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Almost 50 Years of Inuit Art Exhibitions
by Maria von Finckenstein

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Front cover ...
The String Game, 1986, Noah Echalook, Inukjuak (green-brown stone, hide; 18 x 15 x 13 cm; Canadian Museum of Civilization, slide S97-13704, #IV-B-1945).
Photo: Harry Foster, Canadian Museum of Civilization
Almost 50 Years of Inuit Art Exhibitions

by Maria von Finckenstein

The history of Inuit art exhibitions in public institutions is quite unusual. Rather than the scholarly focus on individual artists that characterizes mainstream exhibitions, Inuit art has been mainly grouped in thematic exhibitions emphasizing pre-contact life. Moreover, Inuit exhibitions, many not professionally curated, have catered to a more popular audience, probably because of the extensive involvement of governments (federal and territorial) and marketing agencies, especially Canadian Arctic Producers (CAP). One last point of comparison is that the public gallery practice of playing it safe by focusing on old masters (to the exclusion of emerging talent) is carried to an extreme with reference to Inuit art.

“Inuit art,” as we have come to know and define it, was “discovered” in 1949, as an alternative to dependence upon hunting. At that time, Inuit were encouraged to move into settlements to avail themselves of schooling and social assistance. Handicrafts appeared to be a way of providing an income to people who had few skills that were useful in a cash economy. From the beginning, arts and crafts products ranging from utilitarian crafts to stone sculpture were considered to be a dignified means to an economic end. They were heavily promoted as such by a variety of agencies.

Many exhibitions over the last 50 years appear to have been more promotional than scholarly. While contributing to their populist appeal, such eager promotional efforts have made it difficult for Inuit to be accepted as serious artists worthy of scholarly research and presentation (Mitchell 1997:6). Until recently, the problem was compounded by cultural and linguistic barriers which thwarted efforts to communicate directly with the artists. There is now, however, a younger generation of bilingual artists who are able to interview the older generation in Inuktitut and convey their experiences in English.
Examiner a list by year of Inuit exhibitions beginning in 1951, one is immediately struck by their sheer quantity, on average six per year over a period of almost 46 years. Although it contains more than 300 titles, the list compiled by Inuit Art Quarterly is by no means exhaustive. Travelling exhibitions, for instance, are noted only once, although must have travelled to 10 or more venues. In certain years, there were sudden and short-lived bursts of activity. In 1986, for example, 22 Inuit exhibitions were held across Canada. I wonder whether even the Group of Seven could compete with that kind of exposure and popularity.

COLLECTORS PAVED THE WAY

Most Inuit exhibitions feature groups of artists and, typically, serve to introduce work from a private collection. Enjoying striking popular appeal from the very first, the work of Inuit artists has attracted a large group of passionate collectors who paved the way for the acceptance of Inuit art by public collections. Major public institutions, including the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Canadian Museum of Civilization, owe their Inuit art collections largely to the fervour, generosity and commitment of collectors and donors. The Swinton Collection was the first of many acquired by the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Because many public collections are the result of donations, a large number of exhibitions feature collectors', rather than curators', choices.

Donations are often honoured with a public exhibition, and although some objections have been raised to distinguishing one collector's vision in this way, even more controversial is the practice of exhibiting artwork that is still in the possession of its owners. Such exposure is presumed to have a positive effect on its commercial value. The public, however, benefits from seeing important new works which are usually to be
found in private collections.

Such privileging of the taste of collectors—amateurs rather than professionals—has prevented acceptance of Inuit art by mainstream art critics, especially when, as is usually the case, the collection includes work by many artists. By definition, such exhibitions include work of varying quality and interest, creating the impression of anonymous practitioners who are more valuable as members of a certain ethnic group than as artists in their own right. The presentation of Inuit artists as faceless craftsmen working in the same style belies the tremendous variety of individual talent that exists within this seemingly homogeneous group. Presenting Inuit art in generic group exhibitions is the same as assembling ceramics, wall hangings, sculpture and paintings from Nova Scotia artists and labelling it “Nova Scotia Art.” This would be an experience quite different than, for instance, being introduced to the work of Alex Colville (who lives in Nova Scotia).

**TO PROMOTE CANADA**

Apart from individual collectors, the federal government has been a committed and eager proponent of Inuit art, especially during the first three decades after its “discovery.” Inuit art was shown abroad as early as 1953, only two years after it was first exhibited in a public institution in Canada (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts). With the assistance of the Canadian Guild of Crafts (Quebec), Gimpel & Fils organized an exhibition in London, England to coincide with the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II (Watt 1989:42–4). Northern Affairs and External Affairs made ideal partners in their mutual goal of promoting Canada through Inuit art. Theme exhibits such as We Lived by Animals/Nous vivions des animaux (opened in 1975 in Bonn, Germany) used examples of Inuit art to portray Inuit culture and elevate Canada’s profile at the same time.

**Musko, c. 1970, Paul Toolooktook, Baker Lake (dark stone; 24.5 x 20.5 x 34.5 cm; private collection). Exhibited in the touring exhibition In the Shadow of the Sun (1987–89), organized by the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.** (photo: Richard Garner)

**Singing Psalms, 1966, John Polik, Arviat (bone; 6.3 x 10.8 x 6.3 cm). Included in the travelling exhibition Sculpture: Inuit (1971–73), a collaborative exhibition organized by the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the National Museum of Man (now the Canadian Museum of Civilization).**
Over the years, Indian Affairs and External Affairs, joined by the Canadian Museum of Civilization, continued to introduce Inuit art to an international audience. Exhibitions such as *Sculpture Inuit* (1971), *The Inuit Print* (1977) and *In the Shadow of the Sun* (1989) were considered to be an effective way to promote Canada; Inuit artists had captured the imagination of other countries in a way that no other Canadian regional or national art form had. The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) also became involved in international promotion, funding several exhibitions of varying quality. While *Jessie Oonark: A Retrospective* at the Winnipeg Art Gallery (1986) was professionally curated by Jean Blodgett, *Masters of the Arctic* (New York, 1989) was organized by Amway Corporation.

As for wholesalers and dealers, their main interest has been in promoting Inuit art through commercial exhibitions. Canadian Arctic Producers (representing Inuit communities in the Eastern and Western Arctic) sponsored a series of public exhibitions, some in cooperation with Indian and Northern Affairs. Among them was *Arctic Vision*, which toured in the United States for two years. More recently, Arctic Co-operatives Limited (the owner of CAP) and the North West Company (the former Hudson’s Bay Company) have been involved in ventures as far apart as Paris, France and Santa Fe, New Mexico. Their predominantly commercial intent has not always been beneficial to the reputation of Inuit art. Shows like *Keeping Our Stories Alive* (Santa Fe, 1995, sponsored by the North West Company and the GNWT), which presented both arts and fine crafts by many artists from across the Arctic, may draw large crowds but serve to reinforce the view of some international art critics that Inuit art belongs in folk museums.

The same can be said for the tendency to present Inuit art as a reflection of Inuit culture. Many exhibitions, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, were ethnographic in character. Individual pieces were selected not for their interest as works of art but for their efficacy in elucidating a particular theme: shamanism, the amautik, hunting, the sea goddess or other aspects of the pre-contact culture.

This might have been one of the reasons why, with the exception of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, which was an early starter, public galleries have been reluctant to get seriously involved in Inuit art. The National Gallery of Canada was the first to show Inuit prints and sculpture—before the Winnipeg Art Gallery—but with the retirement of Kathleen Fenwick, curator for prints and drawings, and a change in policy, it ceased collecting and

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Inuit artists had captured the imagination of other countries in a way that no other Canadian regional or national art form had.
exhibiting Inuit art from 1968 to 1984. The Canadian Museum of Civilization had a fervent admirer of Inuit art in its director, Bill Taylor, but had no space in which to display its growing collection until 1989. The Art Gallery of Ontario came on board only in the 1980s after receiving a substantial donation from the Harry Klammer family.

TOWARDS MORE SCHOLARLY EXHIBITIONS

The history of Inuit exhibitions shows a clear trend from early government and commercial involvement to an increasingly active interest among public galleries from the late 1980s on. An impressive array of public institutions is now seriously committed to Inuit art and consistently generates high-quality exhibitions: the National Gallery of Canada, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Art Gallery of Ontario, Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, McMichael Canadian Art Collection and Winnipeg Art Gallery, Carleton University Art Gallery (Ottawa) and Agnes Etherington Art Centre at Queen’s University (Kingston) use their collections to provide art history students with hands-on curatorial experience, an encouraging practice, as it will involve more academics in the study and research of Inuit art and artists. A 1990 *Inuit Art Quarterly* survey revealed that “there are few university courses specifically on Inuit art, or the art of any of Canada’s indigenous peoples, in either Canada or the United States” (IAQ 1990:104).

Given the short history of contemporary Inuit art, it is not surprising that only a handful of curators – especially Jean Blodgett (now at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection) and Darlene Wight (Winnipeg Art Gallery) – have been responsible for most of the exhibitions. None of the curators is Inuit, a situation which is likely to change within the next decade as more Inuit express an interest in caring for and presenting their art. The Inuit Art Foundation’s Cultural Industries Training Program, now in its third year, is a major step in this direction. For many years, Inuit art was taught only at Carleton University in Ottawa: first by George Swinton, followed by Jean Blodgett, and then by Mame Jackson. It has been a very small field indeed, dominated by the thinking and methodology of only a few.

