

## Nancy Campbell's *Itee Pootoogook: Hymns to the Silence* Honored With the 2021 Melva J. Dwyer Award

*Itee Pootoogook: Hymns to the Silence*, an original examination of the work of a groundbreaking Inuit artist, was presented with the 30th annual Melva J. Dwyer Award by the Art Libraries Society of North America's (ARLIS/NA) Canada Chapter. The book was published in 2019 by Goose Lane Editions and the McMichael Canadian Art Collection.

The Dwyer jurors selected *Itee Pootoogook: Hymns to the Silence* out of 15 geographically diverse publications that represent art and art histories from across Canada.

An exceptional compilation of images and essays, this is the first monographic treatment of life and work of Itee Pootoogook (1951-2014). It is a vital study that situates Pootoogook within a generation of Inuit artists who transformed creative traditions and practice at Kinngait Studios (formerly called the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative) in Nunavut. Jurors praised both the visual and textual aspects of the book as central to its success. Clear and generous reproductions of Pootoogook's drawings and paintings allow the artist's work to speak for itself. Pootoogook's artwork features the people, objects, landscapes and architectures of his community, collectively telling multi-layered stories about everyday life in contemporary Nunavut.

Campbell's sensitively-written essay draws upon exhaustive research into her subject, including numerous visits to Kinngait and consultation with Pootoogook's family and community. Contributors Sarah Milroy, Pauloosie Kowmageak, Gerald McMaster, Tarralik Duffy, Sky Glabush, Mark Igloliorte, Meeka Walsh, Wayne Baerwaldt and Jacqui Usiskin offer multifaceted individual insights into Pootoogook as an artist, carpenter and community member. Inuktitut translation was the work of Elizabeth Qulaut. In addition to the texts and reproduced artwork, the book includes photographs of the artist working in the Kinngait studio, a curriculum vitae and robust bibliography. Notably, the entire text is bilingual in English and Inuktitut syllabics. *Itee Pootoogook: Hymns to the Silence* will serve as an invaluable research tool for scholars and anyone interested in the history of Kinngait Studios and its continuing role as a centre of contemporary Inuit art creation.

Author Nancy Campbell is an independent curator of Inuit and Canadian contemporary art. She has curated exhibitions for the Liverpool Biennial, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Art Gallery of Ontario, and McMichael Canadian Art Collection. Her books include *Shuvinaï Ashoona: Life & Work* and *Annie Pootoogook: Cutting Ice*.



Dwyer jurors awarded an honorable mention to *Future Possible: An Art History of Newfoundland and Labrador*, edited by Mireille Eagan and published by The Rooms and Goose Lane Editions.

The Melva J. Dwyer Award was presented by Amy Furness, Melva J. Dwyer Award Sub-Committee Chair. Jury members of the 2021 ARLIS/NA Melva J. Dwyer Award Sub-Committee were Melissa Adler, Allison Comrie, and Jean-Bruno Giard.

The Melva J. Dwyer Award was established in recognition of the contribution made to the field of art librarianship by Melva Dwyer, former head of the Fine Arts Library, University of British Columbia. It is given to the creators of exceptional reference or research tools relating to Canadian art and architecture. Dwyer was a champion of the arts and of art librarianship who mentored a generation of ARLIS/NA colleagues.

#### **About Melva J. Dwyer (October 29, 1919 - November 13, 2017)**

With a diploma in piano and a master's degree in history, Dwyer joined the University of British Columbia Library after completing her MLIS at the University of Toronto. Dwyer quickly set to work building the first major art library in western Canada, relying on her expertise and helped considerably by a large monetary donation. In 1967, she became the first chair of CARLIS, the Canadian Art Libraries Section of the Canadian Association of Special Libraries and Information Services Division. This group later migrated to ARLIS/NA to become the Canadian Chapter. Throughout her career, Dwyer was active in ARLIS and IFLA, and travelled extensively to further develop connections with colleagues and book dealers. She retired from the University of British Columbia in 1984.

#### **About the Art Libraries Society of North America**

Founded in 1972, the Art Libraries Society of North America is a dynamic, international organization of more than 1,000 individuals devoted to fostering excellence in art and design librarianship and image management in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The membership includes architecture and art librarians, visual resources professionals, artists, curators, educators, publishers, students, and others interested in visual arts information. To serve this diverse constituency, the Society provides a wide range of programs and services within an organizational structure that encourages participation at all levels.