

# FORT GANSEVOORT



## THE ART NEWSPAPER

### A new wave: spate of UK exhibitions signal growing recognition for Inuit and Sámi art

Shows in London, Southampton and St Ives are introducing a wider audience to the work of artists from the far north

By Alexander Morrison, February 7, 2024.



"Drawing like the elephant," 2023, Colored pencil and ink on paper. 41.5 x 50.25 in.  
© Shuvinai Ashoona, courtesy of Fort Gansevoort, New York.

Two years on from the last major milestone, the push for representation of art from the far north appears to have reached another. In 2022, the inaugural Sámi pavilion at the Venice

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Biennale brought to the fore three Sámi artists whose work sought to [“defend Sámi perspectives”](#), according to the curator. At the same event, the Inuk artist Shuvinai Ashoona received a [special mention](#)—her playful, fantastical interpretations of modern Arctic life capturing the imagination of the opening ceremony judges.

This month, a more focused, national moment of recognition for Indigenous creativity is taking place. Several exhibitions and events in the UK are bringing to the fore work by leading contemporary artists—Ashoona among them—along with a figure who paved the way for future generations. They make up part of a continued, promising international shift.

## **Inuit artists past and present**

Elsewhere, the work of two Inuit artists from different generations are receiving much-deserved attention from disparate institutions.

At the Perimeter in London—the non-profit, private space set up to house the collection of its founder Alex Petalas—Shuvinai Ashoona is having her latest stand-out moment with a solo show of recent drawings (until 26 April). The artist, who is part of an [artistic cooperative](#) in Kinngait, in the far east reaches of the Canadian Arctic, merges mythology, humour and pop culture references to create thoroughly unique depictions of ordinary life for Inuits in the region. (Another artist from the Kinngait Studios co-operative, Ningiukulu Teevee, has a [show](#) just opened at Canada House, running until 1 June.)

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Shuinai Ashoona's *Drawing like the elephant* (2023) embodies her playful style.  
Courtesy: Fort Gansevoort

Like Pieski's, her works address a range of issues affecting her community today, including climate change and the growing influence of Western culture and language, but highlights the nuance within these developments. Many of the drawings, for example, emphasise the leisurely joy that comes with the warmth of summer—and the collective nature of storytelling across cultures. The work of the wider co-operative over the decades is explored on the lower floors.