*Mask of Memory, 1995, David Ruben Piqtoukun, Paulatuk/Toronto* (Brazilian soapstone, hair; 31.0 x 25.0 x 4.2; private collection). Exhibited in *Between Two Worlds: Sculpture by David Ruben Piqtoukun (1996)* at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. (photo: Ernest Mayer)

Many exhibitions over the last 50 years appear to have been more promotional than scholarly.
The lack of solo exhibitions may be at least partially attributed to the tendency to lump a large group of artists—regardless of their astonishing range of talent and individual expression—under the generic term “Inuit art.” Apart from a few major artists such as Karoo Ashevak (Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1977), Luke Angunadjuaq (Art Gallery of Ontario, 1993), Tiktak (University of Manitoba School of Art, 1970), George Arlook (Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1968), Augustin Anaittuq (Art Gallery of Ontario, 1985), Jessie Onark (Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1986), Kenojuak (McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1986) and Pudlo (National Gallery of Canada, 1990), only southern-based artists such as Manoak Aqpiaq, David Ruben Piqtoukun and Abraham Anghik have had solo exhibitions. Apart from reliance on eclectic private donations, galleries are hampered in presenting work by individuals because the artists depend upon immediate cash returns and the marketing agencies normally sell their work piece by piece rather than as a group. Piqtoukun’s latest show, *Between Two Worlds: Sculpture by David Ruben Piqtoukun*, organized by the Winnipeg Art Gallery, was possible only because his Toronto dealer linked the artist and the curator with collectors who bought work over a two year period. This could happen only because Piqtoukun, unlike other Inuit, sells most of his work through one dealer.

The other major hindrance to solo exhibitions is the fact that work by major artists such as Kiawak Ashoona from Cape Dorset is bought locally as it is produced, and quickly disappears into private collections in unknown locations. It would be very difficult, if not impossible, to assemble the work Ashoona did over the last two years, or even to organize a retrospective of his work.

The relationship between dealer and artist as we know it in the South does not exist for Inuit, and it is no accident that among the dozens of solo exhibitions of northern-based artists only a few feature sculptors (Tiktak, Karoo Ashevak, George Arlook, Augustin Anaituuq). Retrospectives of graphic artists are easier to organize since graphic work is better documented and more easily assembled. However, as we come to concentrate more on the differences among Inuit artists and pay attention to individual talent, it is likely that group shows will disappear and that solo exhibitions—carefully researched over a period of time—will become the norm.

In the meantime, it is encouraging to note the definite trend towards more scholarly exhibitions. Exhibitions such as *Pudlo: Thirty Years of Drawing* (National Gallery of Canada, 1990) are extensively researched and usually require a long

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An impressive array of public institutions is now seriously committed to Inuit art and consistently generates high-quality exhibitions.
lead time to mount, unlike the group shows that were thrown together in a slap-dash manner in the early days by well-meaning people with little training. Cynthia Cook's Angulalik exhibition, From the Centre, was the result of 10 years of research. Exhibitions have traditionally been a way for art historians to present the results of new research and to document findings in a catalogue.

One final observation is that most Inuit exhibitions have dealt with the "old masters" of early years; there has been little emphasis on young and upcoming talent. Again, Between Two Worlds is an exception. The latest work of younger Inuit artists can usually be seen at commercial galleries but rarely finds its way into public galleries, which tend to be conservative. In the case of Inuit art, this has been especially true.

While the first 50 years have been shaped by collectors, promoters and merchants — joined belatedly and reluctantly by academics — there are promising signs that the next 50 years will benefit from the hands-on involvement of Inuit — artists and others — who are rightfully staking claims to what others have long regarded as their exclusive domain.

The list of public exhibitions of Inuit art, compiled by year, is available as a print-out or on disc for $19.95. To order, please contact Inuit Art Quarterly at: 2081 Merivale Road, Nepean, Ontario, Canada K2G 1G9; Tel: (613) 224-8189; Fax: (613) 224-2907; e-mail: iaq@inuitart.org

REFERENCEs

Mitchell, Marybelle

Watt, Virginia

My Wife and I, 1974, Peter Pitseolak, Cape Dorset (stonecut; 63.5 x 86.4 cm). Exhibited in In Cape Dorset We Do It This Way (1991) at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection.

Maria von Finckenstein, is an art historian and curator of Inuit art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec.

Untitled, c. 1975, Jessie Oonark, Baker Lake (stroud, felt, embroidery floss, thread; 159.5 x 122.5 cm; private collection). Exhibited in Jessie Oonark: A Retrospective (1986-87) at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.
Curator's Choice:

Noah Echalook and Simeonie Elijassiapik

Text by Matthew Fox and captions by Maria von Finckenstein

Noah Echalook

Noah Echalook was born in an outpost camp 70 kilometres north of Inukjuak on May 13, 1946. His uncle, carver Lucassie Echalook, lived in the same camp and encouraged the young Noah to carve. At 21, Echalook spent two months at Expo '67 in Montreal giving carving demonstrations. Within a few years, his artistic direction had expanded to include printmaking. In 1972, he and another uncle, Thomassie, attended a print workshop led by Bob Paterson in Puvirnituq. Following their return to Inukjuak, an abandoned portable classroom was converted into a print shop. Noah contributed to Arctic Quebec print collections in 1972 and 1973, using stonecuts to depict simple vignettes from Inuit life, including stretching skin, hunting and fishing.

Carving has always been Echalook's main artistic interest. By the time Inukjuak issued a community print collection in 1976, he was no longer involved in the printmaking program. By the late 1970s, his sculpture was regularly featured in commercial exhibitions, including sales at the Arctic Circle (Los Angeles), Vita Inuit (Italy), Inuit Gallery of Vancouver and Snow Goose Associates (Seattle).

Echalook's work is recognized for what has been described as “super-realism,” in which he slightly exaggerates and distorts both the body shapes and facial features of his subjects without relinquishing meticulous attention to detail. Generally, his figures have highly expressive mouths and elliptical eyes. In his earlier work, Echalook tended to focus on small-scale renditions of fish, bears, otters, geese and weasels. A more recent theme is his portrayal of women engaged in various domestic activities. Legends also figure in his art, as in an example from the 1980 catalogue for the Things
Made by Inuit travelling exhibition. In describing the work _A Legend_, which shows a woman pulling on a noose looped around a bird's head, Echalook wrote: "A vulture tried every way he could think of to get an Eskimo wife for himself, but without success. The woman also tried different ways to kill him. This is one of the ways."

Echalook's work has also been included in exhibitions organized by the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Surrey Art Gallery, Musée du Québec and Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montreal. His work is found in the permanent collections of a number of other institutions, including the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art (Fort Worth), Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto), National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa) and the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery (Alberta).

Echalook lives in Inukjuak and supports his family with his earnings from carving, but he is increasingly worried about the income generated by his trade relative to the rising cost of living. He hopes carving in Inukjuak will be revitalized: "I'd like to see the carving business rejuvenated, especially in Inukjuak." Echalook said in a phone interview, "because that's the occupation of most people here."

_Description of Echalook's sculpture is taken from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development artists' biographies. A source cited in Echalook's biography is Barry Roberts, The Inuit Artists of Inouedjouac (La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec, 1978)._

*fig. 1: Woman Playing a String Game, 1987, Noah Echalook, Inukjuak (dark green veined stone, ivory, hide; 26.1 x 38.7 x 24.1 cm; National Gallery of Canada).* Although this monumental work is massive in size and compact in form, Echalook has nevertheless succeeded in creating a sense of movement. While the baby in the hood seems to be wailing in discontent, the face and body of the woman are thrust forward as if to eagerly engage the viewers and involve them in the string game. The careful sculpting of all the details, including the pieces of leather sewn onto her boots with the stitches showing, makes this piece one of the artist's most important and accomplished.

(photo: National Gallery of Canada)
fig. 2: Mother and Child, c. 1981, Noah Echalook, Inukjuak (grey-green stone; 24.7 x 24.5 x 11.5 cm; National Gallery of Canada). While the woman is occupied with stretching skin or perhaps playing a string game, her mouth is wide open, flashing a row of teeth, as if she is laughing about some private joke. Her exaggerated, slightly distorted facial features give the piece an expressive, dramatic quality. As in most of Echalook’s sculpture, the figure’s movement has been captured at mid-point, just as it is taking place.

fig. 3: Untitled (Face-pulling Contest), 1996, Noah Echalook, Inukjuak (grey stone; 25 x 17 x 9 cm; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada). In this intricately carved, exquisitely executed piece, one man is standing, legs wide apart, his upper torso twisted in an effort to beat his opponent in a contest of strength and endurance. The other is clasped around his hips. This tour de force of sculptural craftsmanship exemplifies the artist’s interest in capturing movement and action and creating ornamental patterns which reveal his background as a printmaker. The piece does not have a singular point of view; every angle exposes another part of the action as the eye slowly wanders around it. (photo: Tim Wickens)

fig. 4: The String Game, 1986, Noah Echalook, Inukjuak (green-brown stone, hide; 18 x 15 x 13 cm; Canadian Museum of Civilization). In this, one of the many variations on a woman playing the string game, the back view is as interesting visually as the front view. The arrangement of the different planes, framed by the hair on top and the parka rim at the bottom, creates a beautiful rhythm of diagonal lines and gentle curves, in which pleasure in the formal expression overrides our interest in the subject matter. (photo: Canadian Museum of Civilization)

fig. 5: Woman Stitching a Skin Closed, 1980, Noah Echalook, Inukjuak (green-black stone, hide, bone; 22 x 17 x 25 cm; Art Gallery of Ontario). Nunavik sculpture tends to portray everyday scenes, often catching an activity in progress. The subject here is of a seamstress pulling threads through a skin, a mundane activity portrayed with the sense of drama and urgency characteristic of this artist. The open mouth, large distorted eyes, diagonal movement and sharp ridges indicating folds in her sleeve all contribute to a feeling of energy and restlessness.
fig. 6: Woman Drummer, 1987, Noah Echalook, Inukjuak (black stone, bone; 11½ x 10 x 6 in.; private collection). Echalook follows artistic conventions established by Johnny Inukpuk and other carvers from the early 1950s, including the inlaid teeth and eyes made from ivory, and the carefully articulated parka trim and braid. However, the arms raised in mid-air and the head turned sideways give the piece a dynamic quality missing in the early works. A sense of movement is suggested equally by the undulating surface which catches the light wherever a bulge is protruding, making the highlights dance over the highly polished stone. (photo: La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec)
Simeonie Elijassiapik
Simeonie Elijassiapik was born in February 1948 in a small hunting camp north of Inukjuak. He first carved in 1962, but says he took a more serious approach in 1964, at the age of 16. Hunting was the main theme in his first carvings. His father, Elijassiapik, and well-known Inukjuak carver Johnny Inukpuk had taught him to hunt; it is not surprising that they both had an influence on Simeonie's artistic development.

