UMIAQ SKIN BOAT

A Film by Jobie Weetaluktuk

PRESS KIT

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UMIAQ SKIN BOAT

BRIEF SYNOPSIS

Umiaq Skin Boat is a beautiful and poetic 30-minute film about a group of Inuit elders in Inukjuak, Quebec who decide one summer to build the first traditional seal skin boat their community has seen in over 50 years. Once an essential vessel for travel and for hunting large prey like bowhead whales, the umiaq has been replaced in modern times by canoes powered with out-board motors. Over the course of working together on the boat, the elders recount astonishing stories of survival while navigating volatile and unforgiving Arctic waters, and of dangers both natural and man-made. Shot against the magnificent backdrop of the northern landscape, Umiaq Skin Boat bears witness to the resilience of the Inuit spirit in changing times.

DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY

Jobie Weetaluktuk is a writer, editor, broadcaster and filmmaker who originally hails from Inukjuak, Quebec, and is now based in Montreal. His first documentary film, Urban Inuk (Iqloolik Isuma Productions, 2005), follows the spiritual and practical struggles of three Inuit who have left their ancestral homeland in the Arctic for the concrete jungle of Montreal. Urban Inuk aired on Aboriginal People’s Television Network in 2005 and played in over 20 festivals and venues across Canada, the USA and Europe. In 2006 the documentary won the Grand Prix, Rigoberta Menchu Community Award at the Land-in-sights First People’s Festival in Montreal, and toured various Maisons de la Culture in that city as part of the Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montreal (RIDM)’s Coups de Cœur programming.

DIRECTOR FILMOGRAPHY

Umiaq Skin Boat (Catbird Productions), 2008, 31 minutes, documentary (Official Selection Hot Docs 2008, Closing Film – First Peoples’ Festival 2008)

Urban Inuk (Iqloolik Isuma Productions), 2005, 46 minutes, documentary (Grand Prix, Rigoberta Menchu Award, Land Insights First People’s Festival, Montreal)
**PRODUCTION DETAILS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title</strong></th>
<th>UMIAQ SKIN BOAT</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>31 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Production Company</strong></td>
<td>Catbird Productions, Inc</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>Original Inuktitut (with French or English subtitles)</td>
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<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Creative Team</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Producer</strong></td>
<td>Katarina Soukup</td>
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<td><strong>Writer/Director</strong></td>
<td>Jobie Weetaluktuk</td>
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<td><strong>Camera</strong></td>
<td>Jobie Weetaluktuk, Caroline Oweetaluktuk, Lineas Kasudluak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Editor</strong></td>
<td>Marie-Christine Sarda</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sound</strong></td>
<td>Éric LeMoyne</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Original Music</strong></td>
<td>Jean-François Caissy</td>
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**DETAILED SYNOPSIS**

Our planet has really changed… My mind is saying that either the moon or the earth has changed.

– Daniel Inukpuk

**Umiaq Skin Boat** is a beautiful and poetic 30-minute film about a group of Inuit elders in Inukjuak, Quebec who decide one summer to build the first traditional seal skin boat their community has seen in over 50 years. Once an essential vessel for travel and for hunting large prey like bowhead whales, the umiaq has been replaced in modern times by canoes powered with out-board motors. Over the course of working together on the boat, the elders recount astonishing stories of survival while navigating volatile and unforgiving Arctic waters, and of dangers both natural and man-made. Shot against the magnificent backdrop of the northern landscape, **Umiaq Skin Boat** bears witness to the resilience of the Inuit spirit in changing times.

Our planet and the moon are changing, but they always have. More dramatically, it is we who have changed. As a global society we have become profoundly disconnected from the earth in our world of modern conveniences. For Inuit, still nomadic hunters and gatherers even sixty years ago, this transition was compressed into the space of a single generation. Once-essential knowledge about surviving in the harsh Arctic environment became regarded as an old man’s tale.

Whatever the climate conditions, Inuit survived for thousands of years by being resourceful and adapting through careful attention to their natural surroundings. A connection to the land and water remains essential to the continued existence of future generations. By reviving lost traditions, this group of elders ensures that in the wake of great changes, their culture will remain afloat, firmly anchored in the knowledge of the past – their umiaq a richly symbolic vessel for the community’s history, memory and pride.

**PEOPLE IN THE FILM**

Inukjuak is a small, remote Inuit community in Nunavik (Northern Quebec), and the hometown of director Jobie Weetaluktuk. In 2007, the Pukkik Cultural Group of Inukjuak, which was established to preserve Inuit culture and language at the community level, embarked on an ambitious project to build an umiaq. The goal of the group is to make traditional culture visible, and in the past they have built a qammat (sod house) and seal skin tupiq (tent).

