

Emmanuelle Léonard

DEPLOYMENT

Curator: Louise Déry

June 9 - November 14, 2023



LA
GALERIE
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Canadian
Cultural
Centre
Paris

In partnership with the Galerie de l'UQAM (Université du Québec à Montréal)

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This booklet has been conceived and edited from the texts written by Louise Déry, for the exhibition "Deployment" at the Galerie de l'UQAM - from November 1st, 2019 to January 25, 2020.



"Deployment": an immersion in Canada's Far North

Caitlin Workman, director of the Canadian Cultural Centre

It is with great pleasure that the Canadian Cultural Centre welcomes you to Emmanuelle Léonard's exhibition, "Deployment", presented in partnership with the Galerie de l'UQAM - Université du Québec à Montréal.

Through captivating photographic and videographic work, produced during a residency within the Canadian Armed Forces, Emmanuelle Léonard offers us a unique immersion in the multiple dimensions of the Canadian Arctic.

Long considered to be a vast, inhospitable expanse, untouched by human presence, the Arctic reveals its full complexity, far from the representations associated with exploration stories and media images, some of which have contributed to shaping a romantic - though false - vision of this region of the globe. Covering 40% of Canada's surface area, the Far North of our country is inhabited by more than 200,000 people, half of whom are Inuit. Rich in culture, lifestyle and language, these communities have an engaged and expert knowledge of their environment.

The geopolitical importance of the region and the implications for Canada have never been greater, with the territory now at the centre of global concerns and growing interest in its natural and energy resources. The race to exploit the Arctic's resources poses a threat to its fragile ecosystem, already significantly affected by climate change for decades.

In following the strategic deployment of the Canadian Armed Forces in the Far North, Emmanuelle Léonard witnesses an exceptional and essential collaboration with Inuit communities, who have always known these lands intimately. Beyond the image of vast expanses of ice, she reveals the crucial importance of local, national and international solidarity for the preservation of this territory and the communities that call it home.

I would like to thank the artist for her exceptional work, as well as all those who contributed to the realization of this exhibition: Louise Déry, curator and director of the Galerie de l'UQAM, Catherine Bédard, deputy director and curator of the Canadian Cultural Centre, Lisa Eymet, who designed this booklet, as well as our entire team.

Enjoy your visit!





Emmanuelle Léonard, Deployment

Louise Déry, Director of the Galerie de l'UQAM and curator of the exhibition

"Deployment" presents a body of work undertaken by Emmanuelle Léonard during a research residency in the Canadian Far North sponsored by the Canadian Forces Artists Program. It is a continuation of the artist's photographic and videographic projects from the past fifteen years, which focused on the hierarchies that form within social, judiciary, military and religious systems. This group of works pursues her interest in the function of authority and the mechanisms by which it is circumvented or undermined.

With this exhibition, Léonard addresses a diverse set of realities: strategic military deployment in a region of the world where the national, political and economic stakes have been raised by climate change; young adults committed to the collective values of the army while remaining intent upon their own personal quest; the Inuit Rangers, without whose contribution one could not learn how to survive in such cold; the innocence of the soldiers' awe before the grandeur of the northern landscape.

In the gallery



Extracts from *Opération Nunavut*, 2019 - 2 videos, colour, sound, 24 min 24 s - Collection of the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, Montreal

The audiovisual installation "Opération Nunavut" consists of a double projection of panoramic images filmed during Emmanuelle Léonard's 2018 research residency.

In the Hercules transport plane that flew the participants to Resolute (Qausuittuq, Nunavut), in the metal shacks that housed them and in the temporary camps they erected on the Arctic horizon, the young soldiers, following the instructions of the Inuit Rangers, carried out manoeuvres at -50° C that seem pointless in this surrealistic world where the cold reigns supreme and the enemy is a mirage.

The video loop's soundtrack of nonstop noise strongly anchors the work in the reality of the subject: the experience is accompanied by the sound of airplane engines, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles and generators, belying the notion of an isolated, silent North where one hears only cracking ice, gusting wind and squalling snow.

As a complement to this video diptych, Emmanuelle Léonard made a series of photographs of soldiers, Rangers, camps and a firing range. The images were captured as she moved through the territory with the troops, mainly by snowmobile in the surrounding areas and by bush plane for expeditions farther afield.



Extracts from *Opération Nunavut*, 2019



Hercules, Winnipeg-Resolute, 2019 - Inkjet print, 111 x 167.2 cm - Collection d'œuvres d'art de l'Université du Québec à Montréal

While pursuing her residency, Emmanuelle Léonard shared in the soldiers' and Inuit Rangers' everyday life. She acquired considerable research experience in the various settings in which she has immersed herself to work.

In the course of Operation Nunavut, her cameras recorded the mission's participants: their activities and expectations, their movements and periods at rest. During training, she most often encountered masked silhouettes covered from head to toe to avoid frostbite. At other times, some faces were unveiled.



