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LAAKKULUK WILLIAMSON BATHORY RECIEVES INAUGURAL KENOJUAK ASHEVAK MEMORIAL AWARD

Toronto, Ontario – June 13, 2018 - The Inuit Art Foundation is pleased to announce Iqaluit, NU-based artist **Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory** as the recipient of the inaugural **Kenojuak Ashevak Memorial Award**. Williamson Bathory is an established multi-disciplinary artist whose practice centres on *uaajeerneq* (Greenlandic mask dance) and also includes acting, curating, drum-dancing, music and writing.

“**Kenojuak Ashevak** really opened new realms of imagination and new realms that allowed people to see themselves and show themselves at the same time,” says **Williamson Bathory**. “And, it is overwhelming for to me to think her spirit is touching mine so closely, or being near to mine. I am so grateful and very humbled to be in this huge spirit of art.”

“At the Inuit Art Foundation, we are committed to celebrating and supporting Inuit artists across Inuit Nunangat and beyond, and the Kenojuak Ashevak Memorial Award is one way that we tangibly provide direct support to artists,” says IAF Executive Director and *Inuit Art Quarterly* Publisher Alysa Procida. “Due to the contributions of our donors and supporters, the award allows us to honour the tremendous impact of **Kenojuak Ashevak** while providing exemplary artists and community builders like **Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory** with an opportunity for a self-directed residency to further engage their practice. We are so glad to be able to assist her in her work.”

Established to honour **Kenojuak Ashevak**, CC, ON, RCA (1927-2013) and her unparalleled artistic legacy, the **Kenojuak Ashevak Memorial Fund** supports a visual artist to undertake a residency of their choice with up to \$10,000 biennially. The IAF opened applications to the award for the first time in April 2018, after significant work to make the process relevant and culturally appropriate. Assessed by an Inuit-majority jury of curators and arts supporters, the announcement of the inaugural winner is the capstone of the IAF’s thirtieth anniversary celebrations.

Williamson Bathory is a founding member and Artistic Director of Qaggiavuut! Society, which recently launched a capital campaign for a Performing Arts Centre in Nunavut. In addition to her performances in theatre, dance and poetry, **Williamson Bathory** has also been published widely including in the Spring/Summer 2014 and Spring 2016 issues of the *Inuit Art Quarterly*, the latter of which featured her poem *Tallurutiup Tariunga* (2016). **Williamson Bathory**’s work has been presented at numerous galleries across Canada including the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, grunt gallery, Blackwood Gallery and most recently at the Art Gallery of Ontario, among others. Other career highlights include her inclusion in the 2010 anthology of Canadian Poetry *Pith and Wry* and her appearance in Tanya Tagaq’s *Retribution* (2016) music video, with whom she is a frequent collaborator. Beyond her own artistic pursuits, **Williamson Bathory** is also dedicated advocate for gender equality in creative spaces, decolonizing museum spaces and supporting Indigenous political voices.

To learn more about this year’s winner, visit iad.inuitartfoundation.org/artist/Laakkuluk-Williamson-Bathory.

The IAF would particularly like to thank the donors who made this award possible: John and Joyce Price, David Burns, Paul Machnik, Christopher Bredt and Jamie Cameron, François Dumaine, Ginette Dumouchel, Carol Ann Ellett, Patricia Feheley, Rawlson O’Neil King, Maija M. Lutz, Catherine Madsen, Marcia Miller, Suzanne Nash, Ann Sprayregen and three anonymous donors.

To learn more about this award and to support it, visit inuitartfoundation.org/programs/awards.

Established in 1987, the **Inuit Art Foundation** provides support to Canada's Inuit arts communities and is the sole national body mandated to promote Inuit artists and art within Canada and internationally. The Foundation is deeply invested in the rich history and tradition of Canada's Inuit artistic expressions while actively contributing to the growth and development of these unique and diverse contemporary art practices. The Foundation undertakes advocacy on behalf of Inuit artists and realises a number of strategies aimed at enhancing the appreciation and interpretation of Inuit art. The Inuit Art Foundation is supported by the private sector along with contributions from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and other public agencies. A volunteer, Inuit artist majority Board of Directors oversees the Foundation.

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