Have a good night.
C: You too.

Glenn Gear interview

October 11th, 2018 17:45 EST, in person

Kathryn Florence: So, just for…notation sake; you have read and understood the information and consent form?
Glenn Gear: Yes, I have.
F: Wonderful. [Laughs]. Thanks for doing this, Glenn.
G: Yeah.
F: So, can you start by telling me your name and where you're from?
G: Okay. So, my name is Glenn Gear. Um, I was born and raised in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. My dad is Inuk, my mom is a Newfoundlander. My dad is from the Nunatsiavut region in, uh, northern Labrador around the Hopedale—Hopedale area. So, yeah.
F: And then, how did you come to be in Montreal then?
G: Oh, let's see. I finished my, uh…my BFA in Corner Brook Newfoundland through Memorial University. I had an extra year to finish up electives. Um, and just decided to come here, uh, with my partner, Brad, and a good friend. Uh, basically to cat-sit. So, is cat-sitting for an art history professor and ended up—ended up staying here and then doing an extra year, uh, finishing year to get my BFA. And then, um, ended up doing my masters, uh, here Montreal.
F: Alright. Yeah. Cat sitting that's…
G: Cat sitting lead into all this.
F: I mean, sure why not?
G: It happens. I mean, um, this has happened to many-many of my friends were they…they sort of stopped by Montreal and love the city and then end up staying here for a while.
F: Yeah. So, what medium do you work in and why?
G: Uh…so, over the years I've worked in, I guess different kinds of media. My Master's was in installation. My, uh, bachelor's was actually in photography. And it went on to work in animation, which as I sort of see it; it's kind of combination. Especially stop-motion animation. It's a combination of sculpture and little sets and photography. So, it's able to apply those-those skills. Uh, and as a late I've been doing, um, more installation-based stuff and…yeah. But I-I don't have one particular medium, although I'll always love animation. Right now, doing, um, more beadwork and sort of smaller scale stuff. Um, but also, been doing some mural work as well. So, it kind of shrinks and expands, I think, my scale. But there's—like an underlying theme maybe through all the different media that I choose.
F: What's the theme?
G: So, the theme is, I think, about land. Uh, land and people. Land and history. Land and animals. And it's all harking back to…uh, coastal life, Newfoundland, Labrador. Uhm…it's very much about…uh…maybe a space between…uh…the present, the here and now, and, uh, say the past through like archives and photo archives, but also, dreaming other space. Opening up another space that's perhaps more playful or more dreamlike where other narratives can come into play. Is that too wordy? [Laughs].
F: No, it's not wordy at all. You're allowed to go into as much or as little detail as you want!
G: It meanders—but, I mean, I—the core of my work is…definitely Inuit culture from Nunatsiavut. It's about that sense of place and regionality but that connection to land. So, it's human bodies, human people who lived on the land. Inuit culture and also settler culture, and

how those two have kind of, uh, intertwined and mingled, set and rooted in primarily in Labrador but also in-in-in Newfoundland itself. Yeah.
F: So, then you got your BFA here and your MFA here.
G: I got my BFA in Newfoundland.
F: In Newfoundland?
G: Yeah. I love the way you say that! [Laughs].
F: BFA? [Laughs]. Newfoundland [Pronounced New-found-land]
G: No, Newfoundland [pronounced New-fun-land]. Mainlander! Mainlander!
F: Uh…yeah.
G: Um, yeah. Yeah. Think fun. Fun. Newfoundland. Yeah. You've run it together. Newfoundlanders always do this.
F: Well, I'm a *haole* (Hawi'ian term for mainlander). So, yeah; mainlander. [171]
G: Yeah, sorry. I just kind of…What was it? [Laughs]. Remember, I have ADHD so…
F: Yeah, yeah [Laughs]. So—So, you got your-your BFA.
G: Yes, I got my BFA in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. That's where I got it. And then, um, came here, uh, to do an extra year to finish off my electives and then ended up doing my Masters here.
F: So, what drew you to do your BFA? What drew you into learning how to, you know, do photographs and animation?
G: Um…I-I knew I—as a kid I was always like a crafty kid. I always loved making things and art was a real passion. It was always something I excelled at and, um, it just seemed like a logical progression. I had some wonderful teachers in high school that really encouraged me, um, and became mentors for me. Um, and also, helped me with just basic things like preparing me for art history. Uh, which is really unusual. I remember being the only…uh, kid in high school who…wanted to study art history. And because there's one-one person to enroll, um…my professor had to teach it not officially, but unofficially. I could—um, she mentored me through lunch hours. This was Sean O'Hagan and it was really wonderful to get that kind of preparation before I went…went and did my-my BFA. At that time, the BFA school had just-just opened in Corner Brook. I was with the guinea pig group that kinda went through. And that was really that was really fun. It was difficult too, but it was—it was mostly…
F: It's always difficult to be the first class to be…brought through anything.
G: Yeah. It was, uh—it was, yeah, a learning experience for everyone involved. In trial by fire. And, yeah, we ironed out a lot of that.
F: That's good.
G: Yeah.
F: So, then…what does making art mean to you?
G: Ah, big question!
F: Yeah.
G: Um…I think it's—uh…it means many different things on different levels. For me it's a really, um…visceral personal connection to making and to, um…um…having a-a-a kind of…a sense of pride in-in making something that's well-crafted and…um…Yeah, the sort of love of the making itself and I think that's a very-very personal kind of, um, connection to materials and to building and to making. I think it's also, about, for me, a large part it's-it's about storytelling and telling stories that are maybe…uh, maybe traditional stories that are retold through different lens or

