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Features

6 The Beginning
By Virginia Watt

The story of the birth of the Inuit carving industry 50 years ago

18 A Legacy of Female Leadership
By Ellen Easton McLeod

The history of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild told from the perspective of its women leaders

Department

Editorial
Keeping Things in Perspective 3

Focus
“We Wouldn’t Be Doing What We’re Doing If It Weren’t For Him”
Inuit recall being encouraged to carve by James Houston 24

Curator’s Choice
Celebrating Nunavut
By Jessica Tomic-Bagshaw 31

Curatorial Notes
Iqqaipaa: Celebrating Inuit Art 1948–1970
By Maria von Finckenstein 35

Qamanittuaq Drawings by Baker Lake Artists
By Judith Nasby 38

Creation and Continuity: Inuit Art from the Shumiatcher Collection
By Darlene Coward Wight 40

Reviews
Exhibitions
The Gasparski and Ridd Collections
Reviewed by John Ayre 42

Books
The Arctic Sky
Reviewed by Norman Hallendy 45

Update 46

At the Galleries 52
Advertiser Index 54
Calendar 62
From Our Readers 63
Keeping Things in Perspective

Virginia Watt did not want a funeral; she died as she lived, behind the scenes. Nonetheless, five of her friends decided that we would meet in June to toast the memory of this extraordinary woman, whose year of death also marks the 50th anniversary of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild’s landmark sale of Inuit art in 1949. As manager of the guild from 1968 to 1986, Virginia carried forward the vision of her predecessors: Alice Peck, May Phillips and Alice Lighthall. It was fitting that the current manager, Nairy Kalemkerian, was with us at Virginia’s memorial lunch. Nairy has inherited the mantle of female leadership in the Canadian Handicrafts movement, as detailed in Ellen Easton McLeod’s article (p. 18).

We all had stories to tell. Personally, I am especially grateful for Virginia’s active involvement in getting the Inuit Art Foundation off the ground. The unwavering support of the president did much to counterbalance the risks inherent in undertaking something that had never been done before. I think Virginia regarded our work at the Inuit Art Foundation as the culmination of a lifelong effort to further the interests of artists. Although art made by Inuit has a major presence worldwide, the artists have, until recently, played a minor role in its promotion and interpretation. It is only now, 50 years after the Inuit art industry was conceived, that they are beginning to take their rightful places on the art scene.

Apart from the higher visibility being enjoyed by artists, Inuit are increasingly being invited to act as curators and commentators. Our president, Mattiusi Iyaituk, was a resource person at an indigenous artists symposium in Taipei last April. July Papatsie co-curated an exhibition that

In spite of this forward movement, there continue to be instances in which Inuit interests are overlooked or disregarded. The Inuit Art Quarterly has a commitment to bring these to public attention, but we are gratified to note that they are now also being reported in other publications. An article entitled “Taking the Inuit out of Inuit Art” appeared in the April 8, 1999 issue of Ottawa X Press. Briefly, the author deplored the treatment of Inuit at the opening of Iqaqipaa, the Canadian Museum of Civilization’s well-publicized exhibition in honour of the establishment of Nunavut. CMC chair Adrienne Clarkson and other dignitaries were on stage, while two artists, one of whom had a work in the show, were “squashed like sardines” in the audience. Chairs had been set aside for invitees to a VIP reception hosted by the exhibition sponsor: the artists were not invited. In a tip of the hat to multiculturalism, Inuit provided musical entertainment.

A few days after the Iqaqipaa opening, the museum was again in the limelight as the host of Nunavut Day celebrations (why at a museum, rather than at Parliament, the seat of power?). Nunatsiaq News, one of the gutsiest newspapers published anywhere, carried an article entitled “Ottawa celebrations divide participants by class and race.” A posh reception was hosted – we are told by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs – in the CMC theatre where invited guests watched the Iqaluit ceremonies on a large screen. I turned over the two tickets given me for this event to our president, Mattiusi Iyaituk, and visiting artist Kananginak Pootoogook. Scrounging a third, I accompanied them past security into the reception area where no other Inuit were to be seen. There is a large Inuit community in Ottawa – at least 500 – but where were they? Not in the theatre; besides Mattiusi and Kananginak, there was only Jessica Tomic-Bagshaw.

So, where were the Inuit? Not in the Grand Hall where the general public was watching the Iqaluit ceremonies on a big screen and being entertained by Inuit singers and dancers. The Inuit were at the bottom of the escalator and around a corner, huddled at tables set up around a large canoe in the foyer of the First People’s Hall, watching the ceremonies on a television set. I was told that there was a large screen set up for them in the hall, but I never got that far, having been stopped by an artist who was dismayed at being away from the action and wanted my help in repositioning himself.

I was also told that there had been a quota of 10 per cent of the theatre seats (it holds 500) reserved for Inuit and that they did not RSVP. And, finally, I was told that “they [Inuit] wanted to have their own party.” I wasn’t the only one to find this situation incredible; one observer
described it as “apartheid.” It is hard to believe that anyone intended to slight Inuit – especially on a day that was supposed to symbolize some regaining of their lost sovereignty, but racist attitudes are deeply entrenched and continue to crop up when and where you least expect them.

Consciousness raising has only begun and it may be that institutions are slower to embrace change than individuals. I was, for instance, impressed by the appreciation for artists’ concerns evidenced in questions from the audience at the Art Gallery of Ontario’s one-day symposium in April. People responded with enthusiasm to the first speaker, Victoria Mamnguqsualuk, who talked about what making art means to her and how she does it. But while the audience and the Inuit – Sally Webster of Baker Lake also spoke – seemed to be on the same wavelength, those speaking for the institution seemed unsure of how to move from the abstract to the concrete.

Chief Curator Dennis Reed attempted to set a tone for the day’s discussion by referring to the problem of how Inuit art should be presented in a large, multifaceted institution. Jack Butler, an artist who spent several years working with people in Baker Lake, made an eloquent argument for presenting Inuit art as “an intrinsic part of Canadian art.” Speaking later in the day, Peter White, a curator whose interest is in postmodernism, not necessarily Inuit art, insisted that we have to stop ghettoizing and categorizing, but wondered how that could be done “within the framework of this stolid institution.” How indeed? In the end, an unnamed audience member’s response was: “Why can’t you bring the art to life to people?”

Another curator, Peggy Gale, whose interest is in video art, not necessarily Inuit, alluded to the fact that changes in the way art is displayed demand a change in attitudes towards art. She drew an interesting parallel between Japanese and Inuit attitudes, suggesting that while westerners separate art from daily living, others do not. “In Japan, arranging food on a plate can be art,” she said, causing me to think of an acquaintance – neither Japanese nor Inuit – for whom ploughing a field is an art that provides both technical and aesthetic satisfaction.

As long as the terms of reference are in the hands of the dominant society (as represented by our large institutions), the status quo will resist challenge: from the media, academics and artists. Indeed, while the AGO started off on the right foot by opening the morning session with Victoria Mamnguqsualuk saying real things about her art, later participants failed to pick up on the one topic begging attention: collaboration of curators and artists, specifically Inuit artists. Jack Butler’s articulate comments about the painful colonialist dilemma that exists in the North – he described himself as “an empowered representative of the dominant culture in relation to a disempowered ethnic minority” – were ignored by later speakers except for AGO curator Cynthia Cook who referred to the generally good intentions of colonialists. Indeed, the title of the dispirited afternoon session – “Curating the North” – gave no hint of the by now generally accepted need for collaboration between artists and curators.

It seems clear that we have entered a period of curatorial crisis. A new paradigm is required, one that will accommodate the interests of academics, artists and the viewing public. Much has been written about the poverty of the reigning paradigm, some of it in The Inuit Art Quarterly. Our commitment now is to present case studies of the sharing of power. In the summer issue, Sue Gustavison of the McMichael Canadian Collection wrote about consulting with artists to organize an exhibition highlighting a topic of paramount interest to them: stone. In this issue, Maria von Finckenstein, Inuit art curator at the CMC, writes about her experience working with the Igqapaaq exhibition team. In coming issues, we will present a number of case studies in which curators have stepped outside the paradigm to share power with artists. We will continue to bring forward real people’s experiences of working together to create something new, brave ventures given the difficulties the institutions they work for have in accommodating other voices.

Fifty years ago, due to the timely intervention of James Houston and the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, artmaking was established as a successful cottage industry and a major source of livelihood for thousands of Canadian Inuit. Encouraged by the Northwest Territories administration, the guild’s efforts were directed towards the alleviation of “suffering and deprivation.” The objective of the players at the time was, unabashedly, to develop a self-sufficient handicraft industry, drawing on the age-old skills of the Inuit. They succeeded in developing an artheart that was both a Canadian icon and a marketing success. Some people just like it and enjoy it; others try to understand and say ever more interesting things about it. Until recently, Inuit have not been numbered among the latter. Artists say over and over again how important it is for them to have this opportunity. It is also important to my understanding of what they are doing. Since Inuit drew my attention to the stone several years ago, I have gained a whole new appreciation of why things look the way they do: the material is both inspiring and limiting – as the McMichael makes clear in its path-breaking exhibition Northern Rock: Contemporary Inuit Stone Sculpture. Listening to Victoria Mamnguqsualuk at the AGO, my awareness of the connection between making tools and making art deepened. “You have to take the time,” she said. “You can do good work if you take the time.”

The legendary patience of Inuit hunters stands them in good stead as artists – and as commentators. What is 50 years in their long history of making art and other things? Time will put all things in their proper perspective, including today’s apparent crises. We are using this issue to mark a milestone that seems important only because of our limited perspective: the 50-year anniversary of the commercialization of Inuit art practice. We dedicate it to Virginia Watt, who played a role in that short history but who never thought she deserved to be eulogized for doing her job. MM
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The BEGINNING
By Virginia Watt

The first exhibition of Eskimo Art took place in Montreal at the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in 1949. The exhibition was sold out in three days.

This news item has been reprinted many times in newspapers, magazines, promotional material and books. In 1977, a clipping service provided me with copies of this statement from 23 Canadian newspapers. My intent here is not to editorialize on the cause or the effect of this news story but, rather, to relate the events which preceded the exhibition in 1949 and the four years that followed. The Canadian Handicrafts Guild was founded in 1906 as a non-profit organization. Its aims and objectives were as follows: to encourage, retain, revise and develop Canadian handicrafts and art industries throughout the Dominion; to prevent loss, extinction and deterioration of the same; to encourage home industry by making it profitable and honourable; to aid people skilled in such crafts and industries by providing markets for their products in Canada and abroad; and finally, to educate the public as to the value of such arts, industries and crafts.

The guild was a national organization with headquarters in Montreal. Over the years, it developed branch organizations in other cities throughout Canada. Among the first members of the guild were people who had collections of Indian and Eskimo crafts. It is not surprising that one of the guild’s interests was to encourage the Native peoples of Canada to produce good traditional crafts. Guild members organized exhibitions and competitions for the Indian people. They produced travelling shows, some of which included Eskimo crafts borrowed for the occasion from private collectors.

In 1930 the guild organized an exhibition of Eskimo arts and crafts at the McCord Museum in Montreal. The artifacts and small ivory carvings captured the imagination of the public and press alike. It is not usual for the New York Times to review an exhibition held in...
Montreal, but this one drew the paper's comments (1930). There were several attempts made by the Hudson's Bay Company during the great depression years of the thirties to encourage and develop an Eskimo craft market but none were successful.

In March 1939, the Indian Committee of the guild "moved [and] duly seconded that the Indian Committee's name be changed to Indian and Eskimo Committee and that its scope be extended to include the encouragement of Eskimo work" (Canadian Handicrafts Guild Indian and Eskimo Committee 1939). Miss Alice Lighthall was chairman of the committee and among its 12 members were Dr. Diamond Jenness and Major David McKeand of the Northwest Territories Administration Office. Major McKeand had reported to the guild that poor hunting years in the North caused acute suffering and deprivation among the people and that this condition might be alleviated by developing a market for Eskimo crafts in the South. The following year he sent a small collection of crafts that he had obtained while on an inspection tour of the Ungava, with the request that the guild should "take up the work of encouraging Eskimo handicrafts through white women now in the Arctic" (Canadian Handicrafts Guild 1939).

The committee's assessment of this collection reads as follows:

There are among them some curious and clever attempts to imitate articles of daily use ... miniature baskets and a kerosene lamp, complete with chimney. We hope there may be an opportunity to direct some of these efforts along simpler and more practical lines! ... the function of this Committee in relation to (Native) products, must continue to be in the encouragement of the best use of traditional design, material and workmanship and the education of an appreciative and discerning public. (Ibid.)

In 1939 the guild had exhibited a collection on loan from the Right Reverend A.L. Fleming, Bishop of the Arctic. The
At the Annual Meeting last year, there were on view here some half dozen baskets from the Far North. They were crudely made grass affairs, in grotesque shapes imitating objects in use, or seen by the Eskimos who had made them: a cooking pot, a blubber stove, an oil lamp, complete with chimney. These had been sent to us by Major David McKeand, of the Nascopie expedition with the request that the Indian and Eskimo Committee should take up the work of encouraging Eskimo handicrafts through white women now in the Arctic ... It was decided to prepare a leaflet that might be distributed by the Nascopie on its summer voyage, to every post where there was a white woman, missionary, nurse or teacher, wife of a factor, or an RCMP man. In this we asked their cooperation and suggested small competitions for the best work in their districts with a list of saleable objects for the materials to their hands.

- Alice Lighthall, Canadian Handicrafts Guild Annual Report, 1941

exhibition included “very fine Eskimo fur work and walrus tusk ivories. Especially fine is the great seal altar frontal made by the women of Pangnirtung for the new Cathedral at Aklavik” (ibid., 1940).

The Montreal members of the committee met and drew up a tentative plan with suggestions for a leaflet to be distributed to “anyone on the ground anxious to take part in the effort.” Dr. Jenness arranged for the committee to meet in Ottawa where specimens from the museum collection could be used to illustrate the discussion. Miss Lighthall [the manager] reported:

In a detailed discussion of the whole matter — the possibilities of developing existing skills, directing them to the use of Native materials and designs rather than to borrowed ones and the question of marketing the products — many interesting points were brought out. The art of basketry, for instance, is only practised among the eastern Eskimo of a limited district in the Ungava. It was taught to them by Moravian missionaries about 200 years ago. (Ibid.)

