

## CLOSE UP



SHUVINAI ASHOONA  
**Untitled (Walrus Man)** 2007–08  
 Ink and pencil crayon 55.9 x  
 76.2 cm COURTESY FEHELEY FINE ARTS  
 PHOTO BRAD VAN DER ZANDEN

### SHARY BOYLE ON Shuvinai Ashoona

The moment I encountered this image I felt an instant connection with it. My response was intense and euphoric, a deep rush of excited bewilderment. The confusion produced by the disfigurement of the characters' faces made me feel like keening. Simultaneously, I wanted to laugh my head off. What is going on??! Look at the pencil-crayon marks, the vertical scratchiness—and the faded, complementary colours. Look at the three points of black. Then step back and see the overall composition: the figures making a pretzel of their arms, entwining fingers, crossing legs—while the tree, beheaded and with spread-eagled roots, wraps an arm protectively around the strugglers. Now lean in closer. Check out those whiskers!! My god. Any communication between the anemone and the walrus is bound to be a mangled, physical thing. But what really pushes it over the edge for me are the two silent players: the perching tarantula and the stiff green fruit.

Shary Boyle took part in the exhibition "Noise Ghost" alongside Shuvinai Ashoona at the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Toronto, in summer 2009.