

ARTCIRQ
ARCTIC CIRCUS



June 2007. Iqaluit, Nunavut. End of *Alianait Festival*.
It's midnight, the fog surround us, the sun's still awake, and here we are. Impossible to sleep: our last show is over, the theater was packed, a huge success. We build bonfires in the tundra, we sing, their eyes are shining and their hearts too. Impossible to sleep: we climb on each other, jumping over the flames, we want to stay with our new friends, now our brothers and sisters, we want to live. We'll leave Iqaluit soon, rich with a week of circus and inspiring encounters. At the airport, returning to Igloodik, our land, I see the exhaustion on their faces but as they board the plane without me, I see the kids leaving head high, free and proud, hearts full and anxious to share their experience. I look at them, they wouldn't even need a plane to fly. This is what Artcirq's all about.



Artcirq's Inspiration

In the summer of 1998, two Igloodik teenagers committed suicide, shattering the small island community of 1,200. In the Arctic, where two cultures collide, loss and a pervasive sense of hopelessness are constant facts of life. The adult suicide rate in Igloodik is seven times the national average. Every time a suicide occurs, feelings of despair and powerlessness grip the community.

Following the recurrence of such tragedies in Igloodik, concrete actions were taken to give children and teenagers a medium to express themselves. On the initiative of *Igloodik Isuma Productions*, the artist collective behind the internationally acclaimed feature film *Atanarjuat The Fast Runner*, eight young people formed a group with the intention to prevent suicide in their community.

The organization was previously called *Inuusiq* (which means “life” in Inuktitut), and its first mission, with the help of *Igloodik Isuma Productions*, was to produce a television series about the reality of youth in today’s Arctic. Lucy Tulugarjuk and Guillaume Saladin were members of the *Inuusiq Youth Drama Group*, as well as co-writers and actors in the series.

The *Artcirq* performance project evolved from this early youth theatre initiative while Saladin was studying at the *National Circus School in Montreal*. With the financial support of *Cirque Eloize* (Montreal) and *Igloodik Isuma Productions*, Saladin, Karine Delzors and five other Montreal circus students traveled to Igloodik in 1999 and 2000 to provide workshops for Inuit youth. They developed two performances that were presented to the community and documented in the film *Artcirq* by *Igloodik Isuma Productions* in 2001. Since then, the *Artcirq* collective has undertaken professional development, as well as adapted and presented several performances in Montreal, Igloodik, Dublin, Iqaluit, and several Nunavik communities.

The *Artcirq Inuit Performance Collective* is composed of over 20 young musicians, actors and acrobats, who are deeply involved in the cultural life of Igloodik. All of them have performance experience, tremendous talent, and desire to go on developing their skills with *Artcirq*. In the past seven years, the artistic directors of the project were only able to work part-time in Igloodik. Consequently, all the workshops were short-term events. Since October 2005, artistic director Guillaume Saladin moved to Igloodik to coordinate the project, along with Lucy Tulugarjuk and Kenneth Rasmussen, on an on-going long term basis.



Lee Narraway (both)



Artcirq's Mission

The Artcirq Inuit Performance Collective is based in Igloolik, Nunavut, a remote Inuit community in Canada's Eastern Arctic. The collective was established in 1998, with the goal of providing Inuit youth a vehicle for creative expression through theater, performance, and circus arts – all while maintaining a strong link to Inuit traditions and performance styles.

Made up of both Inuit and non-Inuit artists collaborating across languages and cultures, the collective has been in existence for almost 10 years.

The goals and objectives of the Artcirq collective are to:

- * Integrate the roots of traditional Inuit performance culture (acrobatics, juggling, clowning) with the aesthetic techniques of modern circus and theatre;
- ** Give young Inuit access to universal vehicles of creativity and communication offered by the performing arts, bridging the gap between different generations and cultures;
- ** Promote spiritual and physical self-expression while enhancing the self-esteem of participants;
- ** Deliver orientation workshops on circus and performing arts in the village of Igloolik;
- ** Develop and present live performances developed by the young people of the village and the artists of Montreal;
- ** Document the whole experience on video to share with others through television and internet;
- ** Cooperate with the local youth groups in Igloolik to increase the communication tools for youth, which are often limited due to a lack of resources, in order to prevent suicide;
- ** Increase awareness on global environmental issues generally, and on Arctic's climate warming specifically.



Artcirq's Growth

Artcirq began as a social project in occupational therapy—but the reach of its activities grow, year to year. Artcirq's training space is located in the old community swimming pool. Using old mattresses from the dump as crash mats, the creativity of its members has transformed this space into a performing arts center. Metaphorically speaking, the area of the old swimming pool is used to learn how to swim, but without water – much in the same way circus training occurs. Artcirq has developed from a month of activity per year to a full-time organization involving training in circus arts, Inuit games, music, and video making. Its artistic credibility is increasingly recognized around the Arctic, and its message is becoming a source of inspiration for other youth. Artcirq members are creating spin-off projects among Inuit people.

