

The exhibition proposes an outstanding collection of 40 sculptures, produced between 1997 and 2003, drawn mainly from the Raymond Brousseau Collection. In 2005, with financial assistance from Hydro-Québec, the major collector and Inuit art dealer from Québec City donated 2 635 works to the MNBAQ, making it one of the most remarkable collections in Canada, in which Manasie Akpaliapik’s sculptures figure prominently.

“Manasie Akpaliapik proposes striking works that meld the traditional and the contemporary. The themes and materiality of his work appeal to our emotions and our senses. A striking encounter with an outstanding artist awaits you.” Jean-Luc Murray, Director General of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec said.

Nature is central to Manasie Akpaliapik’s creation

*“Sometimes I am unable to verbalize what I feel inwardly,
 which I then express through my art.”*

- Manasie Akpaliapik



In perfect symbiosis with nature, the artist has for more than five decades sought in his ancestral environment the inspiration and the materials that spawn in his imaginative universe unique, astonishing, indeed very profound works. His sculptures are fascinating objects imbued with symbols of the mythology of the North and the multifaceted use of the elements selected. They tell the story of the Inuit and encourage reflection at a time when relations between humankind, nature, and the climate are of paramount concern.

Incredibly powerful sculptures

Manasie Akpaliapik. Inuit Universe. The Raymond Brousseau Collection broaches varied, captivating themes: Animals; Talilayuq, Goddess of the Sea; Stories and Legends; The Inuit and His Culture; The Sacred Owl; and Shamanism. Representations of wildlife, legends of the North, the supernatural world, the transmission of knowledge, and the Arctic environment embodied in three dimensions characterize by and large the works exhibited.

Among the masterpieces in the exhibition, mention should be made of *La Peur de perdre sa culture* (circa 2000), made of whale bone and caribou antler. It strikingly illustrates how, after World War II, federal authorities forced the Inuit to adopt the lifestyle of southern residents, thereby making them renounce nomadism for a settled mode of life. Their traditional way of life was systematically uprooted and Christianity was imposed on them. The shaman personified has been split in two by the devastating impacts on his community of this new way of life.



Another sculpture broaches a well-known theme of Inuit mythology, that of the legend of Talilayuq, or Sedna: *Talilayuq, Goddess of the Sea* (2000), made of whale bone, caribou antler, fieldstone, and alabaster. The work relates a story handed down through the generations that tells how the goddess, half woman, half fish, rules over all marine animals. When angry, Talilayuq traps the marine animals in her hair and only the shaman's intervention can calm her and free the imprisoned wildlife.

The works *Un Inuit songeant à l'univers* (2000), *Un jeune homme exposant fièrement le fait que ses connaissances proviennent des aînés et de ses ancêtres* (1997) and *Phoques* (circa 2000), clearly reveal the sculptor's skill. Visitors can appreciate his unique manner of combining different materials such as whale bone, caribou antler, ox horn, alabaster, or Brazil soapstone, and the virtuosity of this master sculptor.



An art that has changed over time

The peoples of the circumpolar regions have carved stone and ivory for thousands of years. Starting in the 16th century, contacts between the Inuit and explorers fostered trade. It was only in the first half of the 20th century, at a time when the nomadic northern populations adopted a settled mode of life and had to find a livelihood that the first cooperatives were established and artists began to produce prints and large-scale sculptures sent to the south. Manasie Akpaliapik's artistic career perfectly illustrates changes in Inuit art over time.

A fabulous journey to the land of the Inuit

The exhibition's staging evokes the northern territories, reproducing the horizon between the sky and the sea or between the sky and the land. The artist's sculptures are arranged in a circular space bathed in theatrical lighting, thus creating a unique atmosphere in which subtle modulation of the light echoes the solar cycle in the Arctic circle. The custom-made furnishings evoke the morphology of the Arctic landform.

Complementary explorations

Aside from discovering the artist's sculptures in an inspiring space, visitors are invited to examine Manasie Akpaliapik's creative process through two mediation spaces.

