

# SISIMIUT ART WALK

DISTANCE: ~4 KM

TIME: ~90 MINS

A self-guided route through nine stops, from harbour carvings and monumental murals to intimate portraits in stone. Along the way, discover stories of family, hunting, fishing and life between coast and interior.



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## **Marine Wildlife**

### **Peter “Kujooq” Kristiansen & team**

#### **2022 - 2024**

Along 268 metres of Sisimiut’s harbour, fish and marine mammals emerge from the exposed rock. Greenlandic artist Peter “Kujooq” Kristiansen and his small team worked with the stone’s natural cracks and contours to create this expansive panorama of marine life.

The setting is part of the story. Fishing and hunting marine mammals have sustained people here for generations, while commercial fisheries helped Sisimiut grow into the town it is today.

These carvings are the marine counterpart to Miki Jacobsen’s terrestrial wildlife murals at Stop 4. Together, the works reflect the movement between coast and interior that is central to the history preserved within the Aasivissuit–Nipisat UNESCO World Heritage area.

Most of the animals are carved directly into the rock. The exception is the shoal of metal ammassat, or capelin, swimming through the panorama. These were attached as the final part of the work.

Follow the rock face and see how many animals you can find. Can you identify them all?



2

## The KGH Mural

**Eva M. Kleist**

**1994**

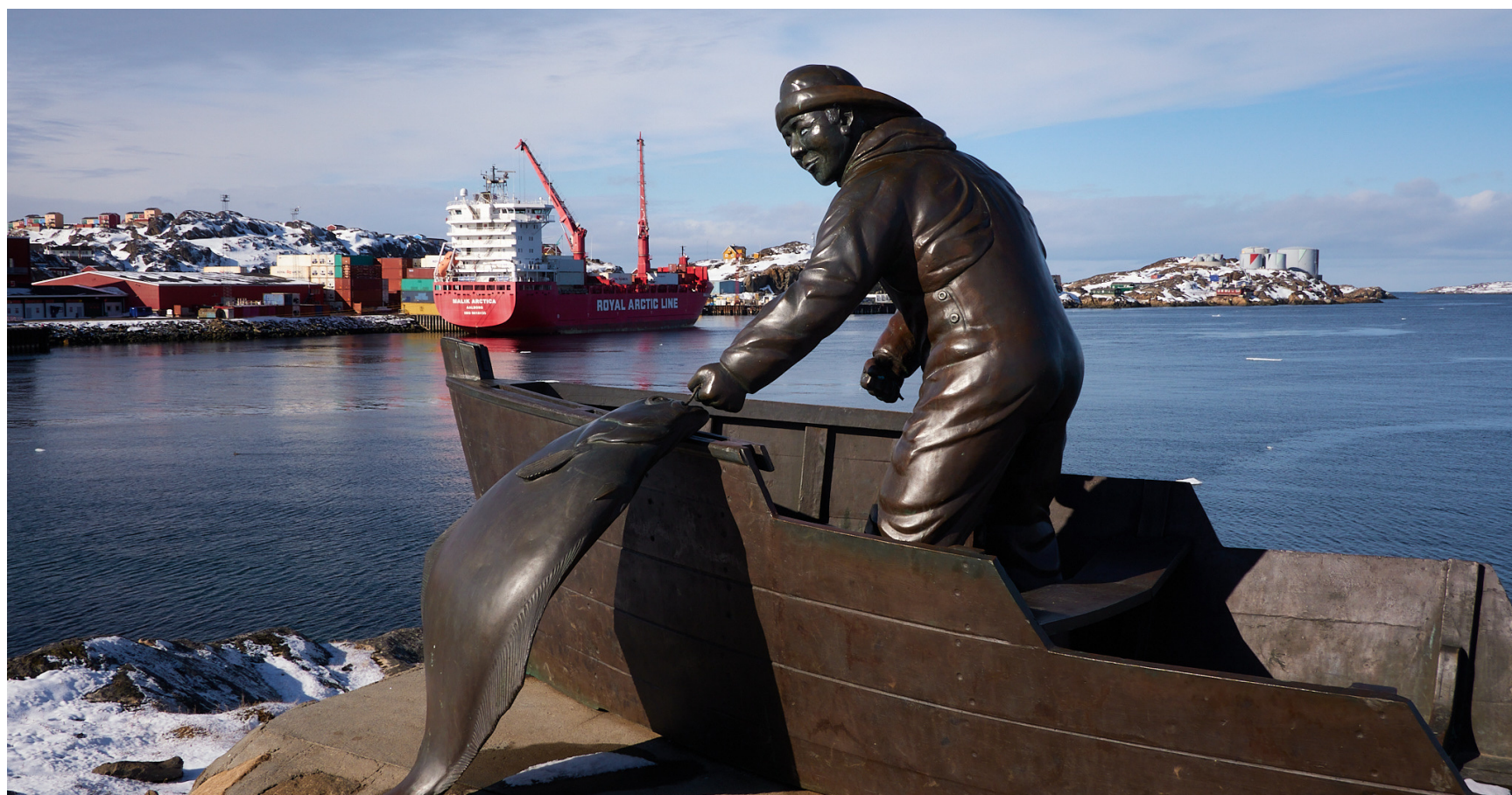
Eva M. Kleist's mural brings hunting, home and trade together in one continuous scene.