[171] Thank you to the production and crew of Come From Away for teaching me how to pronounce this province through song.

understood, uh, in a different way. And I'm really thinking about archives here and, um, oral histories. Those stories that are easily, um…told by—by means other than say…fragments of images and, um, kind of, uh, dreams or, uh, nonlinear narratives. So, I'm really interested in, I guess, how these stories can, uh, transform and connect to people in communities. So, as I say, my work is very personal. Um. There's a real love of making and crafting. But I'm also, really interested in, uh, specific histories of Labrador, Newfoundland, um, of colonization, of, uh, how Inuit culture has-has really flourished and, uh, transformed in many different ways and become a—become its own thing within the Nunatsiavut region I guess, in northern Labrador. So, yeah it's of—it's personal and it's broader reaching out to community, but also, creating space, um, where different things can be held at the same time. So, I'm really thinking about…maybe about history and resilience and how that connects with personal stories that speak of something broader. God how verbose [Laughs].
F: [Laughs]. I think that's—
G: [Laughs]. It's personal and about community at the same time, right?
F: Yeah.
G: Those things are sort of inseparable in a way.
F: I think it was very well stated. I have those moments too. They usually only come out when I'm writing. When I talk, I tend to just say stupid things.
G: [Laughs]. Wait, do you have ADHD as well?
F: Yes.
G: Are you—which variant is it? Do you know? Or is it mixed?
F: I think it's mixed.
G: Well, I think I'm mixed too.
F: So, what would you say the main influences on your work are? Either in terms of other artists or other…
G: Other makers? I'm really interested in a lot right now. A lot of the craft…and the craft that have come out of the Nunatsiavut region. Thinking specifically of-of Heather's shows; SakKijâjuk, of course. Um, people like Nellie Winters who are—hold the culture and those traditional craft making techniques in such a…kind of wonderful way. Chesley Flowers; I love his…um…his carved, uh…I'm just thinking about his carved, uh…caribou and stuff. It's Chesley Flowers, yeah? I think it's Chesley?
F: I think so?
G: Yeah.
F: Yeah.
G: Okay, I'm terrible with names. But I really…like in terms of unique artists right now. Well there's Berry Ponnel, there's his brother…Derek Ponnel, I think? I think he said…uh, he does he's wonderful sculptures. There's Billy Gautier. I think he's—he's doing some really interesting things in terms of carving.
F: Yeah.
G: Yeah. There's So, many great artists like from that region. I mean, my cousin Samantha does wonderful photography. I always think of Sam as taking photographs of sled dogs and stuff which she's she spent time raising them before she had kids. She had her own team and stuff. I think about would those crafts people who take So, much pride in what they do and such a strong sense of materiality and a kind of knowledge that just comes from the materials that they-they touch, they feel, they-they use. And that's linked to sort of traditional crafts from the regions. That, I love that.

F: Would you say that there are certain crafts that influence your work?
G: Yeah. Right now, I—I've always loved…um…uh…but—thinking about, um, soap stone carvings and stuff.
F: Yeah.
G: Um, but I love sealskin work and I've been really admiring a lot of the sealskin inlay. So, the dark and the light. Kind of understanding how to sew things together. You can see where I'm going with this.
F: Yeah.
G: This is gonna be my next project.
F: Yeah.
G: So, really interested in that technique of sealskin inlay, dark and light. Um, definitely beadwork. And for myself that's-that's more coming through, maybe, a First Nations kind of background where… Or that's how I'm learning it. Yeah I see you looking at my rings.
F: I saw you make one of them…so, yeah.
G: So, it's been really fun. Um. Beadwork is more traditionally I guess in Nunatsiavut than decorative work on mitts and boots and, uh, usually women's collars and stuff?
F: Yeah, the chest pieces.
G: But I think that's shifting and changing too. And it's sort of seeing—it's sort of exciting seeing more men get involved in that because I think with a lot of First Nations there's some fantastic male leaders, you know? *Male beaders.* Men who are beading. And maybe in Inuit culture that same thing isn't there—the same parallel isn't there, but, you know, I think that's shifting and changing. It's kind of neat to see that. In terms of animation I'm really interested in—I love that with the work of the brothers Quay. They do some fantastic dark, very atmospheric short animations. I'm trying to think. I'm blanking now on some of the names, but, yeah. And Spenc Myer(?), he's done some really surrealistic, wonderful stuff. Hera Tuetrinka(?) I mean these are all sort of European masters, Russian masters of stop-motion animation in particular. Working at the NFB, I mean, for me it's been great working alongside people like Janet Perlman…uh…it's almost there…just…what's her name? oh my god, she's only won—like she's won like an Oscar.
F: Oh, that could be a lot of people! [Laughs].
G: Goddamn. Yeah, there's So, many people at the NFB that have inspired me. The name will come to me.
F: Yeah, and you can always—whenever it comes to you can always email me later like, 'This is the person'.
G: Oh, but the—having done a few projects at the NFB it's been really inspiring to sort of see what's—what happened. And then there are new people who are up-and-coming. Really exciting to see—just waiting for their careers to kind of explode. Like Nancy Saunders, right now I think she's gonna be gigantic. Also, Pasha Partridge, she's just starting right now. She's…she has a film that's screening at imagine native. Next week! which I help mentor her on. So, I can—I can see her kind of getting into animation. So, for me it's sort of…it's looking at—okay some-some of the past masters but also, contemporary craftspeople and also, people who are up and coming. Those are people who inspire me.
F: Yeah. You look like you have—you're trying to think of one more name.
G: Yeah I know. It's there It's there. I can see her face.
F: [Laughs]. What kind of subjects do you focus on in your work and why? What do these subjects mean to you?

