



MORE!

Im Norden Kanadas trainieren junge Zirkuskünstler bei schneidender Kälte im ewigen Eis. Einen ihrer aufregendsten Auftritte hatten sie bei sengender Hitze im Sand Afrikas. **ANN CHANDLER** spricht mit zwei jungen Inuit über ihr Leben beim ungewöhnlichsten Zirkus der Welt.

SCHWIERIGER

A cool circus like no other



The circus has come to town! About 20 young performers balance on each other's shoulders, juggle with clubs, and fly through the air.

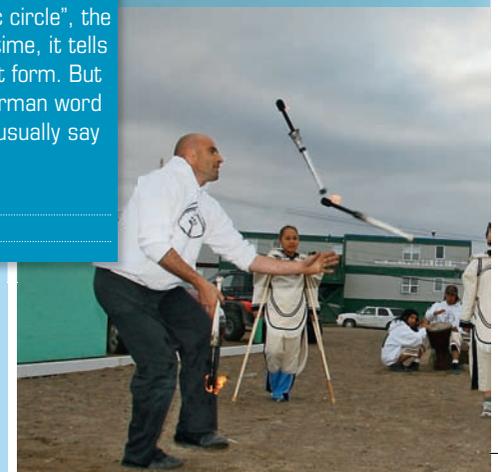
Artcirq, the world's only Inuit circus, uses such performances to teach people about Inuit culture.

WORD WATCH

The clever name **Artcirq** sounds like a compressed form of "arctic circle", the Inuit's home. At the same time, it tells us that circus is also an art form. But don't be misled by the German word *Artist(-in)* – in English, we usually say "circus performer".

to compress zusammendrücken
to mislead irreführen

Fotos: Artcirq Productions (2)





Der Zirkus Artcirq

- is the world's only Inuit youth circus and performs all over the world.
- started in Igloolik in Nunavut, Canada in 1998 to fight teen depression and suicide.
- blends juggling and acrobatics with elements of Inuit culture, like throat-singing.
- includes a video production company that has made seven documentaries and short films about the circus and the Inuit people.
- also has a band with a CD called *Artcirq Jam*.
- organizes performances, concerts, workshops and camps in Igloolik and around the world.

To watch videos of Artcirq, go to: isuma.tv/artcirq

to blend jam (session) mischen eigentlich: ☺ Musiker-Treffen zum gemeinsamen Improvisieren



One of the performers is 17-year-old **Nikita Ungalaq**, an acrobat and contortionist. She also performs traditional Inuit singing, called throat-singing. "Artcirq has changed my life," Nikita told **Spot on**. "I don't know what I'd do without it. It's helped me to make friends and travel to so many places. It's such a great feeling to perform and know that you're making people smile."

Nikita found it hard to learn hand-to-hand tricks, in which you balance on someone's hands. The hardest trick she has to do is called a three-man-high, when three people stand on each other's shoulders. "It's not easy to keep your balance for such a long time," she said. "I always feel like I'm going to fall and injure myself. But I never do." Now Nikita is learning a new trick – juggling.

In the Nunavut region of northern Canada, Nikita lives in a small town called Igloolik. Nunavut makes up about a fifth of the country and it's home to around 29,000 indigenous people, called Inuit. Unfortunately, Inuit are plagued by unemployment, poverty and other serious problems. Their suicide rate is ten times the national average.



Nikita – "It's great making people smile"

Fotos: Nunawit Tourism (o.); Artcirq Productions (u.)

to juggle	jonglieren
club	hier: Keule
Inuit ['i:nuɪt]	Bezeichnung der Eskimos für ihr Volk
contortionist	Schlangenmensch,
[kən'tɔ:ʃnɪst]	Verrenkungkünstler(-in)
throat-singing	Kehlkopfesang
indigenous [ɪn'dɪʒənəs]	einheimisch; hier: Eingeborenen-
to plague [pleɪg]	plagen



Guillaume Saladin is a circus acrobat from Quebec, the French-speaking province in eastern Canada. When he was younger, he spent a lot of time at hunting camps in Igloolik. After hearing that five young Inuit a year committed suicide in Igloolik, he decided something needed to be done to help. So, Guillaume helped to start Artcirq there in 1998.