Elijassiapik's themes have evolved to include shamanic transformations. His father's traditional approach and Johnny Inukpuk's stylistic conventions have been successfully combined in his development. Elijassiapik's talents have been highly praised by his fellow artists, recognition of which he is proud. In 1981, Elijassiapik was awarded first prize in a sculpture competition organized by members of the Inukjuak co-op. "To see my work improve has made me feel very good," he said in a 1994 interview, "and it is even more encouraging for me when Qallunaaq and fellow Inuit want to buy my work."

Elijassiapik's bold individual style has proven to be commercially successful in Europe and North America. His work has been included regularly in commercial gallery sales since 1978, and he has been featured twice in solo exhibitions: at Marion Scott Gallery (Vancouver) and The Guild Shop (Toronto).

"I now receive letters from all over the world from Qallunaaq, some of whom I've never met, requesting carvings and telling me how much they enjoy the work I do," he said. "When I am carving, it is not like working. It is more of an enjoyment, and the money I get is more of a perk."

Elijassiapik is represented in the permanent collections of three Canadian institutions: the Canadian Museum of Civilization (Hull, Quebec); Musée de la civilisation (Quebec City), and Ministère des affaires culturelles du Québec (Quebec City).

Conscious of his reputation as a well-established carver, Elijassiapik has encouraged young people in Inukjuak to pursue art as an occupation. "If you are thinking of starting to carve but are thinking you would not be able to do a certain type of carving like ones you see, you should continue anyway because we all have different ideas of what is good. Everyone has their own way of doing things, and that is why no one should be discouraged from trying. I implore those artists just starting out not to give up."

fig. 1: "Mother with Two Children," 1987, Simeonie Elijassiapik, Inukjuak (black stone; 21 x 9 x 5½ in.; private collection). Elijassiapik's work incorporates elements of Johnny Inukpuk's style as is evident in the oversized, exaggerated hands and the stylized treatment of the parka trim. He continues the tradition of emphasizing the mouth and teeth but, instead of ivory inlay, he simulates the same effect by scratching on the eyes and by giving the figure protruding teeth as if they had been carved out of ivory. All three figures seem to be facing something frightening: the young boy on his mother's back clutches her hair, while she in turn holds onto the little girl's hood as if to protect her.

fig. 2: "Untitled (Shaman Combing Sedna's Hair)," 1997, Simeonie Elijassiapik, Inukjuak (dark green stone; La Fédération des Cooperatives du Nouveau-Québec). The artist tackles the theme of the shaman grooming the sea goddess in a highly original fashion. Holding onto her flipper, the shaman passes the comb through her hair. Rather than sitting or reclining, the sea goddess is suspended in the water, holding onto the ground with both arms to keep..."
herself from drifting away. Her expression seems to indicate that she enjoys the attention, while some seashells strewn on the base leave no doubt that the scene is taking place under water.

**fig. 3: Mother and Child, 1987, Simeonie Elijassiapik, Inukjuak (black stone; 10 x 8½ x 5½ in.; private collection).** The confidence with which Simeonie Elijassiapik treats his subject matter comes across as bold and forceful. There is nothing timid in the way he scratches on facial features and hair, giving both figures intense facial expressions. Note how the ripples of the sleeve catch the light and how the woman's naked shoulder is revealed where the hood has slid down. Elijassiapik says that he enjoys carving and some of that infectious joy of creating comes through in all of his work.

**fig. 4: Woman Pulling Off Boot, 1997, Simeonie Elijassiapik, Inukjuak (black-brown stone; 5 x 2½ x 5 in.; private collection).** In spite of its somewhat cartoonish quality and the formulaic criss-crossing of the base, this figure of an unclad young woman is engaging in its immediacy and liveliness. Focal points are her face and oversized fingers. She is in the process of pulling off a boot in a nonchalant fashion, using only one arm. A large vein in the stone runs along the thigh, leading our eyes up to the boot and contributing much to the dynamic quality of the piece.

*(photo: Tim Wickens)*
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INUIT OWNED
Peter Murdoch: Pioneer of the Nunavik Co-op Movement

by Matthew Fox

Having worked with Inuit since 1947, Peter Murdoch has announced he will retire as general manager of La Fédération des Cooperatives du Nouveau-Québec (FCNQ) at the end of 1997. Murdoch, who was responsible for establishing the Nunavik co-op umbrella organization in 1967, has been general manager since its inception.

At the age of 17, Murdoch left Newfoundland to work for the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in the North. He was posted to Lake Harbour in 1947, travelling there on the last trip made by the Nascopie, the HBC vessel that subsequently sank in the Cape Dorset harbour. Murdoch was forced to learn Inuktitut quickly because only one resident of Lake Harbour, Tommy Manning, spoke English. He became fluent, an invaluable skill that was to stand him in good stead in his 50-year career working with Inuit.

In the late 1940s, Murdoch transferred, often by dogteam, from one HBC post to another, working at each location for a period ranging from several months to two years. Pangnirtung, Cape Dorset, Kuujjuaq (Fort Chimo), Kangiqsualujjuaq (George River), Kangirsuk (Payne Bay), Clyde River and Pond Inlet were among his postings. Most communities at that time were barely more than a scattering of buildings. In addition to the trading post, a typical settlement consisted of a small grouping of pre-fab houses for whites and shacks and igloos in which Inuit lived, an RCMP detachment, an Anglican and/or Roman Catholic mission and, sometimes, a weather station. Most Inuit families lived on the land, visiting the posts only at sealift time.

Years later, Murdoch reminisced about the many communities and people he came across during those early postings (1995:57-8): “During the year I spent at Pangnirtung [in 1948], I learned a lot from Kilibuk, who was employed by the HBC. Kilibuk was a fantastic gentleman who seemed to know everything, and could fix anything. He told me many stories about the earlier days of Pangnirtung, and the whaling crews that hunted there. He and his family, particularly his son Johnny, helped me learn Inuktitut and the ways of the Inuit.”
As an HBC clerk in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Murdoch witnessed the growth of the northern economy and its reliance on handicraft production. He was in touch with many of the artists, including Henry Evaluaq and Charlie Siviluapik, whose work would later become more widely known to southern collectors (1995:59): “Henry Evaluaq was the best, and he did a number of excellent pieces while I was there. I remember two in particular, both of hunters stalking a seal on the ice. He told me that one was of a hunter who would be successful in killing the seal, and the other would be unsuccessful. I could not detect the clues, but they were obvious to other Inuit.”

It was during a posting to Puvirnituq in 1955 that Murdoch began laying the foundation for the cooperative movement which has become strong in Northern Quebec. He encouraged Inuit to set aside a portion of their carving income for tools and equipment. These “camp accounts,” as they were called, were the first step towards working collectively to solve common problems:

I remember somebody came in and they wanted to know if there was any way that they could get better tools for mining. So I told them that, since everybody was going to own them ... why not have each person pay for them by putting a little bit of money aside. We put five cents out of a dollar into the camp account. This is what they called the five-centiapik, “the little five cents.” I figured that mining equipment would cost maybe one or two hundred dollars. In a couple of weeks, they had the money for it. No one could believe that with just a little five cents you could do that. It was a completely new concept in those days that people could have so much strength in pooling their resources (in Mitchell 1994:53-4).

The idea took hold. The Puvirnituq Inuit became more ambitious in their projects, progressing from the purchase of tools to group purchases of motors and whaling boats. Eventually, they engaged in inter-camp loans to finance various purchases or projects. “For the first time, two groups got together and helped each other out to buy what they wanted,” Murdoch said (ibid., 54). “I could very easily have given [them what they wanted] on debt. It wouldn’t have hurt us [HBC], but it was much better that they solved their own problems – at least, I thought so.” Within two years of implementation, the Puvirnituq Inuit had “worked a genuine miracle,” accumulating $40,000 in credit with the HBC after paying off a debtload of $25,000 (Mitchell 1996:199).
Murdoch attributes the success of this venture to the openmindedness of the Puvirnituq Inuit. “I learned how resilient the people are, how easily they accept new ideas and new ways of doing things,” he says (in Mitchell 1994:51). “Povungnituk showed me that new resources could be adapted to provide a good life for the people, and, if properly used, these new ways could strengthen rather than weaken the people.”

A NETWORK OF COOPERATIVES
The Puvirnituq experience laid the groundwork for a network of cooperatives serving Nunavik. Soon, co-ops were initiated in several northern communities. Murdoch had, by this time, moved to Yellowknife to work as a regional administrator for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. In Puvirnituq, Father André Steinmann helped establish the Povungnituk Sculptors’ Society, which soon opened a sales office in the South, near Quebec City. The Sculptors’ Society became the Povungnituk Co-operative Association in 1959, making it, along with George River and Cape Dorset, one of the first Inuit co-ops.

In 1966, Puvirnituq hosted the second pan-Arctic cooperative conference, at which the idea of an umbrella organization to serve all co-ops in the Northwest Territories and Quebec was proposed. Murdoch, working on a short contract with the CBC, was travelling across the Arctic with author Farley Mowat and arrived in Puvirnituq shortly after the conference. Remembering Murdoch’s help a decade earlier, the Puvirnituq Inuit asked him to become involved in setting up the organization. “[Murdoch] had a vision that Inuit could stand on their own two feet,” recalls Bobby Snowball of Kuujjuarapik, who has known and worked with Murdoch for 30 years. “But he thought that if the co-ops were run without the federation, Inuit would not have full control of their future” (in Kudluk 1997).

La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec (FCNQ) was incorporated in 1967 with five founding member co-ops: Kangiqsualujjuaq, Kangirsuk, Kuujjuarapik, Kuujjuaraapik and Puvirnituq. FCNQ’s goal was to help its members to achieve self-determination through the training of Inuit and Indian replacements for non-Native managers and through various economic development strategies (Mitchell 1996:198).