G: So, I-I think I'm always interested in history. So, that's why I think right now I'm really focused on archives; photo archives from Labrador, photo archives of sort of early Labrador settler and Inuit life, and Inuit life. And sort of looking at how things like trade—fur trade and fisheries and whaling and living the coastal life—primarily, along the coastal Labrador, how that sort of—how that came about, what that looked like, what were the hardships, and what was the blending of these two very different cultures? Say a settler culture and an Indigenous culture. Because I think Labrador is a really hybrid place. It's a really interesting coastal life where life is harsh; everyone had to work together. And yeah, it's not to erase, you know, the kind of hardships and just real violence of colonialism and things like the residential school system and as such. But it's also, to…maybe, point towards this other space that happened that was about friendship, that was about a merging of different cultures or like a kind of back and forth. I mean those two things exist at the same time. And that—I think, that's why that region is really fascinating for me. Generally, I'm—I'm interested in stories of people and place, stories of people and animals. I love this idea that maybe there's…there's a spirit that—especially within Inuit culture, there's a spirit that can move from easily from person to animal to, say, plant or a tree or some-some other thing. That there's this guiding or connecting thing or spirit that…ultimately can shape-shift into those different forms, but still hold that, uh, similar energy. I love humans and animals and that kind of relationship. I think I'm fascinated by stories where humans and animals interact in different ways or humans and animals become these hybrid creatures. So, that's kind of an underlying *theme* of mine. Also, I really think about land and what land means, and land as a subject. Or land—land as a subject, in the sense that it has a personality. It has a breath. It has a heartbeat. Land is not really separate from-from us. It's funny because, I think, in—in the West and what I learned—you know, going through art school was So, much about land/scape/. About the scopic. About looking and viewing. And that really has—its, you know, roots within a lot of Western way—Western kind of viewing and kind of perspective drawing, and this way of understanding nature; and culture over nature. Those sorts of ways that really—part of that kind of European art history kind of tradition. But when I think about Labrador and I think about my connection to family my-my immediate ancestors; I never think about landscape, I think of land. And I think that's a big difference. I mean Labrador is called 'the big land'. And when you go there and…just visit the-the coastal communities and you're out on the land and…you just get a sense—you have a different sense of time, a different sense of space. It's governed by weather and the Sun and the stars and…it resets your clock. And—I really sense that when living in the city—and I love the city—but it drives me crazy.
F: [Laughs].
G: And then it takes me to two weeks, at least, for my clock to reset and get used to the silence. But then you get in-tune with—morning starts from really early, and So, you get up earlier. You want to be outdoors and there's a pull and a connection to be on the land. To…yeah, it's something really vital. So, yeah. Again, getting away from this idea of landscape is something—this Vista, this view that you-you're looking at, but land is something that's…intangible and you live it and it's a part of like your blood, your bone, your marrow. It's-it's in there. So, yeah that's something that I sort of think about a lot, I guess. What was the question? [Laughs].
F: [Laughs]. No, you answered the question fine. So, going back to the whole focusing on humans-and-animals-thing. Now we get to start talking about Sedna and Nuliajuk.
G: Oh.
F: Yes. So, I've been asking all of the artists to do this: can you tell me the story of Sedna?
G: Oh!

