

ART WALK

OPENING HOURS

MONDAY - SUNDAY 13-17

THURSDAY 13-19

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NUUMMI EQQUMIITSULIANIK
SAQQUMMERSITSIVIK
NUUK KUNSTMUSEUM

DISCOVER NUUK AND GREENLAND THROUGH THE ART

How does it feel to be in a city? Numerous artists have worked with the city and the space in both smaller and larger scales. Nuuk is full of art works, street art and decorations.

Nuuk Art museum has created an art walk around the city of Nuuk. Discover the spaces and the art works in the city in a route between Nuuk Art Museum and the colonial harbor. You can find redfish, icebears, seals, Greenlandic legends and myths interpreted and let loose in the city of Nuuk. Maybe you will find a hidden path, your own way or follow the footsteps of others.

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1 THE MOTHER OF THE SEA – COLONIAL HARBOUR

// BY CHRISTIAN "NUUNU" ROSING (B. 1944)

The Mother of the Sea lives at the bottom of the sea. She rules over all the marine animals. If man is misbehaving, the mischievousness and dirt gets tangled into her hair and that way, she keeps the animals from man to hunt or fish. Then man must send a shaman on the long and dangerous journey down to the bottom of the sea to comb and clean the mother of the sea's hair and sooth her, in order to keep the settlement from starving.

Newly combed and clean, the Mother of the Sea has once again released the animals.

Sometimes the sculpture is on land, other times in water – depending on the tide.

IMANEQ

Standing by the sculpture Kaassassuk, you can look all the way up the hill to the Tele tower called Qullilersut. There's a pedestrian street called Imaneq, which goes all the way up to Qullilersut, from Katuaq following the façade shaped like the northern lights. You have to cross a parking space on your way up, intercepting the pedestrian street. In the old days, a lamp was hung at the top of this hill, so in the darkness of winter, you could still find your way around the city. The city was much smaller then. Qullilerfik means the place you hang a lamp. The first sculpture on your way up is Kaassassuk.

2) KAASSASSUK – IN FRONT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GREENLAND

// BY SIMON KRISTOFFERSEN (1933-90)

Kaassassuk is the name of a legend about an orphan boy called Kaassassuk. He is humiliated and bullied in his settlement until he meets the Lord of Power.

In this sculpture Simon Kristoffersen shows Kaassassuk's encounter with the Lord of Power. They look in separate directions. In the legend Kaassassuk is flung by the Lord of Power until he gets (almost) unconquerable powers.

The artist has made the Lord of Power heavy, monumental and forceful without a neck, with dilated nostrils, big round eyes with no pupils and with legs ending suddenly like an elephant.

After being flung by the Lord of Power, Kaassassuk is going out into the world, to learn how to use his powers.

The sculpture was made in 1973 in The Royal Danish Academy of Art, and was placed in front of the Rigshospitalet (a specialised hospital) in Copenhagen until 1987, at which point it was moved to Nuuk.

Every summer in June, the newly graduated students dance around the sculpture.

3) STONES – BETWEEN NUUK CENTER AND THE CULTURE HOUSE KATUAQ

// PETER "KUJOOQ" KRISTIANSEN

Across the café Pascucci, just between Katuaq and Nuuk Center, there is something emerging from the ground – round black polished stones appear in the grass.

Looking closer at the different stones lying around in the grass you will find a fish and other animals carved in the stones.

They are there, but are very easy to miss if you neglect to stop and look down.

4) "KAYAK FAMILY" – IN FRONT OF KATUAQ// BY ISLE HESSNER (B. 1962)

A group of three standing kayaks are found by the entrance to Katuaq. Sculptures you can sit in, meet around or play on – a meeting point or a place to rest.

Isle Hessner works with iron, tree and concrete in her sculptures. Materials often used to build buildings with. Here the iron and the concrete offer a windbreak – a shelter against snow and wind. At the same time the snow and wind works with the iron, giving it its brownish patina.

In winters, the concrete beneath the kayaks is covered with snow, and only the kayaks are visible.

5) WALL DECORATION – INSIDE KATUAQ

// BY BUUTI PEDERSEN (B. 1955)

It is said in a Greenlandic myth, that a man fell in love with his sister. When she found out, she took a bit of turf, dipped it in the train oil, set it on fire and ran away. The brother ran after his sister, but didn't manage to light his turf. The brother is still chasing his sister – running over the sky he has become the moon, eternally trying to get to his sister, the sun. Together, the sun and the moon control the tide and the seasons changing.

Above the information and ticket sale counter in the cultural centre Katuaq, this myth about the sun and the moon is cast in the concrete wall. The man as the moon is pursuing the sun, the woman, across the curved white wall with stars and outlines of landscapes as the scenery, but always with the same distance between them.