FCNQ first established itself in the old Povungnituk Sculptors’ Society sales office located in Lévis, on the south side of the St. Lawrence River across from Quebec City. The offices moved, first to Quebec City, then, in 1974, to Montreal, where FCNQ now operates in a sprawling office and warehouse complex on the western outskirts of the city. “The carvings were going to receive more exposure in Montreal,” Snowball says of FCNQ’s decision to relocate (in Kudluk 1997), “and it was easier to ship to Montreal from Northern Quebec.”

One of FCNQ’s strengths has always been the communication between staff and the northern membership. The staff, but especially Murdoch, spent much time in Nunavik communities for meetings and to consult with local managers and the Inuit community. During some years, Murdoch spent more than half of his time in the North. Snowball fondly remembers a variety of experiences he shared with Murdoch during the early years of the FCNQ: whaling and hunting, delivering mail and, in the days before there were any hotels in Nunavik, scrambling to find billets when they were stranded in remote communities by bad weather.

CARVINGS: THE ECONOMIC BACKBONE OF THE CO-OP MOVEMENT
From the start, member co-ops were involved in purchasing art from local Inuit and sending it to FCNQ, the southern wholesaler. Art, especially carvings, was essentially the only viable economic activity that could be exported to a southern market. As a result, it was the economic backbone for most individuals who wished to purchase goods and services imported from the South through the co-op. Murdoch said that carving also represented a vital social role (in Fox 1997): “Carving was a very prestigious activity. Everybody understood that and everybody believed that a good carver and good hunter were just as important in their society. So kids worked with elders, their uncles, their fathers and mothers, to learn to carve.”

By the 1970s, Murdoch and the organization’s Inuit directors had shaped FCNQ into an organization offering a comprehensive service: accounting, retail development, education, tourism, production services, and the general coordination of all co-op activities. In 1976, member co-ops were paying for almost all FCNQ’s operating expenses with their own revenues (Mitchell 1996:200).

Fortunes, however, quickly changed, and by 1978 the Inuit art market was burdened with high inventories of poor-quality sculpture. That year, FCNQ and Canadian Arctic Producers, the umbrella organization for co-ops in the Northwest Territories, submitted to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development a joint request for a grant to write off a portion of art inventory considered
unsaleable (ibid., 201). The proposal was refused and FCNQ had to negotiate financing arrangements with banks to stay afloat. By 1981, FCNQ carving sales had decreased by 41 percent (ibid.), forcing co-ops to reduce or halt the purchasing of art. As Murdoch says:

[Nunavik co-ops] had a very slowly developing production system in art, and, because of the recession in the South, the sales of sculpture were cut in half in one year. When that happened, one could either hope that this recession would go in a short time and support the inventory. Or, if you were not in a position to do that, you had to cut production. And everywhere, we had to cut production because government would not permit an inventory buildup… That had a very profound effect on the development of Inuit, mainly artists (in Fox 1997).

Although Nunavik carving sales have improved since the recession of the early 1980s, FCNQ has largely abandoned its previous efforts to encourage other art forms - basketmaking, dollmaking and printmaking - because of their unprofitability. Murdoch recently commented that Nunavik carving is much improved (in Fox 1997): “Technically the work is better today than it was in the very early days. Even though we may not have realized it, the hands can do what the imagination conceives. The artist can express himself better because he has more technique and he probably has more efficient tools.”

While FCNQ has been successful in the training of Native people to manage the northern co-ops (most Northwest Territories co-op managers are non-Inuit), it has been less successful in fostering Inuit managers in the southern operation. Aliva Tulugak of Puvirnituq, now in his third term as FCNQ president, says that “the members in general feel part of the co-op because they can communicate [with local managers] directly in the language.” but he hopes that Inuit will soon assume management of the $60-million umbrella organization.

Nunavik Inuit have long controlled the board. From the beginning, Murdoch insisted that Inuit would be in charge of FCNQ policy by installing an all-Inuit board of directors. When asked in a recent interview about the dynamics of the organization, he replied (in Fox 1997): “The [Inuit] feel free to judge us, anything we do or anything we say. It’s a bit tough sometimes, because if they have a criticism, they say so. We [FCNQ] belong to them. We are their organization, we are an extension of them. This is not a head office, it’s a tail office.”

It is likely that such experiences as the 1955 Puvirnituq fivecentsiapik experiment later helped shape Murdoch’s approach during his years at FCNQ. “The more informed the people are, the more power they have,” he said. “[FCNQ] is paid to inform the people, to teach the people.”

Teaching was one of Murdoch’s strengths. One of many skills he taught Nunavik co-op managers was the ability to read and interpret a financial statement, whether or not they spoke English. In fact, he assisted with the creation of a business vocabulary. As Tulugak said (in Mitchell 1997): “Peter has been training us to be independent for the past 30 years, even though we may not have realized it. The learning spirit he’s created will continue and it will give Inuit a chance to develop on their own.”

While Murdoch’s professional approach has centred on empowering Inuit through the imparting of knowledge, he quickly points to what he has learned from Inuit over 50 years of professional and personal relationships (in Fox 1997): “I think I have learned more from Inuit than I ever taught them. That is very gratifying, but it is very humbling, too. Our environment makes it easier for our culture to survive. Inuit didn’t have that and, still, they survived. To have done so meant that they have a lot of strength that we don’t have. Which is why they can teach more than they can be taught.”

In September, a celebration was held in Puvirnituq for Murdoch and his wife, Lucille. Inuit from Puvirnituq and Akulivik, some of whom have known the couple for more than 40 years, attended the party.

Murdoch says he has no definite plans for retirement, but Tulugak hopes Murdoch will stay in touch with Inuit communities, "because he’s got so much more to give to the North." George Filoas, a longtime Murdoch understudy, will succeed him as FCNQ general manager.

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“Technically the work is better today than it was in the very early days ... the hands can do what the imagination conceives.”
A little help goes a long way: A $1,000 grant from the Inuit Art Foundation was used for "gas and grub" by Gjoa Haven artists when they transported a home-made shack to a stone quarry site serving three communities: Taloyoak, Pelly Bay and Gjoa Haven. The carvers use it for tool storage and overnight stays.

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Johnny Aculiak:

"It seems to me that our culture will die off one day if we do not keep carving"

Henry Kudluk conducted the following telephone interview in Inuktitut with Inukjuak carver Johnny Aculiak on July 16, 1997. Kudluk later translated the interview.

Henry Kudluk: When did you first start to carve?

Johnny Aculiak: I cannot remember the year I started to carve, but I've been carving ever since I first picked up a piece of soapstone. I remember the moment, but I can't remember the date.

Kudluk: Did anyone teach you how to carve?

Aculiak: No, I was never taught. When I was young, I would work away on a carving until someone came along. Then I would quickly pretend I was not carving. I used to be ashamed, thinking that my carvings were not good enough for people to look at. All the time I was carving, I would keep an eye out to see if people were coming my way. Eventually, I lost my shyness about my carving. Now I carve openly.

Kudluk: Do you remember why you began carving?

Aculiak: It was because I envied my friends who could carve. They could do what I couldn't. That gave me a lot of anxiety, not being able to carve like my friends. I really wanted to learn.

Kudluk: What kinds of things did you make when you first started?

Aculiak: I remember making a seal. A seal is good practice for beginner carvers. I liked carving Inuit people. I used to get requests from teachers who wanted me to make something specific for them. I would always try even if I had never made it before. Mostly they wanted birds, I was already being told that I was a good carver, even when I had no idea of how to price a carving. They would ask me to make something and price it, and that is how I started to lose my shyness at showing my work.

Seal Helping Spirit, 1978, Johnny Aculiak, Inukjuak (black stone; 13.0 x 14.0 x 5.5 cm; Harold Seidelman).
Kudluk: Do you remember the price of the first carving you ever sold?

Aculiak: The first time I had to price a carving was when I filled a request. Before that, I had no idea that people who carved were being paid for it. And I certainly had no experience in pricing carvings. I cannot remember how much I was paid, but I remember that I bought a lot of things with the money I got for it.

Kudluk: What materials do you use?

Aculiak: I have seen people using power tools when they are carving but I am not too keen on that idea. I have always used hand tools.

Kudluk: What kinds of materials do you carve in?

Aculiak: I use a lot of soapstone. I sometimes add ivory to my carvings, or I might use caribou antler to enhance them.

Kudluk: What is your favourite subject to carve?

Aculiak: I carve a lot of Inuit subjects to show our way of life.

Kudluk: Have you gone anywhere outside your community to show your work?

Aculiak: I have been to Montreal on a few occasions to fix broken carvings. I also went overseas in 1987 to demonstrate how Inuit carve. I cannot pronounce the name of that place very well because I cannot speak in English. I think it was called Moscow. We passed through 28 cities on our tour of Europe.

Kudluk: Are the people overseas different from Inuit over here?

Aculiak: Yes. Here I am a carver and I live on the coast of an ocean. I found that the carvers in Russia are on the coast too, and they carve what they catch and eat it too. They also make their own tools over there.

Kudluk: Did you get to meet Russian Inuit?

Aculiak: Yes, they wanted to meet Inuit carvers from Canada, maybe to compare the different ways we carve. They do most of their carvings in ivory.

Kudluk: Did you find that the Russian carvers have a style similar to the Inuit of Canada? Or is it very different?

Aculiak: Their work is very different from the carvings that I do. They are very good at working with ivory. Their ivory carvings are incredible. I could not compare the quality of the work they do to the work I do.

Kudluk: How well do you think the Russian Inuit are doing compared to an Inuk from Canada?

Aculiak: They have it very hard over there. They have real hardships. I would ask them what happens to the carvings that they completed and where do they sell them. They told me that they had to notify their government before they could sell anything. They also had to make their own tools in order to make carvings.
Johnny and Lilly Aculiak (at right) during a tour of Europe and Russia, 1987.

Kudluk: What type of tools did they make?

Aculiak: They make files and other tools. They are very handy at making their own tools. They make all kinds of files.

Kudluk: Was there an exchange of any type when you met the people from Russia?