F: Or at least the one that you know.
G: Okay. So, there's So, many stories of Sedna.
F: Yes. So, tell me the one that you-you know. The first one you know or the one you-you most hold to.
G: Right, so—the one that…that I know—and this came about when I finished or was working on Hanmunahh(?) which—the film that's actually part of a larger Sedna story. So, the Sedna story that I know…I'm gonna see if I get this straight—because I've heard So, many different versions and they're all at the same time, So, they overlap a bit my head. But the one that I know—[Laughs].
F: [Laughs]. Raising my thumbs now. Which actually is a part of Sedna's story.
G: Yeah. That's unusual for guys to have that [tattoo on the fingers] but I figured maybe rings it's okay. I've asked a few.
F: Yeah?
G: And kind of checked in. Yeah we don't get those tattoos so…yet. I think that may-may shift and change. But we're not there yet. Thinking ahead. Yes. So, basically there was…there's a young-young girl who her father really wanted her to, uh, to be Wed to another like—a prominent person with-within…within the community. So, she had a—he had a number of suitors for-for her and she kept denying them. She kept saying, 'no I don't. I don't want to marry-marry this person I don't. You know, I'm just not I'm not interested.' and this made her father more, more angry. And…[Laughs]. see I'm gonna mess it up because every two different versions and forget about the bigger context.
F: Okay look what I know about—[Laughs]. What I know about mythology is that it is verisimilar, which means that no matter how you tell it it's always the true version. So, it doesn't matter
G: Okay. Okay. So…um…I'm-I'm just trying to think of this. The story that I know…that I—that I heard first. And it was just a chunk of it, right? it's where she's out in the boat with her father. Her father's really angry with her. Um, just the story Qallunaat…um…yeah it…it comes within that. So, it's before the boat. It's before she's out in the boat. It's when she returns. Right?
F: Yeah.
G: After she's…yeah she's had sex with her husky. That's when she's in the boat. That's where my story is. [Laughs].
F: [Laughs]. Do you want to back track So, we can include that?
G: Okay. Won't be long.
F: It's okay.
G: Okay. So, from the beginning. Because I want to get—I want to get the story straight too. Because I only know in chunks. And I've never actually pieced it together and spoken it out loud. So, it's blurry in my mind, but it makes sense
F: Yeah.
G: In a nonlinear fashion. And in a—I'm not an oral storyteller, I'm a visual one.
F: Yeah.
G: Very different for me.
F: It's easier to get your-your-your thoughts straight when you have a storyboard.
G: Yeah, exactly! and I'm okay with the nonlinear thinking and doing. That's—that's what I do. But I will try to be linear about this so…
F: [Laughs]. So, there are lots of suitors—

G: The story of Sedna. So, yeah. Young woman. Now, she's in this small community. Her- her father has sent her in—many different suitors. She's refused-refused to all of them. This enrages her father and she's banished from the community. She decides to take her one true friend and go off and live in the wilderness. Now she comes of age and realizes, oh, she does want to get married, in fact, So, she decides to marry, not these suitors that all of her father have sent her, but her one true friend, which is her husky. And over time…there was a union between husky and this young woman, who came of age. And out of this union came a baby. The baby was the father of the white race. The qallunaat. So, um, she decides to go back to her father and her community. Her father is enraged that not only has she married her dog—not married any of the suitors, but has given birth to this-this in between—this qallunaat—this totally—this other white race. Yeah? this other race which is white. So, he brings her a boat and he's…getting more and more angry. And he's rowing out into middle of the sea and…yeah, this is where the—see this is where I know two different divisions. One is he tries to throw her overboard. The other—the other version is she falls over and she tries to get back into the boat. In any case, she's either thrown or falls overboard by her father and she's trying desperately to get into the boat. And she's, uh…she brings her hands up and clings on to the side of the boat. And her father takes an axe and cuts off her fingers. Um, she falls back into the water. And her fingers, um…uh…basically fall down to the deep and become the sea mammals that could—the seals. The Walrus. Um. Uh. The whales. Uh, and then she falls to the bottom of the ocean and transforms into Sedna. Like she's this powerful deity who now is basically ruler of the deep and ruler of the animals within that realm. Um, and I can't help but think it's out of sheer defiance, of like some patriarchal order.
F: [Laughs].
G: I mean this is my personal interpretation, that she became her own person and became this—like a—one of the most important gods in Inuit mythology. A Sedna—um…I mean, she has to be appeased. Like her hair gets tangled. She-she becomes crazy. She can become like vengeful and mad. She can also, give So, much bounty, give So, much, um, to the people and she controls the animals. She decides are there gonna be seals this year, you know? Are—is there gonna be bounty? are people gonna be able to eat? So, that's a story that I know. But within that too, um, as a little side story; I was reading sort of accounts how shamans, when they would travel they would often—and speaking *"astrally travel"*
F: With the air quotes.
G: With air quotes.
F: With the air quotes.
G: Um, they would go visit Sedna if things are really bad and they would, I guess, travel to the bottom on to sea and comb her hair. If her hair got tangled, they would comb out her hair. And the shamans would do this, and this would appease her. This would make her feel cared for…um…and calm her down, basically. And so, yes, the shamans would…would occasionally visit her to keep things in check. I love that idea of the shaman combing Sedna's hair to kind of—I think it's a really beautiful image. It's something that may come…
F: May come…up in a future project?
G: [Laughs]. May come up. Yeah I think so. I think so.
F: So, what does the figure of Nuliajuk—what does—or Sedna—what does she mean to you?
G: Um. It's—I think there-there's a conscious and unconscious thing.
F: Yeah?
G: I think of Sedna, NuliaYuk.