At the entrance to the exhibition room, a story accompanied by a series of photographs evokes the artist's annual trips to his native region in ᐃᐅᐱᐸᐸᐸᐸ, Ikpiarjuk (Arctic Bay), to collect whale bones washed up on the beach, aided by members of his family and his community of origin. The trips ranging over thousands of kilometres devoted to collecting his favourite material seem indissociable from the subsequent creative work in the artist's studio. Visitors will also discover the artist's profound, unflinching respect for the animals, from the collection of bones washed up on the beaches of Nunavut to the discovery of the subject that emerges from each fragment of material.

To conclude the exhibition, an alcove presents a selection of photographs focusing on the two geographic poles that characterize Manasie Akpaliapik's artistic practice: his studio, in southern Ontario, and his native region in the Arctic, to which he returns every year. In addition to these visual souvenirs, a whale vertebra loaned by the Group for Research and Education on Marine Mammals enables visitors to become familiar with this unusual material.

In the same area, visitors can also watch a continuous video in which Manasie Akpaliapik recounts his life trajectory and creative process.



Manasie Akpaliapik in a nutshell

Manasie Akpaliapik is a native of Baffin Island in Nunavut, more specifically the village of Ikpiarjuk (Arctic Bay), one of the northernmost Inuit sites in Canada's Far North. He was born in 1955 in a small community of seal hunters. From childhood, he devoted himself to sculpture by observing members of his family, including his grandparents and one of his aunts. In the early 1980s, he became a professional sculptor. The work of this outstanding observer of the oral tradition, moral values, wildlife, the supernatural world, and the Arctic environment revealed itself in Montréal and Toronto.

Carved in whale bones, caribou antlers, or walrus ivory, the works of this master stone carver can also be hewn in an exceptional manner out of Brazil soapstone, dolomite, or even marble. Manasie Akpaliapik's sculptures exert tremendous attractive power and are admired in the leading museum and private collections in Canada, but also in the United States, and Europe.



Raymond Brousseau and Manasie Akpaliapik, a unique bond

The MNBAQ has for several years enjoyed privileged relations with the great Québec City Inuit art collector and dealer Raymond Brousseau. His collection, one of the most prestigious in the world, is showcased in the *Ilippunga* room in the Pierre Lassonde Pavilion, where a number of the most outstanding works are displayed. They include *La Maternité* and *Hommage aux animaux*, two major sculptures by Manasie Akpaliapik that delight visitors.

Moreover, the ties that unite the collector and the artist go back 40 years and are imbued with deep-seated admiration, great respect, and genuine friendship. Raymond Brousseau does not hesitate to describe Manasie Akpaliapik as the foremost Inuit artist of all time. In 2005, when the time came to relinquish his collection, Mr. Brousseau kept 37 of Manasie Akpaliapik's sculptures, which visitors can admire at the exhibition. With the future acquisition of these outstanding works and through a generous



donation by the collector, the MNBAQ will become the depository of the biggest collection of works by Manasie Akpaliapik ever assembled.



Credits

Manasie Akpaliapik. Univers inuit. La collection Raymond Brousseau, an exhibition developed by the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.

Directorship

Annie GAUTHIER
Director of Collections and Exhibitions, MNBAQ

Management

Pascal NORMANDIN
Head of Exhibitions and Curatorial, MNBAQ

Yasmée FAUCHER
Head of Museography, MNBAQ

Catherine GAUMOND
Head of Collections, MNBAQ

Curatorship

Daniel DROUIN
Curator of Ancient Art and in charge of the Inuit Art Collection from 2005 to 2020, MNBAQ

Exhibition and Graphic Design

Marie-France GRONDIN
Designer, MNBAQ

Scenario and texts of gallery panels and labels

Manasie AKPALIPIK
Annie AKPALIPIK
Daniel DROUIN

Gallery Mediation

Delphine EGESBORG
Head of Family Mediation, MNBAQ

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Québec 

Manasie Akpaliapik. Inuit Universe. The Raymond Brousseau Collection
Gérard-Morisset Pavilion of the MNBAQ
From June 18, 2021 to February 12, 2023