A leaflet was prepared asking for the recipients’ cooperation and suggesting that small competitions could be held to encourage good work. Major McKeand was to undertake the distribution of the leaflet, which would cover “every post where there was a missionary, nurse, teacher, wife of a Hudson’s Bay Factor.
or a member of the RCMP." What the results were of this plan are not recorded. We do know that the guild's efforts in the Arctic were severely curtailed during the Second World War. Seven years later the plan was revised and put into action.

In 1947 the guild had been informed that small stone carvings were being made in the Ungava and the guild was asked to do everything in its power to encourage this work. Hunting was poor and the people were in desperate need of an additional income. Colonel P.B. Baird, Director of the Montreal office of the Arctic Institute of North America, was a new member of the guild's Indian and Eskimo Committee. He agreed to supply a list of names of white women living in the Arctic who would be willing to encourage and stimulate the production of good crafts (Canadian Handicrafts Guild Indian and Eskimo Committee 1948a). A letter written by Miss Lighthall outlined the guild's objectives and expressed concern that the rapid invasion of the North by white people could have a derogatory effect on the special skills of the northern people. She emphasized the need to encourage the independence and individuality of the craftsmen.

The letter was sent to 25 women in the following communities: Arctic Bay, Cape Smith, Fort Chimo, Pangnirtung, Port Harrison, Puirnituq, Southampton Island, Sguiluk, Baker Lake, Great Whale River, Chesterfield Inlet, Eskimo Point and Pond Inlet. A list of suggestions accompanied the letter. The preface to the list is worth repeating:

The Native work of the Eskimo is unique in the world today. It is a survival of the crafts that were carried on by very early man. In any work we do with the Eskimo, it would be well to remember this and that we should encourage them to use their own materials and methods rather than to imitate ours. We have the responsibility of not letting them forget their own arts. (Lighthall 1948)

Alice Lighthall was indeed the right woman at the right time. The following is a direct quote from the minutes of the Indian and Eskimo Committee meeting of November 18, 1948b:

Mr. J.A. Houston of Grandmère who visited Port Harrison [Inukjuak] during the past summer spoke to the committee at some length about his plan to encourage craft work among the Eskimos of that district. Mr. Houston felt very strongly that the latent skills of the Eskimos could be brought forth if there was someone on the spot to encourage them. He gave the names of Miss Woodrow and Miss Andrews, two white women in Port Harrison, who had asked him if he could

The foundation of all such work should be its usefulness to themselves. (Fur clothing is better for them than cloth. Sinew sewing is better than any machine stitching.) Things made for sale are much more attractive when the Native character is kept. They must also be of good quality and workmanship. Articles fulfilling these conditions are sought after by sportsmen and tourists ...

Small models of their own Native figures, animals and utensils are interesting. Ivory carvings suitable for brooches, pendants, clips or buckles. Beads, bangles, spoons and ladles, small boxes, needlecases, scissors protectors and napkin rings are all suitable. Soapstone work: small bowls and ash trays, in the manner of their own cooking – pots and lamps ...

A good way to encourage skilled work is to hold little exhibitions of the people's work, and judge it for quality, encouraging all the exhibitors to improve.

(Excerpt of Suggestions for Eskimo Handicrafts from letter by Alice Lighthall, Canadian Handicrafts Guild, 1948)
We have for some time been considering the possibility of collecting some of the Eskimo handicraft products, but up till now have not been able to find a suitable means of contacting the Eskimos... We now have an opportunity of contacting them through a Mr. James A. Houston of Grandmère, Que. Mr. Houston spent last summer at Port Harrison and Povungnituk, both on the eastern shore of Hudson Bay. He is an artist and drew a large number of sketches and coloured pictures up there, and feels that we would have an excellent opportunity of getting the Eskimos to bring some of their things in for exchange to the usual trade goods.

(Excerpt of letter from C.J.G. Molson of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild to Clifford P. Wilson of the Hudson's Bay Company, January 7, 1949)

return next summer and help them in this work. Mr. Houston asked for the cooperation of the guild through the Hudson’s Bay Company whose stores would perhaps be able to arrange to supply food in return for pieces of good craft work.

The meeting continued with a lengthy discussion about ways and means of transporting finished work, standards of craftsmanship and the types of crafts produced in the area. “The guild agreed to sponsor Mr. Houston in his effort to promote the production of crafts in and around Port Harrison and Povungnituk.” James Houston was the right man at the right time.

The Indian and Eskimo Committee was a group of volunteers, without funds but endowed with unquenchable enthusiasm. They met with C.J.G. Molson who was then president of the Quebec Branch of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild. He agreed to the proposal that the Quebec Branch Shop provide the funds for the proposed test purchase at Port Harrison which Mr. Houston would undertake during the summer of 1949.

“$1,100 had been underwritten by the shop and placed to the credit of Houston at the Hudson’s Bay Company. Travelling expenses were estimated at $400” (Canadian Handicrafts Guild Quebec Branch Shop Committee 1949a).

In the context of 1980, $1,500 is a very small amount of money, but in 1949 to a nonprofit craft organization without access to any funding other than what they earned in their shop, the expenditure of $1,500 on the unknown was a courageous and daring act. The auditor's report for the year ending December 31, 1948 noted a loss of $467.

The guild received a letter in July 1949 from R.A. Gibson, Deputy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories Administration Office, “asking about the extent of its work and plans for the Eskimo.” Miss Lighthall went to Ottawa to have an interview.

Mr. Gibson said that Mr. Houston’s activities had been reported to the administration by the RCMP inspector, and that the matter had inter-
They would like also that the guild's Indian and Eskimo Committee include a representative of the Department, Mr. James G. Wright. (Canadian Handicrafts Guild 1949)

The committee agreed to invite Mr. Wright to join them. In October, Mr. Wright was invited to speak to the committee about the government's plans. He reported the problems which had been brought about by the depressed price of furs and that

... the Department of Mines and Resources was looking forward to securing the services of a man who would organize the whole new handicraft industry among the

We have made up an approximate list of items which we would like to obtain and Mr. Houston has this list which he will attend to. We have authorized him to purchase up to $1,100 worth of articles this summer, and our idea was to deposit this sum with your company to provide credit for that amount of stores to be supplied the Eskimos on his order. I presume that your company would be able to benefit in some way from this through charging us such price for the exchange goods as would give the company some profit ... If this arrangement works out satisfactorily, it would be ours and Mr. Houston's plan that he should go again in other years to other places and develop a more or less permanent outlet for Eskimo handicrafts through the guild.

(Excerpt of letter from C.J.G. Molson of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild to Hugh W. Sutherland, Controller, Fur Trade Department, Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg, January 30, 1949)
As you may know, the company has always encouraged the development of handicrafts among the Eskimos and Indians, and is keenly interested in providing them with this supplemental means of livelihood. Through the years much energy and money has been spent on these projects, but the results were often disappointing... Naturally, we want to assist you if you decide to carry through this plan, but we don't want you to be disappointed and left with a lot of unsaleable material on your hands.

(Excerpt of letter from Clifford P. Wilson of the Hudson's Bay Company to C.J.G. Molson of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, February 11, 1949)

Mr. Houston has made arrangements to fly in to Port Harrison and has to be at Moose Factory on 15th of June. He will probably therefore be up there from shortly after the 15th of June until the middle of September. He has obtained official permission from Bishop Carrington of Quebec to use the church quarters there to live in.


Eskimo, but the appointment of this official had not yet been made. Miss Lighthall mentioned that the Handicrafts Division of the Department of Indian Affairs had taken quantity rather than quality in their Indian handicraft products and thus they are losing their distinctive market. It was pointed out that the same thing should not happen to the Eskimo craft market. (Canadian Handicrafts Guild Indian and Eskimo Committee 1949)

When a suggestion was made to teach art in the northern schools, Miss Lighthall advised the speaker to "send the children to their grandfathers for that." The meeting concluded with a suggestion from Mr. Wright that a letter should be written to R.A. Gibson requesting a government grant so that the guild should continue its worthy work among the Eskimos" (ibid.). In early November, James Houston was appointed the Canadian Handicrafts Guild's arctic representative. Plans were made to apply for a government grant so that Houston's work could be expanded to include other areas in the Arctic. November 21, 1949 was the date set for the exhibition and sale of the works collected in the Port Harrison area during the previous summer (Canadian Handicrafts Guild Quebec Branch Shop Committee 1949b).

In May 1950, Jack Molson reported that "the Government grant of $8,000 had been received" (ibid. 1950). The grant was given to cover costs of travel and salary for James Houston for two years.

At a meeting at the guild in October 1950, Miss Lighthall reported as follows:

Mr. Houston made two trips to the Arctic. The first trip extended from the first of March to the middle of July 1950, and covered the Port Harrison area on the east coast of Hudson's Bay. The second trip extended from early August to the latter part of September and covered the west coast of Hudson's Bay. In the Port Harrison, Povungnituk and Cape Smith area the quality of handicrafts was found to be greatly improved over that of the previous summer. The guild is receiving...
The utmost cooperation from the Hudson's Bay Company and it is recommended that a letter of thanks be written to Mr. R.H. Chessire. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police offered to carry (transport) crates of handicrafts - some of these unfortunately have been damaged by sea water and storms. Total purchases of $6,200 have been authorized to date in this area. Purchases on the west coast were comparatively small, as Mr. Houston did not find much available handicraft work there. He expects that better results will be produced in 1951. He was prevented by ice from covering Igloolik. In Chesterfield Inlet where he had gone at the request of the government to work with the Eskimo polio victims, he was unable to work due to the fact that food and accommodation were not made available. $300 worth of crafts were purchased in Repulse Bay and $600 was left with the manager of the Hudson's Bay post in order that he might continue to purchase and to inform the guild when that amount should be increased. (Canadian Handicrafts Guild Indian and Eskimo Committee 1950)

Miss Lighthall noted that sales of the Eskimo articles were proceeding satisfactorily through the Canadian Handicrafts Shop, its agents and exhibitions. At the same meeting, Molson read an estimate of expenses which he had prepared in connection with the application for renewal of the government grant for 1951. This grant was to cover a period of seven months of travel in Baffin Island and the Ungava for two people. (James Houston was about to be married.) The items on the list included: files, emery paper, needles, beads, boxes, dogteam travel, arctic tent, winter clothing, food, sleeping bags, primus stove, insurance, etc. Other than salaries, the most expensive item was dogteam travel at $600. The estimate totalled $8,000 (ibid.). The guild's "Eskimo Project" net profit for the year ending December 31, 1950 was $167 (ibid. 1951).

The Houstons' trip to the Arctic in 1951 was successful. They visited Lake Harbour, Cape Dorset, Frobisher Bay, Pangnirtung, Clyde River, Pond Inlet and Salluit. They reported that the travelling had been good on sea and ice and that "they had been helped by the Eskimos everywhere" (Canadian Handicrafts Guild Quebec Branch Shop Committee 1951). About 2,000 carvings and crafts had been purchased on Baffin Island with the cooperation of the Hudson's Bay Company store managers. Fifty-eight cases had arrived at the guild with the balance expected on the next trip of the CD Howe. There would also be shipments from the Hudson's Bay posts in the Ungava.

We understand that Mr. Houston will not take any part in the actual exchange of trade goods, but rather that he will issue orders for stipulated amounts to the Eskimos from whom he makes his purchases, the Eskimos, in turn, submitting these orders to our post manager who will honour them as cash.

We have been very much interested in the efforts of your guild to encourage the development of a handicraft industry amongst the Eskimos at Port Harrison last summer ... The Eskimo economy has, in the past, been based largely upon the white fox fur trade. The white fox is subject to cyclic scarcity and wide fluctuations in price depending on world fur markets. We are anxious to introduce new industries at suitable points to improve the Eskimo economy and the proven ability of the Natives in producing characteristic handicraft articles holds promise for developing a small industry in this field if the Eskimo production can be properly organized and outlets to suitable markets provided.

(Excerpt of letter from H.L. Keenleyside, Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources, to Mrs. Currie, President of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, November 17, 1949)
While the Canadian Handicrafts Guild was able to initiate a limited experiment on its own account, discussion with your department has shown that a much more comprehensive plan is now indicated. Therefore, the guild wishes to apply for a grant to cover expenses incurred during last summer in the Arctic and expenses anticipated for the coming year. The general outline of this work is set forth in paragraphs one to four of your letter. They include:

1) Mr. Houston acting as instructor, supervisor and purchaser for the guild. The guild would provide the funds for purchase of the goods and would undertake the marketing of them at its own expense, the selling price to be based on the usual trade mark-up over the cost price;

2) the publication of a booklet sponsored by the guild;

3) the training of polio victims;

4) general cooperation with the Northwest Territories administration.

During 1950 the guild had organized Eskimo art exhibitions in Toronto, Calgary and New York. In 1951, this program was expanded and exhibitions were sent to the National Gallery of Canada and the Royal Ontario Museum. Stories of the exhibitions and the arctic adventures of the Houstons were reported in Canadian Geographic, Vogue, Canadian Art, Time and Life magazines. Requests for radio interviews with the Houstons were frequent. The public was enchanted with this new, curious and exotic art form.

The guild was faced with the problem of having to finance the ever-increasing flow of shipments from the North, months before the goods were received in Montreal. Skins and furs that had not been properly cured had to be destroyed. Carvings and crafts that were not up to standard were not offered for sale. Breakage was a common and costly problem. The exhibition and sale of November 1952 had been disappointing and efforts were made to stimulate markets in other parts of Canada and in the United States (ibid. 1952). Preparations were made for an exhibition in 1953 at Gimpel Fils in London, England during the time of the Coronation. James Houston made arrangements with Eugene B. Power of Ann Arbor, Michigan to supply the American market through the guild. Molson reported in May 1953 that “the opening of new markets both here and in the United States looked promising” (ibid. 1953a).

