

Nanoq!

The man in the blue boiler suit leans forward and concentrates on his work. In his right hand he holds an ulo. He scratches gently in the back of the skins. It looks like a mask. Behind the bright inner skin, we can see the white bristly fur. It must be a piece of fur from a polar bear.

Suddenly the tannery worker turns over the skin. Immediately we recognize that it is a mask. It is a natural mask of skin and fur. It is the fur from the head of a polar bear.

In Qaqortoq the tannery and the headquarters of the publicly owned company Great Greenland is located. The company produces fur and fur products.

Further ahead in the factory floor the rest of the fur from the polar bear hangs. The thick, beautiful fur with the characteristic powerful air-filled hair. I must touch it!

Many of the polar bears in South Greenland will be shot dead. In addition to a small quota for hunting, a few polar bears are shot dead to protect the small settlements, when these hungry polar bears threaten the people in the settlements.

Hunting for fur animals and subsequent processing the fur for clothing and other products is an important part of the Inuit culture. It is hard to imagine that the hunting of fur animals will stop or that we will no longer see seal skin coats and boots in our settlements.

Scientists believe that the stock of polar bears is threatened. Why not just put the bears to flight? Other solutions than shooting the poor creatures exist, but the reality is that when the polar bears have reached the southern part of Greenland via the drifting ice from the east coast of Greenland, they will die of hunger before long. They will not find sufficient natural food for polar bears in South Greenland.

I wonder if the fur from the head of the polar bear, which I am looking at here in the bustling tannery, is the polar bear shot of a sheep farmer further in the fiord? That polar bear, which still had fur from a sheep in the mouth. Or is it the polar bear, which a sheep breeder further to the south shot, after the bear had killed his horse?



*Great Greenland, Qaqortoq, South
Greenland, September 2017*