Artcirq is working on two levels as a young, innovative Inuit cultural enterprise. On the local side, Artcirq provides Igloolik youth with a place where they can learn how to express themselves through arts, enhance their self-esteem, and create role models in the community. On the national and international level through the *Oaraya* show, it provides a meaningful way for artists to communicate and to share the Inuit culture with the rest of the country and the world.

The addition of video-making to Artcirq gives a realistic view of what challenges face youth in the Arctic today. The youth act as mirrors of the challenges that confront society. Artcirq is ultimately a vehicle to build artistic bridges for artists around the world. It allows people to meet, exchange, and share their point of view and culture. Artcirq is re-defining the channel of intercultural communication, which is used as a tool to promote both traditional and modern Inuit culture and is leading a whole new way of adapting modern and past issues to create a better, meaningful reality. Artcirq is for youth, by youth.



Igloodik is an Inuit community in Nunavut, northern Canada. Because it is on a small island in Foxe Basin that is very close to the Melville Peninsula (and to a lesser degree, Baffin Island), it is often thought to be on the peninsula. The name “Igloodik” means “there is an igloo here” in Inuktitut and the residents are called *Iglulingmiut* (~*miut* - “people of”).

Information about the area’s earliest inhabitants comes mainly from numerous archeological sites on the island; some dating back more than 4,000 years.



Artcirq's Synergy

Since coming back on June 29, 2007 from our first big festival, the *Alianait Festival* in Iqaluit, Artcirq is opening up to a whole new world of possibility. Artcirq includes performing, providing workshops to youth, collaborating with other artists on stage, screening videos, and video-recording the whole experience. This unique formula reflects the multi-disciplines of the project and of its members. Presenting a realistic image of the Arctic today by bridging the past with the present to allow for a meaningful and bright future. Such enterprise could not have sustainable life without strong partnerships.

Being in close partnership with *Igloolik Isuma Productions*, Artcirq is able to take advantage of their facilities, technology, and contacts. This strong connection means that the teams of both organizations benefit from each other's experiences. The whole artistic process lived by youth is recorded on video and the youth edit it into segments that are readily available through *Isuma.tv*. The vibrant cultural community of Igloolik acts as a launch pad for Artcirq to fly around the world with invitations to perform, give arts workshops, and present videos. The youth have their passports ready.

As a non-profit organization, Artcirq is financially supported by *Igloolik Isuma Productions*, *NITV*, *Canada Council for the Arts*, *CLEY* and *Cirque Éloize*, Artcirq is also developing partnerships with *Makivik Corporation* and other national enterprises.



Artcirq's People

core members

Guillaume I. Saladin is 35 years old and is the co-founder, co-artistic director, trainer, and casting director for Artcirq. He is from a family of anthropologists and grew up in Igloolik until he was 15. After graduating from UQAM in 1998 with a degree in Sociology and Communication, Guillaume founded the Artcirq project with Lucy Tulugarjuk, while at the *National Circus School of Montreal*. In 2001, he was cast in Cirque Éloize's show *Nomade*, directed by world-renowned Daniele Finzi Pasca from the *Theatro Sunil*, Lugano, for a 4-year world tour as an actor and acrobat. He now lives in Igloolik on a permanent basis to carry on the training of Artcirq members, and to work on video projects with *Igloolik Isuma Production* and *Artcirq*.

Lucy Tulugarjuk is 31 years old and is the co-founder, co-artistic director, trainer, and casting director for Artcirq. She is an actress and throat signer. She founded the Artcirq project with Guillaume Saladin in 1998. Lucy played the character of Puja (Atanarjuat's saucy second wife) in *Atanarjuat The Fast Runner* (2001). Mother of 3 children, Lucy graduated from a management training program in Ottawa. She currently lives in Igloolik where she's involved with Artcirq and Igloolik Isuma Productions.

Bruce Hauilli is 29 years old and has been a director and video technician member of Artcirq since 2005. Bruce is involved in the Artcirq video project as a director, actor and story consultant. His short film *407* marked his directorial debut, and he received a grant as emerging artist in 2006 to produce his second short film *Issaittuq*. Bruce wrote and directed *Issaittuq* that screened its premiere simultaneously in Nuuk, Greenland and Igloolik, Nunavut in June 2007. Bruce is the father of twins.

Leah Angutimmarik is 23 years old and a member of Artcirq since 1999. Leah has participated in several workshops and performances, and she is a throat singer, juggler, actor. She had the leading role of Apak in *The Journals Of Knud Rasmussen* (2005). She was invited to perform with Artcirq in Dublin, Ireland during the Spring 2006. Mother of a little boy and will have her second baby by late fall 2007.

Kenneth Rasmussen is 30 years old and a filmmaker and actor from Aasiaat, Greenland. He graduated from *Danish National Television* (DR) in 1998 as a film and video production technician. Among others, he directed and produced: *The Making of 'The Journals of Knud Rasmussen'*.