F: Nuliajuk. That's the way Heather taught me to say it
Okay, Nuliajuk.
F: Yeah.
G: Yeah. Okay. I've heard it NuliaYuk. You can…yeah. I never know what the J's whether you pronounce them or not
F: I know three different syllabics so…I barely pronounce English right anymore.
G: Yeah [Laughs]. I know. I know.
F: [Laughs].
G: Nuliajuk is it? Nuliajuk.
F: I think so.
G: Yeah, okay.
F: Until I'm corrected.
G: Yeah. Yeah
F: Which I fully welcome.
G: Yeah I know. And I'm…I…
F: Let's stick with Sedna.
G: Yeah let's do.
F: Let's stick with Sedna. So, what does—what does this figure Sedna mean to you?
G: So, Sedna is…is this…is…this sorta powerful, powerful goddess who you respect and revere because she's linked to all the sea life, all the animals. And it's *SO*, important to in your culture. But there's also, for me this wonderful, um…um…what's-what's the word? she's a defiant character in the sense that originally she was this woman who-who….didn't-didn't want to fit into the norms of the day; we want to get married, and she was her own person. And she paid the price, but she also, got transformed. So, I always think about the story of Sedna as something bigger; a sort of a message for, um, young women who don't fit in and also, for-for men who don't quite fit those stereotypical norms. And this is totally my take.
F: And that's completely valid.
G: Um. There's…a wonderful sense of empowerment, and hope, and in standing up and creating a space that perhaps is other. So, I really think about myself as like a queer Inuk where the space is within-within traditional Inuit culture. Or cultures, because I don't think there's just one. Where's the space for me? how can I speak? I'm not a hunter. I know I would never be. I would—I would need to marry a hunter. [Laughs].
F: [Laughs].
G: I will be able to create beautiful clothing and-and wonderful…maybe charms and bracelets and rings? I don't know the magical powers for sure, um, but I think it's important…uh, yeah—that-that Sedna kind of represents this was protector. And she kind of can give a life and take it away very easily. And that's very much about the sea, it's about the ocean, it's about, um, that life. And I always had such a respect for…for the sea growing up because you could So, easily drown or get swept out. And I guess, growing up in Newfoundland there's a lot of folklore around the sea and coastal life in general. A lot of mythology a lot of superstition. You never tease the sea, you know? you never—you never tease the waves. It was like such a bad thing to do. [Laughs].
F: [Laughs].
G: So, um—so, there's a lot of respect that-that's there…um. And maybe some of that is fear, but it's more respect; like you-you just…the sea can give you So, much and So, the figure Sedna can give you So, much. You just have to remember where your food is coming from where that

bounty is coming from. How that's giving you your livelihood, like, through traditional, like, clothing. Um. Oh, it's feeding your-yourself, your family, your community. That sort of thing So, Sedna is kind of this powerful, powerful character that it's all those things. [Laughs]. It's a very personal interpretation but also, you know?
F: It's—yeah.
G: Yeah.
F: That's what the interviews are about to get different opinions and different—different stances on it. So…
G: I think too because like a lot of Inuit culture is very matriarchal in a sense that women—they really hold the culture. They have the majority of symbols in their craft work. In how food and meats prepared and stuff. They have a lot of that kind of implicit knowledge. They're the ones that carry those…carry those stories on through their craft and through—I really feel like in physical form especially. Somehow they-they manifest the culture…in So, many—So, many ways. Patterns, color, and materials that are used.
F: So, then one of the starting questions I had for my-my thesis was seeing all these images of Sedna with a tail. So, why do you think she has this fish or sometimes seal, sometimes beluga tail?
G: [Laughs]. It's true. She's kind of like the-the original mermaid. Except she's So, much powerful than what we think of as a siren or a mermaid. Maybe closer to siren, but she's even more powerful than a siren. Um, it's interesting I guess because—yeah—because in this story—I mean her torso, is never cut or I've never heard of her legs being cut off. It's always her fingers, right? they become…they become the sea animals, you know? the seals and, you know, narwhals, all those wonderful things. That's really interesting. I guess a lot of Inuit mythology too—-there's always like human-animal hybrids, um…or like giants that roam the tundra and stuff. So, again I think this is real connection to animals and reverence for-for the animals. So, maybe that carries over into Sedna having a tail. I can't help but think that maybe…maybe long, long ago before mermaids, maybe she didn't have a tail. Maybe it was…something else. Although, you know, her being a sea creature makes sorta sense. But yeah some of the depictions that I see contemporary depictions are very mermaid like.
F: Do you think the Qallunaat mistake her for a mermaid?
G: I think so. I think—definitely that's the closest thing. Qallunaat always do that. [Laughs].
F: [Laughs].
G: And I speak as someone who is Qallunaat and Inuk, cuz I come from both spaces. Yeah I think there's…um…the mermaid is kind of…it's an easy symbol that Qallunaat can, um, grab on to. It's…it's something very similar to-to what they-they're familiar with. But Sedna is So, not a mermaid.
F: So, do you think they understand the meanings of her story when they see her in these images?
G: No, I don't think they get it at all. I mean, maybe some of them do and I think that's changing. But I think a lot of them think 'oh wow she's this beautiful goddess, you know? kind of like mermaid. Kinda down there, protector of the animals'. And it's like no Sedna can just take care—
F: Just smite?
G: [Laughs]. Just—they were smote. She will take you out.
F: Oh, we are not gunna start the smite/smote debate. [Laughs].
G: Yeah. I mean, Sedna's—Sedna's scary. She's scary as hell. She's So, powerful. Um, but with that there's a lot of respect and love as well. But yeah someone to just be respected more than

