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Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)

Canada, 2001 , 172 minutes

Director: Zacharias Kunuk

Cast: Natar Ungalaaq, Sylvia Ivalu, Peter-Henry Arnatsiaq, Lucy Tulugarjuk, Madeline Ivalu **Producer:** Paul Apak Angilirq, Norman Cohn, Zacharias Kunuk, **Screenplay:** Paul Apak Angilirq **Cinematographer:** Norman Cohn **Editor:** Zacharias Kunuk, Norman Cohn, Marie-Christine Sarda **Music:** Chris Crilly **Production Company:** Igloodik Isuma Productions Inc. / National Film Board of Canada **Print Source:** Igloodik Isuma Production Inc. **Format:** 35mm

Recipient of the Camera d'Or for the Best First Feature at the 2001 Cannes Film Festival, this captivating film from renowned sculptor and video artist Zacharias Kunuk merges tradition with technology to bring an ancient Inuit legend to the screen.

Evil in the form of an unknown shaman divides a small community of nomadic Inuit, upsetting its balance and its spirit of cooperation. Twenty years later, two brothers Amaqjuaq (The Strong One) and Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner) find themselves caught up within this cycle of vengeance, when Atanarjuat wins the hand of the lovely Atuat away from the boastful son of the camp leader.

With painstaking attention to historical detail and Inuit storytelling traditions, Paul Apak Angilirq consulted elders at each stage in his preparation of the first ever screenplay to be written in Inuktitut. Yet, this film is not a documentary, but rather a compelling drama that is both culturally specific and universally accessible. Set in the Arctic at the dawn of the first millennium, the story of Atanarjuat has been passed down through the generations as a cautionary tale against the dangers of setting personal desires above communal needs. Norman Cohn's skillfully executed digital cinematography lends a sense of immediacy, while also adeptly capturing the stunning beauty of the Arctic landscape. Richly textured and thoroughly entertaining, *Atanarjuat* clearly stands as a landmark achievement in Canadian cinema.

Diane Burgess

Fri., Sept. 28, 7:00 p.m.,
Vogue Theatre <ATANA>

Sun., Sept. 30, 3:00 p.m.,
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