



Inuit tattoo artist Kyra Kilabuk tattoos Micheline Kilabuk-Cote's temple in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada. — AFP photos



Inuit tattoo artist Kyra Kilabuk poses for a photo in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada.

INUIT WOMEN'S FACIAL TATTOOS MAKE A COMEBACK IN ARCTIC

Inuit women in Canada's far north are bringing back a lost ancient tradition of facial tattooing that missionaries once declared "evil." Time-honored tattoos for Inuit women include V-shapes on temples, dots on cheeks and lines on chins. A tattoo artist uses a shiny needle to dot ink on the temple of Micheline Kilabuk-Cote, 37, a symbol depicting the close bond she has with her two sisters. Kilabuk-Cote is a civil servant in Iqaluit, the capital of the Nunavut territory. She said she has been "wanting to do this for a very long time," to reclaim her heritage and honor her mother, who died 19 years ago.

"I hadn't had a chance to really connect with her and her culture," she told AFP, explaining that her mother had been denied an opportunity to be tattooed. "This is for her." Strikingly visible on the chin, forehead and chest, such traditional tattoos were for a long time a means to transmit information about the life of a woman, her interests, or her status in the community. Some had their fingers and hands tattooed to honor Sedna, the goddess of the sea in Inuit mythology. Others on thighs indicated that they were mothers.

But the practise faced opposition from Anglican and Catholic churches who sent missionaries to the Arctic. They said "tattoos were evil," Gerri Sharpe, president of Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, which represents Inuit women in Canada, told AFP. Bit by bit, the tradition faded. But a few years ago, an Inuit artist started a revitalization project after learning that the last traditionally tattooed Inuit woman was dying. Hovak Johnston traveled to northern communities to teach different techniques for Inuit women of all ages to get tattoos.

Public figures have also contributed to the art form's rise, such as Mumilaaq Qaqqaq, who at age 25 became the first Inuit woman with a facial tattoo to be elected to Canada's parliament in 2019. She served a single two-year term. Then in 2021, Shina Nova, an Inuit singer and influencer, posted videos of her tattoo session, viewed more than 40 million times on TikTok.

Tattoos empowering

There's strong demand wherever there are Inuit, says Zorqa Qaunaq, who recently led a workshop with six

people in Iqaluit. The Inuit university program staffer does two tattoos a week at her home in the national capital of Ottawa-home to the largest population of Inuit outside of the far north. It mainly receives young people aged 20 or 30, but also a few teenagers. "It's healing and therapeutic," for some Inuit, she said. After leaving the north when she was young, the now 34-year-old said she felt "disconnected" from her culture. Getting a tattoo was a way of asserting her identity. "It's empowering to have my tattoos," she said.

Gerri Sharpe, 52, with markings on her fingers, wrists and face, echoed this sense of pride. "They are very significant and sacred," she said, adding that she showed off her tattoos to Pope Francis during his visit to Canada in July to apologize for abuses at church-run Indigenous residential schools. The pontiff made a stop in Iqaluit. "It was important for me to show him that we still had our tattoos, (that) they are still alive and well and being revitalized, that (the tradition) was not lost," she explained. — AFP



Inuit teens learn how to cook salmon over an open fire at a summer camp in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada.

Netflix subscriber numbers re-ignite after chilly start

Netflix on Tuesday reported that it gained more than 2 million subscribers in the recent quarter, calming investor fears that the streaming giant was losing paying customers. The company said it ended the third quarter with slightly more than 223 million subscribers worldwide, up some 2.4 million, after seeing subscriber ranks ebb during the first half of the year.

Netflix shares shot up more than 14 percent in after hours trading to \$275 on the earnings news. "Well, thank God we're done with shrinking quarters," Netflix co-chief executive said during an earnings call. "We're back to the positivity; we've got to pick up the momentum." The turn-around in subscriber growth comes as Netflix is poised to debut a subscription option subsidized by ads in November across a dozen countries.

The new "Basic with Ads" subscriptions will be priced at \$6.99 in the United States—three dollars less than a no-ads basic option, Netflix chief operating officer Greg Peters said in a briefing. "The timing is great because we really are at



this pivotal moment in the entertainment industry and evolution of that industry," Peters said. "Now streaming has surpassed both broadcast and cable for total TV time in the United States."

Netflix is working with Microsoft on its ad-supported tier, and teams at both companies will likely need to be bulked up to handle the huge demand by advertisers, Peters said. "We're turning some folks away right now because we just don't have the marketing capacity to serve everyone," Peters said. After having shunned advertising since it started its streaming service, Netflix acquiesced as competition in the market intensifies and as consumers recoil from soaring inflation.