EXHIBITION // KATUAQ

Follow the wall decoration. The aisle in the back of the culture house is used for changing exhibitions. Each summer the students from the Nuuk Art School exhibits their art works. Another recurring exhibition is the Greenlandic Artist Association.

6) PAINTINGS – INSIDE KATUAQ

// BY AAGE GITZ-JOHANSEN (1897-1997)

Go upstairs in the café Cafétuaq. Here you get the best view to the paintings by Aage Gitz-Johansen. Gitz-Johansen was called Qalipaasorsuaq – the great painter.

He was from Denmark, but fell in love with the Greenlandic and Sapmi cultures. He travelled to Greenland several times, and even lived here in shorter periods. He used the inspiration from mythologies and Greenlandic culture in his art.

Gitz-Johansen plays with lines, with the figures and their relations on the ground or the canvas. The paintings are not telling anything specific about Greenland or Greenlandic culture; the painter is fascinated by the culture, by the human being especially the female figure, by the colours brown and blue – and he uses all this as motives to create a painting.

7) MARKS ON STONES – IN FRONT OF KATUAQ

// BY JEPPE GITZ-JOHANSEN (B. 1939)

Right in front of Cafétuaq, in the Cultural Centre Katuaq, four stones are lying.

Go over and around the stones to find the engraved marks in different colours. They appear from the stones like ancient petroglyphs or carvings, like the secrets of cave paintings or as a prayer for the sun. Someone has been here and left a mark.

This is not an official decoration. Jeppe Gitz-Johansen didn't ask permission. But here they are – as the part of Nuuk you have to look for. Art by Jeppe Gits-Johansen's father (Aage Gitz-Johansen) is exhibited inside the cultural house.

8) AMISUT – SCULPTURE BY THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

// BY NAJA-ROSING ASVID (B. 1966)

2009

Seeing a group of seals swimming at sea level is called “amisut” in Greenlandic.

The seals wind and unwind in the sculpture – swimming together.

It was made in connection with self-government replacing Home Rule in Greenland in 2009 where the entire square was inaugurated.

The artist behind, Naja Rosing-Asvid, has formal education within architecture.

Across from Amisut is the former Hotel Nuuk.

9) HOTEL NUUK VESTIBULE // BY ANNE-BIRTHE HOVE (1951-2012)

2000

Today Hotel Nuuk is a student hostel. Look through the windows into the entrance hall into the hotel lobby and bar. The white columns are decorated with copper. The bronze moves in waves around the top of the columns and have different patterns engraved.

If you walk around the corner, there is a larger window providing a better view of the columns.

Anne-Birthe Hove decorated the hotel lobby and bar in 2001. Three large copper plates called “Night Ravens” (Natteravne – which in Danish is an expression for those who like to stay up at night) and 14 prints on canvas of the mountain Sermitsiaq were on the walls. Today these pieces of art can be seen at Nuuk Art Museum. A huge sand blown glass plate, today lost, separated the room.

EXHIBITIONS IN GRØNLANDSBANKEN

Walking to the top of the hill you pass a white tower with a bird on the façade. It is the building of the Greenlandic bank Grønlandsbanken. In their vestibule – both downstairs and upstairs - they have changing exhibitions by contemporary Greenlandic artists. Take a look – most of the works of art are for sale.

10) A WALL, A STONE AND A PAINTING - POST & TELE, THE POST OFFICE

// BY JENS THORDAHL CHRISTENSEN (B. 1965)

2006

In the entrance hall of the post office there is a big red mail box placed in front of a dotted wall.

Dots which gathers and scatters. The wall is made of zinc and the dots painted with car paint. The dots are inspired by traditional women’s tattoos.

While the artist made the dots, he read the names from a Greenlandic phone book aloud. He originally wanted to make as many dots as people living in Greenland, but that was not possible.

The stone in the middle of the vestibule is from Nuuk and has been sand polished. It marks the centre and offers a break in a room many people walk through every day.

The third part of the decoration is inside the post office. A five metres long painting is hanging next to the desk, inspired by the ice cap and the vast lands in the Greenlandic nature.

11) “FISH ON ITS WAY I & II” - WALL PAINTINGS IN STAIRWAYS BENEATH THE TELE TOWER

// BY CAMILLA NIELSEN (B. 1972)

A huge swimming redfish is found by the staircase in the back of the small entrance room between the two shops Panasonic and In Fashion.

Take a walk around the building. On the opposite side numerous smaller redfish with huge round eyes are swimming by another staircase. Move close to the windows to get a good look at the redfish on their way.