The first teens to join Artcirq learned acrobatics from Guillaume in a drained swimming pool, using primitive, hand-made equipment and old mattresses. "The equipment wasn't important," Guillaume explained. "The important thing was bringing the teens together, getting them to trust each other and share a new experience."

Learning acrobatics is hard. It requires patience and discipline. But Guillaume kept encouraging his pupils so they wouldn't give up. "If you have goals, you need to work hard," he said. "If you give up, nothing will happen."



Artcirq – on stage and on ice

to drain	entleeren
goal	hier: Ziel
to come a long way	hier: viel erreichen
sled	Schliitten
adaptable [ə'dæptəbl]	anpassungsfähig; hier: flexibel

Little by little, every day – that's how you succeed in life."

Since those early days, the Artcirq troupe have come a long way. They perform all over Canada, and have also been to Mexico, Ireland, France and even Africa. They often perform for other Arctic communities, travelling on snowmobiles and sleds in winter or on boats in summer. And back in February, six of them performed at the Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver.

In early 2008, the troupe left their homes in Igloolik, where it was minus 50 °C, and travelled to Mali in West Africa, where it was 40 °C.

In fact, it was so hot they slept during the day and performed at night at the Festival of the Desert, near the city of Timbuktu. "We're very adapt-able," said Guillaume. "We can perform indoors or outdoors – on ice or on sand."

Die Stadt Igloolik

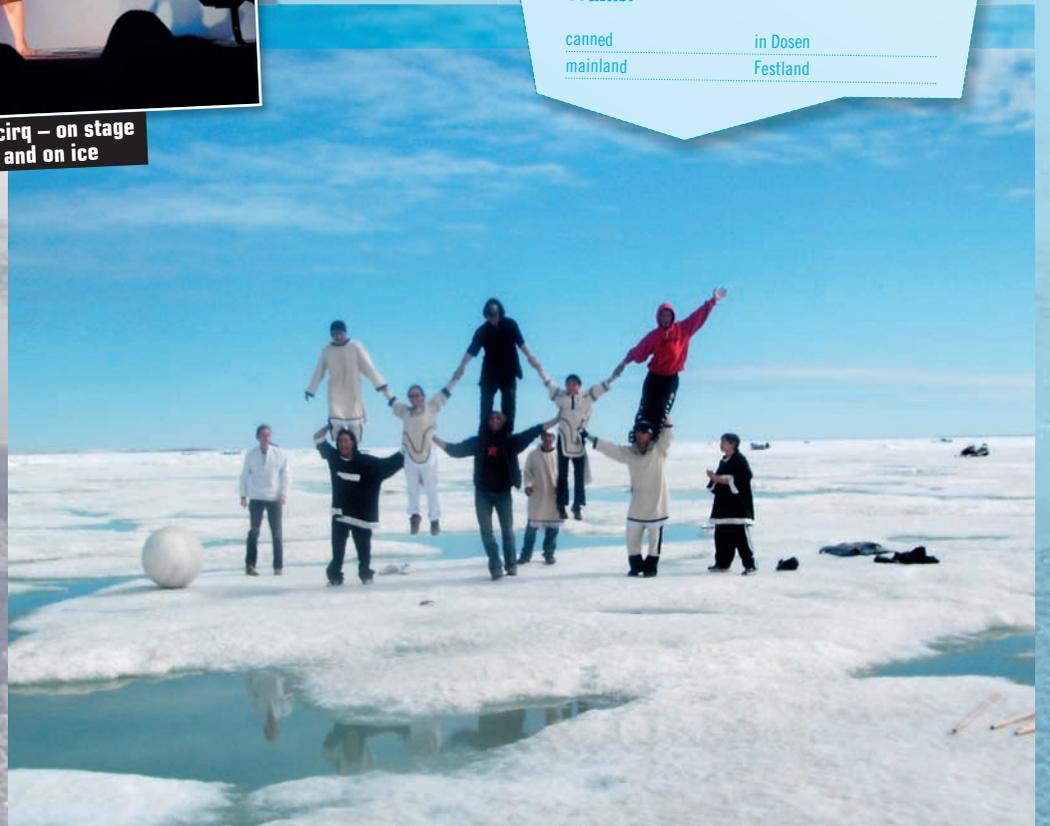
Igloolik is a small town of about 1,500 people on Igloolik Island in Nunavut, in northern Canada. Its name means "there is house here" in the Inuit languages, known together as Inuktitut.

