



In today's contentious global media environment, when millions of people have been driven from their homes worldwide, Isuma media art in the UN Year of Indigenous Languages looks at the forced relocation of families from an Inuit point of view. Our name Isuma means 'to think,' a state of thoughtfulness, intelligence or an idea. As this film illuminates Canada's relocation of Inuit in the 1950s and 60s, we seek to reclaim our history and imagine a different future.

## **DIRECTOR'S VISION – ZACHARIAS KUNUK**

Igloodik elder Noah Piugattuk was born in 1900 and passed away in 1996. His life story is that of Canada's Inuit in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – that of my parents' generation and my own. What happened to Inuit over the past century; and how did we get from where we were then to where we are today?

Piugattuk's life and mine crossed paths many times. I was born in 1957 in a sod house at Kapuivik in north Baffin Island. My family was part of Piugattuk's camp. I was at the time sleeping with my frozen Kamik boots under my pillow, learning to drive a dogteam and to be a hunter like my father. I never saw a white person until I was nine years old. In 1966, my parents dropped me off in the settlement of Igloodik. They were told if I didn't go to school they would lose their monthly government Family Allowance. So, I went to school to learn English, left behind by my parents who went back out on the land for a couple more years.

*One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk* was shot in the same Kapuivik camp where the story took place on a beautiful spring day in 1961. I would have been three years-old, riding around on my mother's back in her *amauti*. Piugattuk's hunters had stopped for tea while seal hunting when the region's government man showed up to tell Piugattuk he had to give up his nomadic life on the land and move into Igloodik. Pre-fab settlement housing had been built during the Cold War to centralize government control in the Arctic. The White Man was actually named Mr. Whyte; Inuit called him *Isumataq*, meaning Boss, although the exact translation would be 'he-thinks-for-us.'

Many years ago, Pauloosie Qulitalik, my family member and founding partner of Igloodik Isuma Productions, told me about how Boss came out on the land one day with a revolver on his belt and tea and sugar to share. His presence revealed to Piugattuk the irresistible power of governments who make world wars to get their way. At first, the visit seemed friendly; but it prompted momentous change. Piugattuk moved into the new settlement, and then I moved too. My parents finally came in. Now everyone has moved and no one lives on the land.

A few years ago we started brainstorming about making a film of that very day, wondering if we recreated it back then, watching Piugattuk pass through it, maybe we could see what really happened to us all, and use our video skills to show this to Inuit and the world.

While Piugattuk and other Inuit foresee the inevitable loss of Inuit independence in a Canadian future, they also believe in the enduring strength of Inuit values - of working together for a common purpose and adapting resourcefully to unexpected circumstances.

Our filmmaking invites all audiences to think for themselves, about what they see and understand. There's a story *inside* the film and there's the story *of* the film. The simple fact that Inuit today make a state-of-the-art digital film for both Inuit and world audiences to see demonstrates the resilient power of Inuit culture to adapt to our ever-changing world. In this sense, *One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk* offers truth and reconciliation as 21<sup>st</sup> century media art from the Inuit point of view. That's my director's vision.

## **ABOUT ISUMA**

In 1985, the Inuktitut-language video, *From Inuk Point of View*, broke the race-barrier at Canada Council for the Arts when Zacharias Kunuk became the first Inuit or Indigenous applicant ruled eligible to apply for a professional artist's grant. Kunuk was the video's director; Norman Cohn was cameraman; Paul Apak was editor; and elder Pauloosie Qulitalik told the story. By 1990, the four partners formed Igloodik Isuma Productions Inc. to produce independent video art from an Inuit point of view. Early Isuma videos featuring actors recreating Inuit life in the 1930s and 1940s were shown to Inuit at home and in museums and galleries around the world. Over the next ten years Isuma artists helped establish an Inuit media arts centre, NITV; a youth media and circus group, Artcirq; and a women's video collective, Arnait Video Productions.

In 2001, Isuma's first feature-length drama, *Atanarjuat The Fast Runner*, won the Camera d'or at the Cannes Film Festival and won the 2002 Genie for Best Picture. Also in 2002, both *Atanarjuat* and *Nunavut (Our Land)*, a 13-part TV series, were shown at Documenta 11 in Kassel, Germany. Isuma's second feature, *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, opened the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival, and its third feature, *Before Tomorrow* (2008), written and directed by Igloodik's Arnait Video Productions women's collective, won Best First Canadian Feature at TIFF and screened in World Cinema Competition at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival.