As an art school student in the 1990s Camilla Nielsen saw this red deep-sea fish with its round eyes – often popped out – at the local fish market, which was a neighbour to the Art School in Nuuk. Since then, she has used the red fish as a motive with a line repeatedly, each time trying to simplify it - to shape the lines - until the redfish becomes indistinguishable. Then she returns to the original shape and starts over. Each redfish is different, but the artist uses acrylic paint, water colour and ink to make each of her redfish.

The huge redfish raises itself from the wall behind and takes in the room with its size. In the group of redfish, their eyes are a fixed point. They are all on their way.

12) PAINTINGS ON THE GABLES OF BLOCK 10 AND 5 // BY GUIDO VAN HELTEN AND STÉFAN BALDURSSON 2014

The paintings on the house ends of the concrete apartments are like Street Art. The art phenomenon conquers and decorates public spaces of the cities without asking for permission, because it is seen as a democratic right to co-create and use the spaces surrounding us. This Street Art was supported by the municipality, but the initiative came from the artists themselves.

The paintings improve - maybe even renovates - the worn buildings – and makes them appear different. These severely criticized concrete apartments were built in larger cities all over Greenland during the 1950s and 1960s as a part of Danish objective of modernizing Greenland where people were moved from settlements to the larger cities.

Stéfan Baldursson is from Iceland and has created the woman with the polar bear on the house end of block 10. The pair gaze vigilant up the road to the pass, which numerous inhabitants of Nuuk daily walk or drive through.

Guido Van Helten is from Australia and is the artist behind the painting on block 5. It is made from a photograph of a hunter from East Greenland taken by the photographer W. Thalbitzer in 1906. In Nuuk Art Museum a painting of this man called Nujappik is hanging painted by Søren "Solo" Nielsen (1874-1948).

Blok 5 also has a bloody history. 10 people were killed in 1970 in a gas explosion, which destroyed most of the building.

A documentary about the street art paintings at the house ends was planned as part of the project, but during a long take of the work on block 10 the camera with the photo archive was stolen.

13) NUUK ART MUSEUM

Across the road from the lady with the polar bear on Block 10 you will find Nuuk Art Museum. The museum is founded on the collection of Svend and Helene Junge. The building was given to the municipality in 2005 along with the large art collection. The museum is the biggest collection of art open to the public in Greenland, and houses both historic and contemporary Greenlandic art.

Did you look through the window at Hotel Nuuk and see Anne-Birthe Hoves decoration of the columns? The rest of the former decoration is found inside Nuuk Art Museum.

14) PATTERN ON THE FRONT OF THE CITY HALL // BY THUE CHRISTIANSEN (B. 1940)

On the front of the city hall you will find a pattern, which is easy to miss. The piece of art is inspired by avittat – the Greenlandic sealskin embroidery where tiny bits of dyed sealskin are sewn into a pattern on kamiks and other pieces of needlework. When the sun is shining the pattern gleams. Thue Christiansen – the artist behind the pattern – is also the artist behind the design of the Greenlandic flag.

An eagle in the court yard of the city hall

In the courtyard of the city hall a sculpture hides in the bushes in the corner. The head of an eagle stands on a concrete block with big round eyes you can cover with your hands, with a beak you can stroke and a head you can pad.

15) INUSSUK – THE END OF KUUSSUAQ // BY NIELS MOTZFELDT 2009

Inussuk the sculpture is called standing with a view to the colonial harbour and the fjord. The Greenlandic word inussuk means cairn or directly translated “something that looks like human beings”. A cairn directs us on our way in the mountains or on the fjord.

The three columns are twisting and leaning against each other united at the top. They columns symbolize the people of Greenland in North, East and West – joining and supporting each other.

It is made of stone, copper and concrete. The stones in the sculpture are from all over Greenland.

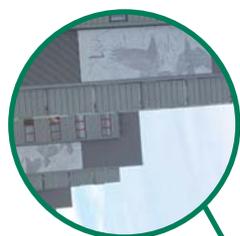
16) RAVENS – APARTMENT BUILDINGS ON TUAPANNGUIT // BY RIKKE DIEMER

At the top of the apartment towers the ravens are flying from house to house.

The many ravens playing over the rooftops belong to the winters in Nuuk, says the artist Rikke Diemer about the ravens on the apartment towers.

The ravens first flight was on the house end of Block Q – a block of concrete apartments out of three and was torn down and replaced by these towers in 2011. With these seven towers the ravens began flying again.

Place yourself at a little distance of the first tower then all the ravens on the 7 towers melt together to an unbroken motive of ravens taking off, flying and landing.



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