**Daniel Inukpuk** is the chair of the Pukkik Cultural Group in Inukjuak. In the film he recalls his mother’s stories of traveling inland by umiaq, and remembers several dramatic escapes from death while on the open waters. He is a well-known soapstone carver, whose sculptures have been exhibited in galleries in Europe and Japan. Daniel was born on the King George Islands in the Hudson Bay. Daniel often talks about his childhood, and vividly remembers life on the land as a nomad. He is also a hunter.
Daniel Oweetaluktuk Kasudluak is a member of the Pukkik Group and one of the umiaq builders. In the film he tells the poignant story of his escape by boat from abuse at the hands of his foster parents. As a great hunter, he has provided for his family and his neighbours through his ability to catch game. His generosity is well known throughout the community.

Josephie Nalaturuk is a son of the late Alaku, a great adventurer and explorer of Nunavik and Nunavut around the Hudson Strait. Nalaturuk has been a leader in traditional qajaq-making and dog-teaming. He was commissioned to build an Inukshuk for the McCord Museum in Montreal. Nalaturuk is also a hunter and a carver.

Elisapie Inukpuk is co-chair of the Pukkik Group, and the matriarch of the sewing group which prepared and stitched together the bearded seal skins covering the umiaq frame. She is a master seamstress and doll-maker, whose magnificently detailed figures wear miniature caribou and sealskin clothing and have faces carved from soapstone. Her dolls have been acquired by collectors and museums world-wide.

Nelly Nastapoka is a wonderful and respected elder of Inukjuak. She has been a widow for many years, a tireless worker and skilled seamstress. She is well-known for dressing her family in the exquisite works of her own hand. She comes from the large and competitive Niviaxie family.

ABOUT CATBIRD PRODUCTIONS
www.catbirdproductions.ca

Catbird Productions, Inc was founded in spring 2006 by independent producer Katarina Soukup, who brings with her almost ten years of experience working with award-winning, internationally acclaimed Inuit filmmakers Igloolik Isuma Productions, the creative team behind the Canadian cinema classic Atanarjuat The Fast Runner (2000), winner of the Camera d’or at Cannes 2001

Among her award-winning producing credits is Urban Inuk (2005) directed by Nunavik writer Jobie Weetaluktuk. This documentary follows the spiritual and practical struggles of three Inuit who have left their ancestral homeland in the Arctic for the concrete jungle of Montreal. Urban Inuk aired on APTN and played in over 20 festivals across Canada, the USA and Europe. It won the GRAND PRIX - Rigoberta Menchu Community Award at the Land-in-sights First People's Festival in Montreal in 2006, and toured various Maisons de la Culture in that city as part of the Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montreal (RIDM)’s Coup de coeur programming.

Soukup’s last film for Isuma as producer, Kiviaq Versus Canada (2006) is also directed by Atanarjuat director Zacharias Kunuk and co-written by both Soukup and Kunuk. This documentary traces the extraordinary life story of Canada’s first Inuit lawyer and examines the reasons why he is suing the Canadian government for Inuit rights. Kiviaq had its world premiere
at the Edmonton International Film Festival in September 2006, and was broadcast on History Television in March 2007. It received a Special Jury Mention (Séquences Documentary Award) at the 2007 Land-in-Sights First People’s Festival. The Globe and Mail described Kiviaq as a “powerful documentary.... beautifully made and angry, it is a startling and cogent story”.

Soukup founded Catbird Productions with a desire to produce exciting, socially-relevant independent documentaries which push the boundaries of the genre. As a producer, she seeks out film projects that tell powerful human stories and reveal the extraordinary in the seemingly ordinary. She is particularly interested in films about music, art, culture, and human rights. To that end, she recently completed the short documentary Umiaq Skin Boat by Urban Inuk director Jobie Weetaluktuk (which had its World Premiere at Hot Docs 2008), and is currently developing projects with innovative directors such as Caroline Martel (director of the award-winning Phantom of the Operator). She is currently producing documentary about Kent Nagano and the Orchestre symphonique de Montreal’s first tour of the Arctic in the company, directed by young filmmaker on-the-rise Félix Lajeunesse. Soukup is also developing a documentary project she herself will direct on the life of pioneering Inuk photographer, artist and historian Peter Pitseolak. She holds an MA in Media Studies from Concordia University, Montreal.