Aculiak: No, we did not give them anything. I was not told to bring anything for that purpose. Also, I was not aware that they were short of tools. It was only after I was there that I said to myself, “If I had known, I would have brought them things that they cannot get. If I had only known what they lack in Russia I would have brought it for them.” I also regretted that I did not bring a carving to show them how and what we carve.

Kudluk: Do you still carve today?

Aculiak: Yes, I still carve today. I was given a message to call you so I stopped carving to make this call to you.

Kudluk: Do you have any sources of income other than carving?

Aculiak: No, but I have had other jobs such as helping build the airport here. Maybe if I could speak English I would have a lot more opportunities for employment. I know how to lay dynamite in the ground: that is what I did to help construct the airport. People really liked the work that I did. But normally I just carve and that provides my income.

Kudluk: Are you content to earn your living from carving?

Aculiak: Yes, I enjoy being a carver. But our work is made for sale to Qallunaq and there are a lot of people who have never seen our carvings. Another thing I want to say is that carvings made with hand tools should not be on the same shelf as those made with power tools.

Kudluk: What has been the biggest obstacle that you have faced as a carver to date?

Aculiak: What I think is that carving with stone is not always so easy. Some stone is very hard. Some is nice and soft. Because of the hardness of the stone, what I want to make in my mind is not always achieved. It is a challenge for me to make what I want without the use of power tools.

Kudluk: Are there any concerns that you have about carving in general?

Aculiak: It is not too difficult to quarry for soapstone in the summertime, but during the winter, when we run out of soapstone, it is a lot harder trying to quarry under all the snow.

Kudluk: Do you often run out of carving material?

Aculiak: Yes. There are people out there who have never seen Inuit quarrying for soapstone. If you have never seen it, you would have no idea how much work is involved. But Inuit are a very resourceful people and we always manage to get done what has to be done. We see the white people blasting rock when they are making roads or digging for minerals. But we Inuit can do the same using only the power of our hands. I would like people to see us quarrying and to know how much work it is. I sometimes wish that we could be filmed while we are quarrying so that people would understand what kind of work is involved.
Kudluk: You think that the people who admire Inuit carvings should be more aware of what it takes to produce them?

Aculiak: Yes. It is not an easy job trying to quarry stone from off the land. Every year we have to find a shabby boat to take us to the stone. The boat might have no proper pump to drain water. We drain the water from the boat by hand because it leaks, and when we get to the quarry site, we have to take the rock out of the ground without proper quarrying tools. I want the people who buy carvings to know what it takes to produce the things they are buying. I want them to know that the price they pay is small for the amount of energy spent in trying to produce it.

Kudluk: Are you aware of any steps being taken to ensure that carving does not die off with the upcoming generations?

Aculiak: I try to encourage younger people to carve. I emphasize the fact that the young people should follow the traditions of their forefathers. It seems to me that our culture will die off one day if we do not keep carving. The carvings we make show the Inuit way of life. I notice that we are now even losing our language. The younger generation mainly speaks English and if that keeps up, our language will die. This is a very big concern for me. In spite of the hard work required to quarry stone in the winter when the rock is covered with snow, I do it in the hope that our culture will be passed on through our carvings. If the carvers now living were to die today, we would not have anyone to carry on the tradition that we have perpetuated through our carvings. I try to teach my son to carve, but, as a beginner, his work is not wanted.

Kudluk: Are there younger people in your community who are starting to carve?

Aculiak: There are some who are just beginning. I encourage them to keep on, even though the co-op is not always willing to buy work from younger artists. If their work is not being bought, they will just give up. Carving will die off with the older carvers. But I tell them not to give up. I go to meetings to tell them not to give up, even if their work is not being bought. Our ancestors used to carve and we must keep it going. I know for a fact that there are a lot of Qallunaq who do not know about Inuit carvings and we should be trying to reach them, to encourage them to become buyers.

Kudluk: Do you have an idea that would keep young people carving, even if their carvings were not being bought, to keep Inuit art alive?

Aculiak: What I think sometimes is that they should carve whether their work is being bought or not. But when they are told not to carve, their ego...
get hurt and they might just give up carving altogether. The buyers who tell them to stop are telling them they do not have the ability. But they can only develop ability if they keep carving. I think it might be helpful to get a building in which our young carvers could display what they have made.

Kudluk: Where do you carve in the winter?

Aculiak: In the winter or the summer I carve in the same place, in a tent near my house. It has no heating but I continue to work in it even during the winter months.

Kudluk: You don't mind working in a tent in the cold?

Aculiak: No. I don't mind it because this is my livelihood. We could work indoors but we do not have the materials to build a carving shop.

Kudluk: Would you like to have a warm place in which to carve?

Aculiak: For myself, it doesn't matter but I would like a warm building in which young people could be taught to carve. Personally, I can do without a building.

Kudluk: Do you have any thoughts you would like to convey to other artists?

Aculiak: I have not prepared any particular message. But I would like to tell all the carvers out there, especially the ones just starting out, not to give up carving. I also want to tell the distributors that tell us to stop carving that they should try harder to expose Inuit art to the rest of the world. There are still many Qallunaq that have never seen our art. I also want our young people to keep on carving, to remember that, if they continue to carve, our culture will be kept alive. There are not enough jobs out there and carving can mean independence for them. What I have told you is only the tip of the iceberg of what I would like to say. But if I keep going, I might shock and offend some people. So I will just stop here. What you have asked about today are very big issues that Inuit are dealing with. I have tried to answer them to the best of my ability.

Kudluk: I do not have any more questions; thank you for sharing your thoughts.

Aculiak: Thank you for asking me.

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Ancient People of the Arctic

BY ROBERT McGhee

Vancouver:

UBC Press, 1996

244 pp., $35.95

Reviewed by Charles A. Martijn

Ancient People of the Arctic

As a Canadian archaeologist who combines the talents of a top-notch researcher with the skills of a first-class popularizer, Bob McGhee is a rarity. His latest publication for an informed general public and, one might add, for his peers, presents us with a reappraisal of what prehistorians have learned over the past 75 years about the earliest occupants of the Arctic, the Palaeo-Eskimos. The book rates as his finest effort to date. There is much to admire in McGhee's new volume. The erudition of the author never burdens his crisp language. He writes clearly and in uncluttered detail, explains patiently, examines original assumptions with a critical eye, makes telling new proposals whenever feasible and keeps a tight rein on any temptation to overstate his arguments. A steady sequence of subject headings and subheadings serve the reader as semaphores along the way.

Ancient People of the Arctic is sumptuously illustrated. Sixteen colour plates by Harry Foster provide an ineffable introduction to prehistoric Dorset Eskimo art. In addition, many of the black-and-white photographs capture the arctic landscape and the remains of prehistoric habitation with unusual discernment. Several maps facilitate our understanding of initial human expansion into the Arctic, as well as later cultural developments. Their utility, however, could be improved by a more exhaustive incorporation of place names referred to throughout the text.

McGhee's explanatory framework for Palaeo-Eskimo prehistory emphasizes how, over a period of 4,000 years, climatic changes in the Arctic had an impact on vegetation and sea ice conditions, thereby affecting the behaviour and density of land and marine animals. This, in turn, led to modifications in human adaptation as the Palaeo-Eskimos were repeatedly forced to revise their survival strategies. Archaeologists are able to detect such cultural shifts by studying settlement patterns, habitation forms, midden contents, and stylistic transformations within specific classes of artifacts. In some cases, manufacturing techniques were altered. The abandonment of various tool types and the introduction of new ones also took place. Prehistorians have been fortunate in that extremely cold and dry weather, aided in part by permafrost, has favoured the preservation of tools and weapons made by these ancient arctic people. Not only stone and ivory implements, but also bone, horn, antler, wood and leather objects survive under such conditions.

The ancestors of the Palaeo-Eskimos appear to have adapted to a marine economy in the Pacific Rim area of Siberia and Alaska. At about 2500 B.C., during a waning postglacial warm period, individual families started spreading eastwards across the northern tundra zone, and over the course of several centuries their descendants made it all the way to Greenland and Labrador. In the process, different regional adaptations arose. The people who occupied the Western Arctic relied to a large extent on caribou herds for subsistence. Those within the Eastern Arctic became more diversified, hunting not only caribou, but also marine animals such as seals, walrus, beluga and narwhal, which they captured with harpoons. Elsewhere, in the High Arctic and northwestern Greenland, non-migratory muskoxen herds constituted the mainstay of the Palaeo-Eskimo diet.

Around 1000 B.C., significantly colder conditions began to prevail in the North, leading to the abandonment of certain parts of the High Arctic. Contrary to what many might think, however, this more
severe climate also set the stage for new cultural adaptations which flourished in the Low Arctic. In this vast region later Palaeo-Eskimo groups, to which prehistorians have given the name “Dorset Tradition,” began to take advantage of the optimum conditions for sea fauna hunting provided by wider expanses of sea ice during longer winter seasons: plentiful fish, seals, walruses and small whales.

McGhee painstakingly traces the impact of this development on Dorset material culture, demography, social organization, territorial expansion and economic exchange networks. By effecting a transition to a predominately ice-shell hunting economy, the Dorset people successfully maintained a stable way of life for more than 1,500 years, ranging over an immense territory from the Central Arctic to southwestern Greenland and Newfoundland. Then, once again, a warm phase set in, triggering another cultural upheaval. This time, however, renewed Dorset efforts at adjustment were short-circuited by the arrival of a different population from the east.

McGhee’s remarks about arctic archaeology and art and his illustration of the famous “Tyara maskette” brought back certain memories and led me to reread a diary I kept during the summer of 1958 in Northern Ungava, while working as an assistant for William E. Taylor, Jr. Seven Inuit accompanied our field party, including Tyara, the most renowned personage then living on the south shore of Hudson Strait. My entry for Friday, August 29, records what happened when we began excavating at site JGu-2 on Mansel Island and came across a veritable storehouse of Dorset carvings, knife handles, needles, points, and harpoon heads. At a given moment, Keataina gently nudged Bill’s wife, Joan, and pointed towards Tyara. He had dug up a carving and, kneeling, was holding it in one hand, quietly singing a song. We never found out what the words were. Had he associated the object with an angakok [shaman]?