Follow the figures along the wall from right to left. A man approaches his kayak. Hunters return with a seal. A woman in traditional clothing uses an ulu to flense another, while the open wall of a winter house reveals scenes of everyday life. At the end closest to the road, blubber is boiled beside rows of barrels marked KGH.

KGH was the Royal Greenland Trading Department, which controlled trade in Greenland for generations. It bought products from local hunters, including seal and whale blubber. Once processed into oil, the blubber could be exported for use in lighting and soap production.

In 1986, the Greenland Government took over KGH and renamed it Kalaallit Niuerniat, or KNI. The inscription therefore connects the mural's historical scenes with the KNI building on which they are painted.

Look for the different stages of the story. How many connections can you find between the hunt, the home and the trading post?



3

## **The Halibut Fisherman**

### **Christian “Nuunu” Rosing**

### **2006**

A fisherman leans over his rowing boat, straining to haul an enormous halibut from the water. Greenlandic artist Christian Rosing created this life-sized bronze from an original sketch by Sisimiut resident Kristian Lennert.

A seven-member volunteer committee raised approximately 800,000 DKK for the memorial. It was presented to Sisimiut during the town’s 250th-anniversary celebrations in September 2006.

The sculpture honours the generations of fishermen whose work helped establish Sisimiut as one of Greenland’s main fishing and industrial centres. Its position overlooking the harbour connects that history with the vessels and fishing industry operating here today.

Look closely at the fisherman’s clothing, boat and working posture. These details recall the early 1900s, when longline fishing from small boats contributed to the growth of Sisimiut’s commercial fishery.

Where does your eye go first: the fisherman’s effort or the extraordinary size of his catch?



4

## Terrestrial Wildlife

Miki Jacobsen

2006

Seven apartment-block gables across Sisimiut have become monumental portraits of the region's land-based wildlife. Painted by Greenlandic artist Miki Jacobsen, who grew up in the town, they depict loons, a musk ox, two reindeer, ptarmigan, Arctic hare and an Arctic fox.

The direction they face is part of the story. You look east to view the murals, towards the inland hunting grounds and Aasivissuit–Nipisat, the UNESCO World Heritage area that extends from ice sheet to ocean. This landscape preserves evidence of 4,200 years of hunting and seasonal movement.

The murals are the terrestrial counterpart to Peter “Kujooq” Kristiansen's marine wildlife carvings in the harbour. Together, the works reflect the long relationship between people, animals and the land and sea around Sisimiut.