Throughout all of the early years, the Hudson’s Bay Company and the guild worked in close cooperation. The company’s assistance in the Arctic to James and Alma Houston was invaluable. In 1953, the guild could no longer continue to purchase the entire production from the eastern Arctic. An agreement was

**Untitled, 1954, Levi Echalook, Inukjuak (stone and ivory; 6.5 x 7.5 x 2.8 in.; Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec).**
made with the Hudson's Bay Company that “the company would handle all the direct buying from the Eskimo and that the guild would purchase its allotment from them” (ibid.).

In James Houston’s report of his trip to the eastern Arctic in the summer of 1953 he states, “Eskimo handicrafts show a marked improvement in 10 of the 12 separate areas where they are now being purchased by the guild.” He mentions in particular Port Harrison, where “Norman Ross and R. Ploughman of the Hudson’s Bay Company have done much to encourage all of the carvers and as a result can show splendid work from a great many rather than a few” (ibid. 1953b).

Jack Molson received a letter in August 1953 from H.A. Young, Deputy Minister of the Department of Resources and Development, Ottawa. The letter stated that “arrangements are underway to increase the scope of the Arctic Services Section of the Northern Administration and Lands Branch. The development of the handicrafts industry is one of several projects we have in mind …” The letter went on to say that the government would establish vocational and training centres at Aklavik and Frobisher Bay where instruction in trades and crafts would be given, and that “in view of the decision of the department to assume the expenses of and the direct responsibility for fieldwork, I have been brought reluctantly to the conclusion that the annual grant the department has made to the guild in the past for handicraft work amongst the Eskimo will have to be discontinued. This decision in no way reflects the work the guild has done in developing handicrafts in the eastern Arctic.” The letter concluded with the hope that the guild “would give the department its continued support and advice” and that the department would “have its continued cooperation in developing outlets …” In his reply, Molson thanked the writer for his letter, saying “we will therefore plan our activities in accordance with the changed circumstances” (Molson 1953). He warned the government of the dangers of mass production and stated that the guild would continue to cooperate with the government in the marketing of “Eskimo arts and crafts of high quality.”

I am very happy to have the Canadian Handicrafts Guild cooperating with us in this project, as there appear to be good prospects that a vigorous handicraft industry can be established which should be a valuable addition to the Eskimo economy.

(Excerpt of letter from H.L. Keenleyside, Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources, to Mrs. G.S. Currie, President of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, December 13, 1949)

Firstly, the general purpose of both the Canadian Handicrafts Guild and the Northwest Territories administration is to secure, if possible, the establishment of a self-sufficient handicraft industry amongst the Eskimo.

(Excerpt of letter from R.A. Gibson, Deputy Commissioner, to the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, January 19, 1950)
After considering carefully the increasing requirements in the Arctic, we have come to the conclusion that the organization of this department must be altered so that more complete and effective direction can be given to projects aimed at improving the economy and well-being of the Eskimo population. Arrangements are, therefore, underway to increase the scope of the Arctic Services Section of the Northern Administration and Lands Branch ... The development of the handicrafts industry is one of the several projects we have in mind, all of which must be carried forward together and in a closely interrelated way ... I think it is apparent that there will be opportunity in this expanded program for us to touch the handicrafts industry at several points and we hope to assert a considerable degree of influence upon it.

(Excerpt of letter from the Department of Resources and Development to the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, November 1953)

The government's decision was a blow to the guild but not for long. With exceptional resilience, Alice Lighthall wrote to Molson that "the government's decision was not without its brighter side ... We welcome the news that they are planning other projects for the Eskimo, thereby releasing the unnatural strain upon handicrafts to replace relief in times of hardship" (Lighthall 1953). Miss Lighthall recommended that "we should urge the government to put its energies into developing general and scientific education among the people, making practical installations to help their economy and leave arts alone" (ibid.).

By the end of the 1950s the Inuit cooperative movement had started in the North. Today, the cooperatives own and operate their own distribution agencies in the South. The Hudson's Bay Company [now called the North West Company] continues to distribute carvings purchased by its northern store managers.

The years from 1949–1953 were years of an experiment without precedent. No one knew then whether the project would succeed or fail. These years were the beginning of what is today a multimillion dollar Inuit enterprise.

This article, written in 1980, is reprinted here with permission of the Canadian Guild of Crafts (Montreal) and Dr. Dorothy Stillwell, executor of the author's estate. Minor changes have been made to conform to Inuit Art Quarterly style.

NOTES
1 The name was changed in 1967 to Canadian Guild of Crafts. The Quebec Branch became autonomous in 1967. The name was changed to Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec.
2 The term "Inuit" is in common usage today.

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A Legacy of
FEMALE LEADERSHIP
By Ellen Easton McLeod

Fifty years ago, in 1949, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild sent James Houston to the Arctic to purchase Eskimo carvings. On the anniversary of that famous beginning, readers might be curious about the sponsoring organization. Who and what was the Canadian Handicrafts Guild? How does it fit into the picture? In fact, the guild was over 40 years old in 1949, and its involvement with Houston and Eskimo art was a natural outcome of its earlier history.

The Canadian Handicrafts Guild is a non-profit, national organization started in 1905 in Montreal by two volunteer women, Alice Peck (1855-1943) and May Phillips (1856-1937). Intelligent, practical and pioneering, their initiatives created a legacy of female leadership in the guild, carried on by such stalwart women as Alice Lighthall (1891-1991) and Virginia Watt (1919-1999). Women activists have been the heart and soul of the guild’s development for almost a century.

Alice Peck and May Phillips: developing the crafts of all Canadians
Alice Peck and May Phillips, both born in the 1850s, grew up in an era when women’s roles were severely circumscribed. When they founded the guild, Alice Peck was a well-to-do Montreal mother of seven. Schooled in England, well travelled in Europe, she was an accomplished weaver and book binder. May Phillips, an artist who had spent five years studying art and working in New York City, was principal of the School of Art and Applied Design in Montreal. Artistic women with many interests, they sought a way around the fact that cultural institutions such as the Art Association of Montreal were run by men only. In the 1890s, as it became acceptable for women to play a public role outside the home, Peck and Phillips involved themselves in organizations like the Women’s Art Association of Canada (WAAC).

By the late 19th century, the British Arts and Crafts Movement led by William Morris had raised the status of craftsmanship in artistic circles. Among the movement’s adherents in Britain and the U.S. were women who started organizations to promote crafts under the guise of philanthropy. Coupled with a benevolent motive, volunteer women could assume leadership in the arts, and still conform to the feminine ideal of nurturing. This model appealed to Alice Peck and May Phillips.

Escaping the city in the summers, the two Montreal women were familiar with the home arts of rural Quebec. They were attracted by the design, workmanship, natural colours and originality of French Canadian rugs and weaving, and Indian basketry, beadwork and quillwork. They feared that catalogue goods would kill home arts production, and saw Indian arts beginning to decline in quality. The arts and crafts revival in Britain and America inspired them to foster the home arts and crafts of the countryside. With a sense of noblesse oblige, they began an arts and crafts movement in Canada.

Alice Peck, Montreal, c.1890.
Courtesy Barbara (Peck) Carter
In 1896, as leaders of the Montreal Branch of the WAAC, Peck and Phillips began promoting home arts and handicrafts to preserve these arts and provide incomes to needy women. Out of their early success came a vigorous rivalry over handicrafts with the national WAAC president in Toronto, Mary Dignam. This competition precipitated a public separation that led to the founding of the Montreal-based Canadian Handicrafts Guild in January 1905 with a mandate to revive and develop the crafts of all Canadians.

Women activists have been the heart and soul of the guild’s development for almost a century.

The Napoleonic Code adopted in Quebec denied women the right to act in many legal and financial matters. Peck and Phillips, however, were less hindered by their gender than advantaged by their class. With the help of prominent men in law and government such as William Lighthall, Sir Melbourne Tait and Sir George Drummond, they secured the national incorporation of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in 1906. Henceforth they invited men to join, appointing several as honorary officers and members of the finance committee, and by 1912 the presidents began to be men. Still, men did not dominate. Women were employed as shop managers and secretary-treasurers, and women volunteers continued to do much of the work in the Canadian Handicrafts Guild.

What was this work? For more than 30 years, from 1902 until 1936, they held annual, national exhibitions and prize competitions in the art gallery in Montreal. Later, their exhibitions became less regular, but continued to draw entries from the whole country. In 1902, when women were not expected to be entrepreneurs, Peck and Phillips began a handicrafts shop in downtown Montreal, where a retail operation continues today. With seed money from Lady Strathcona, they raised the capital to buy stock for the shop and for Canadian craft exhibits at regional fairs and festivals, and at major exhibitions in the U.S. and abroad. Through business and government support, guild women staged national exhibitions and travelled the country to find craftspeople and new members. Provincial branches and affiliated agencies in Canada and the U.S. joined the effort to support, show and sell Canadian crafts. In 1909, Alice Peck inaugurated the guild’s permanent collection of Canadian crafts.

In Montreal, in the 1920s, May Phillips started classes to teach immigrant children the crafts of their own countries. In 1932, the guild began a Montreal handweaving school. They produced exhibition and retail catalogues, information pamphlets and annual reports. They had professional photographs taken of their craft exhibitions for use in articles for magazines, journals and newspapers. The guild’s efforts on many fronts educated governments and the public on the value of crafts, keeping respect for craftspeople alive in Canada. By the late 1940s, the field was so robust that the Massey Commission received evidence on handicrafts from 44 societies and individuals, along with 16 briefs and presentations on Indian arts and crafts (Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences 1951, 236–9).

From the very beginning, Peck and Phillips embraced Native arts. In 1900, Indian baskets were shown at their exhibition of loaned decorative arts and crafts held at Morgan’s Department Store (now the Bay) in Montreal. They invited Indian women from Caughnawaga (Kahnawake) to the exhibition, hoping they would emulate the fine workmanship of their elders.

Beginning with their first exhibition at the Art Association of Montreal gallery in 1902, Peck and Phillips always included Indian work in their exhibitions. They also purchased it to sell in their handicrafts shop. In a 1905 speech to the Royal Society of Canada, Alice Peck indicated that the guild’s shop had arts from 15
different Indian districts, where they encouraged individualized work using local materials (Royal Society of Canada 1905).

The guild chose to pay well for quality, rather than opting for quantity and mass production. It was naive, but Peck and Phillips saw new handicraft production as an opportunity for cultural preservation, as well as for Indian self-support. Although they sometimes used touristic settings with pageantry and simulated "authenticity" to sell Indian arts, the guild women accepted acculturated arts as long as materials and workmanship were of good quality. They did not think Indian arts were dead; rather, they invited contemporary craftspeople to follow the standards of their forebears.

**Alice Lighthall:**

**An Ardent Advocate for Inuit Art**

Alice Lighthall, daughter of two early guild supporters, Cybel and William Lighthall, had served as a nurse in France during the First World War. She became active as a guild volunteer in the 1920s, very soon focusing on Native arts. Her passion for Indian arts derived from her family's longstanding relationship with many Indian tribes. Her father was a recognized historian of Quebec and the Iroquois.

By 1931, Alice Lighthall had taken charge of Native arts for the guild's exhibitions, which often included government loans of Indian and Eskimo articles. These exhibitions served to encourage the public to be more discriminating about inferior work and "fakes," which were increasingly available (Canadian Handicrafts Guild 1933). In the spring of 1933, Alice Lighthall set up a new Committee of Indian Work to study ethnologists' collections of Indian arts in Montreal museums, in the hope of restoring this knowledge to Indian communities (Lighthall 1933).

In 1935, Lighthall had the guild document the extent of Indian craft production. She persuaded the Indian Affairs Branch to require its Indian agents to complete a questionnaire about traditional tribal craft work. The survey indicated a reservoir of knowledge in the making of moccasins, baskets, snowshoes, beadwork, leatherwork and quillwork which the guild was anxious to preserve and encourage (ibid., 1935). The formation of a partnership with the federal government to develop Indian arts was interrupted by the Second World War. As it turned out, the government went ahead alone, and it was not until 1946 that Alice Lighthall took up her program again with a national, juried Indian exhibition. Afterwards, many prize-winning items and private loans were organized as an educational exhibit that travelled across the country with the help of the Hudson's Bay Company, which was to become a vital partner in promoting Inuit art.

The guild's commitment to Native arts extended to northern Canada. Scattered references reveal its early interest in the Arctic. Even in 1905, the guild's exhibition in the Montreal art gallery showed an Eskimo soapstone lamp (La Presse 1905). In 1911, Peck and Phillips included a small kayak carved in walrus ivory by Pontoullik from Hudson Strait as part of its coronation gift to Queen Mary. In 1912, the guild sponsored a lecture by Arctic explorer Christian Leden on Eskimo arts and handicrafts, and purchased crafts from him (Canadian Handicrafts Guild 1914). These Leden purchases were probably supplemented by carvings brought from the Arctic in 1913 by Alice Peck's son, Hugh. In 1915, newspaper accounts of the guild's exhibition reported, "Eskimo carvings of great beauty have come to the Guild and it is felt the art of these northern tribes ought not to be lost" (Telegraph 1916).

Initially, the guild members wanted to preserve the Arctic's indigenous arts for their skill and cultural value, and were interested in "authenticity." Guild members, who were prevented by distance from knowing the people of the North, may have believed, as did ethnologists, that Native arts would disappear. In the 1920s, the guild collected such Eskimo crafts as carved walrus tusks, a walrus skin belt, a carved deat and a sealskin pouch, which in 1928 were transferred to the ethnology department at McGill University (Canadian Handicrafts Guild 1928). In 1930, at the McCord Museum in Montreal, the guild organized the first exhibition devoted solely to Eskimo arts and crafts. It featured tools, pencil drawings and tiny ivory carvings, attracting great interest from both the public and the media, even the New York Times (1930).
By the late 1930s, the guild's interest in the Arctic changed to encompass new artistic development. Alice Lighthall's Indian Committee included NWT administrator Major David McKeand, who described the decline of the caribou and the poor economic conditions in the North. The guild decided it could help by encouraging northern craft production for a southern market.