anything. I think for a lot of Inuit. But you don't tease or play around with that image at all. It's way too powerful. So, just imagine, to get back to the Shamans who would "travel" in quotations—to go down to…to comb her hair to appease her. That's terrifying and I'm totally intrigued by it too. Plus, I love the idea of a man brushing a woman's hair.
F: Well she doesn't have fingers?
G: Yeah, I never thought about that.
F: I read it in a book.
G: Of course! She doesn't have fingers. No. No. That makes sense. It's part of the story. Of course, you need someone to comb her hair, brush it out. [Laughs]. Never even thought about it before you pointed it out Kathryn. That's too funny. [Laughs]. Aw. I would comb her hair, brush it out and… But it speaks to care, right? it speaks to almost a self-care or care of your—I mean, if you're if you're a man care of your partner. A care of women and, um, it's really important, um…that that-that message is there as well, embedded in the stories.
F: Okay. And then the last question I have is what do you want Qallunaat to learn from your art?
G: Oh! Oh my gosh!
F: Yeah. I always end with the biggest one. [Laughs].
G: Geez, such a doozy. For me, personally, because I'm—yeah—I come from-from a hybrid or mixed background of qallunaat and Inuk, I'm always read as white. And white meaning, you know, maybe with an Irish ancestry—which I do have or English ancestry—though people don't go beyond that. They never think of me as, um, Indigenous in any sort of way shape or form. And that's very much, you know, how race kinda operates. It's skin coloring…primarily. I mean, there are complications within but-but…
F: It's very complicated.
G: Yeah, yeah. But yeah. If anything for me, on a personal level—for me it's kind of exploring like my connection to Inuit culture, my connection to my dad and my family in Labrador, uh. And I guess it's to kind of articulate the value of all the craft and the making and the love of the land, the love of the people and the patterns the history, the aesthetics. How that culture is living is not something that's behind museum glass or fixed within…um, within the past. You need culture right now. It's something that's thriving, expanding and it's changing. It's really actively changing right now and it's…for myself, it's really exciting to be a part of that. So, with my art…I-I guess, it's to open up or articulate another space where…um…I guess where traditional craft and Inuit—Inuit craft and techniques can be reinterpreted and re-understood in contemporary ways. And there's a big…uh, there's a big movement right now with Inuit who are born in the south or born in the city. Urban Inuit. And how they are connecting; sometimes for the first time or reconnecting to their roots in a more traditional fashion. So, there's this…this space that's opening up where you have really exciting and contemporary ideas around art and art making, and even crafts and printmaking and digital work that has its roots in….maybe, traditional—more traditional ideas of Inuit culture that's opening up a space where there's a dialogue between the North and the South. Between the urban and…say the rural, or there's the urban and the wild. I think that's really fascinating and there are a lot of young urban Inuit who are opening up that space right now. So, I just finished a working on a documentary recently called The Fifth Region. And it—it traces the lives of these two young urban Inuit who are kind of connecting to their culture in different…in different ways and negotiating that-that space. And it's really exciting to-to see that. So—and the—our film is called <u>The Fifth Region</u>. I mean, the four main regions—Inuit regions and the North…um…you know, there's Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut, and Nunaat, and the fifth region being the urban Inuit. That urban population which is

growing. It's growing more. And it's really, really interesting time to see urban Inuit kind of articulate that space for themselves. And again, that comes with it comes with…urban knowledge and it's mixed with traditional Inuit knowledge and values. It's-it's neat to see. Plus, within that, there's…a more and more sort of queer spaces that are opening up. And I think for-for many indigiqueers, that's really important. I think right now, it's really important for Inuit in particular to articulate those queer spaces. And to kind of maybe reclaim a lot which has been lost through Christianity and through colonialism…um, but also, to create something…maybe new…that is, you know, comes out of queer politics, comes out of urban indigenous—kind of resilience and resistance and creates something that is kind of new and life-giving. Yeah kind of…yeah. Something…can't quite name it. [Laughs]. but-but something new-new and different and exciting. What the hell was the question again? [Laughs].
F: [Laughs]. What do you want Qallunaat to learn from your art?
G: Um. I want them to, um, to learn that being Inuit isn't one thing. It isn't…it isn't—something that…I want them to get away from preconceptions that they have of Inuit and of the north. Because I think that those have been really damaging. I want them to really consider…the multiple spaces, I guess, that we all hold whether it's your culture or sexual identity or tradition or religion—those different spaces that we can occupy or stand within at the same time. Even when those spaces seem contradictory. I want them to think of Inuit culture as something that's contemporary, something that's really vital, something that's shifting. That's really important, really important for me. So, again, getting away from this idea of Inuit as a link to, you know, igloos and vast kind of vast ice wasteland…and…and to think about Inuit culture as something that's much more diverse. Much more about dialog between north and south and about…yet contemporary aesthetics kind of urban culture as much—and technology in addition to-to…I guess traditional…traditional ways of living and knowing. I always think about, too, technology—just as an aside—techno—like Inuit technologies that get carried into, you know, popular culture. You know, urban culture and stuff like that. Things like the kayak, and, um, just the word 'igloo' and, you know, how that's sort of used. But these different…technologies that were kind of developed like around ice fishing and ice spears and…uh…uh…just like the kulluk, the seal-oil lamp. Stuff like that. All those technologies that were kind of invented. But also, how the North is always—for decades and decades has always been crisscrossed by technology; through satellite technology, through broadcast, through the—what was it—the-the dew line system which is a Cold War kind of thing. Radar systems. Skidoos. You know, all of that. All of those technologies that have always been in part—well, not always been a part of, no—but have been part of the North for decades and decades and how that's influenced…influenced culture. I think if anything the Inuit have always been very resilient but also, really adaptive to technologies that they have access to. I think is something a lot of Qallunaat don't realize; like it's all— that's always been a part of like—part of the way we think or the way we problem-solve. It's like, 'oh yeah sure I'll use that. That's new.' it's-it's like we'll combine that with like…like traditional forms of, you know, mending and sewing, putting things together. But, you know, sort of like an ad hoc or—things can get macgyvered and very interesting sort of ways.
F: I say as the resident MacGyver of this household; 'yeah'. but-but you're right about that. A lot of people, especially in, you know, high academia like promote this idea of, you know, societies and cultures being these static things instead of— okay well it's constantly—I don't want to say improving itself but it's constantly adapting to new challenges because that's how you survive.
G: Yeah, exactly.
F: No matter where you are.

