Background

Haiku is a Japanese poem of 17 syllables, in 3 lines of 5, 7 and 5. Haiku traditionally evokes images of the natural world. The purpose of Haiku is to create a poetic form which has the brevity and intensity of the moment. The rigour of Haiku ensures that only the most essential parts of an idea or moment remain.

Rationale

The theme of this Haiku is irreparable change and crossing a point of no return. The first line speaks about the damaged landscape, with the repetition of ‘W’ representing the ice caps and glaciers of northern terrains. The second line seeks to illustrate the unforgiving nature of the Arctic climate with the ‘Knead’. ‘Knead’ is a double entendre. If read as ‘need’, the line becomes about our insatiable need for ‘black’ or oil, while ‘knead’ describes the forceful folding and distorting one can experience within Arctic winds. The last line also has a double meaning. It speaks about the footprints that Arctic wildlife would have left in the ice and snow, had it not been for the damage to their habitats; hence, their description in the past tense. It also references the work of Arctic organisations and places it alongside the art of tracking, a skill belonging to many First Nations people. They track within the Arctic; we track the Arctic itself.