On a later occasion, at the stratified Early Dorset Tyara site on Sugluk Island, a paragraph in my entry for Thursday, September 25, reads: “In the afternoon, in level 3, Tyara found an exquisite carved mask, one inch of ivory, a naturalistic representation of a face. As Bill said, the oldest carving in the Eastern Arctic so far. Tyara actually shouted to us to come and see, something which he doesn’t even do with naulaks [harpoon heads].”

These notes reveal how not only archaeologists, but their Inuit crew members as well, could be enraptured by Dorset art.

As a final remark, on only one point do I find myself remonstrating with McGhee. It has to do, oddly enough, with the very first sentence of his book in which he claims that “we live in a world with no new horizons.” Well yes, but also no. John Clare, a 19th-century English poet, relates in his autobiography how, as a child, he once started walking across Emmonsailes Heath, towards the horizon and the “brink of the world,” expecting when he got there to be able to “look down like looking into a large pit and see into its secrets.” In other words, each one of us in his own way is stirred by a similar passion for the personally unknown, and sets out anew to explore the same horizon.

Charles A. Martijn is the author of Canadian Eskimo Carving in Historical Perspective (1964). He recently retired after 25 years as senior prehistorian and ethnologist of the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Communications.
Jane Stewart was appointed minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development following the June federal election. On June 21, she addressed the crowd gathered at Rideau Hall in Ottawa for the unveiling of an inukshuk by Kananginak Pootoogook.

CAPE DORSET INUKSHUK UNVEILED AT RIDEAU HALL

A 3,500-lb inukshuk built by Cape Dorset artist Kananginak Pootoogook with help from his son, Johnny, was unveiled at Rideau Hall in Ottawa on June 21. The stone marker, built from about 20 pieces of local Dorset stone that blended brown, pink and black hues, was commissioned last year by Governor General Romeo LeBlanc, at whose official residence it now rests.

The unveiling was part of Canada's National Aboriginal Day festivities. The two Pootoogooks travelled to Ottawa in May to reassemble the inukshuk, which had been transported by a Hercules aircraft. LeBlanc later related that, at the time of reassembly, he had told Pootoogook that the inukshuk looked “hard-headed,” to which the artist replied: “When you talk to it, it won't argue back.” Several hundred people attended the unveiling, including the newly appointed minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Jane Stewart, James Houston, Norm Hallendy, Peter Ernerek and John Amagoalik.

A LITTLE HELP GOES A LONG WAY

In May, the Inuit Art Foundation (IAF) awarded three small grants to fund Inuit artists' projects in northern communities. Kinngitak Society, the carvers' association in Gjoa Haven, Northwest Territories used a $1,000 grant for “gas and grub” to enable artists to transport a homemade shack to a quarry site serving Gjoa Haven, Pelly Bay and Taloyoak. The shack, which provides overnight shelter and a place to store tools, was built from plywood donated by the local co-op.

Iluayummiut Artists' Association in Cape Dorset, Northwest Territories used a $2,000 grant to purchase tools and stone that were used for a six-week...
CARVING WORKSHOP IN CAPE DORSET IN JULY AND AUGUST. ASSOCIATION CHAIR OKPIK PITSEOLAK LED MORNING WORKSHOPS FOR ELDERS WITH LITTLE OR NO CARVING EXPERIENCE, AND AFTERNOON SESSIONS WERE SPENT WITH YOUTH. SHE COVERED A RANGE OF TOPICS WITH THE STUDENTS, INCLUDING: STONE TYPES; TOOL USAGE; CARVING TECHNIQUES; HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES, AND PRICING. PARTICIPANTS SOLD THEIR FINISHED CARVINGS TO THE LOCAL CO-OP OR NORTHERN STORE, THE PROCEEDS FROM WHICH ENABLED THEM TO BUY THEIR OWN TOOLS AND STONE. PITSEOLAK REPORTS THAT STUDENTS WERE “VERY THANKFUL” FOR THE TOOLS AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN A NEW SKILL AND PROGRESS TOWARDS SELF-SUFFICIENCY. THE FILES, AXES, CHISELS AND MASKS HAVE BEEN PUT IN STORAGE TO BE USED IN A SIMILAR WORKSHOP NEXT SUMMER.

ARNAIT KAMINIVINGAT (PLACE WHERE WOMEN MAKE KAMIKS), A GROUP OF WOMEN ARTISTS IN INUKJUAK, NUNAVIK, USED A $2,000 GRANT FROM THE FOUNDATION TO PURCHASE AN OIL HEATER, CANVAS AND PLYWOOD FOR A TENT THAT WILL PROVIDE THEM WITH A PLACE TO WORK. ELISAPEE INUINKUK, PRESIDENT OF THE GROUP AND A DOLL AND BASKETMAKER, SAYS THAT MANY INUKJUAK WOMEN WOULD RESUME THEIR ARTMAKING WHEN THEY HAD A DEDICATED SPACE IN WHICH TO WORK. THE GROUP ALSO SECURED A $6,120 GRANT FROM KATIVIK REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL TO HIRE TWO PEOPLE TO BUILD THE TENT. AT PRESS TIME, INUINKUK HOPED TO HAVE THE TENT IN USE BY THE END OF THE SUMMER, BUT WAS WAITING FOR MATERIALS TO ARRIVE ON THE SEALIFT.

CANA DIAN NATIVE ARTS FOUNDATION EXPANDS MANDATE

ON JUNE 30, JOHN KIM BELL, PRESIDENT OF THE CANADIAN NATIVE ARTS FOUNDATION, ANNOUNCED THAT THE ORGANIZATION HAD EXPANDED ITS MANDATE AND UNDERGONE A NAME CHANGE TO REFLECT ITS BROADER ACTIVITIES. TO BE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ACHIEVEMENT FOUNDATION, THE FUNDING BODY WILL PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ABORIGINAL YOUTH FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREAS OF ARTS, BUSINESS AND SCIENCES. “DUE TO OUR FINANCIAL GROWTH, AND SUCCESS IN PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS TO ABORIGINAL YOUTH IN THE ARTS, MORE AND MORE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CONTACTING US FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN OTHER AREAS OF STUDY,” SAID KIM BELL. ESTABLISHED IN 1985, THE FOUNDATION HAS PROVIDED $5 MILLION IN ARTS SCHOLARSHIPS TO ABORIGINAL YOUTH ACROSS CANADA. THE ORGANIZATION ALSO PRODUCES THE ANNUAL NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS GALA.

1997 GREAT NORTHERN ARTS FESTIVAL

MORE THAN 80 NORTHERN ARTISTS PARTICIPATED IN THE NINTH ANNUAL GREAT NORTHERN ARTS FESTIVAL IN INUVIK, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES FROM JULY 18-27. THE FESTIVAL WAS ABLE TO INVITE MORE ARTISTS THIS YEAR DUE TO INCREASED SPONSORSHIP, PRIMARILY FROM CANADIAN AIRLINES AND THE CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS. ORGANIZERS INVITED A MIX OF WELL-ESTABLISHED AND YOUNGER ARTISTS TO PROMOTE INTERACTION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. PARTICIPATING INUIT CARVERS INCLUDED: LYPA PITSEOLAK (PANGNIRTUNG); DAVID AND SABINA ISSIGAI TOK (HALL BEACH); TOMMY KUNILUSEE (CLYDE RIVER); PALAYA QIATSUK (CAPE DORSET); PAUL TOOLOOKTOOK (BAKER LAKE); JOHNNIE KATALUK (CORAL HARBOUR); NICK SIKKUARK (PELLY BAY); BEN PORTER, JR. AND JOSEPH SUQLUK (GJOA HAVEN); EUNICEY SHYTOO MUCKPAH (PORT ALBERNI, B.C.); ELI NASOGALUAK (SACHS HARBOUR); BILL NASOGALUAK (YELLOWKNIFE); AND STANLEY FELIX AND JOE NASOGALUAK (TUKTUYAKTUK). GRAPHIC AND JEWELLERY ARTISTS INCLUDED: ANDREW QARPIK, JACOPOSIE TIGLIK AND JOLLY ATAGOOGYUK (PANGNIRTUNG); ELISAPEE ITULU (KIMIRNIRUTU); Aoudla Pudlat (CAPE DORSET); MATTHEW NUQINGAQ (IQLUIT); NANCY SEVOGA, VICTORIA KAYURYUK AND SIMON TOOKOOME (BAKER LAKE); EMMA TATTI (RANKIN INLET); BESSEY COCKNEY (TUKTUYAKTUK), AND AUDREY LOREEN-WULF (INUVIK). ORGANIZED TO DRAW TOURISTS TO INUVIK AND TO DEVELOP ART IN THE NORTH, THE FESTIVAL INCLUDED WORKSHOPS, ARTMAKING DEMONSTRATIONS, STORYTELLING, ART RAFFLES, FILMS, MUSIC AND DANCE. AN ADDITION TO THIS YEAR’S FESTIVAL WAS A VIRTUAL GALLERY ON THE INTERNET (WWW.GREATART.NT.CA). IT WAS LAUNCHED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FESTIVAL AND PLANS ARE TO MAINTAIN IT YEAR-ROUND. THE SITE INCLUDES PHOTOS OF ART FOR SALE, PRICES AND ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES.
The Kitikmeot Inuit Association has entered a joint venture with Canamera Geological to establish a mining exploration company in the Central Arctic. As reported in Nunatsiaq News (June 13, 1997), Kitikmeot Geological will offer a full range of exploration services by late 1997. Investment in Northwest Territories exploration by prospective mining companies has exceeded $100 million in each of the last five years.

**IGLOOLIK VIDEOMAKERS TACKLE BIGGEST PROJECT TO DATE**

Igloolik Isuma Productions, led by Zach Kunuk, will produce a made-for-television film to be broadcast by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in 1999. Plans call for an all-Inuit team of writers, directors, actors and producers to make Atanjuuat (Fast Runner), depicting a legend from the Igloolik area. A screenplay of the legend was first written by Igloolik video artist Paul Apak. The project's budget is expected to be about $3 million. Such issues as language and subtitling are currently being negotiated between igloolik Isuma, the CBC and funding sources that include Telefilm Canada, Baffin Business Development Centre, Kakivik Association and the Government of the Northwest Territories. Shooting is expected to take place in the spring of 1998, and Kunuk said he hopes to have the film finished to mark the birth of Nunavut in April 1999.

