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ÁNORÂK FILM, RED MARROW MEDIA and EYESTEELFILM  
present

# TWICE COLONIZED

A Film By Lin Alluna

Written by Aaju Peter

Produced by Emile Hertling Péronard, Alethea Arnaquq-Baril,  
Stacey Aglok MacDonald, and Bob Moore



**WORLD PREMIERE - 2023 Sundance Film Festival - World Documentary Competition**

Mins 92 | Language English, Danish, Kalaallisut, Inuktitut w/ subtitles | Year 2023 | Country Greenland/Denmark/Canada |

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#### **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

Renowned Inuit lawyer Aaju Peter has led a lifelong fight for the rights of her people. But while launching an effort to establish an Indigenous forum at the European Union, Aaju finds herself facing a difficult, personal journey to mend her own wounds after the unexpected passing of her son.

#### **MEDIUM SYNOPSIS**

Renowned Inuit lawyer Aaju Peter has led a lifelong fight for the rights of her people. But while launching an effort to establish an Indigenous forum at the EU, Aaju finds herself facing a difficult and deeply personal journey to mend her own wounds after the unexpected passing of her youngest son. In this “powerful exploration of cultural trauma” (The Film Stage), director Lin Alluna follows alongside Aaju Peter as she strives to reclaim her identity after a lifetime of whitewashing and forced assimilation.

#### **LONG SYNOPSIS**

Renowned Inuit lawyer Aaju Peter has led a lifelong fight for the rights of her people. A member of a historically marginalized and oppressed community, Aaju’s heritage puts her in the unique position of someone who has been “twice colonized” – first by European settlers who arrived in the Arctic, and then by modern-day Canadian policies and institutions. But while launching an effort to establish an Indigenous forum at the EU, Aaju finds herself facing a difficult and deeply personal journey to mend her own wounds after the unexpected passing of her youngest son.

In this “powerful exploration of cultural trauma” (The Film Stage), director Lin Alluna follows alongside Aaju Peter as she strives to reclaim her language and identity after a lifetime of whitewashing and forced assimilation.

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#### **DIRECTOR'S Q&A with LIN ALLUNA**

**How did this film come about? How did the idea originate? What inspired you?** I first met Aaju Peter by coincidence seven years ago in Copenhagen, when I was still at film school. I didn't know who she was back then, but I was immediately captivated by her, so I got the courage to invite her out for a cup of coffee. I was honored that she took time to meet with me and those first hours I spent with Aaju were life changing to me. She revealed hidden truths about myself and the history of my country, that I knew I had to find a way to share. Aaju lit a fire in me - and two years later we started filming together. Aaju Peter very generously shares her life story and bares her soul, for us to learn from her. I hope she'll empower those who watch the film, like she's inspired all of us who came together to make this film with her.

**How long did it take to make the film? From concept to finish.**

It took us seven years from the first time we ran into each other in 2015 till we had a finished film. It was a journey full of laughter, tears and (for me) many realizations, as we were building up a trusting relationship and developing the film.

**Why did you make this film?**

Collaborating with Aaju on this film, I have personally learned so much and I still have lots to learn. As a Dane, I feel a responsibility to use my opportunity with this film to expose chapters of Denmark's colonial history, and portray some of the present day effects of colonization in both Europe and Canada - not only to my own countrymen, but to the world. My goal is to support Aaju's work and hopefully inspire steps we can take towards a better future. In Europe we make decisions that affect Indigenous land and lives, but it's time we take responsibility for our continued colonial behavior and ensure Indigenous people a seat in European politics.

**Share a story about filming.**

The second time I was invited to shoot with Aaju Peter was for two days in Bruxelles, where she was giving a speech on sealing at the EU. At the same time, I was invited on a vacation with my new in-law family, but I knew it was a once in a lifetime opportunity getting to work with Aaju, so I cut the vacation short and went to Bruxelles instead. I'm not sure what happened, but for some reason our phone services couldn't connect, so I ended up waiting in a hotel lobby for Aaju for an entire day. I was afraid to move and miss her, so I just sat there in front of the door till she finally came. We laughed so much when we found each other! I think she took pity on me, because she invited me to come stay at her couch and we ended up spending the whole night talking and walking around the city.

