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Piqutiapiit

Niap

McCord  
MUSEUM  
100 Years Young

## Press Release

# ***Piqutiapiit*, an exhibition by artist Niap at the McCord Museum**

## **Finesse, refinement and femininity: A tribute to the creative work of Inuit women**

**Montreal, March 22, 2022** – As part of its Artist-in-Residence program, the McCord Museum presents *Piqutiapiit*, an exhibition by Montreal-based artist Niap, opening March 25. Born in Kuujjuaq, Niap has created a piece to celebrate the expertise of Inuit women. The exhibition is among the events commemorating the McCord Museum’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary until September 2022.

Although one might imagine that the traditional Inuit lifestyle in the Far North consisted solely of surviving a harsh, forbidding environment, the Inuit created refined objects and clothing that illustrate a great aesthetic sense. Using only simple tools like scrapers, needles, thimbles and *ulus*—indispensable, all-purpose “women’s knives”—women would construct highly practical yet exquisitely beautiful objects.

Niap is struck by the ingenuity and creativity of her ancestors: how, with so few tools and materials, did these women manage to carefully decorate the long-lasting objects and clothing they made, while carrying out the many tasks required of them as keepers of the family group’s well-being?

For the exhibition, Niap created a new piece inspired by *savviqutik*, the beaded decorations on the front of women’s clothing. However, this creation more specifically references and enters into a dialogue with the impressive *amauti* from the Museum’s collection that is part of the exhibition. Just as her ancestors recycled and reused materials, sometimes designating them for other uses, Niap has unearthed objects and materials from various places, giving them a new function and new aesthetic.

With *Piqutiapiit*, which means “precious belongings” in Inuktitut, the artist reveals the finesse, refinement and femininity of the traditional objects she selected from the McCord Museum’s [Indigenous Cultures Collection](#) to be part of the exhibition. She thus celebrates both the expertise and the artistic talent of Inuit women.

“As I viewed the objects in the collection, I was really struck by the energy that women had put into decorating everyday tools like combs and fish hooks. When you consider that these communities operated on a survival basis, it is truly remarkable that so much time was devoted to enhancing the aesthetic qualities of objects.

“The piece I created for the exhibition is without a doubt the most challenging project I have ever done as an artist, to date. Beadwork demands considerable physical and mental strength because one must constantly repeat the same moves while sitting still for hours.

This research and creation process has heightened my respect for the work of Indigenous women and strengthened my love and admiration for my culture,” explained Niap.

“In partnership with the Conseil des arts de Montréal, we are pleased to present this exhibition highlighting the ingenuity and artistic refinement of Indigenous women. *Piqutiapiit* bears witness to our desire to offer artists from Indigenous communities a space to express themselves, thus helping raise their voices and promoting their culture.

We are very excited to give the public an opportunity to engage with the research and creation of Niap, a multi-talented emerging artist,” remarked Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer.

The *Piqutiapiit* exhibition is presented in collaboration with the Conseil des arts de Montréal:

“The Conseil des arts de Montréal warmly congratulates multidisciplinary artist Niap on her exhibition *Piqutiapiit* (“precious belongings”), which is part of the very first edition of our Indigenous Artist-in-Residence program in partnership with the McCord Museum. Through the original creation of this Kuujuuaq artist, we discover the variety of forms found in Inuit art while taking a fresh look at the Museum’s existing collections,” stated Nathalie Maillé, Executive Director of the Conseil des arts de Montréal.



## Artist biography

Currently based in Montreal, Niap (b. 1986) is a multidisciplinary artist from Kuujjuaq, Nunavik, whose practice includes drawing, painting and sculpture. Taking an approach that fuses traditional Inuit art with modernism, she uses artistic strategies specific to contemporary art to address themes related to her ancestral heritage. Her goal is to ensure the continuity of Inuit art as well as its renewal.



© Marilyn Aitken – McCord Museum



© Roger Aziz – McCord Museum

## Exhibition-related activities

### **Let's talk!**

**Sunday, March 27, 1 to 2 pm** at the Museum



Intergenerational discussion panel providing multiple perspectives on the concept of femininity, with artist Niap.

Free activity, in French.

### **Lecture: Inuit Women Artists**

**Thursday, April 7, 6 to 7 pm** at the Museum

In conjunction with the exhibition Piqutiapiit, the Museum invites the public to an intimate panel discussion with Niap (multidisciplinary artist), Julie Grenier (a beader and director general of Taqramiut Nipingat Inc.) and Heather Igloliorte (an independent curator and art historian from Nunatsiavut and Associate Professor of Indigenous art history at Concordia University).

Together, they will discuss the ingenuity and creativity behind the artistic practices of contemporary Inuit women. The presentation will explore the central role of women in Inuit artistic creation, from making clothing and traditional ornaments to contemporary works of art and complex beaded jewellery.

Free activity. The talk will be given in English, followed by a question and answer session with the public in French and English.

### **Workshop: Introduction to beading with artist Niap**

**Saturday, June 11, 12:30 to 1:30 pm (families)  
and 3 to 5 pm (adults)** at the Museum

During this workshop designed for both novice and experienced beaders, Inuk artist Niap will introduce participants to Inuit beading techniques and explain how to work with the tools used to create traditional beadwork. An opportunity to learn more about this Indigenous art form and experience a shared moment of connection.

Space is limited, reservations required.



Amauti ornament, Inuit, Nunavimut?, 1900-1930. Gift of Air Canada, M999.105.4 © McCord Museum



© Niap

## Museum hours and fees

Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10 am to 6 pm | Wednesdays, 10 am to 9 pm  
Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 5 pm

Adults: \$19 | Seniors: \$17 | Students (ages 18-30): \$14 | 17 and under: free  
Indigenous people: free

Wednesday evenings: free (*Piquitiapiit* and permanent exhibition) or  
\$9.50 (*JJ Levine: Queer Photographs* and *Parachute: Subversive Fashion of the '80s*)

First Sunday of the month: free for Quebec residents

To ensure an optimal visitor experience for all, you must reserve online tickets for Museum visits and activities, both free and paid. Visit the Admission Desk page on the Museum's [Website](#).

*The McCord Museum sincerely thanks BMO Financial Group for free admission on Wednesday evenings, the Fondation J. A. DeSève for free admission for children 12 and under and the Rossy Foundation for free admission for teens ages 13 to 17 for 2022.*

## Covid-19: measures for a safe visit

The Museum observes the health measures recommended by the Quebec government. To find out what measures are in effect at the time of your visit, visit the [Museum Website](#).

## Artist-in-residence program

Launched in 2012, in partnership with the [Conseil des arts de Montréal](#), this program invites artists to take a critical and conceptual look at the McCord Museum's collection, reflecting on the connections between their artistic practice and the artefacts and stories they uncover during their research. At the end of each residency, the artist presents a solo exhibition of works created for the occasion. As part of this research-oriented creative activity, artists are encouraged to communicate their own interpretation of the collection and propose new ways of interpreting history in its many forms.

## About the McCord Museum

The McCord Museum celebrates life in Montreal, its people and communities, past and present. Reaching beyond the city to the wider world, the Museum creates and presents engaging exhibitions, educational programming and cultural activities with a critical and inclusive take on social history. Its collections of Archives, Documentary Art, Dress, Fashion and Textiles, Indigenous Cultures, Material Culture and Photography comprise 200,000 objects and works of art, 2.15 million photographs, 3,500 rare books and 340 linear metres of textual archives. Founded on October 13, 1921, the Museum is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with special programming until fall 2022. McCord Museum: Our People, Our Stories.

## PRESS KIT AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Source: McCord Museum

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