

GET TO KNOW THE ARTIST PITSEOLAK ASHOONA

0:01

Pitseolak Ashoona was a groundbreaking leader in modern Inuit art in Canada.

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She is celebrated for making drawings about life in Qikiqtaaluk (Baffin Island), and she produced over 8,000 original works in her lifetime.

This drawing shows women working together

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Pitseolak was born on the southeast coast of Tujakjuak (Nottingham Island) sometime between 1904 and 1908.

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In her early childhood, Pitseolak travelled great distances to camps along the southern coast of Qikiqtaaluk (Baffin Island).

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As an adult, Pitseolak and her husband Ashoona moved between camps up to ten times a year, following the seasons.

Here Pitseolak represents the camp at Igandalik

Pitseolak's husband Ashoona in 1929

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Pitseolak and her family eventually settled in Kinngait (Cape Dorset).

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In the 1950s and 1960s, there was a vibrant arts and crafts industry being established there.

Inuit artists in the print studio in 1961

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Inspired by this community, Pitseolak decided to try drawing.

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To create her works, Pitseolak worked with two of the main materials that were available to Kinngait artists: pencils and felt-tip pens.

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With these materials, she drew many subjects, including animals, people, food preparation, and travelling.

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Some of Pitseolak's drawings were made into prints, and these prints became popular with Canadians across the country.

This print uses five colours of ink to represent a bird

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Pitseolak's drawings communicate the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (Inuit principles of knowledge).

This drawing shows the importance of family and community.

2:02

Pitseolak enjoyed numerous successes during her career, including the publication of her book *Pictures Out of My Life* in 1971.

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In 1974 she became a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.

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"Does it take much planning to draw? Ahalona! It takes much thinking...." — Pitseolak Ashoona