Terry Uyarak is 21 years old and a member of Artcirq since July 2006. Terry graduated from Igloolik High School and is captain of the hockey team, a hunter, a musician, and he is an up-and-coming artist and actor. Terry has been putting a lot of energy and heart into the Artcirq project. As one of the Artcirq leaders, he is in-charge of training when Guillaume is not in town, organizing trips and taking care of the other members. He is also called Uyarak, after one of the most respected men in the last 30 years of Igloolik.

Solomon Uyarasuk is 21 years old. Solomon is a high school graduate, acrobat, aerial tissue climber and Avid editor. He first started acting in Isuma Productions' film when he was three years old. He performed in Kaugjjagjuk Show in 2004, acted in *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* (2006), as well as Artcirq's *Issaituq* (2007). Solomon is taking on more and more responsibility in Artcirq and is involved as tour organizer. He was the project leader for 'Folks on the Rock Festival' in Yellowknife in July 2007. He is becoming a well-known circus artist in the North.

Jacky Qrunnut is 22 years old. Jacky is a high school graduate and was the technician, acrobat and lighting operator of the Kaugjjagjuk Show in 2004. He has been performing with us ever since and has revealed to be an amazing actor. Jacky comes from a great family of hunters, and stars in Artcirq's *Maanna* (2007).



Oaraya Performance

Technical requirement for the performance:

- * A white backdrop behind the stage for video projections
- * One rig point on the ceiling for acrobatic aerial acts
- * A sound system with speakers
- * Stage lights
- * A surface clearance of about 35' x 35'

For workshops:

- * Same surface clearance as the performance, plus 3 crashing mattresses if possible.

Surface. We usually perform on a theater-dimension stage (35 feet wide by 35 feet deep); however, since Inuit have had to adapt to the harsh terrain of the Arctic for the last 4,000 years, we can make due with almost any surface. We have already performed on the ice, on the tundra, on the street and we are planning to perform in the Sahara desert in Mali in 2008. Wherever we go, the show is adapted to the new settings.

Length of circus show. Inspired by Inuit traditional games, the arctic environment and circus techniques, an Artcirq performance can range from a 5 minute act to a full-length 60 minute show. Our current performance « Oaraya », (*Can't wait for—*), is in constant evolution, performed by Inuit core members in collaboration with professional guest artists from around the world. Our acts are constantly evolving as we meet new sources of inspiration. Collaboration is at the heart of our work process.

Cast and Crew. The numbers of Artcirq artists vary depending on the travel budget, the availability of the artists, and the demands of the client. For a single event with a 5-minute performance, 3 artists would fly out of Igloolik, and for a full show, we are 12 altogether: 8 Inuit artists, 2 professional circus performers and, one filmmaker and one tour director.

Workshops. Usually, our workshops are divided in 2 parts:

- * 1 hour screening of Artcirq-Isuma movies and documentaries followed by a 30-minute discussion on the youth reality.
- * 2½ hours of theater performance, circus and music workshops.



Circus and music. We believe in sharing our skills and passions through organizing workshops for youth around the world. So far we have organized circus, music and video workshops wherever we have gone. It is meaningful for us to be able to meet directly and share our art creating a space for dialogue.

Environment. Coming from the coldest region on Earth, we are deeply concern about the the environment and its conservation. By presenting the scientific evidence, the observed consequences and the solutions to mitigate them, we provide visually attractive multi-media talks on phenomena, such as climate change and biodiversity crisis.

Video presentation, video recording and broadcast through Internet. Since its inception in 1998, Artcirq has always worked closely with *Igloolik Isuma Productions* and *Isuma.tv*, to develop and produce several fiction film and documentaries about the lived reality of youth in the Arctic today. This selection of works can be presented as part of the circus performance or separately. In collaboration with Igloolik Isuma filmmakers, we video-record the events in a community to produce short films and documentaries about the experience. These videos are broadcast through the *Isuma.tv* internet channel.

Budget. If an organization or individual would like Artcirq to perform in their community, they would need to take into account the following provisions depending on the type of performance and/or workshop chosen:

- * Return fare from Igloolik for the artists,
- * Per diem for the artists,
- * A double occupancy lodging facility,
- * Presentation fee for performances and/or the workshops.

To assist in the financing of performances, Artcirq offers to apply for grants; however, identification of these financing sources would be the responsibility of the contracting party. Feel free to contact us to work out a mutually beneficial agreement.

Co-founder



Artistic and logistic collaborator



Sponsors



Funding Agencies



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts
du Canada

Conseil des arts
et des lettres





Igloolik



ARTCIRQ

c/o Guillaume Saladin & Lucy Tulugarjuk

Co-directors

PO Box 215

Igloolik, NU

X0A 0L0

Tel: 867.934.8033 | Cell: 514.581.8033

Guillaume Saladin: clown@total.net

Lucy Tulugarjuk: uyarak@hotmail.com