PRODUCER FILMOGRAPHY

Peter Pitseolak Time-Traveller (dir. Katarina Soukup/Catbird Productions), documentary, in development
Stravinsky in the Land of the Inuit (dir. Félix Lajeunesse/Catbird Productions), documentary, in development
WaveMakers (dir. Caroline Martel/productions artifact), feature documentary, in production
Umiaq Skin Boat (dir. Jobie Weetaluktuk/Catbird Productions), 2008, 31 min, documentary
Kiviaq versus Canada (dir. Zacharias Kunuk/Igloolik Isuma Productions), 2006, 46 min, documentary
What Belongs to Inuit (dir. Zacharias Kunuk & Bernadette Dean/Igloolik Isuma Productions), 2005, 49 min, documentary
Urban Inuk (dir. Jobie Weetaluktuk/Igloolik Isuma Productions), 2005, 46 min, documentary

CREATIVE TEAM

MARIE-CHRISTINE SARDA - EDITOR

Marie-Christine Sarda has worked extensively as a freelance documentary editor, as well as working for the CBC, Radio Canada and the National Film Board. In 2001 she won (along with co-editors Zacharias Kunuk and Norman Cohn) the Genie for Achievement in Editing for the feature film Atanarjuat The Fast Runner. In addition editing many of Isuma’s productions since Atanarjuat, Sarda has also edited films by Magnus Issacson (Hellbent for Justice), Elisapie Isaac’s debut documentary If The Weather Permits (Sundance Film Festival 2004) and Jobie Weetaluktuk’s documentary films Urban Inuk (Grand Prix Rigoberta Community Award, Land In-Sights Festival 2006), and Umiaq Skin Boat (Official Selection Hot Docs 2008).
CAROLINE OWEETALUKTUK – ADDITIONAL CAMERA

Caroline Oweetaluktuk is director of photography for Kativik School Board Educational Videos, and also works on independent film projects. She lives in Inukjuak.

LINEAS KASUDLUAK – ADDITIONAL CAMERA/SOUND

Lineas Kasudluak was one of the young filmmakers involved in the making of Inuvunga: I am Inuk, I am Alive (2004), an innovative NFB documentary project in which eight Inuit teens document their final year at high school. Kasudluak learned the basics of filmmaking with filmmakers Daniel Cross and Mila Aung-Thwin, along with fellow first-time directors Bobby Echalook, Sarah Idlout, Laura Iqaluk, Willia Ningeok, Caroline Ningiuk, Dora Ohaituk and Rita-Lucy Ohaituk.

ÉRIC LEMOYNE - SOUND EDITOR

Having been nominated for Canda’s top television awards, the Gemini’s, in both music and sound, Éric LeMoyne enjoys all aspects of sound postproduction. From doc soundtracks to feature scores, from Studio Morin Heights to his personal facility, Eric has worked with the best people in the business for 25 years. His credits for sound editing include Skin, Flesh & Bone about Carbone 14 (Gemini nominated arts/entertainment feature), Kiviaq versus Canada (documentary), and Apocalypse 10.5 (Drama). As a composer, he has contributed to Faith & Fortune: The Reichmann Story (Gemini-nominated documentary), The Tree That Remembers (an award-winning documentary) and Double or Nothing: The Rise and Fall of Robert Campeau (Gemini-nominated feature documentary).

JEAN-FRANÇOIS CAISSY – ORIGINAL MUSIC

Jean-François Caissy is a photographer, filmmaker and musician. He completed his studies in photography at the CEGEP de Matane in 1998, after which he participated in numerous group exhibitions and mounted the sound and photo installation Mon doux camping. He has developed a career as a filmmaker in parallel to his work in photography, and his films have been presented at various festivals and galleries in Canada and abroad, notably at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Colima and the Festival International du Film Francophone de Namur. In 2003, he founded his own production company (Marfa Films). Through Marie Films, he produced his first feature documentary La Saison des Amours (2005), which was screened at the Rendez-Vous du Cinéma Québécois and theatrically at the Cinéma Parallèle (Ex-centris) in Montreal. He composed the original music of two documentary films in 2007, and is currently in production on La belle visite, his second feature documentary.
COMPLETE CREDITS

Catbird Productions
presents

UMIAQ SKIN BOAT

a film by
Jobie Weetaluktuk

Pukkik Cultural Group

Umiaq Builders
Daniel Inukpuk
Daniel Oweetaluktuk Kasudluak
Josephie Nalaturuk

Skin Sewers
Elisapie Inukpuk
Jeannie Inukpuk
Nellie Nastapoka
Lydia Eljiqsiapik
Caroline Eljiqsiapik

Helpers
Johnny Kasudluak
Moses Nowkawalk
Simon Makimak

Writer, Director
Jobie Weetaluktuk

Producer
Katarina Soukup

Camera
Jobie Weetaluktuk
Caroline Oweetaluktuk
Lineas Kasudluak

Sound
Rita Lucy Ohaituk
Lineas Kasudluak

Editor
Marie-Christine Sarda

UMIAQ SKIN BOAT
Original Music
Jean-François Caissy

Sound Edit
Éric LeMoyne

Sound Mix
Jacques Comtois

Post-Production Supervisor and On-line Editing
Alexandre Domingue

Photographs
Library and Archives Canada

Nakurmiq (Thank You)
Pukkik Cultural Group of Inukjuak
Avataq Cultural Institute
Nancy Palliser Kalai
Betsy Weetaluktuk

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Produced by

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