

Left: "Mallik (Jacky Orunnut) and Japati (Gouchard Uttak) see Boss's dogteam coming," from *One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk* (2019) by Isuma. Photo: Levi Uttak

COURTESY ISUMA DISTRIBUTION INTERNATIONAL LTD. (MONTREAL)

Right: Installation view of *Within/Infinite Ear* (2016) by Tarek Atoui, featuring Pauline Oliveros, Ione Sentralbadet and others, at the Bergen Assembly 2016. Photo: Thor Brødreskif

COURTESY BERGEN ASSEMBLY (BERGEN)



Isuma to Represent Canada at the 58th Venice Biennale

Isuma, the Inuit artist collective led by Zacharias Kunuk and Norman Cohn, is representing Canada at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, 2019.

Isuma, meaning “to think, or a state of thoughtfulness” in Inuktitut, is Canada’s first Inuit video-based production company. Co-founded in 1990 by Kunuk, Cohn, Paul Apak Angilirq (1954–98) and Pauloosie Qulitalik (1939–2012), it is committed to the preservation of Inuit culture and language and the presentation of Inuit stories to Inuit and non-Inuit audiences around the world.

“Since the mid-1990s, the Isuma collective has been challenging stereotypes about ways of life in the North and breaking boundaries in video art, [and it produced] the first video-based work to win a major film award at the prestigious Cannes film festival,” said Marc Mayer, the former director and CEO of the National Gallery of Canada. “Isuma’s participation in Venice also marks the first presentation of art by Inuit in the Canada Pavilion. I am convinced that the international art world will be inspired by the insights that Kunuk and Cohn’s collaborative work will elicit at the next Venice Biennale.”

Isuma’s groundbreaking feature films, documentaries and television series have been screened at numerous renowned festivals, including the Edinburgh International Film Festival, the Flanders International Film Festival Ghent, the Sundance Film Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival and the Cannes Film Festival, where it was awarded the *Caméra d’or* in 2001. Its work was featured at Documenta 11 and 14 (Kassel, Germany) and is represented in the programmes of major art institutions, including the National Gallery of Canada.

The Venice Biennale is among the most prestigious contemporary art events in the world, and the only international visual arts exhibition to which Canada sends official representation. Exhibitions for the Venice Biennale are commissioned by the National Gallery of Canada and produced in partnership with the Canada Council for the Arts. The 58th Venice Biennale will take place from May 11 to November 24, 2019.

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Bergen Assembly 2019

Intended as a critical approach to the biennial, the Bergen Assembly, itself a triennial, was inaugurated in 2013 and takes place in the city of Bergen, Norway. Hans D. Christ and Iris Dressler, the artistic directors of the upcoming assembly, have invited ten artists, curators, theorists and activists to join them in developing the assembly’s content and format. The members of this core group conceive the assembly’s programme, which features overlapping projects that include workshops, “parliaments,” film screenings, performances, discursive programmes and exhibitions.

Titled *Actually, the Dead Are Not Dead*, the Bergen Assembly 2019 will address the spectre – a “being-with” the “not presently living.” This attention to the dead constitutes a rejection of necropolitics, which destroys the material basis of life for large portions of the population, quietly sanctions the physical and social deaths of workers, refugees and the poor, and risks the survival of the planet. Phantoms or spectres, the “not presently living,” are important allies in the process of emancipation and in the struggle for justice, which is always a justice-to-come, based on the recognition of and responsibility to the past (no longer) and the future (not yet).

Necropolitics lies behind the many lives that “do not count” and the deaths that are not mourned, those whom Judith Butler calls the “ungrievable” and Achille Mbembe the “living dead.” Mourning in Western culture has the function of ensuring that the dead do not return. In contrast, *Actually, the Dead Are Not Dead* calls for a form of mourning that evokes the return of these dead, for the sake of life.

Three related and overlapping themes will inform this year’s assembly, which is understood as the relationship between art and political action: the inversion and parodying of the order of political institutions (“Assembly of Idiots”); the exploration of art’s potential for resistance and emancipation (“Doing Assembly”); and “hauntology” – the integration of those who can no longer or not yet be found within the living political present (“Assembly of Phantoms”).

The Bergen Assembly will take place from September 9 to November 10, 2019. For more information, please contact:

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