In 1939, the committee changed its name to the Indian and Eskimo Committee and organized an exhibit of Eskimo handicrafts loaned by Bishop Fleming of the Arctic. Lighthall's committee met with Diamond Jenness in Ottawa to see Eskimo material at the National Museum, but realized that untanned leather goods were unsuitable for sale in the South.

In 1941, at the urging of the NWT office, plans were made to send a leaflet to white women in northern communities with suggestions to encourage crafts that would be viable in a southern market. Thanks to the Second World War, these plans were carried out only in July 1948. Just as Peck and Phillips had sent leaflets in 1920 to Women's Institutes in the west with ideas for saleable handicrafts, Alice Lighthall sent letters with “Suggestions for Eskimo Handicrafts” to non-Native women in 25 northern communities. The northern women were advised: “A good way to encourage skilled work is to hold little exhibitions of the people's work, and judge it for quality, encouraging all exhibitors to improve” (Lighthall 1948). Alice Lighthall invoked the earlier methods of Peck and Phillips, with the same sense of noblesse oblige but, by 1949, the guild had found another way.

With no concrete response to Lighthall's letters, the guild decided it needed its own northern representative. In late 1948, James Houston fortuitously presented his Eskimo sculptures to Lighthall, and the guild's arctic project took an exciting new turn. Over the next four years, pioneering initiatives by the guild, Hudson's Bay agents, government officials and James Houston himself launched the contemporary world of Inuit art. After November 1953, when Houston became a civil servant and was no longer its artistic representative, the guild continued to purchase Inuit work through the Hudson's Bay Company, acting both as a wholesaler and a retailer for the next 18 years (Watt 1990, 40). Alice Lighthall made several trips to the Arctic herself, becoming an ardent advocate for Inuit art.

Inuit art became a major part of the guild's permanent collection. In May 1969, at La Maison del Vecchio in Montreal, the guild mounted "Industry in the Homes of the People," an exhibition which showed 75 Inuit, 51 Indian and 54 Quebec handicraft items from the permanent collection. When, in the early 1970s, space shortages, conservation issues and financial considerations led the guild to disperse items from its permanent collection to other museums, it was primarily Native art that was retained. Alice Lighthall fiercely defended its importance to the readers of Craft Dimensions (Lighthall 1974–75). Head of the guild's Indian and Eskimo Committee for more than 30 years, Lighthall received the Order of Canada for her efforts on behalf of Indian and Inuit art.

**Virginia Watt:**

**TIRELESS DEVOTION**

Virginia Watt came on the guild board in the 1960s as a volunteer to renovate the shop. She was invited for her experience in design, ceramics and retail, not Native art. By 1968, she was made manager of the guild shop, and became managing director in 1971. As director of the guild, she championed both Indian and Inuit art and artists.

Virginia Watt's high standards, honest criticism and support for people willing to work hard were legendary and rewarding. Her advice over several years to Nascapi Indian craftsmen and women resulted in the display of very good work at the guild's 1977 Nascapi exhibition. She was also proud of developments in Inuit art. The guild was interested in encouraging textile arts for Inuit women. In 1970, Virginia Watt suggested that Pangnirtung women try their hands at woven wall hangings. Not long after, in 1972, the guild held the first exhibition of what became a unique tapestry art (Watt 1992). Under her direction, the guild was a leader in presenting Inuit graphic art to the public. She wrote introductions to many Inuit print catalogues in the 1970s. For the 1974 World Crafts Organization Symposium in Toronto, Watt chaired the exhibition *Crafts from Arctic Canada.* She introduced the public to Cape Dorset jewellery with an exhibition in November 1976.

In the late 1970s, Virginia Watt became a board member of Canadian Arctic Producers, the wholesale distributor of Inuit art. She served on the Eskimo Arts Council for over a decade (as chair from 1977 to 1983), providing technical advice to the cooperatives, deciding on prints to be released to the public and giving policy advice on Inuit art to the minister of Indian Affairs. In 1985, she was awarded the Order of Canada in recognition of her years of service to Inuit art, artists and craftspeople of the North. In 1989, she was elected president of the Inuit Art Foundation, a national artist-owned agency supporting Inuit artists, and, in 1997, was made Honorary Lifetime Director.
Virginia Watt also created a tangible testimonial to the guild’s early role in supporting Inuit artists. In 1980, she installed the guild’s Inuit collection as a permanent exhibition and produced a comprehensive catalogue, *The Permanent Collection: Inuit Arts and Crafts* c. 1900–1980. Helga Goetz (1980, 17) called the exhibition “one of the most distinguished collections of Inuit art... Its excellence and breadth reflect the discriminating judgement and continued support of a group of individuals responsible for introducing Inuit art to the Canadian public.” This collection, which includes the guild’s early acquisitions, was added to significantly in the period 1950 to 1965. It continues to reflect the craftsmanship interests and standards of the guild’s women founders.

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**Tied up with string**

The guild’s place in history is a crowning achievement for all four women. Under founders Alice Peck and May Phillips, the guild documented its activities and preserved its records. They were assisted by very capable secretaries-treasurers such as Isabella Abbott and her successors. In her seventies, Alice Peck published a comprehensive article about the guild for the *Canadian Geographic Journal* (1934). In her later years, Alice Lighthall quietly took on the role of voluntary archivist of the guild’s papers, saving and organizing them in tidy bundles on the top floor. However, but for Virginia Watt, they might all have disappeared into a dumpster. In 1986, about to retire as director, Watt decided to leave a clean slate for her successor, Nairy Kalemkerian. In particular, she wanted to clear out the attic. Along with broken furniture and junk were many undated and unlabelled dusty brown-paper packages. Having the good sense to examine the bundles before tossing them out, Watt was amazed to find the history of the guild tied up with string. With help from Dorothy Stillwell and Olga Burman, she spent her retirement as a volunteer establishing a professional archive worthy of this cache of Canadiana. In addition, she wrote many “In Retrospect” columns for the *Inuit Art Quarterly* (1987–1993) and assisted numerous scholars researching the guild’s archives. Guild women were not only trailblazers; they were keepers of the flame.

Ellen Easton McLeod is the author of In Good Hands: The Women of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, a book on the early history of the guild. It will be published in the fall of 1999 by Carleton University Press.

**Notes**

1. The terms “Indian” and “Eskimo” are used here frequently, consistent with the vernacular at the time.

2. They felt their privileged position carried responsibilities to contribute to society and to help others.

3. In the late 1920s, the guild planned a *Book on Crafts* for which it solicited and received articles on numerous subjects, including one on Eskimo art by Diamond Jenness (Canadian Guild of Crafts Archive C6 D1 (226). Unfortunately, this book project died during the Depression.

4. Unfortunately, later government programs frequently fell into this trap (see Nicks 1990).

5. Her ancestor, Peter Schuyler, was the first Indian Commissioner, who in 1710 took five Mohawk chiefs to England, where he introduced them to Queen Anne (see Bolus 1973).

6. She chose respected members of the guild’s Indian Committee to do the judging: Diamond Jenness (National Museum), T.F. McLwraith (Royal Ontario Museum), and Alice Turnham (McGill Museums) (Canadian Handicrafts Guild 1947, 22).

7. “Of Great Interest to Women’s Institutes” (Canadian Guild of Crafts Archive C11 D2 076 1920).

8. Crafts mentioned were basketry, carving in ivory and soapstone and well-cured, hand-stitched fur and skin work.

9. She had travelled to Baffin Island twice before she went to Yellowknife, NWT (Hicks 1963). A guild branch had been operating in Yellowknife since 1946.

10. Among other things, Virginia Watt had been a successful costume designer and potter, and had run her own shop in Hudson, Quebec.

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Inuit recall being encouraged to carve by James Houston

KENOJUAK ASHEVAK CAPE DORSET

I was very nervous after I made my first drawing. I felt very intimidated to go give my drawing to the person, Saumik, who asked me to make a print. I remember I was even shaking when I was going to deliver my print to him. I used to feel scared when I had to deliver my work when I was first starting out. From an interview by Simeonie Kunnuk, May 27, 1994.

AXANGAYUK SHAAN
CAPE DORSET

I've been carving soapstone ever since the co-op asked me to. I started carving even before the co-op started. I started when the government arrived in Cape Dorset. A man named Saumik [James Houston] was buying our carvings. We were not aware, at that time, that the co-op existed. Saumik introduced us to carving. I've been carving ever since. From an interview with Simeonie Kunnuk, July 7, 1994.
LEVI QUMALUK PUVIRNITUQ

I started carving way before Peter [Murdoch, Hudson's Bay Company manager] arrived here. It was around 1952 or 1953, that's when a qaqlunnaq came to Inukjuak and told us that if we could carve we would be able to make a living from them. And when I heard that, I started carving. I can remember the first tools that I had: one file, one pocket knife and an improvised tool that I made by myself. It came off an old Primus stove. I used an axe to make it rough, so that I could use it as a round file. And with those three tools, I made three carvings that I remember today. One sold for two dollars, the others for $1.50 and 50 cents. The reason why I remember it so well is that it made me so proud at the time that a stone could bring in some income. I remember I sold those three carvings to Jim Houston. The subjects were an ivory fish, and the soapstone subjects were a cod fish and a sculpin.

James Houston never really suggested what kind of subjects he wanted us to carve. All he said was that if you could improve the quality of the carving, it would be good. That's what he used to say. If your wives could make dolls that were like Inuit, similar to the way Inuit dressed, then, he said, that would be very good. He never suggested that we carve certain types of subjects, but he wanted better quality every time that we brought in our carvings. The way we understood it was not by words alone. Like, when we would go in to trade in the village of Inukjuak, we'd get a chance to see some work by other people. From that, we thought that if we could outdo this guy, we would make an improvement. And as we progressed, as time went along, the people were doing more detailed carvings. And the subjects of the carvings began to change. At first, it was mostly figures of animals, but it went on to figures of humans. From that, people went on to make figures of humans doing what hunters usually do. Carvings grew more complex as our ability to carve improved. From an interview with Marybelle Myers (Mitchell), translated by Aliva Tulugak, April 30, 1985.

LUKTA QIATSUK CAPE DORSET

We weren't aware of carving soapstone before Saumik; I thought that it was good for making buckets. We didn't think that the soapstone would ever become anything valuable. But in future, it became our one source of income. We learned a lot about carving from Saumik. He was also my employer and he was buying our carvings. We learned from him. From an interview with Simeonie Kunnuk, June 10, 1994.
Qaqaq Ashoona Cape Dorset

A long time ago, probably in the year 1953, I was a teenager when the man named Saumik came to Cape Dorset. When I first started carving, I can remember that I used to finish my pieces in a short time. From an interview by Simeonie Kunuk, July 7, 1994.

DAVIDEE ITULU KIMMIRUT

I first began to carve in 1952. Some of it was on my own. I was asked to carve, and some of it I started on my own. I don’t know the name of the man who asked us to carve. In Inuktitut we used to call him Saumik. He used to have people in Cape Dorset do carvings. When we were young children we made carvings just for ourselves; we did not make them for other people to buy. But when Saumik arrived, I really began to carve in earnest so that I could buy things.

Back when I was growing up, Inuit did not seem like they were struggling too much to be able to buy things. But I have never tried to duplicate what he used to make. The carvings I made were for myself. When Saumik asked me to make carvings, I began. Saumik presented me with drawings and he asked me to make carvings of the pictures he gave me. He asked me to make carvings for him.

When I was growing up, carving was not that much in demand, only when I was married were carvings really demanded. When I was a young boy, there was nothing else but playing, eating and just being happy. I think all the people that first started carving in Cape Dorset did not make what they thought of. I think they were pretty much following what Saumik was telling them to carve, because this is how he had approached me. He was trying to help Inuit so I was happy with what he was trying to do. He is trying to help us and I guess he knew what he was doing and that is why he was asking people to make certain things...that is what I used to think. From an interview with Henry Kudluk, August 21, 1998.
OSUITUK IPEELEE CAPE DORSET

James Houston and his wife first arrived here from Lake Harbour around 1951. Everybody was sort of poor then, even though they were getting family allowance. For those who didn’t have any babies or kids, it was a struggle. It was a hard time. As soon as James Houston arrived, he went around town looking for people who were willing to carve and any woman who was willing to sew something for the co-op, or for himself. For James Houston. Right after he arrived, things started to get much, much better. Once he got here, he made things very clear: that people would be able to get paid and they could make anything, a carving of Inuit or animals. People didn’t wonder, because he made himself so clear, what he wanted to do. They all understood what he wanted right away and, that same summer, he wanted soapstone right away. He was letting people gather their own soapstone. So, even if the men weren’t artists or carvers themselves, they’d give it a try. They tried their best even though it wasn’t very good at that time, at least they were getting paid and things were getting better. If you had a good carving, you’d get a better price.

Saumik left it up to us to make what we wanted. He asked anybody who’s willing, anybody who thought they could carve, to make an Inuk, a human design of an Inuk or any animal. Saumik and Arnakota [Alma Houston] seemed different from the other qablunnaat because right away, when they arrived, they were interested in the Inuit and willing to help. That’s where they seemed different. Right away, they got involved with the local people. I’m not the only one who feels like that. My dad and his age group, even the younger ones, feel like that; it’s going to be with them for as long as they live. James Houston was the only real man who has ever come, and he’ll be the last one to have done so much for the town, just as one man. Inumarit [real man], that’s how we will always think of him. Because of what he’s done for the town and how he wanted to help us. People often wonder why he never bothers to come around anymore. Everybody is so thankful to the man; he’s at the top of the list in Cape Dorset. When James Houston first arrived, he had lots of money to pay people who were carving. The money is still flowing – bundles of it – all because of him. Everybody will always be grateful. Maybe he’ll be in the history. From an interview by Sharon van Raalte, translated by Maata, May 1985.