G: Totally! And I think about like…uh…just think about like, uh, soap stone carving this stuff. Like how that came about and got popularized. And the carvings that they do for themselves and for one another; it's very different from the stuff that they'll sell to the south.
F: Yeah.
G: Or to qallunaat. You know, cuz they know what the market wants, and they know how to make money. But if you look at like even their early, early sort of little carvings; it's wonderful little carvings of like saws, you know, out of soapstone, or it's one of like a little television I've seen
F: I saw one of a tiny little musket.
G: Oh really? [Laughs]. That's wonderful. Yeah stuff like that. And then you have a contemporary stuff where you have like a computer and, you know, a keyboard. You know? it's all curved perfectly and it's hilarious, right? You know, So, it's not the seals and the-the bears and stuff. Yeah this stuff is beautiful and too but it's interesting what—what gets carved is…is usually stuff that's culturally significant in that moment, you know?
F: Yeah. Well, like I said that was the last question I had. Is there anything you want to ask me or anything else you want to have stated on the record?
G: Um…yeah! I'm just interested like how did you get…how did you get interested in the Inuit culture coming from your background?
F: Um, I've always been interested in art of the Americas from…uh, not-not looking at American schools of painting or schools of art but actually art made by Indigenous Americans; whether from South America or North America. So, I…I noticed in my hometown Museum, which would be the Eiteljorg. Um…
G: Sorry, what's your hometown?
F: Indianapolis.
G: Okay.
F: Yeah. So, at the Eiteljorg, they had—on the bottom level would be like the American West Wing, which is a lot of, you know, white painters that went out west to paint, you know, the-*the Wild West.*
G: Yeah
F: And then on the top it—the second level had all the works that were made by Indigenous persons. And I was always more interested in the work by Indigenous persons and in the sculptures that I-I would see there because there was more meaning, more context…more…more activity within the object itself and the people there than you would find down below.
G: Hmm.
F: So, when I…uh…started finishing up my undergraduate, when I was working with Mesoamerican art, I started looking around…uh, my own state. Which we don't have—we don't have recognized tribes.
G: I didn't know that
F: Indiana means 'land of the Indians'. We have no recognized tribes.
G: Wow I…yeah it's funny.
F: Yeah. So, I was looking…at…all this art we had in this one Museum and I wanted to learn more. And I was just kind of drawn into Inuit art just by…just by the sculpture. Something about them was just hypnotic and I just wanted to learn more.
G: Yeah. It's really interesting that you say it's hypnotic because it's…for me it's-it's totally the-the sculptures, the-the forms and lines; there's something about it that calls me. Um. I grew up

