



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## **WINNIPEG ART GALLERY**

**INUIT ART EXHIBITION—WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Statement by:

The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Wednesday, June 14, 2017

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### WINNIPEG ART GALLERY

INUIT ART EXHIBITION—WASHINGTON, D.C.

**Hon. Patricia Bovey:** Honourable senators, Canada's Inuit artists are highly esteemed at home and abroad. Since the 1950s their works have been collected widely by individuals, corporations and Canada's public art galleries.

The Winnipeg Art Gallery, the first to focus seriously on developing an Inuit art collection, did so from 1951 under the directorship of Ferdinand Eckhardt. Spurred by the insights, knowledge and many northern travels of George Swinton and Jerry Twomey, the WAG's collection has been greatly enhanced over the decades by donations and contributions from many.

Now the largest and most significant collection of contemporary Inuit art globally, it includes sculpture, prints, drawings, paintings and textiles, and includes every Inuit community. Important ground-breaking scholarly work has been produced by successive WAG Inuit art curators: Jacqueline Fry, Jean Blodgett, Bernadette Driscoll, and since 1986, Darlene Coward Wight.

The WAG has also been working for many years to develop an Inuit art centre. The participation of the Government of Nunavut in this initiative is particularly exciting and important, and the Nunavut government's Inuit art collection is now on loan to the WAG. The gallery is hoping to break ground on this new centre this fall, right behind the gallery itself.

Tomorrow night marks another first, the opening of a special exhibition, "Ningiukulu Teevee: Kinngait Stories," organized by the Winnipeg Art Gallery at our Canadian embassy in Washington. It is the first solo exhibition of any Inuit artist ever held in the U.S.

Teevee's drawings explore the relationship between abstraction and representation. Inspired by patterns in nature and traditional stories, the 28 drawings and photographs document her and contemporary Cape Dorset. In addition to creating art, Teevee has also written a children's book which was shortlisted for the Governor General's Literature Awards, and her art is in a number of major public galleries and museums.

I applaud the Winnipeg Art Gallery and curator Darlene Wight for this project. Of course, my special congratulations and thanks go to artist Ningiukulu Teevee, an artist of whom we should all be very proud. I also thank Dorset Fine Arts for their participation.

This exhibition runs in the Canadian embassy in Washington until October, and I know, honourable colleagues, that any and all of you will be very warmly welcomed.

An important milestone, I am truly sorry I cannot be in Washington for its opening, but they know I am there with them in spirit, as I trust all of you are too.