Ranger at Night, Resolute, 2019

Inkjet print, 114 x 114 cm

Collection d'œuvres d'art de l'Université du Québec à Montréal

Soldier at Night, Resolute, 2019

Inkjet print, 114 x 114 cm

Collection d'œuvres d'art de l'Université du Québec à Montréal



The Firing Range, 2019 - Inkjet print, 111 x 167.2 cm - Collection d'œuvres d'art de l'Université du Québec à Montréal



Rangers and Soldier, 2019 - Inkjet print, 111 x 167.2 cm

In 2016, on her first northern expedition in Canada (to Salluit and Deception Bay, Nunavik), Emmanuelle Léonard was invited to join the staff of the *Laboratoire international associé BeBEST* focused on the study of marine ecosystems. There, she was in close contact with marine biology researchers from the *Institut des sciences de la mer de Rimouski, Université Laval* (Québec City), and from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, as well as with members of the support team from the Inuit community. In 2019, she took a sampling of the images captured and combined them into a video triptych.

A loop of images that circulate from screen to screen, the work establishes a relationship between different northern worlds: a nocturnal festival with a choreography of all-terrain vehicles whose headlights illuminate the village of Salluit; scientists treating water samples in a Raglan Mine storage depot that served as a laboratory; the rudimentary architecture of the structures, hangars and garages; an ore transport vessel aglow with its lights anchored at the port.

This work soberly suggests an awareness of the often perilous challenges of exploiting the natural resources of the Far North, the resulting water and air pollution, the looming perspective of an intensification of maritime traffic and the pressing need to hasten scientific research in the face of the climate emergency.



Extracts from *A September Night, Salluit – Deception Bay*, 2019
3 videos, colour, no sound, 7 min 5 s



Extracts from *A September Night, Salluit – Deception Bay*, 2019

Resources

Canadian Forces Artists Program

The Canadian Forces Artists Program (CFAP) offers professional artists the opportunity to learn about the personnel, daily operations and spirit of the Canadian Forces, as well as the families and communities affected by Canada's military activities. The artists selected may be deployed on home or foreign soil. During their research residency, they accompany missions in order to develop and create new works in a context that respects their freedom of expression.

*Source: Government of Canada - www.canada.ca
Canadian Forces Artists Program*

Training in the High Arctic

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) conduct various annual training activities in the Far North. One of these is Operation Nunavut, which first took place around Resolute Bay (Qausuittuq), Nunavut, in 2007. In March 2018, Emmanuelle Léonard was present at this huge operation, which, like other missions of this type, fulfills the need for the CAF to maintain federal presence in the North and assert Canada's sovereignty there by demonstrating the ability to function in the region's severe winter conditions, intervene in all types of situations, meaningfully support

scientific research in the Arctic and co-operate with their military allies in the Far North as well as other Canadian government partners.

*Source: Government of Canada - www.canada.ca
Operation Nunavut*

Soldiers and Rangers

The Rangers have been co-operating with the Armed Forces in Canada as reservists since 1947. Today, they number around five thousand. During the military training activities that take place in various Arctic locations, they provide support and expertise to the army instructors to ensure the proper deployment and safety of the young soldiers who are learning to deal with the polar climate. A great many of the Rangers are Inuit from the region. These men and women with indispensable knowledge contribute to preparing operations, the functioning of manoeuvres and the movement of personnel. Speaking twenty-six different languages and dialects, they provide essential contact with the two hundred Inuit communities spread throughout the territory.

*Source: Government of Canada - www.canada.ca
About the Canadian Rangers
www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/canadian-rangers*

On the mezzanine



Landscape, Cornwallis Island, 2019
Inkjet print, 83.6 x 125.4 cm

"Deployment" considers questions as varied as what the young apprentice soldiers are seeking in the Far North, what motivates women to embrace a military career, the relationship between explorers, scientists, miners and the people who live in the Inuit Nunangat – the immense territory that makes up 40% of the Canadian Arctic, where roughly 65,000 Indigenous people live.

Emmanuelle Léonard's work presents images that are challenging to decode because, whether they deal with the recognition of Arctic peoples' rights, the acceleration of global warming, increasing exploitation of the resources of the Far North by mining companies, military presence or the territorial claims of the countries bordering the Arctic Circle, they display facts, people and landscapes without prescribing a point of view.



Waiting for the Twin Otter, 2019
Inkjet print, 83.6 x 125.4 cm

In extremely rigorous climatic conditions, Emmanuelle Léonard photographed both the Arctic landscape and the activities of soldiers entrenched behind the parkas, hoods and goggles that shielded them from the bitter cold. The artist's eye lingered over the equipment that levelled the soldiers' identity.

Her images make them look ghostly and anonymous, their bodies encumbered by heavy clothing. She herself experienced the waiting and relative passivity the soldiers had to endure owing to the vagaries of the weather that condition deployment, the hierarchical chain of decision-making, the limitations of motors that refuse to start and the disturbing northern night that is late in falling or eclipsed altogether.