**ARCTIC ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS**

An environmental report released in the spring by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development stated that Inuit are being exposed to high levels of PCBs and other chemicals used in industry and agriculture in Europe, North America and Asia. The 500-page Canadian Arctic Contaminants Assessment Report said the pollutants end up in the northern food chain and could pose serious health threats to Inuit communities. The Canadian Arctic Resources Committee (CARC), an environmental lobby group, is urging the federal government to negotiate a global agreement through the United Nations Environment Programme. For more information or to pledge support, CARC can be reached at: 1100-1 Nicholas Street, Ottawa, Ontario KIN 787; Tel (613) 241-7379; Fax (613) 241-2244.

**PEOPLE**

On June 2, the Royal Canadian Geographical Society awarded James Houston the 1997 Massey Medal. The presentation took place in a private ceremony at Rideau Hall, the official residence of Canada's Governor General. The medal, established by the Massey Foundation in 1959, is awarded annually to recognize "outstanding personal achievement in the exploration, development or description of the geography of Canada." Houston is credited with helping Inuit develop traditional art forms to realize commercial success in southern markets in the 1950s.

Janet Catherine Berlo took up the Susan B. Anthony Chair of Gender Studies and Art History at the University of Rochester in Rochester, New York in September. Her teaching duties will include courses in women's studies, art history and the graduate program of visual and cultural studies. Berlo, previously a professor of Art History at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, is a frequent contributor to Inuit Art Quarterly, having written on Western Arctic and Alaskan art, and the work of Cape Dorset artist Napatchie Pootoogook.

Ruth Phillips assumed her position as director of the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology in July. Previously a professor of Anthropology at Carleton University in Ottawa, Phillips has served on the editorial advisory committee for Inuit Art Quarterly. She will be teaching in the Art History and Anthropology departments at the University of British Columbia.
On June 11, Canadian prime minister Jean Chrétien announced the appointment of Jane Stewart as minister of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). Stewart is in her second term as the Liberal member of Parliament for the federal Ontario riding of Brant. She succeeds Ron Irwin in the DIAND portfolio. Irwin retired from federal politics prior to the June election.

Nancy Karetak-Lindell of Arviat, Northwest Territories was elected Liberal member of Parliament for the riding of Nunavut in the federal election on June 2. Karetak-Lindell defeated New Democrat Hunter Tootoo, Progressive Conservative Okalik Eegeesiak and Reform er John Turner. Shortly after her victory, she told Kivalliq News, "I've never been one to keep quiet when I feel I have a cause to push."

Audrea Loreen-Wulf, Western Arctic artist and past director of the Inuit Art Foundation, has returned to the North to live in Inuvik, Northwest Territories after spending several years in northern British Columbia. She plans to write a book about her experiences as a young student at Grollier Hall, a residential school in Inuvik.

**IN MEMORIAM**

Levi Qumaluk 1919–1997
Puvirnituq carver and printmaker
Levi Qumaluk died on July 29, 1997. One of six brothers to take up carving as a livelihood, Qumaluk began to carve in the early 1960s, around the time a co-op opened in the community. Recurring themes in his work included mother and child scenes, hunting narratives and legends. He was known for paying careful attention to detail in tools, weapons and clothing. His work was first exhibited to the southern public at the *Man and His World* pavilion at Expo '67 in Montreal, Quebec. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Qumaluk's popularity was evident in the regular presence of his work in public and selling exhibitions, including those at the Art Gallery of York University (Downsview, Ontario), McMichael Canadian Art Collection (Kleinburg, Ontario) and Winnipeg Art Gallery (Manitoba). Qumaluk had also sporadically produced stonecut prints for the annual Puvirnituq print collections from 1962 to 1975. This effort became more consistent from 1976 to 1987, the last year a Puvirnituq collection was produced. His graphics usually depicted descriptive hunting scenes and camp life. His wife, Caroline, was a respected printer in the Puvirnituq print shop.

**UPDATE**

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**A Man Cooks Fish as His Wife Softens Kamiks, 1986, Levi Qumaluk, Puvirnituq (stonecut; 38.5 x 25.0 in.).**

In recent years, Levi Qumaluk carved exclusively at his bedside. He is shown here shortly before his death, Puvirnituq, 1997.
UPDATE

Andy Mamgark 1930–1997
Arviat artist Andy Mamgark died on July 22, 1997 from a power tool accident while carving. Mamgark was working with a grinder on a piece of soapstone when a chunk of the rotating cutting wheel flew off, striking him in the neck. He was pronounced dead at the Arviat Health Centre. A police investigation revealed that the blade showed stress cracks, leading to speculation that it was too old to be safe. Mamgark’s work was first included in an organized exhibition in Sculpture/Inuit: Masterworks of the Canadian Arctic that toured internationally from 1971 to 1973. His sculpture is included in the permanent collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization (Hull, Quebec), Eskimo Museum (Churchill, Manitoba), Winnipeg Art Gallery (Manitoba) and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.).

Harry Appleton, founder of Appleton Auction Galleries in Vancouver, died on May 23, 1997. Appleton was a promoter of Inuit art for nearly 30 years and had been selling Inuit sculpture at auction in Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, Calgary and Toronto since 1972. The business will continue under the ownership and management of his son, Ronald.
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DAVID RUBEN PIQTOUKUN

NEW WORKS
From May 30 to September 28, Prairie Region Exhibition was presented at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. A collection of work organized by the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, the exhibition featured member artists from western and northern Canada, including Inuit academy members Kenojuak Ashevak, Abraham Etungat, Osuitok Ipeelee, Kananginak Pootoogook and Marion Tuu'luk. The exhibition will be presented at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina, Saskatchewan from June 19, 1998 to August 16, 1998.

The Baptism, 1992, Kananginak Pootoogook, Cape Dorset (brown, black, grey, blue, yellow, red lithograph and stencil; 66.2 x 51.4 cm).

Woman with Ruler, 1996, Oviloo Tunnillie, Cape Dorset (mottled green-grey stone; 43.6 x 12.0 x 31.0 cm; Dr. and Mrs. H. Mitchner).

The Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, Ontario presented Robert Flaherty: Camera Studies from June 4 to September 1. The exhibition consisted of Flaherty’s photographs taken in Kuujjuuaq (Fort Chimo), Chesterfield Inlet and on Baffin Island between 1913 and 1915, as well as a set of photogravures from Flaherty’s Camera Studies in the Far North, published in 1922. Flaherty is best known for his 1922 film Nanook of the North. The AGO also presented Oviloo Tunnillie, showcasing work by the Cape Dorset carver, from June 27 to October 26. The solo exhibition was held in conjunction with Strangers in the Arctic, an international exhibition of paintings, photography and mixed media by 14 artists from Russia, England and Scandinavia. Tunnillie depicts both traditional and contemporary subjects in her sculpture. Many pieces were inspired by her first encounter with white culture when she was sent south for medical care as a young child. Her carvings of nurses, teachers and social workers document the range of events and emotions she experienced. Through her work, Tunnillie often comments on social ills observed in both the North and South, creating sculptures that are universal expressions of modern concerns. “It is appropriate that Tunnillie’s work is displayed beside an exhibition that explores ‘otherness’ experienced by southern artists while travelling in the Arctic,” said Cynthia Cook, AGO’s assistant curator of Inuit art. “Through her sculptures, we not only learn about her feelings of alienation in the South, but also of the dissociation the Inuit feel as their culture assimilates with ours.” (Information supplied by the Art Gallery of Ontario)
Abstract, 1975, Marion Tuu’luuq, Baker Lake (stroud, felt, embroidery floss; 208 x 136 cm; private collection). (photo: Thomas Moore Photography)

Inuit II: From the Collection of Frederick and Lucy S. Herman was shown at the Muscarelle Museum of Art in Williamsburg, Virginia from August 23 to October 19. The exhibition consisted of approximately 50 prints — additions to the Herman’s gift collection since the 1993 Muscarelle exhibition Contemporary Inuit Drawings, also based on the Herman collection. Judith Nasby, director of the MacDonald Stewart Art Centre in Guelph, Ontario, gave an exhibition talk at the Muscarelle on October 9.

The Museum for Textiles in Toronto, Ontario presented A Stitch in Time: The History and Aesthetics of Baker Lake Wall Hangings from May 3 to November 2. Curated by Cynthia Cook, associate curator of Inuit art at the Art Gallery of Ontario, the exhibition included 35 works by Naomi Itiy, Ruth Qualluayuk, Marion Tuu’luuq, Elizabeth Angnakuq, Winnie Tatya, Irene Avaalaqiq and Jessie Oonark. A Stitch in Time explored the historical development of Baker Lake wall hangings, their aesthetics and iconography, and the social implications of their production from their inception in the mid-1960s to the present. Selections were made from the collections of the Museum for Textiles, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the National Gallery of Canada, the MacDonald Stewart Art Centre, and individuals in Canada and the United States. Cook and videographer Barbara Arsenault made a two-week research trip to Baker Lake in March 1997. A video documenting the artists talking about their work accompanied the exhibition.

Arctic Odyssey, a nature exhibition focusing on the mixing of scientific and traditional Inuit knowledge of the North, opened on June 14 at the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa, Ontario. A closing date has not been officially announced, but the exhibition is expected to be open until the summer of 1998.

Mother with Her Three Children, c. 1996, Martha Tickie, Baker Lake (black stone; 7 x 6 x 6 in.; Spirit Wrestler Gallery). (photo: Kenji Nagai)

Spirit Wrestler Gallery presented two concurrent exhibitions from June 28 to July 19. Sisters: Martha Tickie and Effie Arnaluaq featured more than 40 sculptures by the two Baker Lake artists. Amulet to Art: An Exhibition of Arctic Jewellery comprised pendants, brooches and earrings made by students in Nunavut Arctic College’s fine arts and crafts program. Serapio Ittusardjuat, Inuk Charlie, Martha Noah, Leona Poodlat, Elizabeth Haqpi, Okpik Pitseolak, Mark Eetak and Nancy Tasseor were among the artists represented. On August 11, James Houston visited the gallery for a book signing to mark the re-release of his 1980 novel Spirit Wrestler, for which the gallery is named.