not knowing that I was Inuk. So, I grew up not knowing my dad was Inuk because he's very passable white and it's very typical of a lot of the Inuit from Labrador because of the generation.
F: Yeah.
G: You know, mixing with the Irish, the English, the Scottish and such. And, um…it wasn't until I was in my teens before, you know, I'm like, 'Dad, this is whole side of family I don't know.' like I knew all my mom's family and my grandparents on my mom's side and stuff and my cousins. But I knew just part—just part of my-my dad's side of the family; his half-sister and all their 13 children. Um, I didn't know I didn't know my grandparents on my-my dad's side. I remember I was, like, maybe 12-13 before I realized, 'Oh yeah people with two sets of grandparents.' Oh my god! I've normalized this! Where the hell are my other grandparents? and between many years to kind of…gently sort of ask and to find out; 'Oh my god, Dad's Inuk.' Like, this is freaking me out. I had no idea. But prior to that I had all these things; like I always loved Inuit culture. I loved soaps—and we always have a few little soap stone carvings in the house and stuff which is pretty typical in Flint. Like we always have—usually little seals that were made from seal skin or little owls and pictures and stuff. Little knickknacks. But I remember like even…One year I won stamp collectors like, first place or whatever—and the little book that I got was this first edition stamp collection of…of…Kenojuak.
F: Yeah.
G: Yeah. Of her work and I love these stamps. I was—I was 12 at this point. And I loved all the stories and stuff and I would just…I would read like Inuit stories cuz I found them So, *weird* and just…
F: [Laughs].
G: Like, I was frightened by them and—but was drawn to them. Same way with all the-the carvings and stuff. And I remember mining, chipping off pieces of soapstone with my cousins and stuff. Well, we never thought about it as part of, maybe, who we were. We just did it. It's not like we really talked about being Inuk at that point. It wasn't cool. This is back in the early eighties room late seventies, early eighties. And So, it wasn't that too much later that I…kind of realized, 'oh yeah. My dad's Inuk.' Um, he's, you know, from Hopedale stuff. I had to get there, you know? I had to meet family that he never had a chance to meet. He went through the residential school system and was, you know, very cut off from his…his mother for many years and she—his dad died when he was like three years old or something. So, he had this disconnect. His-his mom spoke fluent Inuktitut and Innu and English. But he-he only learned English right? and he was always of the land, of Labrador very much, even though he spent a majority of his life living in Newfoundland. His heart's in Labrador. And he's just a person—he's an outdoors person right? He loves hunting and fishing and that sort of thing. I didn't. [Laughs].
F: [Laughs].
G: I didn't. I loved—just loved being out in the woods. Loved the land. I just did different things on the land. I was more of a gatherer. So, yeah, I didn't really come into my indigeneity until much later in life. You know, as an adult basically. And it's very different from learning it in the beginning. I mean there were there were traces and hints of it there, but it was…it was opaque. It was invisible to me for a while. So, anyway that's a little bit more about my background and…So, I feel like a new Inuk kind of coming out. This is my second coming out. [Laughs].
F: [Laughs]. We'll see if I'll have one of those. [Laughs]. Maybe not for ano—No we're in the process of going through our own family archives. Uh, since my grandpa recently died, So, my mom took on the job of going through all our family documents and stuff.
G: Right.

F: And tracing our family line and…uh, one of those actually traces back to the Blackfoot Sioux.
G: Huh, cool.
F: So, yeah. We all have those little pushes that are just like 'huh, I wonder where this comes from?'
G: Yeah, yeah. Exactly. It's-it's funny when you start finding out stuff about your family-family history, and stuff that's-that was secret or stuff that—I know So, much now…about my dad's side of the family, So, much more than he knows. So, I'm almost like, 'Dad, this is your first cousin. You've never met them'.
F: [Laughs].
G: I'm younger, So, and so, they know about our family. The stuff I was—what was really amazing was about 12 years ago when I first went to Labrador. Really to kind of find family and I was doing artistic research as well, but it was more to just trace family lineage and family tree. And I knew—I knew I had people out there right? I just sort of had to find them. But I just have fragments bits and pieces. And, anyway, I arrived in Labrador was the first-first day I went to this…little shop called 'slippers and things' at Happy Valley Goose Bay. And they had like all this seal skin products. I saw this one pair of slippers left. I tried them on, and they fit perfectly. They're seal skin like…'mine, totally mine' and I see this beautiful soap stone sculpture this black bear but he was standing on— standing up with his arms. And I knew there was something-something that was So, beautiful about it. Anyways, I loved it. I got it. And I just talking to the woman there and I said "Do-do you know the artist who did this?" "Oh, Bill. Bill. Yeah. He's-he's actually here. Like, he's in town. Why don't I don't give you his number if you want?" Like, "Yeah. Let me write up my contact number and stuff. I would love to meet him." Anyway, I'm writing out my name, it's just like "I know who you are!" "Excuse me?" Like it's my first day in town. She's like "I know who you are! You're Tom's son." (My dad, right.) And I'm like, "What? Who are you?" "I'm his sister."
F: Oh my god!
G: So, this is my aunt. I had never met her before. It's just like "I knew you were coming. I knew you were. We-we knew that you were—you were coming. At some point we'd know when. You're this you're the spitting image of your dad. And you walk through the door and, you know, you were here." Um, it fre-freaks me out just thinking about it now. But, she knew who I was, because I grew up like not knowing who it looked like-like my mom's side of the family So, the first day I set foot in a Happy Valley Goose Bay, my aunt recognizes me. You know, it's like I come home in a weird kind of way. But I have made some sort of physical connection and it was a great place to be. The absolute right place to be yeah. And it's like someone looking at you and saying, "I know who you are." It's like this—it's like suddenly I'm visible, like all of me is visible. Not bits and pieces. But like—yeah it was it was so amazing. I really loved it.
F: [Laughs].
G: [Laughs].
F: Thank you So, much for doing this
G: Oh, you're welcome. I know I kinda babbled along
F: No, it's completely fine. I find that is how you get the better stories, because it lets people, like, take their time and think and work through the little—the little gears in your head
G: Yeah, cool. Well, thanks.