**Did the film change from your original idea for the film as you were filming or in post?** Aaju Peter is the main source of inspiration and vision for this film. The core concept of the film actually didn't change much during the years, because we always had an ambition of showing the personal effects of colonization and cinematically bending the limits of reality.

Being a co-production we worked with filmmakers from both Denmark, Greenland and Canada. It was at times complicated, but for instance gave us the luxury of working with the incredible cinematographers Iris Ng, Glauco Bermudez and David Bauer who each added their own personal touch to the film and lifted the visual side of the film cinematically. E.g. it was David who first suggested shooting new scenes on super8 and it was Iris and Glauco who ended up shooting it. For me those scenes are such a fundamental part of what makes this film special.

I cannot stress enough how important editor Mark Bukdahl's bold and sensitive touch has been to making this film what it is - there's not a clip in the film that doesn't have a purpose and it was a

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privilege to work with someone with his hyper intuition of emotional storytelling and dynamic use of footage.

I'm ambitious and particular about the film's cinematic tone, and I was just blown away by the sound. To me the music Olivier Alary and Johannes Malfatti composed was both delicate and powerful - I never imagined it could be that precise, but when I watch the film, I'm still very moved by Celina Kalluk's throat singing and vocals, because she unexpectedly became like an echo of Aaju's emotions. Experiencing the film come together in the sound universe Benoît Dame and Catherine Van Der Donckt created, was such a joy, because it embraced the film so elegantly.

Making this film has been a long journey, but everyone gave their heart to each detail of the film and I'm extremely grateful that I got the opportunity to work with such artists. It is thanks to the team behind the scenes that Twice Colonized became greater than what me and Aaju could ever have achieved by ourselves.

#### **What were the challenges in making this film?**

As a white Dane, I'm historically embedded in the colonization under which Aaju Peter has suffered, but I also have the possibility to confront my country with its past. Especially producer Emile Hertling Péronard, who was with me from early on in the process, was a big part of finding a way that was ethically and creatively sustainable both behind and in front of the camera. It was because of him that we came to produce with Alethea Arnaquq-Baril and Stacey Aglook, ensuring an Inuit led production.

On shoots I would do everything I could to have the flexibility to go with what felt right to Aaju in the moment. That meant we were spontaneously changing plans, which was challenging conditions for the production team, but at the same time being in an ongoing dialogue with Aaju about what, when and why to shoot was essential to the process.

As a director, it can be scary not having absolute control or agency over the film on shoots or in edit, but I have no doubt that Aaju and I empowered each other to make a better film together. I wouldn't do it any other way and I'm thankful for the producers who came together and fought hard to make this collaboration method possible within the funding systems.

#### **What were the successes that you had in making this film?**

Producers Emile Hertling Péronard, Alethea Arnaquq-Baril and Stacey Aglook Macdonald are all Inuit producers, but from opposite sides of the colonial borders that Denmark and Canada have imposed on their people. Twice Colonized will be the first formal co-production between Inuit from Greenland and Canada, and thus an example of decolonization in that the colonial borders will be dissolved in the process of making the film. The collaborative aspects of my work methods enabled us to come together as a team and tell this very important story from a unique perspective. I think it's been eye-opening for all of us to work like this and experience how it elevates the film.

On a personal level, I was very moved two years ago, when I heard Aaju say that people have chosen for her all her life, but she chose me to make this film. I take that responsibility and trust very seriously, and I'm honored to be working with her.

**Where do you find inspiration or who/what has influenced you as a filmmaker?** I was so inspired when I read "Split Tooth" by Tanya Tagaq because she moves freely between fiction, memoir, myth, reality, and poetry, portraying a heroine in a way that empowers the reader. To me, getting editor Mark Bukdahl on board our team was the last ingredient we were missing to find the right balance in the film's language, which I hope people will experience as both political, personal and poetic. In my opinion truth is a discussion and as a director I try not to reduce the complexity of the world into one objective angle. Reality is complicated. It's impossible for me to

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give a 100% accurate account of who Aaju is and what she's been through. Only she will ever fully know that. Twice Colonized is a portrait of Aaju and I hope it will leave the audience feeling empowered to make a difference, because that's how Aaju makes me feel.