Arrival at the Firing Range, 2019
Inkjet print, 83.6 x 125.4 cm



Hangar Resolute, 2019
Inkjet print, 83.6 x 125.4 cm



Siesta, 2019
Inkjet print, 83.6 x 125.4 cm



Extract from *Motivations, Amélie*, 2019
Video, colour, sound, 5 min 58 s

Here the artist's attention turns toward the soldier-as-human-being in short video portraits of a dozen volunteers who were asked to describe their impressions of the landscape, the cold, life, remoteness and the nomadic condition brought on by military life.

They appear out of uniform, without masks, some scarcely past adolescence, amid the close quarters of the soldier's life and the immensity of the land, balancing solitude and interdependence. A few minutes each, the black-and-white sequences were filmed very soberly in a nondescript space. Of various languages, cultures and origins, the participants come across more as young people enthusiastic about their discovery of the Arctic than military personnel talking about their job. At first, they appear nervous in front of the camera but then speak spontaneously about the mission's challenges. Their comments enable us to grasp how troubling a physical state the cold induces, a state shared by all, which fosters a feeling of solidarity. And they suggest an attitude of awe before the beauty of the landscape and the northern light.

Next, Emmanuelle Léonard gives the floor to members of the Canadian Forces whom she met at the Valcartier military base, near Québec City. They are professional military personnel – men and women with trades and careers – filmed in their military attire. They answer questions the artist asked about their background, their training, their years of experience in the army and the areas they specialize in.

Emmanuelle Léonard is interested in their motivations and the challenges that punctuated their learning experience, and in establishing a relationship between what is experienced within the organization and how it is perceived from the outside. These brief video-portraits attest a kind of intimacy and express the hesitations and aspirations of individuals whose activities take place at a certain remove from so-called normal life.

In this video, Amélie tells her personal story and describes why she wanted to be a part of the military.



Radar AMISR, Resolute, 2019 - Inkjet print, 83.6 x 125.4 cm

During her Operation Nunavut residency, Emmanuelle Léonard travelled by military chain-track vehicle, snowmobile and bush plane (Twin Otter). In the area around the Resolute base (Qausittuq, Nunavut), the airport and Crystal City (Manitoba), she observed structures such as radar installations and scientific experiments distributed along a twenty-kilometre series of electric poles. Under a sky many shades of blue, she experienced the northern mirage of vast expanses and undefinable distances, with raking light and shadows that grow longer on the all-white ground.



Detail - *Radar AMISR, Resolute*, 2019

Resources

Resolute (Nunavut)

Held every year from 2007 to 2018, Operation Nunalivut was based at Resolute (Qausuittuq in Inuktitut, which means "place without dawn"). The history of this Inuit hamlet figures among the tragic episodes of the colonization of the Canadian High Arctic. It is located on the south coast of Cornwallis Island, at the extreme north of Resolute Bay and the Northwest Passage. It was named for the British vessel HMS Resolute, which set out in search of the Franklin expedition in the mid-nineteenth century. Except for weather stations and some advanced military outposts, it is the second northernmost permanent community in Canada and one of the coldest inhabited places on Earth. Resolute was established for the purpose of asserting Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic during the Cold War.

To do this, the Government of Canada forcibly displaced Inuit families from Nunavik and Nunavut in 1953 and 1955, abandoning them without means of subsistence to a tragic fate. Following an inquiry in 1993 and the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Canadian government officially apologized for "the extreme hardship and suffering caused by the relocation," recognized the perseverance and courage of the survivors and their descendants, and acknowledged

"that these communities have contributed to a strong Canadian presence in the High Arctic." Today, with its airport, Indigenous population and civilian and military presence, Resolute is a hub from which it is possible to reach the farthest northern regions of the archipelago and the North Pole for strategic, military and scientific purposes.

*Source: Government of Canada - www.canada.ca
Apology for the Inuit High Arctic relocation; Nunavut Climate Change Secretariat, www.climatechangenunavut.ca;
The IQQAUMAVARA Project www.iqqaumavara.com.*

The Military Experience and Life Choices

Around 16% of Canadian Forces personnel and 20% of regular force officers are women. Women serve on supply ships, in service battalions, military police squads, units assigned to field ambulances and in most restricted squadrons. They take part in many international missions, including peacekeeping, stability and security operations, and humanitarian aid.

*Source: Government of Canada - www.canada.ca
Statistics on the Representation of Women in the CAF as of April 2022 and Women in the Forces*



Landscape II, 2019

The Canadian Cultural Centre

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The Canadian Cultural Centre also supports Canadian cultural programming throughout France, accompanying Canadian and French institutions in their exchange and cooperation projects.

The Canadian Cultural Centre is also an active member of the Forum des instituts culturels étrangers à Paris (FICEP) supported by the Ministry of Culture since its creation in 2002.

GUIDED TOURS

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WHERE

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ACCESS

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OPENING HOURS

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