In 2008, Isuma launched IsumaTV, the world's first website for Indigenous media art, now showing over 6,000 films and videos in 84 languages. In 2012, Isuma produced Digital Indigenous Democracy, an internet network to inform and consult Inuit in low-bandwidth communities facing development of the Baffinland Iron Mine and other resource projects; and in 2014, produced *My Father's Land*, a non-fiction feature about what took place during this intervention. Recent projects include the feature drama, *Maliglutit (Searchers)* (2016), the TV series, *Hunting With My Ancestors*, and the world's first Haida-language feature film, *SGaawaay K'uuna (Edge of the Knife)* (2018). Most recently, Kunuk, Cohn and the 30-year Isuma media art project was named to represent Canada at the 58th Biennale di Venezia.

## CREW BIOGRAPHIES

### **DR. ZACHARIAS KUNUK OC, ONu – Writer / Producer / Director**

Born in 1957 in a sod house on Baffin Island, Zacharias Kunuk was a carver in 1981 when he sold three sculptures in Montreal to buy a home-video camera and 27” TV to bring back to Igloolik, Nunavut, a community which had voted twice to refuse access to outside television due to lack of Inuktitut programming. Kunuk co-founded Igloolik Isuma Productions Inc. in 1990 with Paul Apak Angilirq, Pauloosie Qulitalik and Norman Cohn. In addition to the 2001 feature *Atanarjuat The Fast Runner*, Kunuk has directed more than 30 documentaries and feature films including *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, *Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change*, *Maliglutit (Searchers)*, and the 7-part documentary series *Hunting With My Ancestors*. He was also executive producer on *Sgaaway K'uuna (Edge of The Knife)*, the world's first Haida-language feature film which premiered at TIFF last year. In 2019, Kunuk, Cohn, and the Isuma collective were chosen to represent Canada at the 58th Biennale di Venezia with *One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk* as its main video installation along with a new live documentary series called “Silakut: Live from the Floe Edge,” which can be viewed and streamed at [www.isuma.tv/live](http://www.isuma.tv/live). Zacharias Kunuk was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2015 and an Officer of the Order of Nunavut in 2019.

### **NORMAN COHN – Writer/ Director of Photography / Editor**

Norman Cohn's experimental video work began in 1970 in the U.S. In 1983, Cohn's exhibition of 16 videos, *Norman Cohn: Portraits*, opened at the Art Gallery of Ontario, the National Gallery of Canada, Vancouver Art Gallery, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and 49th Parallel Gallery in New York. In 1987, his experimental non-fiction feature *Quartet for Deafblind* was shown at Documenta 8. Cohn travelled to Igloolik in 1985 to meet Zacharias Kunuk and Paul Apak after seeing videos they had made while working for the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation. In 1990, Cohn moved to Igloolik, where, with Kunuk, Apak and Pauloosie Qulitalik, he co-founded Igloolik Isuma Productions, and helped develop Isuma's style of “re-lived” cultural drama by adapting the authenticity of video observation to the art of Inuit storytelling. Cohn was director of photography on *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, as well as co-directing *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* and *My Father's Land* with Zacharias Kunuk.

### **JONATHAN FRANTZ – Producer / Co-director of Photography / Co-editor**

Jonathan Franz is a film producer and director of photography working with the Isuma artists' collective. After completing a Master's degree in community planning at the University of British Columbia, Jonathan spent four years living in Igloolik, Nunavut, where he worked with director Zacharias Kunuk. As lead producer and director of photography with Kingulliit Productions, Jonathan has worked on four feature length documentaries, two documentary mini-series, and three feature films, including *Maliglutit (Searchers)* (2016), *Sgaawaay K'uuna (Edge of the Knife)* (2018) and *One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk* (2019). Most recently Jonathan was the lead producer of Isuma's exhibition at the 58<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale.

