



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Qaumajuq is the Winnipeg Art Gallery's striking Inuit art centre; Goota Asboona's Tuniiigusiia/ The Gift; Jerry Cans by Tarralik Duffy; Germaine Arnaktauyok's Mother Earth; A piece from the Inuit Sanaugangit: Art Across Time exhibition; Don't skip the gift shop; Where you can purchase a unique memento.



A day at the museum

Qaumajuq Winnipeg, Canada

THIS BRAND-NEW GALLERY 'BRINGS THE NORTH TO THE SOUTH' WITH THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY INUIT ART IN THE WORLD.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Opened in 2021, Qaumajuq (pronounced KOW-ma-yourk) projects from the Winnipeg Art Gallery (WAG) like a glittering granite iceberg; the interior is equally evocative of Canada's sparsely populated northern territories. Both galleries are flooded with natural light (hence the name, which means "it is bright, it is lit" in Inuktitut) and close to 14,000 pieces of contemporary Inuit art span everything from stone and whalebone carvings to geometric prints, icon-like textiles and mixed media installations (the inaugural exhibition even featured a spacesuit made of sealskin). As a result, there's no better place in the world to get an overview of the major themes running through contemporary Inuit art, as well as the sheer variety of artists and styles.

EXIT THROUGH THE GIFT SHOP

A BROAD RANGE OF CARVINGS, PRINTS AND WALL HANGINGS FROM EXHIBITING ARTISTS MAKES THE WAG GIFT SHOP ONE OF THE BEST PLACES TO BUY INUIT ART IN THE ENTIRE PROVINCE. BUT IF THERE'S NO ROOM FOR A WHALEBONE CARVING IN YOUR LUGGAGE, YOU CAN ALSO FIND HATS, SHIRTS AND HOODIES DECORATED WITH DETAILS DRAWN FROM WORKS IN THE COLLECTION.



On the street

The Inuit are just one of many Indigenous groups in modern Canada; head a few blocks north-west of Qaumajuq and you'll find traditional First Nations ingredients from around Winnipeg featured in modern Canadian dishes at Indigenous-owned Feast Cafe Bistro. Think pickerel sliders served on traditional bannock (flatbread) buns and steaming bowls of ramen, packed with braised bison and wild rice-flour noodles, all floating in a sweet-grass miso broth.



TOP FOUR...

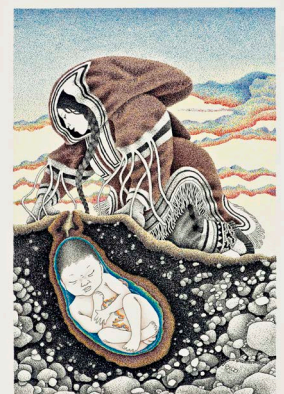
- 1 Take a minute before you step inside to admire the monumental sculptures out the front, including a bewitching green marble piece titled *Tuniiigusiia/ The Gift* that transforms as you walk around it, changing from a mystical mermaid figure to a tattooed mother teaching her daughter how to sing.
- 2 The Visible Vault is a soaring three-storey glass vault displaying almost 5000 stone and ceramic sculptures. Follow the sinuous curved walls and you'll notice images of everyday life in the Arctic interspersed with hunters stalking muscular polar bears, mysterious sea spirits and multi-headed shamans taking animal form.

- 3 Artist Kablusiak melds dry wit and nostalgia in *Surprise Bag*, a strikingly contemporary pop art lucky dip of stone lollies, colourful stickers and a temporary tattoo that reads 'kiss my ass backwards' in Inuktitut.
- 4 You could easily spend half an hour unpicking the details in Adam Alorut's mesmerising *Hunter and his Thoughts*. It depicts a black stone figure kneeling between the tusks of a giant walrus skull covered in carvings of hunters and their prey, mystical animal beings and a companion trapped inside a terrifying spirit.



On now

- The sprawling *Inuit Sanaugangit: Art Across Time* exhibition showcases the diversity of Inuit ancestor cultures with archaeological artefacts stretching back 2000 years.
- Tarralik Duffy's *Gasoline Rainbows* is a playful look at contemporary community life peppered with images both remembered (leather jerry cans) and imagined (whale blubber bubblegum).



WORDS ALEXIS BUXTON-COLLINS PHOTOGRAPHY SHERRI VAN WENT (GIFT SHOP); LINDSAY REID (QAUMAJUQ) ARTWORKS ANDREW PALONGAYOAK DRUMMER (GREY STATUE); COURTESY OF THE WINNIPEG ART GALLERY (TUNIIIGUSIIA/ THE GIFT); GERMAINE ARNAKTAUYOK MOTHER EARTH 2007, INK, COLOURED PENCIL ON PAPER, COLLECTION OF THE WINNIPEG ART GALLERY; TARRALIK DUFFY JERRY CANS 2023, SOFT SCULPTURE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; UNKNOWN ARTIST TWO WOMEN CARRYING MEAT IN TUB, 1892-1901, IVORY, BLACK COLOURING, RED COLOURING, YELLOW COLOURING, STRING, COLLECTION OF THE WINNIPEG ART GALLERY; THE COTTER COLLECTION; PHOTOGRAPH BY ERNEST MAYER