



## Events & Announcements

# Imaginative Film Festival: Before Tomorrow

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*In Conversation with the Arnait Video Collective:  
Madeline Piujuq Ivalu and Susan Avingaq (Jesse  
Wente/CBC)*

The 9th Annual [imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival](#) kicked off Wednesday October 15th in Toronto. Our festival blogger, CBC Radio and TV Film and Pop Culture Critic **Jesse Wente**, will be providing regular updates. Here's Jesse's third report:

## Before Tomorrow

Saturday night at the festival was a special one for me. I once again was able to spend it with the **Arnait Collective**, the amazing group of women who made the remarkable film *Before Tomorrow*. The film screened before a packed audience, making four sold out screenings for this movie in Toronto (3 at TIFF and 1 at imagineNative.) I've seen this film several times now, and it makes me cry every time.

[Before Tomorrow](#) is set in the mid 1800's in a small Inuit community. After an especially bountiful catch, Ningiuq (**Madeline Piujuq Ivalu**; pictured with writer/art director **Susan Avingaq**) and her best friend Kutuujuk (**Mary Qulitalik**) travel to a remote island with her grandson Maniq (**Paul Dylan Ivalu**) to dry the fish. But while they're there, Kutuujuk begins to fall ill, and when no one comes to take them back home, Ningiuq fears the worst.

The movie is a stunning achievement and among the best movies made in Canada this year. It's filmed in that same observational style that distinguished *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* and *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, the two films made by Zacharias Kunuk and Norm Cohn, who serve as executive producers on *Before Tomorrow*. The performances are engrossing in their naturalism and the film has a very tangible sense of history recreated. It also re-imagines Canada's wilderness legacy from a distinctly Aboriginal point of view - the environment is no longer something to be tamed, but is rather existence itself. Likely to be released sometime in 2009, this is a must-see movie.

Adding to its allure are the filmmakers behind it, a group of women based out of Igloolik who have been making videos for almost 20 years. Founded by Marie-Hélène Cousineau, the [Arnait Collective](#) has made mostly community based documentaries since the early

nineties. It's invaluable work, capturing a lifestyle and culture from within, and preserving the stories of the elders for the future generations. Even with all of that experience, *Before Tomorrow* is still surprisingly assured, and suggests that even greater things may be coming from this small group of women, making movies in Canada's north.

[The screening on Friday was followed by a panel discussion moderated by yours truly.](#) Even though I've spent quite a bit of time with these filmmakers, this was really the first time we got to sit down and really discuss their production process and their philosophy of cinema. It was enlightening, as they discussed the cooperation and communication that is so integral to their work, and which seems to be apparent on screen. They are wickedly funny, amusing the audience with stories of being nervous commanding the male crew around and stories from their youth. But perhaps the highlight came at the end, when Susan Avingaq put on an impromptu fashion show, explaining her outfit's use as a maternity garment, and its ability to block the weather. It was a hilarious and wonderfully warm moment - another memory for me in what has been one of the most significant events in my career, being able to spend time with these women and to see this film reach an audience like it has.