ARTS AND CULTURE OTTAWA ᐊᑐᖅ

Inuk Sobey finalist reimagines northern groceries

Tarralik Duffy turns everyday items into hand-sewn sculptures

Nehaa Bimal

Standing beside an eight-foot Coca-Cola can that she stitched by hand, Tarralik Duffy says her art is about more than pop culture nostalgia.

"It's literally a piece of pop art," Duffy said Oct. 2 at a media preview for the Sobey Art Award exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa.

But, she says, "Pop can prices in Nunavut are astronomical and there's an illusion of plenty. But if you don't have money, you don't have access to it."

The Sobey Art Award, now in its 24th year, is Canada's most prestigious contemporary art prize.

Duffy, who is from Coral Harbour and based in Saskatoon, Sask., is one of six finalists for the $100,000 grand prize.

Her soft sculptures are stitched from leather and stuffed with polyester. She has created life-sized jerry cans, an oversized Bic lighter and smoke, and Klik, the canned luncheon meat.

The use of grocery items is a reflection on consumer culture in northern life, and how it is connected to deeper histories of colonialism, Duffy said.

"We were colonized by a department store," she said, referring to the Hudson's Bay Co.

> *"We were colonized by a department store."*
>
> — Tarralik Duffy

"I also joke about how we were colonized by condiments," she said, pointing to the role of brands like China Lily soya sauce in Inuit households as a dipping sauce for traditional foods like maktaaq or caribou.

"It's tied to very warm memories of sharing food but is also a culture clash."

Duffy said her work uses familiar branding, relabelled in Inuktitut, as well as colourful packaging to explore marketing tactics for processed foods.

"You have something that's so garish — like blended pork smashed up in a can — that's more acceptable than our traditional hunting diet," she said.

"What if our food was also wrapped up in pretty packaging?"

Duffy follows in the footsteps of several Inuit artists who have been recognized by the Sobey Art Award.

Annie Pootoogook won the award in 2006. Iqaluit-based artist Laakkuluk Williamson won in 2021, while Kablusiak, an Inuvialuk artist, won in 2023.

Williamson, who is now on the Sobey prize jury, penned Duffy's introduction in this year's Sobey Award exhibition guide.

Duffy also works in jewelry, digital drawing and writing but said sewing remains central to her practice.

"Stitch by stitch, it slows the time down," she said.

"That's why I started working with my hands in the first place, because it quiets the mind and every stitch connects me to my grandmother — or anaanstiaq — and my aunties, and home."

The winner of the Sobey Art Award will be announced Nov. 8.

The exhibition of finalists runs until Feb. 8, 2026, at the National Gallery of Canada.



Sobey Art Award finalists Tarralik Duffy, left, Tania Willard, Sandra Brewster, Hangama Amiri and Swapnaa Tamhane, pose for a photo Oct. 2 at a media preview for the 2025 Sobey Prize exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. (Photo by Nehaa Bimal)



Tarralik Duffy's *Kuuka Kuula*, an eight-foot Coca-Cola can stitched by hand from leather and stuffed with polyester, is part of the 2025 Sobey Art Award exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada. (Photo by Nehaa Bimal)

JUSTICE NUNAVIK ᓄᓇᕗᒃ

No answers yet on possible Nunavik police charges



Quebec's police watchdog has submitted its investigation report to the province's director of criminal and penal prosecutions into a police shooting in Kangiqsualujjuaq. A man was reportedly fatally shot in the community during a confrontation with police on May 6. (File photo by Jeff Pelletier)

Dominique Gené
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Quebec's police watchdog has handed over its investigation report into a fatal police shooting in Kangiqsualujjuaq to the province's director of criminal and penal prosecutions.

Mark Annanack was shot during a confrontation with Nunavik Police Service officers on May 6, then transported to the local health centre where he was pronounced dead. The Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes launched an investigation the next day. That investigation report was passed to prosecutors on Sept. 19.

The director of criminal and penal prosecutions is the authority responsible for deciding whether criminal charges should be filed in this incident, based on information provided in the bureau's report.

Patricia Johnson, the deputy spokesperson for the prosecutor, declined to provide additional information about the incident or what's in the report.

Once the review is finished, the prosecutor's office will announce charges or issue a statement explaining why it chose not to prosecute, Johnson said in a French email Oct. 3.

There is also no word yet whether charges will be filed in relation to an incident between police and the public on Nov. 4, 2024, that led to the death of Salluit resident Joshua Papigatuk and injured his twin brother Garnet Papigatuk.

The police watchdog submitted its investigation report into that case on June 26.

Nunatsiaq News asked the director of prosecutions how long it typically takes for a decision to be made on a case.

Johnson said the time it takes to review varies from one case to another.

"It is therefore difficult to give a minimum or maximum time limit for reviewing a case," she said in the email.

The Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes is still investigating a third deadly incident from the past 12 months, in which a man in Inukjuak died July 17 after an altercation with Nunavik Police Service officers.