**Was there something special technically that you utilized in making this film?** Aaju is a brilliant storyteller and has such a strong, poetic language, so when she described her experience as a child being taken to Denmark as "being white washed", I got the idea to visualize the white washing scene by staging a performance on super 8. It was very moving that so many people came together to make the scene happen and I felt privileged to be part of such a powerful moment.

**What do you want audiences to take away from this film?**

No matter who you are, where you come from and what you've been through you can lead the way for future generations to thrive. You don't have to be perfect to make a difference. Your story is your power.

**What do you hope people will take away from this film?**

As a Dane, I am by definition part of the colonial system that Aaju's been subjected to her whole life. I feel a responsibility to use my opportunity with this film to expose chapters of Denmark's colonial history and portray some of the present day effects of colonization in both Europe and Canada - not only to my own countrymen, but to the world. I hope that the collaboration between Aaju Peter's knowledge and authenticity as a storyteller, along with my artistic approach as a filmmaker who challenges conventional genre boundaries, is the recipe to achieve a more universal conversation and create change.

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**PARTICIPANT Q&A with AAJU PETER**

**How did the film team/filmmaker approach you about the film? Why did you agree to participate?**

I met Lin Alluna in Copenhagen where I had been invited to give a talk on sealing and how the European seal ban negatively affected the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of the Inuit in the circumpolar arctic.

Lin had seen me walking outside in one of the streets in Copenhagen. She told me that she wanted to speak with me and when she asked me if I wanted to go for coffee with her I agreed. She was interested in learning more about my story so I told her about having been sent to school in Denmark from Greenland as a child, how I lost my mother tongue and my connection to my Greenlandic, my culture and how to be a Greenlander.

In 1979 a year after I had moved back to Greenland there was a big gathering of Inuit from Greenland, Canada, and Alaska. I did not know that other Inuit existed other than greenlanders. I was very much taken by this. I met one of the Canadian Inuit and moved with him to Iqaluit when he moved back home to Nunavut in Canada in 1980 for a visit. I have lived in Iqaluit since 1981.

I think the reason why I have protected Inuit rights to their language and culture is because those were taken from me. I was just a child and I did not have a choice. As an adult, I have a choice and I chose to protect Inuit language and cultural rights.

**What do you want audiences to take away from this film?**

That others can impose their language and culture on you and inhabit totally your mind and take your language and culture away from you but with hard work and persistence you can regain what was taken and go beyond.

My mother-in-law once told me, "It is your choice to get angry, no one can make you angry". That was in response to me telling her of how someone had made me angry. I have since come to understand that she was right. We all have choices and we all make choices every day.

I have come to understand that we all need to do our part to make life better for ourselves and others. It is not all about you. It is all about us.

**Where do you find inspiration?**

I find my inspiration from children, young people and young adults. I find that their approach is that life is full of possibilities. I find that their minds are not constrained towards all the things that can be done in life. I find that so refreshing. I also find my inspiration from world leaders who inspired change despite unbelievable obstacles, hardships, and seemingly impossible goals. What inspires me is that at the end of a lifetime of struggle, they persevered and made the world a better place for others.

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#### **FILMMAKERS BIOS**

##### **Director**

###### **Lin Alluna**

Lin Alluna expresses herself through international, character-driven documentaries. She graduated in 2017 as a documentary director from the National Film School of Denmark and was selected as one of the new Nordic Talents the same year. Her artistic focus revolves around intimacy and dissolving the limits of reality. In 2020, she was selected for the CIRCLE Women Doc Accelerator program. Her directorial debut TWICE COLONIZED was awarded the top IEFTA (Intl. Film Talent Assn.) award for docs-in-progress at the Cannes Film Market's documentary-focused industry sidebar Cannes Docs, and will World Premiere at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival.

##### **Protagonist and Co-Writer**

###### **Aaju Peter**

Aaju is an ardent defender of the rights of Canada's northern Indigenous people and issues related to sustainability and resources. In 2011 she received Canada's highest honor, the Order of Canada, and since then she has been called upon as an advisor in both EU and UN. It is Aaju's first work as a writer, but her natural flair for storytelling and in-depth knowledge of the colonization in both Greenland and Canada has made it a natural choice.