From October to July the town is surrounded by sea ice. Average temperatures range from minus 31 °C to just 7 °C. At the height of summer, there's daylight 24 hours a day.

Products like canned food, cars and houses have to be brought over on big ships from the mainland – when the water isn't frozen.

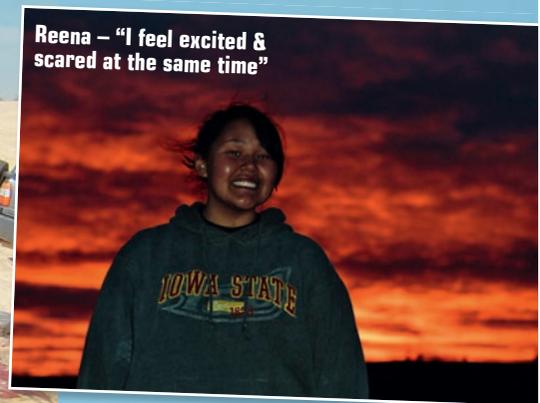
The town is home to the world's only Inuit circus, Artcirq, and to the Igloolik Research Centre, which collects information about Inuit culture. Since the circus started, the town has had more services for young people, including a youth group and sports teams.

canned	in Dosen
mainland	Festland





In Mali – from minus 50 to plus 40 °C



Reena – “I feel excited & scared at the same time”

In 2001, Reena acted in a film called *Atanarjuat*. It was the first film ever made in the Inuit languages of Canada, which are collectively known as Inuktitut. Over the years, Artcirc has evolved and now boasts a video production company and a band. Reena

While in Mali, the troupe learned about Malian culture and had the opportunity to play with local musicians, whose singing style is surprisingly similar to Inuit throat-singing. Experiences like these change a person's outlook. “It’s such a dream to travel to the other side of the world and teach people about our culture and learn about their culture,” said Nikita. “Artcirc has changed the way I see the world outside of Igloolik.”

Fotos: Artcirc Productions (c)

Nikita joined the circus about five years ago and trains with the troupe two to three times a week. “Before every performance, I get butterflies in my tummy,” she explained. “I take a deep breath and hope that I won’t make a mistake. During the show, I feel good knowing that everyone is watching and having a good time. And afterwards, we give each other a group hug and feel happy, because we know there are many more performances to come.”

works on Artcirc films, which are usually documentaries about the troupe and about Inuit culture.

But three years ago, when Reena first joined Artcirc, she found the training very demanding, especially the acrobatics. “At first, I thought I couldn’t do it,” she said. “But I never considered giving up. The troupe have such great energy that it made me want to stay and learn.” ●

Die Menschen Inuit

- are indigenous people of the Arctic regions of Canada, Russia and Alaska.
- are known as Eskimos in the US state of Alaska.
- usually speak one of the traditional Inuit languages or dialects as well as the native language of their country.
- traditionally hunt and fish. They still hunt whales, walrus, caribou, seals, polar bears, birds and other animals.
- still practise Inuit traditions, including storytelling, throat-singing and drum-dancing.
- do traditional Inuit sports at the Arctic Winter Games, held every two years since 1970.

native language [ˈneɪtɪv]
seal

Muttersprache; hier: Landessprache
Seehund, Robbe

In March 2009, Nikita went with the troupe to perform in Paris. Also on that trip was 19-year-old **Reena Qulitalik**.

“It was amazing,” Reena told us. “When I travel somewhere I’ve never been before, I feel excited and scared at the same time. But it’s a good kind of scared!”

to learn about something	mehr über etwas erfahren
outlook	hier: Anschauung, Einstellung
tummy	☺ Bauch
hug	Umarmung
to evolve [ɪˈvɒlv]	(sich) (weiter-)entwickeln
to boast	prahlen; hier: (vorzuweisen) haben
demanding	anstrengend

Music, Artcirc-style