SARAH JOE TALIRUNILI PUVIRNITUQ

I remember that we started carving when James Houston was around. He encouraged people to start. He used to be either in Inukjuak or travelling along the coast going to different camps as far, maybe, as Salluit. And even after he had left, I remember my father selling his carvings to the Bay – that was before the co-op movement started. From an interview with Marybelle Myers (Mitchell), translated by Aliva Tuliqak, May 1, 1985.
SIMEONIE QUPPAPIK
CAPE DORSET

I don't remember when the white men asked the Inuit to carve soapstone. I do remember when carving started but I cannot recall the year. The one white man, Saumik, started the carving of soapstone. You probably remember him, because he told us that he went everywhere in the North. He admitted that he started the carving of soapstone in the Baffin region. From an interview with Simeonie Kunnuk, July 6, 1994.

PAULUSI SIVUAk PUVRNITUQ

During the same summer after Jim Houston left, people were able to sell carvings to the Hudson’s Bay post at the old POV site. It was during that time that I made a carving to sell to the Bay. I do not remember seeing Jim Houston trying to communicate with people about carvings, but I noticed that he would communicate through one of the Hudson’s Bay employees. I remember Johnny POV being informed by Houston or his employers and Johnny would tell the people that if they wanted to try to make carvings it was open to them. But I never recall Johnny saying that they should make this type of carving. From an interview with Marybelle Myers (Mitchell), May 2, 1985.
I started drawing when I was a very young man. It was James Houston who first got me started. He came here in about 1958, and he started me drawing a couple years after that. I've been drawing for a long time now. The first time I ever saw pictures was when James Houston showed me some books. Well, even before he came, I saw some books that were made by a white man, but I had never seen Inuit drawings before. The first time I ever saw Inuit drawings was after James Houston arrived. He told me to draw something, and I started drawing. He never told me what to draw – I never received any kind of help from James Houston even though it was he who started me to draw. From an interview with Marion Jackson, July 5, 1978.

Saumik didn’t ask people to start drawing right away. He didn’t come by plane; he travelled here by dog team, that’s how he got here first ... Maybe he wanted to see from the Inuit, you know, to have them carving and to have them drawing, maybe that was his goal. He really wanted to help Inuit, that’s what he wanted to do. He just wanted to help. He's helping right now even though he's been long gone. It’s what he wanted: he got us into this. He came here all because he wanted to help. We wouldn’t be doing what we’re doing if it weren’t for him, I don’t think. From an interview with Sharon van Raalte, May 1985.

I met Saumik when he came through Kimmirut as a young man with his wife ... I am not sure if they had any children yet. My uncle, who is no longer alive, was bringing them to Cape Dorset through Kimmirut. From an interview with Henry Kudluk, September 15, 1998.
I met James Houston over at the POV (Puvirnituq) site. And I remember my first carving was of a bird, a small bird. I remember that small bird very well because I sold it for five dollars and with that I was able to buy a lot of essential foods. I was able to get flour and other stuff. It was after the trapping season and there was no other activity for me at that time. James Houston approached me and asked me if I could try to carve figures of animals or humans in stone. So I tried it and I guess it must have been appealing to Mr. Houston because I was amazed at the amount of money that I received for it. I’m still very grateful for that little bird because it started me on a road to getting more material goods from the South.

I got very interested in making more carvings. When I had time to myself I carved as much as I could, when I was not trapping or out seal hunting. And ever since that time, I’ve never much wanted for southern foods or southern goods. Our lifestyle has improved since we started selling carvings.

From an interview with Marybelle Myers (Mitchell), translated by Aliva Tulugak, May 1, 1985.
The land has always been very important to Inuit. It is a source of food, of course, but now it symbolizes more than that; the land is a source of political power and self-determination. April 1 marked the birth of the new Canadian territory Nunavut (our land). Nunavut is a dream that took many dedicated people over 20 years to realize. My choice of art here recognizes their strength and determination. Included are works that embody the Nunavummiut sense of pride and respect for the land and its resources.

Landscapes and joyous figures are featured in works by well-known artists. Simon Tookoome’s Each Depends on the Other, for example, is a compelling portrayal of the close and cyclical relationship between different elements of arctic life: human figures walk beside caribou, muskoxen, dogs and spirits. Tookoome’s use of vibrant colour unifies an otherwise unlikely scenario of camaraderie between hunter and hunted. In Luke Anguhadluq’s The Return, one can almost feel the comforting joy of the return of a loved one. The elevated placement of the inuksuit (plural form of inuksuk) in Pitaloosie Saita’s Inuksuk Is Higher Than the Sun indicates how important these physical and spiritual guides are to Inuit. Inuksuit, made of local rock, dot the entire arctic landscape. They indicate favourite fishing or hunting grounds, warn of a rocky inlet, conceal food caches or are used for recreational purposes. An inuksuk is featured on the Nunavut flag, its red colour symbolizing Canada.

The two figural sculptures in Celebrating Nunavut, one by John Pangnark and the other by an unknown Taloyoak artist, make use of the properties inherent in their media. Utilizing his distinctive pared-down style, Pangnark carves minimal detail into the stone to indicate his subject. The artist of the anonymous sculpture has used the porosity of the whale bone to accentuate the figure’s facial and bodily features.

Artists of what is now known as Nunavut have always depicted subjects and themes that demonstrate the Inuit respect for and appreciation of the land. As the selected works demonstrate, art serves as a tribute to the Inuit practice of honouring the environment. Younger Nunavummiut artists feel a similar debt to the land, albeit a more politically based one focused on the sovereignty of their territory. It will be interesting to see the developments and changes in Inuit art in the wake of entry into confederation. Artists, after all, produce works that reflect their lives and their surroundings. Nunavut now embodies an energizing atmosphere of self-determination and a deeply rooted sense of pride, which will carry Inuit art into the new millennium.

Jessica Tomic-Bagshaw, an employee of the Inuit Art Foundation, is in her third year of anthropology and art history at Carleton University.

REFERENCE
Routledge, Marie

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Visuals:
- Each Depends on the Other, Simon Tookoome
- The Return, Luke Anguhadluq
- Inuksuk Is Higher Than the Sun, Pitaloosie Saita
- Untitled, unidentified artist, Taloyoak (whale bone; 19.8 x 12.0 x 10.5 in.; Carleton University Art Gallery; gift of John and Mary Robertson).
Each Depends on the Other, 1976,
Simon Tookoome, Baker Lake
(stonecut and stencil; 25.0 x 37.4 in.).

In this print, Tookoome completely fills the page with illustrations of the interrelationship of Inuit with the land. The earth, animals and people are intimately bound in a symbiotic relationship, none complete without the others. Men walk alongside caribou (an important food source for the inland Inuit of Baker Lake), muskoxen and dogs. Tookoome originally came from an area more dependent on food from the sea, which may account for the large fish in the centre of this print. Tookoome’s use of bold colours and design is part of his intriguing style. His works sometimes are associated with shamanism due to his frequent depiction of transformation themes. Numerous public institutions and private collectors have acquired his works over the years and his images have been exhibited internationally.

Untitled, c.1970, John Pangnark, Arviat (black stone; 8.0 x 4.3 x 3.9 in.; Carleton University Art Gallery; gift of John and Mary Robertson, 1998).

The carvingstone found in the Arviat area is particularly hard. This stone often does not allow for the fine polishing and delicate detailing seen in the sculpture of other communities. Pangnark’s signature minimal style applied to this unyielding stone seems to reflect the steadfastness and strength that helped Inuit to overcome hardships and obstacles on the road to their ultimate goal: Nunavut.

The Return, 1976, Luke Anguadluq, Baker Lake (stonecut; 17.2 x 10.7 in.).

In this touching moment, figures reach out to one another, as well as to the viewer. Anguadluq began his graphic career at the age of 73. He translates his experience and observations into his drawings, many of which were made into prints for the annual Baker Lake print collection. He was a camp leader and an observant and skilful hunter until he moved to the community of Baker Lake in the early 1960s.

Sing for a Good Season, 1993, Thomasee Alikatuktuk, Pangnirtung (stencil; 18.0 x 16.5 in.).

A drummer surrounded by singers and community members dominates this image. The sounds of the songs are captured with radiating lines. Drum dancing and ayaya singing are integral to festivals and celebrations. An oral tradition like that of the Inuit focuses much energy and creativity on song and storytelling. Ayaya songs embody the joy, respect and honour of the celebration.
Spring Landscape, 1977, Pudlo Pudlat, Cape Dorset (stonecut and stencil; 22.1 x 28.1 in.).

Pudlat said that "if an artist draws something over and over again in different ways, then he will learn something. The same with someone who looks at drawings - if that person keeps looking at many drawings, then he will learn something from them too" (in Routledge 1990, 15). One of his favourite themes is landscape. In this print, he draws the figures moving from their camp to the ice fishing holes. This carefully composed landscape even denotes the time of year, the footprints indicating the soft, deep snow of spring. Pudlat alters the viewpoint in this image to give greater depth to the land and figures.

Inuk Is Higher than the Sun, 1978, Pitaloosie Saila, Cape Dorset (pastel and crayon on paper; 14.6 x 22.4 in.; Carleton University Art Gallery, Priscilla Tyler and Maree Brooks Collection of Inuit Art).

I wanted to include an original drawing here. This landscape is dominated by a favourite Inuit motif - the inuksuk. Inuksuit, traditional stone cairns used as land markers, function as geographic and spiritual guides across the Arctic. A red inuksuk appears on the Nunavut flag.

Gathering for Feast, 1978, Hannah Kigusiuq, Baker Lake (serigraph; 20.8 x 29.8 in.).

This scene depicts the energy and excitement of a community feast. Family and community are very important to the Inuit way of life. Kigusiuq is able to render this intimate group cohesiveness through her treatment of the community members: the composition of close figures in relation to each other; their interaction; their eye contact and the atmosphere of anticipation in their gestures. Kigusiuq often does multiple figures in her images, almost portrait-like in nature. The community members are wearing Inuit-style clothing and are shown engaged in various activities. Some are dancing; others are carrying water pails, walking, or caring for the dogs.
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Preparing this exhibition presented me with a number of new challenges. *Iqqaipaa: Celebrating Inuit Art 1948–70* was meant to be the feature exhibition for the year of Nunavut and was scheduled to be displayed in the prime area of the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC), the first display area you see when entering the building. This meant that it would have to engage the general public, from the Japanese tourist to the Ottawa Valley school group. It was an audience different from the enthusiastic art lovers I was used to addressing.

Besides a different audience, I was also, for the first time, working with a team. At Indian Affairs, where I prepared travelling exhibitions for five years, I was the entire team. I made all the decisions regarding the message of the exhibit as well as how that message was communicated. Here, I was one of a team of four: the exhibition coordinator, the designer, the interpretive analyst and myself, the curator. Each of us had different talents and highly specialized expertise to bring to the project and it took me a while to accept that I was only one among equals. It became clear, however, that the project had a much better chance of succeeding if I stuck to my role as the provider of information and selector of artifacts and respected others’ expertise in their fields.

Christina Delguste, the interpretive analyst, suggested a map and text panels to introduce the various geographic regions into which the exhibition was organized. She also indicated what would be of most interest to visitors: the stone used in a particular area, the preferred themes, the peculiarities of style. This information succeeded in making the exhibition much more accessible to visitors with no previous knowledge of Inuit art.

A critical point arrived when we discussed the basic colour scheme of the exhibition. The designer, Tracy Pritchard, and myself disagreed on the colour of the plinths and bases for the display cases, a rather important design element. Before things could assume crisis proportions, Daniele Goulet, our exhibition coordinator, came up with a truly wise solution: she suggested painting several bases and plinths in everybody’s preferred colour scheme and going with the team’s consensus decision. Fortunately, we did not have to do this. The next weekend in the National Gallery I saw an example of what Tracy was suggesting and realized how well it worked. This episode taught me to trust her expertise; there were no more crises.

Every team is as good as its members and I was fortunate to work on a wonderful one. I am now convinced that a well-functioning team can produce a better product than a project controlled by one person. Often, the dialogue and necessary negotiations lead to ideas and solutions that a more hierarchical approach would not permit.
Howling Spirits, 1959, Kiawak Ashoona, Cape Dorset (green stone; 9.2 x 8.1 x 5.5 in.; collection of James Houston).

Kiawak has an amazing capacity to animate stone, as in this malevolent spirit lifting one paw and showing its terrifying teeth. His spirit pieces from the 1960s are among the most imaginative and intriguing images in an impressive oeuvre spanning a good 40 years. James Houston had the pleasure of encouraging Kiawak's remarkable carving talent, which he had started to display at a very young age.

Drum Dancer, 1972, Karoo Ashevak, Talooyoak (whale bone, ivory and stone; 17.6 x 6.8 x 7.1 in.; Canadian Museum of Civilization IV-C-4293).

Whale bone is the material most often associated with sculpture from Talooyoak. In 1965, to encourage the production of carvings, the federal government decided to fly in a shipment of whale bone from Somerset Island, where great quantities had been left by the prehistoric Thule Eskimos and by European whalers. Karoo Ashevak was the first to exploit the inherent expressive possibilities of this unusual carving material.

Mother and Four Children, 1957, Yvonne Kanayuq Arnakyyuinak, Baker Lake (greenish-black stone; 4.5 x 2.8 x 3.6 in.; collection of James Houston).

Depicting a closely knit family scene, this piece possesses all the features characteristic of women sculptors in Baker Lake: a relatively small, intimate size and the portrayal of family life in groups. The lively, playful interaction between the mother and the four children clustered around her make this early piece especially appealing.

In the past, Inuit living in the Keewatin area west of Hudson Bay had experienced the death of whole families due to starvation when the caribou migration failed. James Houston believes these memories have made Inuit there especially eager to portray mothers and their children, a sign that hunting families are surviving.
The other challenge was to work with a special advisor. James Houston was invited to collaborate with me in the selection of artworks, including pieces from his own collection. Similar to working with the team, my sharing of the curatorial decision-making power with Jim led to wonderful results. He discovered pieces that I had overlooked, especially Levi Echalook's *Mother with Child Kneeling by the Kudlik*. He also encouraged me not to be too rigid about our time frame and to include Karoo Ashevak's dramatic pieces, which conceptually belonged in the selection even though they dated from 1972.

