

Vancouver Art Gallery Launches Its Spring Season With *Shuvinai Ashoona: Mapping Worlds*, The Artist's First Museum Exhibition in Western Canada

*Also opening this spring, **lineages and land bases** explores the role of art in representing place highlighting a study on the connection between Emily Carr and Sophie Frank (Skwxwú7mesh)*

Members of the media are invited to a preview of ***Shuvinai Ashoona: Mapping Worlds*** and ***lineages and land bases*** on **Thursday, February 20, 2020, 9:00 AM** at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

RSVP directly to Irene Lo (ilo@vanartgallery.bc.ca)

January 22, 2020, Vancouver, BC – The Vancouver Art Gallery presents two noteworthy exhibitions as part of its 2020 spring season line-up. ***Shuvinai Ashoona: Mapping Worlds*** features pencil crayon and ink drawings produced by Shuvinai Ashoona, the celebrated Inuk artist, over the past two decades, on view from February 22 to May 24, 2020. This is Shuvinai Ashoona's first museum exhibition in Western Canada. ***lineages and land bases*** on view from February 22 to May 18, 2020 presents over 80 works including Sophie Frank's Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) basketry and Emily Carr's late landscape paintings alongside artworks from the Gallery's permanent collection made since the 1960s to the present in order to explore ideas of subjectivity and personhood in relation to the natural world.

Shuvinai Ashoona: Mapping Worlds
February 22 to May 24, 2020



Shuvinai Ashoona, *Composition (Attack of the Tentacle Monsters)*, 2015, coloured pencil and ink on paper, Collection of Paul and Mary Dailey Desmarais III

The exhibition brings together a selection of 36 works on paper produced by Shuvinai Ashoona over the past two decades. Celebrated for her highly personal and imaginative iconography that combines earthly and extraterrestrial realms, *Mapping Worlds* is a vital representation of this third-generation Inuk artist's work.

Ashoona's drawings in ink, graphite and coloured pencils demonstrate her wide-ranging interests in narratives that blur the boundaries between reality and fantasy, past and future. Influenced by her environment and fed by her fascination with horror films, comic books and television, Ashoona references traditional Inuit iconography from everyday life to the mythic; offering strange and fantastical visions that evoke altered states of mind.

Ashoona's work speaks to anxieties about the future related to resource extraction and our fears of the unknown, the monstrous and the "other," yet her artwork does not depict humans in opposition to the otherworldly. Her brightly coloured drawings teem with life, and while the Inuit community occasionally clashes with the artist's creatures, more often than not they co-exist harmoniously. Ashoona's work has become a vision for dialogue on the effects of climate change in the northern hemisphere, the role popular culture plays in Arctic communities and the ways in which Inuit art and artists are represented within Canada and abroad.

"Shuvinai Ashoona's fantastical drawings bridge the reality of life in the North with a boldly imaginative vision," stated Daina Augaitis, Interim Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery. "Ashoona is of a generation of artists who have helped to alter expectations of Inuit art. By breaking with forms of representation adopted by previous generations, her works respond to the complicated impact of a century of colonial influence in the Arctic and challenge stereotypes about life in the North."

Ashoona was born in Kinngait (Cape Dorset), Nunavut, in 1961 and has worked and lived on the southern tip of Baffin Island for most of her life. Although not formally trained as an artist, her drawings are part of a lineage of artistic practice beginning with her grandmother Pitseolak Ashoona (1908–1983) and continued by her first cousin Annie Pootoogook (1969–2016). She began drawing in 1996 and was first included in the Cape Dorset annual print collection in 1997. Since then, Ashoona has worked regularly at Kinngait Studios, which was incorporated in 1959 as the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative and is the longest-running art cooperative in the Canadian Arctic.

Shuvinai Ashoona: Mapping Worlds is organized and circulated by the Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto. The exhibition is curated by Nancy Campbell, PhD, with assistance from Justine Kohleal, Assistant Curator, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery. A catalogue will be published by the Power Plant Gallery (tentative release: May 2020).