INFORMATION:

418 643-2150 or 1 866 220-2150 / mnbaq.org

Page 1 – Photos from left to right and from top to bottom: Manasie Akpaliapik, *A Young Man Proudly Proclaiming That His Knowledge Comes from Elders and Ancestors*, 1997, alabaster, whalebone, caribou antler, white stone and black African wonderstone, 61.2 x 27 x 47.2 cm. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, promised gift of Raymond Brousseau (DPD.2016.29) © Manasie Akpaliapik. Photograph: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie // Manasie Akpaliapik, *Fear of Losing One's Culture*, about 2000, whalebone, caribou antler, white stone and black African wonderstone, 68 x 78 x 20 cm. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, promised gift of Raymond Brousseau (DPD.2016.07) © Manasie Akpaliapik. Photograph: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie // Manasie Akpaliapik, *Seals*, about 2000, Brazilian steatite and black African wonderstone, 30 x 20 x 24 cm. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, promised gift of Raymond Brousseau (DPD.2016.33) © Manasie Akpaliapik. Photograph: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie

Page 2 – Photo: Manasie Akpaliapik, *A Woman Storyteller*, 2003, whalebone, sinew, caribou antler, baleen, white stone and black African wonderstone, 65 x 37 x 61.2 cm. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, promised gift of Raymond Brousseau (DPD.2016.19) © Manasie Akpaliapik. Photograph: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie

Page 3 – Photos from top to bottom: Manasie Akpaliapik, *Talilayuq, Goddess of the Sea*, 2000, whalebone, caribou antler, fieldstone, alabaster, white stone and black African wonderstone, 72.7 x 89.9 x 53.5 cm. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, gift of Renée Bédard and Alain Chanlat (2017.423) © Manasie Akpaliapik. Photograph: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie // Manasie Akpaliapik, *An Inuit Thinking about the Universe*, 2000, whalebone, caribou antler, muskox horn, white stone and black African wonderstone, 62.4 x 40.5 x 34 cm. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, gift of Renée Bédard and Alain Chanlat (2017.424) © Manasie Akpaliapik. Photograph: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie

Page 4 – Photos from top to bottom: Manasie Akpaliapik in Nunavut. Photo: personal archives of the artist

Page 5 – Photos from top to bottom: Manasie Akpaliapik in his workshop. Photo: © Shelby Lisk // Manasie Akpaliapik, *The Sacred Owl*, about 2000, whalebone, white stone and black African wonderstone, 106 x 62 x 43.5 cm. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, promised gift of Raymond Brousseau (DPD.2016.31) © Manasie Akpaliapik. Photograph: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie

Page 6 – Photo: Manasie Akpaliapik, *Muskox*, about 2000, serpentinite, caribou antler, muskox horn and black African wonderstone, 22.5 x 48.5 x 15.3 cm. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, promised gift of Raymond Brousseau (DPD.2016.02) © Manasie Akpaliapik. Photograph: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie

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Until September 6, 2021

Monday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Wednesdays and Fridays until 9 p.m.

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Ages 18 to 30: 15 \$

Ages 13 to 17: 7 \$

Families (2 adults accompanied
up to 5 children aged 17 and
under): 54 \$

Group rate (15 people or more)
for hotels, tour operators and
companies: 22 \$

12 years and under: **free**

Membres: **free**

Wednesdays from, 5 p.m. to
9 p.m.: **half-price**

MNBAQ National Collections

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Seniors (65 and Over): 15 \$

Ages 18 to 30: 10 \$

Ages 13 to 17: 5 \$

Families (2 adults accompanied
up to 5 children aged 17 and
under): 36 \$

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for hotels, tour operators and
companies: 13 \$

12 years and under: **free**

Membres: **free**

Wednesdays from, 5 p.m. to
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