An extended member of the team was Henry Kudluk of the Inuit Art Foundation, who conducted a series of telephone interviews with artists represented in the exhibition. These provided some of the quotes displayed on walls in the exhibition area and also in the captions for individual pieces. In addition, Henry produced a series of sculptures showing the progression from a shapeless piece of stone to the finished figure of a bear, there to be seen and touched in the interactive area developed by Christina Delguste. The area is conceptually and visually integrated with the rest of the exhibition. Five days a week, Heather Campbell, an Inuk from Labrador, demonstrates printmaking techniques and answers questions.

The result of all our efforts is an exhibition with the contemplative mood of a gallery exhibition. Yet there is enough information on the Inuit culture and the context out of which this art has grown to make it of interest not only to art lovers, but also to the general Canadian public and visitors from abroad.

INQAIPAA contains 152 artworks: 120 sculptures, 30 prints and two wall hangings. Twenty works are from James Houston’s collection; the balance was drawn from the CMC collection. The exhibition is organized into four regions.

While labels contain only tombstone data to allow for a large font, individual captions for each of the pieces can be read on a multimedia electronic catalogue in the interactive area.

Tracy Pritchard’s installation turned the display area into a warm and inviting place where visitors want to spend time. Six ethnographic artifacts link the artworks to the past and reinforce the underlying theme: that Inuit hunters and their wives brought innate cultural skills, honed through many generations, into the art-making process. It was only a small step, it seems, from fashioning a hunting knife combining form and function to a sculpture successfully fusing form and content.

Maria von Finckenstein is curator of Inuit art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization.
Qamanittuaq Drawings by Baker Lake Artists

Qamanittuaq Drawings by Baker Lake Artists represents the 35-year history of Inuit drawings through the work of 14 artists from Baker Lake. Opened as the inaugural exhibition at the Baker Lake Heritage Centre on June 3, 1998 by Governor General Romeo LeBlanc, it has since toured to the Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum in Iqaluit. On view from February to July 1999, Qamanittuaq Drawings was the featured exhibition during the Nunavut celebrations.

In August 1999, Qamanittuaq Drawings will travel to the University of Iceland, Reykjavik where it will be exhibited until December 1999. The Icelandic segment of the Qamanittuaq Drawings tour is presented in conjunction with the International Multi-disciplinary Environmental Field Course organized jointly by the University of Iceland and the University of Guelph. Scientists and 24 students from the University of Guelph will be participating in this course with students from the University of Iceland and other international institutions. I have been invited to give a lecture on Inuit art and Baker Lake drawings at the University of Iceland.

Qamanittuaq Drawings continues its tour from Iceland to the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, India where it will be exhibited as of March 1, 2000 for two months. This exhibition will be presented in conjunction with the University of Guelph’s India semester, which involves 20 students from the University of Guelph. I will present a lecture at the University of Rajasthan as the first part of an inter-

Curatorial notes by Judith Nasby

In Nancy Pukingnak’s drawing, she illustrates an episode about Qiviug’s ingenuity in securing a wife. This drawing uses sequential action to unfold the events. Pukingnak explains: “This is Qiviug in the upper corner on the right, sneaking up on the Canada geese and the sand cranes. He is sneaking up on these birds, and they are laughing and having a good time on the water ... These birds had taken off their boots. Then these Canada geese and sand cranes asked for their boots back, but Qiviug refused to give them back unless one of them or all of them would become his wife or wives. The sand cranes are getting ready to attack. Qiviug is frightened, so he returns the boots to the Canada geese and the sand cranes ...” (from an interview with Marion Jackson, 1983).
Inuit and southern Canadian culture are combined in the drawings of Simon Tookoome, Myra Kukiyaq and Joan Arngna'naaq. *Qamanittuaq Drawings* is inclusive of a wide variety of works by important Inuit artists of many generations that reflect both historical and contemporary elements of the culture.

The Icelandic and Indian tour of *Qamanittuaq Drawings* will increase the recognition of Canadian Inuit artists and heighten the international involvement of the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre at the University of Guelph. A bilingual catalogue (English and Inuktitut) that was produced to support *Qamanittuaq Drawings* will also be available at each of the international venues and at the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre. This exhibition is generously supported by the Canada Council for the Arts and by the Jackman Foundation, Toronto.

In 1980, the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre established an Inuit art collection with a specialized focus on contemporary Inuit drawings. Since 1981, the art centre has engaged in ongoing research, exhibition, programming and publishing of Inuit drawings. It has the distinction of housing one of the finest collections of original Inuit artworks in North America. Of the more than 500 drawings in the collection today, a significant number are by Baker Lake artists.

From this extensive collection the art centre has produced two other major international touring exhibitions: *Contemporary Inuit Drawings, 1987-90,* and *Qamanittuaq: Where the River Widens (Drawings by Baker Lake Artists)*, 1994–2000. In addition, the centre has published catalogues and original research in English, French and Inuktitut with contributions from art historian Marion Jackson and artist William Noah, mayor of Baker Lake.

Judith Nasby is director of the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre in Guelph, Ontario.

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Snowy Owl Spirit, c.1996, Ruth Annaqtuusi Tulurialik (coloured pencil on paper; 22.1 x 29.8 in.; Macdonald Stewart Art Centre).

From the drawings she made in 1971, Ruth Annaqtuusi Tulurialik quickly established her unique expressionistic style that often combines spirit images, shamanic practice and transforming animal/human forms in a simple drawing. She commented on her drawing of a horrifying snowy owl spirit to interviewer Marion Jackson in 1983: “Some shamans have spirits... This is a very powerful spirit that has swallowed up humans. Those are arrows flying by it. Those people are aiming at and trying to kill the snowy owl spirit. The little faces around the snowy owl spirit are helping spirits to this higher spirit.” Her unique drawings blend an intense vision of a hectic spirit world with memories and experiences of everyday life.
CREATION AND CONTINUITY:

Inuit Art from the Shumiatcher Collection

This exhibition celebrated the opening of a new exhibit space at the MacKenzie Art Gallery (MAG), the Shumiatcher Sculpture Court. It was appropriate to open this new gallery with an exhibition of works by Inuit artists selected from the collection of Jacqui and Morris Shumiatcher, longtime residents of Regina and patrons of the MAG. Sculpture and prints have been collected by the Shumiatchers since 1954, forming one of the most significant private collections of Inuit art in Canada.

In 1981, Morris Shumiatcher wrote about his fascination with the act of artistic creation, referring to the Inuit artist's "transfiguration" of inert material into an artwork that takes on a life of its own. He was also deeply interested in the life and culture of the Inuit, as evidenced in his admission that "the art of the Inuit enables me, albeit vicariously, to enter into the life of a few gentle, gifted people who continue to be creative and productive in the face of great odds." This interest in Inuit culture is the reason that most of the works collected by the Shumiatchers are narrative in style, depicting the people, the animals upon which they depend and subjects from their rich oral and religious traditions. This dual interest — in the act of creation and in the continuity of culture in the art — is reflected in the title of the exhibition.

Sixty-seven sculptures were selected from the Shumiatcher collection for this exhibition. A number of these works have been donated to the MacKenzie Art Gallery and now form part of its permanent collection. As most of the artworks in the exhibition describe aspects of Inuit life and culture in great detail, the exhibition has been organized thematically. Animals, human figures and scenes from life and legend create a spirited panorama. There is an overall character to this collection that is unmistakable: lively and expressive, in both form and subject. Even pieces with "quiet," closed compositions, such as Bear/Walrus by Jimmy Inaarulik Kadyulik, have an intensity that emotionally engages the viewer.

The text of the exhibition catalogue, by Jennifer Gibson, presents information about the physical, cultural and shamanic context of the art, intended to enhance the understanding of an audience that has not had the opportunity to visit the Canadian Arctic and become acquainted with its indigenous people. We hope that this introduction to another culture will lead to further interest and personal exploration.

Darlene Coward Wight is curator of Inuit art at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.
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In the 1950s, when many Inuit arrived in the South for long-term treatment for tuberculosis, hospital staffs quite commonly encouraged crafts programs. While the intention seems to have been largely therapeutic and recreational, the programs sometimes took on an impressive commercial aspect that netted far more than a bit of loose change for the patients at the tuck shop. In the late 1950s, at Mountain Sanatorium in Hamilton, carvers turned out as many as 200 pieces a month. Some of the best were sold by such large department stores as Simpson’s in Toronto and Woodrow’s in Vancouver. Annual income from the Hamilton program was over $10,000 and one year reached $16,000, a substantial sum at the time (Maclean’s 1958). This made Mountain Sanatorium a bigger producer of Inuit carvings than most communities in the eastern Arctic and managed to raise the ire of Hudson’s Bay Company executive H.W. Sutherland. Seeing these sales as injurious to his northern business, Sutherland went so far as to place the Hamilton carvings in the same category as Japanese imitations. Without explaining why, he doubted that sales of Hamilton carvings by competitors like Woodrow’s would help in “developing the prestige of authentic Eskimo art” (Sutherland 1961).

Sutherland’s irritation would be understandable if the art consisted of nothing but shoddy knock-off pieces. A small exhibit featuring seven carvings made in Hamilton during the years 1954-57 held this spring at Guelph’s Macdonald Stewart Art Centre reveals quite
the opposite. Donated to the gallery by Maria Gasparski, whose husband, B.T. Dale, was a medical director at Hamilton, the carvings are of a high technical standard. The collection possesses additional interest because most of the pieces have both the carvers’ names and disk numbers heavily incised on the bottom. What is unusual is that while the carvers are from all across the eastern Arctic – from Port-Nouveau-Quebec to Clyde River – the stone is all the same, an interesting dark grey-green with a complex grain, supplied to the hospital from a quarry apparently in Quebec.

The most substantial piece is a solidly rooted seal hunter by Peesee Oshuitoq from Cape Dorset, with a composite harpoon and leather line. It is finely finished and shows evidence of shellac coating around the head. Although he carved a “madonna” which was featured in a major exhibit in 1954 at the Phillips Gallery in Washington D.C., Peesee Oshuitoq was never prolific and his work is still relatively obscure. To find a substantial southern piece helps to fill one obvious gap in his career.

A carving of a standing woman by Kowtymoo from Clyde River possesses the same kind of rootedness and assertiveness. There are no soft lines here. The subject, who has no child in her wide amautik, holds her head up to confront the world squarely. It has often been said that, because carvers were hunters, they knew the bodies of their prey so well that their knowledge reproduced itself in the stone. Two small sculptures, a bear by Joanasie Kakkik of Pangnirtung and a caribou by Peter of Lake Harbour, certainly bear this out. The caribou, in particular, demonstrates exacting knowledge of musculature.

A concurrent exhibit at the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre is the Ridd Collection of Inuit carvings. These pieces were obtained between 1950 and 1958, either by matron Marie Ridd at the Moose Factory Indian Hospital or up the coast by her husband Jack, who worked on supply boats. Unfortunately, none of the dozen pieces has any identification. While many of the carvings are somewhat crude, there is an interesting and fluid wood carving of a hunter behind a blind waiting to make a seal kill. Another interesting piece is a complex soapstone ashtray decorated on the outside with small incised circles. It has two circular hollows, one for cigarette ash and the other a decorative motif holding three ivory eggs. A carved owl, mounted on a peg, flies overhead with fully spread wings.

In terms of materials and format, many of the pieces in each of the two collections break the rules of manufacture accepted in the 1950s. Inuit art, after all, was supposed to be made in northern communities of locally quarried stone. Because of the possibility of damage in transit, work was not to have bases or other pegged attachments, a rule that severely limited composite constructions. While the two collections are skimpy, they do open the door to a wider and more liberal view of what was going on in the 1950s outside official channels.

John Ayre is a writer living in Guelph, Ontario.

NOTE
1 Peter’s surname is unknown.

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1958 Toronto, February 1.

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Woman Wearing an Amautik, c.1955, Kowtymoo, Clyde River (stone; 2.5 x 1.8 x 8.0 in.; Macdonald Stewart Art Centre; gift of Mrs. C. Gasparski). Inuit Art Quarterly.
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The Arctic Sky: Inuit Astronomy, Star Lore and Legend

John MacDonald

Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum/Nunavut Research Institute, 1998

313 Pages,

100 Illustrations,

$29.95

Reviewed by Norman Hallendy

The Arctic Sky is a treasure trove of information about traditional Inuit perceptions of the cosmos. It takes the reader on a fascinating tour through a universe defined by elders' knowledge and illuminated by oral history. This is not a leisurely read. The book is so densely packed with valuable information that the reader is required to proceed with care, examining, and often revisiting, each paragraph.

In MacDonald's fascinating account, we are taken straight into the natural, supernatural, mystical and spiritual realms of Inuit culture. The first three chapters present a view of a reality that recognizes no boundary between the physical and metaphysical. MacDonald presents us with detailed accounts of how stars, constellations and planets are perceived by Inuit elders. Their observations, experience and knowledge of the celestial bodies provide a unique insight into Inuit systems of spiritual belief and mythology.

The book is well illustrated with drawings and photographs. The graphics in chapter 3 are particularly helpful in working through the dense text. Macdonald also includes observations made by early explorers and other travellers to the North about Inuit ceremonies and customs related to the sun and the moon, the subject of chapter 4. A basic knowledge of astronomy is useful when reading this chapter, rich in scientific detail. Chapter 5 paints a fascinating picture of the Inuit concept of the atmosphere, composed of acute observations of natural phenomena closely woven with ancient legends.

In chapter 6, which deals with the Inuit system of navigation, the author stresses that they had no single method of finding their way, whether travelling by land or sea. We are made aware that a multitude of factors are considered when making a long journey, dispelling any cliché of the wandering arctic nomad. The importance of place names is also brought to our attention; often, the name of a location denotes its characteristics, providing essential information to those who carry maps in their mind. Chapter 7 is an ambitious essay dealing with the Inuit concept of time. The chart on pages 196 to 198 is especially interesting, depicting the way Inuit conceive of events recurring over time.

The last three chapters recount legends and myths gathered from elders. Chapter 8 (English) and chapter 9 (Inuktitut) consist of verbatim transcriptions of stories elders of the Igloolik area told researchers between 1986 and 1992. These stories deal not only with astronomically significant events, but also with a perception of the universe which was previously known to only a few. The book's final chapter, written in English, adds to this collection several legends gathered by early anthropologists and originally published in ethnographic form.