Jacobsen uses sweeping black brushstrokes and open white space to create animals several storeys high. In 2023, the loons and one of the reindeer murals appeared on Greenlandic stamps.

Step back and watch how a handful of expressive marks becomes a living animal.



5

## **Reindeer & Summer Tent**

### **Jens Abrahamsen**

### **(unknown)**

Two neighbouring boulders carry scenes connected to summer in Sisimiut's interior. On one, a reindeer fills the stone, its sweeping antlers terminating at the boulder's rounded edge. On the other, the triangular form of a summer tent rises above the stones of a tent ring.

For generations, families travelled inland during summer to hunt reindeer, fish and establish seasonal camps before returning to the coast. The two carvings bring the animal and the human presence in this landscape together.

Abrahamsen adapted each image to the individual form of its boulder. Deeply cut and polished areas stand out against the rough stone, allowing the reindeer and tent to emerge from their natural surroundings.

Walk around both boulders. How has the shape of each stone influenced the image carved into it?



6

## **Family Faces**

### **Jens Abrahamsen**

### **2008**

Two monumental faces emerge from the boulders beside Sisimiut's municipal building. Jens Abrahamsen created them with the help of Dortheivalo L. Jensen and another local assistant.

Despite their imposing scale, these are personal portraits. Abrahamsen modelled the man and woman on members of his own family, giving each face distinct features, clothing and character.

Born in Attu in 1951, Abrahamsen has lived in Sisimiut since 1972. He is one of Greenland's top artisans and best known for carvings that depict Greenlandic people, animals and traditional stories. Here, he transferred the detailed work normally associated with smaller objects to substantial boulders.

Move between the two faces and study them from different angles. Which details make them feel like individual people?



7

## **Two Figures** **Heike Arndt** **1994**

Two life-sized bronze figures sit together on a rock, caught in the middle of an exchange. Created by German-born artist Heike Arndt, the sculptures were acquired by the former Municipality of Sisimiut during the mid-1990s.

Communication is a recurring theme in Arndt's work. Her figures often interact through posture and gesture rather than facial expression. Here, one turns towards the other, while the second raises an arm and points into the distance.

Their simplified faces offer few clues about who they are or what has brought them together. Instead, their bodies invite us to imagine the conversation for ourselves.

Stand where each figure is looking. What might have caught their attention, and what do you think they are discussing?



8

## **Scenes of Travel and Hunting**

### **Artisan students & Jens Abrahamsen**

### **1994**

These carvings were created as a final project by students completing an artisan training programme led by Jens Abrahamsen.

Across several boulders, the students depicted scenes of movement and work. Women in traditional clothing propel an umiaq with paddles. A hunter raises his rifle, while another figure bends beneath the weight of a load (probably reindeer) carried across the land.

The project gave the students an opportunity to transfer the carving skills developed during their training to large public works. Depth, texture and polished surfaces define the figures, clothing and tools, while areas of rough stone remain visible around them.

Compare the different scenes. How have the carvers used posture and repeated lines to convey weight, effort and movement?



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## **Woman and Child**

### **Jens Abrahamsen**

### **(unknown)**

A woman sits with a child nestled against her back, its face appearing just above her shoulder. Their bodies curve into one another, transforming the irregular boulder into an image of protection and care.

The carving depicts an important part of family life. Traditionally designed clothing allowed a woman to carry a young child against her back, keeping it warm while leaving her hands free to work and travel.

Abrahamsen leaves sections of the original stone around the figures, while fine incised lines describe their hair and clothing. The rounded faces and limbs give the carving its sense of warmth.

The red building directly behind the sculpture houses the Artisan Workshop. Step inside to meet local makers and purchase gifts directly from the artisans who created them.

Walk around the carving and watch the two figures gradually separate from the surrounding stone. From which angle does their connection appear strongest?