Graphite and Stone - Sculpture and Drawings: Baffin Artists in Two Media is scheduled to be displayed at the gallery from November 8 to November 29.

Nick Sikkuark of Pelly Bay was the subject of a solo exhibition at the Upstairs Gallery in Winnipeg, Manitoba from August 9 to August 30. More than 65 works in antler, whale bone and ivory were included. The gallery now has a website at: www.upstairsgallery.mb.ca

Loondance Gallery in Mont-Tremblant, Quebec presented Three Younger Masters: Tuk Nuna, Taraq Raghe and Tomoo Shacky from July 12 to August 3. More than 40 works by the three Cape Dorset artists were displayed. Cape Dorset Graphics: 1961–1979 was held from July 26 to August 24, featuring works by Peter Pitseolak, Kingmeata Etidloie and Pitseolak Ashoona.
Meeting of Bird Spirits, 1996, Effie Arnaluaq, Baker Lake (black stone; 9 x 7 x 3 in., 8 x 7 x 4 in.; Spirit Wrestler Gallery).

Walrus (brooch), 1997, Sandy Okatsiak, Arviat (copper, sterling silver; 6.0 x 4.5 cm; Spirit Wrestler Gallery).

Native Art Gallery in Oakville, Ontario presented Northern Spirits: An Exhibition of Igloolik Sculpture from June 15 through July. The exhibition included work by Luke Airut, George Auksaq, Bart Hanna, Louis Illujuak, Ross Kayotak, Yvonne Kayotak, Juili Kutsiq and Joelic Stakuluk. The gallery also presented a solo exhibition of sculpture by Peter Kapakataok of Kugluktuk (Coppermine) from September 28 through October entitled Life, Legend and Legacy: A Young Man's Portrait of Kugluktuk.

Inuit Galerie in Mannheim, Germany presented a selection of drawings by Baker Lake artist Luke Anguhaluq from September 7 to October 4. Dr. Christop Vitali, director of Haus der Kunst in Munich, gave a talk at the exhibition opening.

Feheley Fine Arts in Toronto, Ontario presented Singing and Dancing and Playing from June 7 through July. Manusie Akpaliapik, Elijah Michael, Nuna Parr, Pauta Salla, Isyola Kingwatsiak, Mary Pudlat and Simon Shaimaiyuq were among the featured artists. Twenty-nine sculptures and 13 prints and drawings were included.

The 1997 Pangnirtung Community Print Collection was released on June 20 in 16 North American galleries. The collection consists of 15 stencils and etchings. It marks one of the first Pangnirtung print collections for which the seven artists and four printmakers worked without assistance from a southern art advisor.

The June 4 auction of Inuit art at Waddington's Auctioneers and Appraisers in Toronto, Ontario generated $260,000 in sales from more than 450 lots up for bid. Significant sales included a mid-1960s carving by Johnny Inukpuk ($18,700), a Karoo Ashevak work in whale bone ($11,000) and a mother-and-child carving by John Kavik ($6,600).
Judith Varney Burch

Exhibition notice:

Sculpture of the Arctic – Richmond

Miniatures from Kugluktuk (previously Coppermine) – Richmond

Pangnirtung Tapestries 1997 – Richmond

Cape Dorset Prints – Richmond

Arctic Textiles – St. Catherine’s School, Richmond

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Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond

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MORE ABOUT TUPILAKS

Further to an enquiry about a tupilak from IAQ subscriber Mara Washurn in the Summer 1997 issue, several readers contacted us with information.

I am a collector of tupilaks. I have 15, only three of which are identified by artist. They were made by Mathias Ulriksen, Justus Jorgensen and Anthony Poulson, all from Kap Dan, Ostgron, Greenland. The biggest tupilak I have is five and a half inches tall. Some in my collection, expensive and quite rare, have two or three heads. Others are playing music or lying down. In Montreal, the price range for tupilaks seems to be $650 to $1,500. They are made from the teeth of killer whales, and are now banned in Greenland from export. If you want to see more photographs of tupilaks, you could try the Dancing Bear Gallery, Northville, Michigan.

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I am a collector of tupilaks. I have 15, only three of which are identified by artist. They were made by Mathias Ulriksen, Justus Jorgensen and Anthony Poulson, all from Kap Dan, Ostgron, Greenland. The biggest tupilak I have is five and a half inches tall. Some in my collection, expensive and quite rare, have two or three heads. Others are playing music or lying down. In Montreal, the price range for tupilaks seems to be $650 to $1,500. They are made from the teeth of killer whales, and are now banned in Greenland from export. If you want to see more photographs of tupilaks, you could try the Dancing Bear Gallery, Northville, Michigan.

Tupilak figures are still carved in the Tasilaq district. I am not sure whether or not real tupilaks are still made, but the tupilak still has a powerful meaning to people here as is expressed in the following quote:

The tupilak is an evil spirit created by sorcerers or witches. Bones of animals or birds are piled together and hidden in a lonely place. When, one fine day, the sorcerer feels so disposed, he visits his heap of bones and puts them together in the shape of a fantastic creature, but he must touch it with only his thumb and little finger, otherwise the tupilak loses its power. As he is reciting magic words over it, it draws nourishment from the sorcerer's sexual parts. When it has reached the required size, he sends it to sea. One day when he has need for it, he summons it and orders it to go and kill his enemy. The latter usually dies at the mere sight of the tupilak's horrible shape. However, if the enemy has greater strength than the sorcerer, he may reverse the tupilak and send it back to kill the sorcerer. (Aage Gitz-Johansen. Characters of the Greenland Mythology. Copenhagen: Einar Munksgaard, 1949, 57-8)

Hopefully this will give you an idea of the tupilak, one of the most powerful spirits known to Inuit here. I am not aware of any book in English that describes the tupilak in detail.

Ole G. Jensen
Curator, Ammassalik Museum
Tasilaq, Greenland

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Vol. 12, No. 4 Winter 1997
According to the elders in Rankin Inlet, a tupilak is a bad spirit with a shadowy nature. Only shamans have the ability to see one, and it can only be successfully eradicated by a shaman. When a shaman is called in to cure someone who is ill, he will try to catch the tupilak who is outside the igloo. It is said that the shaman’s hands get bloody and he gets terribly confused in this struggle. It takes a tap on the lower part of the shaman’s neck to bring him back to normal. Olle Ittanaar, head of the Inuit Cultural Institute, says that the blood can only be removed from the shaman’s hands with urine, followed by a water rinse.

Jane Schuldberg
Seattle, Washington

In reference to the question about a tupilak, I should let you know that I have published a paper about tupilat (plural of tupilak) in *Études Inuit Studies* (vol. 7, no. 1, 1983). I have a master’s degree in anthropology, specializing in circumpolar peoples. I have been studying tupilat since 1980, and am presently writing a book on the subject. The information that one finds in *Lords of the Stone* on the tupilak figure is mostly incorrect. There is a publication by Robert Petersen, *The Tupilak*, which is not available today but might possibly be found at the National Museum in Copenhagen, Denmark. Ms. Washburn’s figure was made between 1970 and 1981, probably either in the village of Kap Dan (now called Kulusuk) or in the village of Tasiilaq, East Greenland. It is difficult to tell who the carver is, but it could be Ander Kilime or Moses Kuitse.

Sheila Romalis (by e-mail)
Vancouver, British Columbia

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I became interested in Inuit art while I was in Canada from 1988 to 1990 when my husband was the Japanese ambassador. We collected quite a number of prints and a few lovely soapstone sculptures, which I treasure. After Canada, my husband was named ambassador to the United Kingdom. We enjoyed introducing our British and Japanese friends in London to Inuit art and showed them some of our treasures. In May 1997 I had an exciting homecoming to Toronto and Ottawa. I visited the McMichael, the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the National Gallery of Canada. I wished more Inuit pieces were displayed, but I did find several interesting books and a lovely soapstone piece. I started subscribing to Inuit Art Quarterly in Ottawa and have received and enjoyed the magazine ever since. I appreciate the efforts of your staff to inform us of the changing life and art from the perspective of Inuit artists. I wanted to stress the fact that we enjoy Inuit Art Quarterly very much and we are delighted to renew our subscription for another two years.

Sachiko Kitamura
Tokyo, Japan

Inuit Art Quarterly edits letters for grammar, length and clarity. We do not publish form letters or copies. Address letters to: The Editor, Inuit Art Quarterly, 2081 Merivale Road, Nepean, Ontario, Canada K2G 1G9.

Every effort is made to ensure that information in this calendar is correct, but readers are advised to check dates and times with event organizers.

**EXHIBITIONS**

**Art and Expression of the Netsilik**, curated by Darlene Coward Wight, Winnipeg Art Gallery, 300 Memorial Boulevard, Winnipeg, Manitoba, December 7, 1997 to April 26, 1998. Tel: (204) 786-6641.

**Unikat/Stories**, curated by Darlene Coward Wight, Winnipeg Art Gallery, 300 Memorial Boulevard, Winnipeg, Manitoba, September 20, 1997 to April 5, 1998. Tel: (204) 786-6641.

**Germaine Arnaktauyok**, curated by Darlene Coward Wight, Winnipeg Art Gallery, 300 Memorial Boulevard, Winnipeg, Manitoba, February 1, 1998 to August 23, 1998. Tel: (204) 786-6641.


**Making Art Work in Cape Dorset**, curated by Shannon Bagg, Carleton University Art Gallery, 1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, August 15 to November 30, 1997. Tel: (613) 520-2600 ext. 1357.

**Selections from the Permanent Collection**, curated by Sue Gustavson, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 10365 Islington Avenue, Kleinburg, Ontario, September 13, 1997 to February 8, 1998. Tel: (905) 893-0344.

...continued on page 48
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