

Andrew Edlin GALLERY

Shuvinai Ashoona

Born 1961, Kinngait, Qikiqtaaluk

The Inuit artist Shuvinai Ashoona creates her work at the Kinngait Studios, a community-run art-making cooperative incorporated in 1959 as the artistic arm of the West Baffin Cooperative. The work of her fellow Studio members—her aunts Napachie Pootoogook, Mayoreak Ashoona, and Kenojuak Ashevak—has made a profound influence on her art. Ashoona's pen-and-pencil drawings fuse past and present into a divinatory future. The humans depicted in her drawings are joined by mermaids, human-animal hybrids, and fantastical sea creatures. Surreal details – a mother's nourishing breast transformed into the Earth, the mask-like faces of a hooded figure, the fluorescent orange tint of a giant octopus – signal spiritual, cosmological, or phantasmic forces in delicate coexistence with the everyday.

Ashoona first came to prominence in the late 1990s, when her work was included in the 1997 Cape Dorset Annual Print Collection. Recent solo presentations of her work include *Holding on to Universes* at Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow (2020), and *Mapping Worlds*, organized by the Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto (2019), which toured venues across Canada. Her work is in a number of public collections including the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Canadian Museum of History, Ottawa/Gatineau, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the National Museum of the American Indian, Washington DC. In 2018, Ashoona received the prestigious Gershon Iskowitz Prize.