At last . . . they began to rise upwards. His younger sister became the Sun, being warm and burning brightly. But he became the cold Moon.

(Amaunalik, in Holtved 1951)

One cannot help but be impressed with the thoroughness of The Arctic Sky. This book is an excellent example of how a researcher and Inuit elders can work together to document knowledge for future generations. The Nunavut Research Institute and the Royal Ontario Museum are to be commended for undertaking the publication of such an important and innovative work. The Arctic Sky goes beyond an interesting view of astronomy; the reader is presented with a wealth of information about how Inuit define their world. It is an important work and a valuable source of information.

Norman Hallendy is a researcher, writer and photographer with the Tukilik Foundation and author of The Arctic's Silent Messengers (1996), a book celebrating the inukshuk and its role in Inuit culture.
INUIT DESIGNS MARK TURNING OF MILLENNIUM

Two coins bearing designs by Inuit artists were released this spring by the Royal Canadian Mint. A special 25-cent coin bearing a design by noted artist Kenojuak Ashevak (Cape Dorset) was released in April 1999. The coin is the fourth of 12 special edition quarters which are being released monthly through 1999 to commemorate the turning of the millennium. The design, entitled *Our Northern Heritage*, consists of an owl and a bear, adapted from Ashevak’s print *Red Owl*. It was the submission of Toronto resident Emmanouil Kats for the mint’s “Create a Centsation!” contest, in which Canadians were invited to suggest designs for the millennium quarters. Fifteen million coins bearing the design were put into circulation across Canada.

Special edition two-dollar coin featuring a design by Igloolik printmaker Germaine Arnaktauyok. The coin, which shows an Inuit drum dancer, was created to celebrate the birth of the territory of Nunavut in April. 45 mm dia., 0.5 oz., 92.5% silver, 20,000 co

The mint chose a design by Igloolik printmaker Germaine Arnaktauyok to grace another special edition 1999 Canadian coin. The image of a drumdancer, whose drum bears an outlined map of Nunavut, will temporarily replace the polar bear motif usually seen on the Canadian two-dollar coin. According to Arnaktauyok, the drumdancer not only represents the long oral history of the people of Nunavut, but the fact that the Inuit who live there are now being heard by their fellow Canadians and the people of the world. Furthermore, the map of Nunavut on the drum encloses a *quadlik*, which Arnaktauyok describes as a symbol of “security and warmth in Nunavut.” The coin was officially released on May 27.

"MILLENIUM MONEY" FUNDS NORTHERN ARTS

The Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association, Baker Lake’s Savirgayak Society and filmmaker Zacharias Kunnuk were among the 84 winners of the second competition for Canada Council Millennium Arts Fund grants. The winners were chosen from among 588 applicants. The grants, which are designated to fund projects in the arts across Canada to mark the turning of the millennium, are being awarded over the course of 1999 and 2000. NACA is using its $154,200 grant to mount a sculpture symposium on Baffin Island. The symposium, bearing the title “Our Life in Stone,” is being held over two nine-week sessions in Iqaluit. The aim of the symposium is to stimulate new avenues of creativity for sculptors from across the country by challenging them to create large-scale granite sculpture in collaboration with local elders. It will also help to beautify the nation’s newest capital. Artists are carving the rock faces of Iqaluit as well as large free-standing pieces of granite. The first session, which runs from July 2 to September 6, 1999, has attracted 30 sculptors, 24 Nunavummiut and 6 representing Canada’s other provinces and territories; by the end of the summer 2000 session, all provinces and territories will have been represented in the symposium. Elders and master carvers are working with younger, aspiring Inuit artists, passing on their knowledge and experience. The second session will be held from July to September 2000.

Baker Lake’s Savirgayak Society will use its $50,000 grant to fund *Nununuq*, a jewellery-making project. The metalworking society’s members will create 20 major and 30 minor pieces of jewellery and metalwork, reflecting upon where they have been and where they are going. Filmmaker Zacharias Kunnuk was also awarded $50,000 in the competition. The grant will be used to help fund the production of *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)*, an action film inspired by Inuit legend. Kunnuk took over as the film’s director in December of 1998, following the sudden death of director and longtime friend Paul Apak. The film will be told from the Inuit point of view.

Our Northern Heritage, a special edition coin face designed by Kenojuak Ashevak. This is the fourth of 12 quarters in the Royal Canadian Mint’s 1999 millennium series.
Youth in Tuktoyaktuk were treated to a carving course as part of their curriculum this year. Thirty-five students at Mangilaluk School spent two hours per day in the workshop in rotating classes over the winter semester, learning to work with muskox horn and caribou antler. The students, who ranged in age from 12 to 15 years, learned about tools, material selection and carving techniques from instructors Stanley Felix and Jim Radd1. Each produced two pieces of sculpture. “I was satisfied with most of the students,” said Felix. “Most of them were happy to be doing something other than playing with paper in the classroom. It gave them a chance to make something. And some of the students had a quick eye. They learned really fast.”

The course also included an Inuvialuktun language component, one of the conditions of the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre, which funded the course. Radd1, a community elder, was responsible for teaching the students terminology in Inuvialuktun. Fellow instructor Felix is enthusiastic. “I think the language component worked out really well. For me, it’s a big concern, and it should be a priority. No one taught me to speak Inuvialuktun; my parents speak it, but no one’s pushing my generation to learn. I think it’s dying out quickly with our elders.” The course wrapped up in late April.

The Inuit Art Foundation held its annual Spring Qaggiq on May 15-16, 1999. Qaggiq, which means “celebration” in Inuktitut, was held in conjunction with the foundation’s annual general meeting. Visiting artist-directors presented carving and sewing demonstrations over the weekend. Vice-president and elder Okpik Pitseolak (Cape Dorset) lit the qulliq to inaugurate the festivities and ayaya singers entertained onlookers while directors Joe Kavik (Rankin Inlet) and Gideon Qauqjuaq (Taloyoak) demonstrated their skills at drum dancing. President Mattiusi Iyaituk (Ivujivik) and directors Shirley Moorhouse (Happy Valley-Goose Bay) and Qauqjuaq each gave a slide talk and an informal discussion of their work. Melanie Scott, editor of Where Ottawa, gave a seminar entitled “The Conscientious Collector” about the preservation and conservation of artwork. Participants also enjoyed a tour of the Canadian Museum of Civilization exhibit Iqqaipaa with curator Maria von Finckenstein.
It only took a minute for Governor General Romeo LeBlanc to unveil Nunavut’s flag and coat of arms on April 1, but their development was a laborious two-year process. The Symbols Committee of the Nunavut Implementation Committee (NIC) spent the two years juggling the rigorous Canadian official symbols standards with the input of hundreds of citizens from across the country. The committee held a nationwide contest inviting designs for the flag and coat of arms from May 1997 to February 1998. The submissions, which numbered over 800, were reviewed in the spring of 1998 by a jury consisting of Symbols Committee chair Meeka Kilabuk, Nunavut Tungavik Incorporated president Jose Kusugak, NIC chairman John Amagoalik and Canada’s chief herald Robert Watt, as well as artists Kanaginak Pootoogook (Cape Dorset), Thomas Iksiraq (Baker Lake) and Nick Sikkuvak (Pelly Bay). Images created by Pangnirtung artist Andrew Qappik were chosen as rough draft versions of the flag and coat of arms, and were then merged with ideas of other finalists. This marks the first time in Canadian history that an Aboriginal artist has been so involved in the creation of official heraldry. Qappik, however, is modest about his achievements. “There were a lot of people who had a say in it,” he said. “I’m just one of them” (Nunatsiaq News, April 9, 1999). Qappik travelled to Ottawa twice to work with Canada’s official artist, Kathy Bursey-Sabourin, to finalize details of the designs, which were approved by the Queen in October 1998.

The Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association (NACA) began considering artwork this spring for its nascent Nunavut art collection. On March 13 and 14, the jury responsible for selecting the collection’s artwork assembled in Iqaluit to consider the 488 proposals submitted by artists responding to its “Expression of Interest.” The March considerations were the first round in the association’s selection process, which will include further calls for proposal submissions, commissions and outright purchases over the next five years. While the exact nature of the collection has yet to be clearly defined, association coordinator Beth Beattie believes that it will range from older works of contemporary Inuit art to those of up-and-coming artists, and will also include historical artifacts and traditional crafts. All will reside in the collection’s projected home, the new Legislative Assembly in the territorial capital of Iqaluit.

The selection jury, chosen to represent a wide variety of artistic backgrounds and geographical areas in Nunavut, was composed of Theresie Tungilik (Rankin Inlet), Oviloo Tunnillee (Cape Dorset), the late Nelson Takkiruq (Gjoa Haven), Sally Webster (Baker Lake), John Houston (Houston North Gallery) and Christine Lalonde (National Gallery of Canada), as well as a representative of the Legislative Assembly architects. The group worked together for four days developing the criteria for the collection and reviewing submissions. It is expected that the acquired works will, by the end of the collection period, be worth approximately $1,000,000. “I see this as the first chance for us to have our own public art gallery, up here, where the artists can see the work of other artists, and their...
own work, displayed,” said Beattie. “For 50 years, people have been making art and sending it south. There are all these fabulous collections, like the McMichael and the Toronto-Dominion, and yet we don’t have a single permanent collection in Nunavut ... so I think it’s time.” Details of the artwork selected in March have yet to be released. NACA is currently fundraising for the collection.

**ABORIGINAL SOCIAL WORK SCHOLARSHIPS**

Diana Fowler LeBlanc, wife of Governor General Romeo LeBlanc, announced the creation of a new Aboriginal Social Work scholarship this spring. The scholarship, which will bear her name, will be managed and administered by the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, and is aimed at Inuit and both status and non-status First Nations youth. Recipients of the scholarship, which Fowler LeBlanc hopes will grow to 10 annually, will be chosen by a national jury of educators, social workers and other professionals. “I feel it is important, not only to encourage more Aboriginal students to become trained social workers, but also to raise awareness among all Canadians about Aboriginal culture and economic realities,” said Fowler LeBlanc in a March 8, 1999 press release. She will be filling the role of honorary chairperson of the scholarship, which was officially launched on March 11 at a press conference at the Hotel Saskatchewan in Regina.

**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL TELEVISION NETWORK IS BORN**

The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), which has replaced and expanded Television Northern Canada (TVNC), will officially be launched on air September 1. The expansion of TVNC into a national network, approved by the CRTC earlier this year, is aimed at offering programming focused on Aboriginal interests and created by Aboriginal producers across Canada on basic cable.

To fill the need for writers, technicians and producers created by the existence of this new network, a two-week training pilot program for 12 northern Aboriginal broadcasters was held at the Banff Centre for the Arts. Funding was provided by the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation and through Cancom’s 1999 Ross Childs awards. The training program, held from May 24 to June 6, included two independent broadcasters along with ten already associated with established Aboriginal broadcasting organizations. “It’s a nice cross-section,” said Peter Crass, GNWT representative on the APTN board of directors. Participants included Debbie Gordon-Ruben and Lawrence Rogers of Inuvialuit Communications Society, Julie Ivalu and Jake Kadluk of Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, Eveeie Tullora Mark of Taqramiut Production Inc., and independent Martin Kreelak.
PEOPLE

James Houston, well-known artist and author, gave a lecture at the Canadian Museum of Civilization on April 22. Houston shared personal memories of his early years in the Arctic and slides of his favourite works by Inuit artists with an enthusiastic audience. Houston's schedule this spring also included two March lectures in New Zealand on the same topic: one at the Waikato Museum in Hamilton and one at the University of Otago Museum, Dunedin.

Indian and Inuit Art Centre director Viviane Gray, Inuit Art Foundation president Mattiusi Iyaituk and Mohawk artist Shelley Niro travelled to Taiwan in March to take part in the Taipei Symposium on Aboriginal Art and Handicrafts. The symposium focused on the art of Canadian Inuit and Aboriginal Taiwanese, which has never before been publicly exhibited. Gray was responsible for the symposium's keynote address, entitled "The Importance of the Object," in which she discussed the history of the Aboriginal art and craft industry in Canada. There to promote the travelling show Transitions: Contemporary Indian and Inuit Art hosted by the Taipei Fine Arts Centre, Iyaituk held carving workshops, attended the symposium and participated in the International Stone Sculpture Festival in nearby Hualien. While in Taipei, he was also featured in a television show. Iyaituk presented a carving of a bird that he produced as part of an artist's demonstration to the Canadian Trade Commissioner's Office in Taipei, the organization responsible for initiating the symposium. He was impressed with the impact of the commission's undertaking. “The Aboriginal artists were very glad that we went over there,” he said. “They would not have had a chance to exhibit their work if it was not for the Canada Trade Centre in Taiwan. Over there they have more problems being promoted. They seem to be operating by themselves, individually.”