##### **Editor**

###### **Mark Bukdahl**

Mark Bukdahl graduated from the National Film School of Denmark in 2017 and his works has since competed at IDFA, CPH:DOX, Hot Docs, Berlinale and BFI London Film Festival. Variety and The Hollywood Reporter describe his gaze as critical and impressionistic, without passing judgment on the individuals tangled up in it, he displays genuine virtuosity in selection and juxtaposition to keep the viewer janglingly on-edge from start to finish.

##### **Cinematographer**

###### **Iris Ng**

Iris Ng is a Canadian cinematographer whose most notable work turns a critical lens on social issues, justice, and filmmaking itself. Her background in visual art, photography, and music have enriched her work with artists and filmmakers since 2008. Her body of work includes the Academy-shortlisted documentaries Stories We Tell (Sarah Polley, 2012) and Shirkers (Sandi Tan, 2018).

##### **Producer**

###### **Emile Hertling Péronard**

Emile Hertling Péronard is a Greenlandic film producer based in Denmark with production company Ánorâk Film operating out of both Nuuk and Copenhagen. Working to build bridges between Europe and the Arctic through films, Emile focuses on documentaries as well as fiction projects. He recently launched Greenland's first production service company, Polarama Greenland, to advance the Greenlandic film industry and pave the way for more authentic screen content from Greenland. He has been an advisor for the Berlinale, is on the steering group of ARTEF - the Anti-Racism Taskforce for European Film, and his films have screened at Cannes, Venice, Berlinale, Sundance, with Aquarela (2018) being shortlisted for the Feature Documentary Oscar.

##### **Producer**

###### **Alethea Arnaquq-Baril**

Alethea is an Inuit filmmaker and activist from Canada, known for her work on Inuit life and culture. She was awarded the Canadian Meritorious Service Cross MSC, in 2017 in recognition of her work as an activist and filmmaker. She directed and produced Hot Docs Audience Award-winner "Angry

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Inuk" (2016) and the documentary was also included in the list of 'Canada's Top Ten' feature films of 2016.

#### **Producer**

##### **Stacey Aglok MacDonald**

Stacey Aglok is an Inuit Producer/Writer/Director based in Iqaluit, Nunavut. Raised in Kugluktuk, Stacey got her start as a production assistant in a documentary. It was her first drama, Throat Song (2013), that launched her career. Since then she has helped produce and direct one of the most well-known Inuit language television shows, Qanurli.

#### **Producer**

##### **Bob Moore**

Bob Moore is Co-President and Creative Producer at EyeSteelFilm in Montreal where he has produced over 40 feature documentaries since 2008. Together with his talented partners and collaborators, he has been the recipient of over 100 international awards, including Emmys, Cinema Eyes, Golden Horses, Owls, Phoenixes, and a variety of other celebratory animal-themed prizes. He's been the subject of a Producer's Spotlight at the Cannes Marché du Film, is currently an advisor and mentor working with the Sundance Film Festival, IDFA, DMZ Docs South Korea, QUMRA, Tokyo Docs, Dhaka DocLab Bangladesh, Hot Docs, and RIDM.



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**FULL CREDIT LIST**

**DIRECTOR(S)**

LIN ALLUNA

**SCREENWRITER**

AAJU PETER

**PRODUCER**

EMILE HERTLING PÉRONARD

ALETHEA ARNAQUQ-BARIL

STACEY AGLOK MACDONALD

BOB MOORE

**EDITOR**

MARK BUKDAHL

**CINEMATOGRAPHER**

IRIS NG

DAVID BAUER

GLAUCO BERMUDEZ

LIN ALLUNA

**ORIGINAL MUSIC**

OLIVIER ALARY

JOHANNES MALFATTI

CELINA KALLUK

**SOUND DESIGN**

BENOÎT DAME

CATHERINE VAN DER DONCKT

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS**

INUK SILIS HØEGH

MILA AUNG-THWIN

DANIEL CROSS

**LINE PRODUCER**

VALERIE SHAMASH

**ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**

KATIE MCKAY