### **LUCY TULUGARJUK – First Assistant Director**

Lucy Tulugarjuk is an actor, creative performer, and the Executive Director of Nunavut Independent Television Network (NITV). Born in Churchill, MB, and raised in Igloolik and Sanirajak (Hall Beach), Nunavut, Lucy is well-known for her award-winning performances in feature films, including *Atanarjuat The Fast Runner*. In 2001, she was awarded the Best Actress Award from the American Indian Film Institute, San Francisco. She was the first assistant director on *One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk* (2019). She is the co-writer and director of the feature film, *Tia and Piujuq*, which premiered at the Carrousel Children's Film Festival and the Boston Kid's Film Festival in 2018. In addition to her work in film and television, Lucy is a skilled Inuktitut translator.

### **SUSAN AVINGAQ – Production Designer**

Susan Avingaq is a renowned seamstress and artist. Since 1991, she has been an active member of Arnait Video Productions. She was Art Director on Igloolik feature films such as *Before Tomorrow*, *Uvanga*, and *Maliglutit (Searchers)*. For her work on *Before Tomorrow* she was nominated for three Genie Awards as a screenwriter, composer, and art director. She also co-directed the award-winning documentary *SOL*. She has also published children's books and was one of the master storytellers and elder advisors to the Inuit play *Kiviuq Returns*, which premiered at the National Arts Centre in July 2017. Born on the land, Susan moved into the town of Igloolik in the mid-1970s. Her family still hunts and camps on the land part of the year. She continues to remain active locally and across Nunavut, teaching sewing traditions to younger Inuit women.

### **CAROL KUNNUK – Production Supervisor**

Carol Kunnuk is a filmmaker and has worked in independent television and film production since 1994 as a writer, camera operator, production supervisor, assistant director, actor and editor. Her personal work includes the 2010 documentary film *Queen of the Quest*. Her most recent credits include assistant-director for the documentary *SOL* (2014), editor on the documentary film *Angirattut (Coming Home)* (2015), production supervisor on *Maliglutit: Searchers* (2016), and script supervisor on *One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk* (2019).

## **CAST BIOGRAPHIES**

### **APAYATA KOTIERK – Noah Piugattuk**

Apayata Kotierk is an experienced actor who has played in many of Isuma's films, including *Atanarjuat The Fast Runner*, *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, and *Maliglutit (Searchers)*. Apayata is related to Noah Piugattuk's family. He grew up learning traditional Inuit skills, and is an experienced hunter and dog teamer.

### **KIM BODNIA – Isumataq (Boss)**

Kim Bodnia is an award-winning Danish actor, director and writer. He graduated from the Copenhagen Theatre school (1988-1991) before his breakout roles in *Nightwatch* (1994), and Nicolas Winding Refn's cult-classic *Pusher* (1996). Other notable films

include *Dragonfly* (2001), *In A Better World* (2010), and *Rosewater* (2014). To international audiences he is perhaps best known for his role as police detective Martin Rhode in the critically-acclaimed Scandinavian crime series *The Bridge*. In 2019 he was nominated for a British Academy Television Award for his role as Konstantin in the British spy thriller series *Killing Eve*. It is his second time working with Zacharias Kunuk, after playing the role of Danish explorer Peter Freuchen in *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*.

### **BENJAMIN KUNUK – Evaluarjuk (Ningiuq)**

Benjamin spent the majority of his youth in outpost camps outside the Hamlet of Igloolik. During these formative years he learned how to hunt, fish and live off the land as his forefathers have for thousands of years before him. He starred in the leading role of Kuanana in Zacharias Kunuk's 2016 feature *Maliglutit (Searchers)*. *One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk* is his second feature film. Ben is currently living in Igloolik with his young family.

### **MARK TAQQAUGAQ – Amaaq**

This is Mark second feature film, having played a small role in *Maliglutit (Searchers)*. He was born and raised in Igloolik, where he currently lives and works at the nursing station.

### **NEEVE UTTAK – Tatigat**

Neeve has been involved in Isuma projects for many years. She was a television host and producer of weekly programs on the local Igloolik television show *Nunatinni (At Our Place)*. Her first film role was in *Atanarjuat The Fast Runner* and in 2006 she had a major role as Orulu, the wife and matriarch of the shaman Avva's clan in *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*.

### **TESSA KUNUK – Nattuk**

Tessa was born and raised in Igloolik. She is a high school graduate and plans to continue her post-secondary studies. This is her first film role.

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