Rival streaming platform Disney+ is to

launch ad-subsidized subscriptions in December. With the launch of cheaper, ad-supported subscriptions, Netflix and Disney+ are expected to bite into the revenue of traditional television channels. "In directly acknowledging competition and using advertising, Netflix is adapting to the streaming landscape's new normal," said Insider Intelligence principal analyst Ross Benes.

COVID 'logjam'

Netflix expects to add another 4.5 million subscribers in the final quarter of this year. "Although international growth continues, the US video streaming market is hitting its ceiling for subscribers," said Third Bridge analyst Jamie Lumley. "After periods of rapid expansion and

extraordinary spending, Netflix, Disney and their competitive set will soon be forced to focus on improving margins and cutting back on content spending," Netflix said in a letter to shareholders that it believes its competitors have been losing money as they invest heavily to win audiences.

Netflix reported a quarterly profit of \$1.4 billion on revenue of \$7.9 billion—a net income slightly less than in the same period a year ago when it brought in more money. Netflix plans to hold steady with spending some \$17 billion a year on content, said co-chief executive Ted Sarandos. "I feel better and better about that \$17 billion of content spend, because what we have to do is be better at getting more impact per billion dollars spent than anybody else," Sarandos said.

"Big shows that folks engaged with and talk about drive a lot of growth," Peters noted hits such as "Stranger Things" and "Extraordinary Attorney Woo" and pending releases of keenly anticipated films such as "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery." Netflix is also working to smooth out the show release rhythm that was disrupted by the pandemic, according to executives. "COVID got a lot of content jammed up," Sarandos said. "It will take several years to completely unwind the COVID logjam." — AFP

Indonesia wants 'Java Man', art back from Dutch museums

Indonesia has asked the Netherlands to hand back at least eight art pieces and natural history collections that were acquired during the colonial era, including the remains of a landmark hominid known as "Java Man." Identified as the first-ever example discovered of a Homo erectus, a forerunner of anatomically modern humans, "Java Man" is the centerpiece of an important collection at the Naturalis museum in Leiden. It comprises a femur and most of a cranium, discovered on the Indonesian island of Java by Dutch anatomist and geologist Eugene Dubois in 1891-92, when Indonesia was still a colony of the Netherlands.

Asked about Jakarta's request, Dutch education and science ministry spokesman Jules van de Ven on Tuesday said Indonesia made the request "during the summer". Other pieces sought by Indonesia in the Dubois collection include the horse-riding reins of Prince Diponegoro, a Javanese royal who opposed Dutch colonial rule in the 19th century, and the so-called "Lombok treasure" of golden artefacts, the Dutch daily newspaper Trouw reported.

Ven said a government-appointed commission will start a probe in December and make recommendations to Dutch deputy culture minister Gunay Uslu, adding that he could not give a timeline for the work. Ven added the Dutch government had had "very constructive" discussions with their Indonesian counterparts. "Not only did we speak about returns, but also about cooperation in scientific studies and exhibitions."

The Naturalis museum told Trouw it "understood the Indonesian claim" but was surprised that Indonesia viewed objects of natural history in a similar vein as historical artifacts. The Java skull would not have been found if it wasn't for Dubois, it added. Indonesia's approach to its former colonial master follows that of African countries in pressing Britain, France, Germany and Belgium to return historic or cultural items that were looted during their rule. In recent years the Netherlands has finally started to grapple with the legacy of its colonialism in the former Dutch East Indies. The archipelago declared its independence in August 1945 after being under Dutch rule for three centuries. —AFP



(From left) Cast members British actor Jamie Flatters, British actor Kit Young, US-South African actress Charlize Theron, US actor Laurence Fishburne, US actress Patti LuPone, US actress Sofia Wylie, US actress Sophia Anne Caruso, US actress Kerry Washington and Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh attend the premiere for Netflix's "The School for Good and Evil" at the Regency Village Theatre in Westwood, California on Oct 18, 2022. — AFP photos



NEW YORK: (From left) Krysty Wilson-Cairns, Nnamdi Asomugha, Malik Yoba, Noah Emmerich, Tobias Lindholm, Devyn McDowell, Alex West Lefler, Eddie Redmayne and Jessica Chastain attend Netflix's "The Good Nurse" New York screening at Paris Theater on Oct 18, 2022 in New York City.