Public Programs:

Lecture: Nancy Campbell on Shuvinai Ashoona

February 22 | 11 AM

Room 4East, In the Gallery

Free for Gallery Members or with admission. Registration is required.

Register today at vanartgallery.bc.ca/events.

Described Tour

March 28 | 10:45 AM

2nd Floor, In the Gallery

This program is designed for people of all ages who are blind and partially sighted. Capacity is limited. Registration is required.

To register, please contact the Group Bookings Coordinator at 604.662.4717 or at <mailto:groupbookings@vanartgallery.bc.ca> to register.

lineages and land bases
February 24 to May 18, 2020



Emily Carr, *Sophie Frank*, 1914, watercolour on paper, Private Collection

At its core, *lineages and land bases* presents a new perspective on the work and lives of Sophie Frank and Emily Carr, two women artists important to BC's history. The exhibition explores differing ideas of selfhood and its relation to the natural world, revealing how worldviews are informed by culture, history and experience. By urging us to think anew about identity and its ties to the non-human world, *lineages and land bases* offers a deeper understanding of Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) basketry through the work of Frank and her contemporaries, and its connections with Carr's late landscape paintings (after 1934). Carr's watercolour portrait, *Sophie Frank* (1914) will be displayed alongside Carr's writings and Frank's letters to Carr; a small selection of Carr's paintings and ceramics with First Nations content; a weaving by contemporary Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) artist Tracy Williams (Sesymiya); and an audio recording of Frank's great-grandnephew, Chief Bill Williams.

lineages and land bases extends its exploration of nature and culture through contemporary artists that sought new ways to represent their relation to the world around them. More than 80 works drawn from the Gallery's collection will feature works in diverse media from painting to installation. Artists include Kenojuak Ashevak, Carl Beam, Karin Bubaš, Edward Burtynsky, Robert Davidson, Patricia Deadman, Christos Dikeakos, Michael Drebert, Julie Duschenes, Lorraine Gilbert, Jochen Gerz, Brian Jungen, Zacharias Kunuk, Mike MacDonald, Landon Mackenzie, Liz Magor, Al McWilliams, Marian Penner Bancroft, Ed Pien, Bill Reid, Arnold Shives, Simon Tookoome, Jeff Wall, Jin-me Yoon and Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun.

Public Programs:

Curator's Tour: Tarah Hogue

March 3 | 7 PM

2nd Floor, In the Gallery

Free for Gallery Members or with admission.

Panel Discussion: Chief Bill Williams and Dr. Kristina Huneault with Tarah Hogue

March 14 | 3 PM

Room 4East, In the Gallery

Free for Gallery Members and local First Nations or with admission.

More information about this panel to come. Please visit <https://etickets.vanartgallery.bc.ca/events>

The Vancouver Art Gallery is grateful to its exhibition supporters and sponsors:

The exhibition and tour of *Shuvinaí Ashoona: Mapping Worlds* are supported by The TD Ready Commitment, Major Donors The Schreiber Sisters, Anonymous, Canada Council for the Arts and Ontario Arts Council

Shuvinaí Ashoona: Mapping Worlds is generously supported by: Gary R. Bell

lineages and land bases is organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Tarah Hogue, Senior Curatorial Fellow, Indigenous Art, with Sk̓wxwú7mesh advisors Chief Bill Williams and Tracy Williams.

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IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

MEDIA CONTACT

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About the Vancouver Art Gallery (vanartgallery.bc.ca)

Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of North America's most respected and innovative visual arts institutions. The Gallery's ground-breaking exhibitions, extensive public programs and emphasis on advancing scholarship all focus on historical and contemporary art from British Columbia and around the world. Special attention is given to the accomplishments of Indigenous artists, as well as to those of the Asia Pacific region—through the Institute of Asian Art founded in 2014. The Gallery's exhibitions also explore the impact of images in the larger sphere of visual culture, design and architecture.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is a not-for-profit organization supported by its members, individual donors, corporate funders, foundations, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is situated on traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səłilwətaʔł (Tsleil-waututh) peoples, and is respectful of the Indigenous stewards of the land it occupies, whose rich cultures are an inspiration to artistic life in Vancouver and to the work of the Gallery.

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