The Shaman and the Artist: An Anthropological Interpretation, a course exploring the dreams, visions and insights of the shaman as expressed in art, was held June 7 to 25, 1999 at Saint Paul University (Ottawa, Ontario). The course was taught by Hope McLean, who has a PhD in socio-cultural anthropology from the University of Alberta. McLean's doctoral research focused on shamanism in yarn painting. She has also conducted research on shamanism and traditional healing practices among the Huichol Indians of Mexico, as well as on Canadian Aboriginal education and ethnology. Several artists were on hand at the Canadian Museum of Civilization to help celebrate Nunavut Day. Local Inuit carvers

July Papatsie and Mark Pitseolak, and printmakers Germaine Arnaktauyok (Iqaluit) and Kananginak Pootoogook (Cape Dorset), gave a series of workshops and demonstrations of carving and printmaking in conjunction with the museum's exhibit Iqqaipaa. Arnaktauyok was also in Ottawa for the March 31 opening of her spring collection of prints at the Inuit Artists' Shop. Inuk novelist Mitiarjuk Attasie Nappaaluk was recently awarded a National Aboriginal Achievement Award (NAAA) in the category of Heritage and Spirituality. Now in her seventies, Nappaaluk wrote the first novel in Inuktitut, entitled Sannaq: Sanaakkut Piisiviningia Untikaukgingangat (Sanaaq's Family – Stories and Traditions), in 1984. She has also compiled an encyclopaedic body of work in her native language, documenting Inuit beliefs, tales, history and knowledge of the natural world. Nappaaluk was presented with the prestigious award at the 1999 NAAA gala evening on March 12, held at the Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts in Regina and televised nationally by CBC.
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AT THE PUBLIC GALLERIES

On October 9, 1999, the Winnipeg Art Gallery will open an exhibit consisting of a collection of etchings by Elsie Klengenberg (Holman Island) entitled Legend of Uvajuq, curated by Darlene Coward Wight. The prints were commissioned by the Kitikmeot Heritage Society as part of a larger project to record and illustrate this important legend, which explains how Victoria Island came to have its rolling hills. Klengenberg's prints were used to illustrate both a film and a book on the subject. The film, created by Quebecois filmmaker Vic Pelletier and writer David Pelly, has been released in French; the English version is scheduled for release in September with an Inuktitut version to follow. The book, containing Klengenberg's illustrations and local photographs with a text by Pelly, is currently under production. "The great thing about this project is that it's a celebration of an old legend, which came from the elders of this community," said Pelly. "That's how this started - the elders told us this story, and it was just so compelling." The etchings will be displayed at the Winnipeg Art Gallery until January 9, 2000, after which they will be removed to their permanent home in the soon-to-be-built Cambridge Bay Cultural Centre. A Break in the Ice: Inuit Prints and Drawings from the Linda J. Lemmens Collection opened at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia on March 30, 1999. The show was group-curated and installed by final-year anthropology students at the university as a component of a course entitled "The Anthropology of Public Representation." The work of 10 graphic artists is featured in the exhibit, including Ashoona Pitseolak, Simon Tookoome and Pitaloosie Saila. It explores the issues of marketing Inuit art and artists in the South, and themes of community identity, the representation of transformation and the artist's sense of humour. It closes on September 6. Selections from the Inuit component of the Chauncey C. Nash collection are currently on display in the Tozzer Library of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts). The exhibit, entitled The Raven and the Loon, opened on May 5, 1999 and works are scheduled to remain on display until spring 2001, with four print rotations. It encompasses both graphic arts and works in the round, including Kenojuak Ashevak's Return of the Sun, Jessie Oonark's Inland Eskimo Woman and many early, unsigned carvings in stone. James Houston spoke Transformation, 1994, Judas Ullulaq, Gjoa Haven (stone and muskox horn; 16.0 x 20.0 x 8.0 in.; Musée d’art Inuit Brousseau). at the May 5 opening. A new public museum devoted solely to Inuit art opened its doors on May 1. Musée d’art Inuit Brousseau in Old Quebec City is the latest project of private gallery owners Raymond and Lyse Brousseau. The display at the new museum is drawn from Raymond Brousseau's extensive personal collection of Inuit sculpture, spanning the 40 years of his association with the artform. Designed by Lyse Brousseau, longtime head of the design department at the Musée du Québec, it is unique in southern Canada in its exclusive focus on Inuit sculpture. The museum's permanent display, organized thematically and chronologically, traces the development of Inuit art from prehistoric times. The collection consists of some 450 pieces, including several historical artifacts as well as contemporary works by artists such as Peter Morgan ( Kangiqsualujjuaq), George Arluk (Arviat), Osuitok Ipeelee (Cape Dorset), and...
Judas Ullulaq (Gjoa Haven). Text panels guide the visitor through the display. The temporary display area will present one exhibition per year. The current show features work from the Brousseau collection, but Raymond hopes to feature travelling shows with works drawn from other sources. "The museum is not about my collection," he said. "It's about the art, and its context. For my wife and I - it's my love, and her profession." The museum was officially opened with a private reception on April 29. •

Sir Alexander Galt Museum (University of Lethbridge) hosted an exhibition of Inuit art and artifacts drawn from its collections, which ran from March 7 to April 30. The World Around Me was organized by a group of Canadian Museums Association interns and students from the University's Department of Fine Arts, led by guest curator Samantha Archibald. This special project, which included the creation of a variety of educational programs, an interactive web site featuring virtual tours and a searchable database centred around the exhibit, was partially sponsored by SchoolNet and the Museums Assistance Program. • On April 24, the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto, Ontario) held a day-long symposium entitled Art of the North in celebration of the establishment of Nunavut. The symposium consisted of two panel sessions. The first panel, featuring former Baker Lake crafts officer Jack Butler and artist Victoria Mannuguqshaluk, explored art production in Baker Lake. The afternoon session, called "Curating the North," involved Cynthia Cook (Art Gallery of Ontario), independent curators Peggy Gale and Peter White and textile artist Sally Webster (Baker Lake). • Gallery/Stratford (Stratford, Ontario) is holding an exhibit entitled Cape Dorset/Stratford Return: Art and Images 1959-1999, which opened June 1 and will run until October 3. Focusing on the West Baffin Cooperative of Cape Dorset, it documents changes in Inuit art since the Stratford Festival hosted its first Inuit exhibit 40 years ago. Kiawak Ashoona, whose work was among that of a number of contemporary artists included in the show, was in attendance at the opening reception on May 31. • Official opening ceremonies for the Canadian Museum of Civilization exhibit Iqqaipaa were held on March 30 in the museum's Grand Hall. The ceremony began with the lighting of the qudluk by presiding elder Mary Peters, and featured comments by James Houston and CMC chair Adrienne Clarkson. Sophie McRae and Malachi Kiguktaq provided musical entertainment. The event was broadcast live over the Internet, the first time an opening at a Canadian museum has been thus publicized. The webcast also included a pre-taped tour of the exhibit and interviews with the curator. The webcasting continued through the CMC's "Nunavut Days," taking in the various events at the museum in celebration of the creation of Nunavut. The official opening for the adjoining historical exhibit Inuit and Englishmen: The Nunavut Voyages of Martin Frobisher took place on April 15th. It was hosted by Clarkson and Joe Geurts, acting director of the museum. • On May 8 and 9, 1999, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario hosted a two-day artist on-site program, with sewing and carving demonstrations, and information sessions given by visiting artists from Arviat, including Lyta Josephie. A joint opening reception for the McMichael exhibits Northern Rock and Three Women, Three Generations took place on May 14. Napatchie Pootoogook, whose work, along with that of her mother Pitseolak Ashoona and daugh-
Shuvenai Ashoona, is featured in the Three Women show, was on hand at the opening. throat singing with Quanaq Mikkigak (Taloyoak) and Joseph Sigaqik (Gjoa Haven) were also present. On May 16 and again on June 13, Northern Rock curator Sue Gustavson presented an in-depth discussion of her exhibit to members of the gallery. The first show to focus on the geographical and scientific issues surrounding the production of Inuit carving. Northern Rock will run until September 6. Carleton University Art Gallery in Ottawa, Ontario opened a mini-exhibition of prints, drawings and sculptures entitled Celebrating Nunavut on May 10. The show, featuring work by Pitaloosie Saila, John Pangnark and Pudlo Pudlat, was curated by Jessica Butler, who worked with Baker Lake artists in the early 1970s, were instrumental in encouraging the graphic arts in that area. They collected works in a variety of media by such artists as Jessie Oonark and Luke Anguqaluk. Both Jack and Sheila gave slide talks in conjunction with the opening. Sheila’s lecture, at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection on May 14, dealt with “Inuit Drawings and the Construction of Pictorial Space.” Jack’s lecture, held at the Feheley Fine Arts gallery on May 15, was entitled “Baker Lake Drawings: An Art of Acculturation (Which Reflects the Lived Reality of Its Creators).” The Inuit Artists’ Shop is awaiting municipal approval for the raising of a new sign incorporated in a large inuksuk at its Nepean, Ontario location. The inuksuk will be raised by the Inuit directors of the shop’s parent organization, the Inuit Art Foundation. The quarrying and shipping of the stone for the body of the inuksuk has been donated by the Labrador Inuit Development Corporation. The inuksuk raising is scheduled for the weekend of October 30-31, coinciding with the foundation’s annual Fall Festival. An exhibition of jewellery and metalwork created by students of Nunavut Arctic College was held this spring at the Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec shop in Montreal. Opening on April 1 and closing May 15, In Celebration of Nunavut displayed a variety of jewellery forms by 41 students from the communities of Arviat, Cambridge Bay, Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet. The May 6 vernissage featured drum dancing by Angie Eetak and Mark Kakahmee Eetak.

AT THE COMMERCIAL GALLERIES

From May 1–27, 1999, Images of the North Gallery in San Francisco hosted the exhibition Lillian Pitt and Jonas Faber: New Works in Stone, Bronze and Clay, Jonas Quaqortoq Faber is an Inuk from Greenland now residing in British Columbia. A reception for the artists, both of whom travelled to San Francisco for the event, was held on May 1. Early Art and Artifacts of the Inuit: Siberia-Alaska-Canada–Greenland opened at the Isaacs/Inuit Gallery in Toronto on March 20. The exhibit featured artifacts dated as early as 500 AD, reaching back to the pre-Inuit Okvik, Punuk and Thule cultures, as well as more contemporary pieces from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. On May 15, Feheley Fine Arts opened an exhibit of Early Baker Lake Drawings from the Butler Collection. Jack and Sheila Butler, who worked with Baker Lake artists in the early 1970s, were instrumental in encouraging the graphic arts in that area. They collected works in a variety of media by such artists as Jessie Oonark and Luke Anguqaluk. Both Jack and Sheila gave slide talks in conjunction with the opening. Sheila’s lecture, at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection on May 14, dealt with “Inuit Drawings and the Construction of Pictorial Space.” Jack’s lecture, held at the Feheley Fine Arts gallery on May 15, was entitled “Baker Lake Drawings: An Art of Acculturation (Which Reflects the Lived Reality of Its Creators).” The Inuit Artists’ Shop is awaiting municipal approval for the raising of a new sign incorporated in a large inuksuk at its Nepean, Ontario location. The inuksuk will be raised by the Inuit directors of the shop’s parent organization, the Inuit Art Foundation. The quarrying and shipping of the stone for the body of the inuksuk has been donated by the Labrador Inuit Development Corporation. The inuksuk raising is scheduled for the weekend of October 30-31, coinciding with the foundation’s annual Fall Festival. An exhibition of jewellery and metalwork created by students of Nunavut Arctic College was held this spring at the Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec shop in Montreal. Opening on April 1 and closing May 15, In Celebration of Nunavut displayed a variety of jewellery forms by 41 students from the communities of Arviat, Cambridge Bay, Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet. The May 6 vernissage featured drum dancing by Angie Eetak and Mark Kakahmee Eetak.

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NELSON AKSALIK TAKKIRUQ, 1930-1999

Well-known Netsilik sculptor Nelson Aksalik Takkiruq died of a heart attack on April 3 in Gjoa Haven, Nunavut. He was 69 years old. He is survived by his wife, Mary, and their six children. This is the third loss for his family in the past year. Takkiruq’s younger brothers, Charlie Ugyuk and Judas Ullulaq, also well-known carvers, have recently died.

Takkiruq had a long career as an artist, beginning to carve as a youth in the early years of contemporary Inuit art. His work, which resonated with the expressionism so highly developed by artists of the Taloyoak region, was widely recognized; his exhibition list includes over 40 shows in Canada and in such cultural centres as Verona and Paris. He is represented in the collections of the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Takkiruq was a skilled and creative sculptor in both stone and whale bone. Although he turned to carving as an extra source of income to stave off the starvation of the 1950s, it became a central part of his life, and he was actively creating shortly before his death. He told interviewer Simeonie Kunuk in 1994, “I certainly plan to be carving as long as my health allows me to... [it] will continue to be a part of my life as long as I am able.”

Takkiruq’s work reveals his broad knowledge of Inuit legend, lore and hunting techniques, knowledge he often shared with children at the Gjoa Haven school. His strong skills in living on the land were developed early in life. He was adopted shortly after he was born and helped his adoptive family survive the difficult years before and after Inuit settled in permanent communities. According to friend and fellow carver Gideon Quaqjuaq, these skills stood his family and neighbours in good stead throughout the years. “Nelson Takkiruq, Gjoa Haven, 1998

... was very helpful to many people in his community by hunting and providing them with food, and he was always helpful to all his family members. He was very well-respected by everyone.” Ralph Porter, Sr., president of Natilik Fine Arts and a longtime friend of Takkiruq’s, concurs. “He was an expert hunter and helped Inuit a lot,” said Porter. “He was always going on the radio to ask people if they needed help.”

Respected for his long career as an artist and his keen knowledge of Inuit culture, Takkiruq was asked to sit on the selection jury for the newly created Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association (NACA) art collection in 1998. He applied his knowledge and expertise to the first round of proposal considerations in mid-March of 1999. “Nelson Takkiruq will be missed – his humour, his enthusiasm, his strong grounding in traditional ways,” said fellow NACA jury member John Houston. “His spirit, which moved and heartened everyone he met, will be sorely missed.” Takkiruq’s work will be included in the collection, alongside that of his brothers Judas and Big Charlie, and of his nephew, sculptor Karoo Ashevak. Nelson Takkiruq was buried in early April in his community.

Untitled (Nuliayuk), c.1981, Nelson Takkiruq, Gjoa Haven (stone with white inset; 4.7 x 4.5 x 13.2 in.; Winnipeg Art Gallery; acquired with funds donated by Dr. Norman Epstein).
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Sedna Protecting Her Children from the Shaman, Stanley Felix, 30 x 28 x 22.5 inches

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Woman with Ice Bucket,
1999, Manasee Maniapik,
Pangnirtung, Nunavut
(green serpentine;
8 x 9.5 x 20 in.) $3780

Happy Family, 1999,
Okpik Pitseolak, Cape
Dorset, Nunavut (brown
Brazilian soapstone;
4.5 x 8 x 8 in.) $2000

Tattoo Lady, 1999,
Germaine Arnaktauyok,
Iqaluit, Nunavut (blue tint,
etching; 11 x 14 in.) $260

I Remember My Dolls, 1999,
Germaine Arnaktauyok,
Iqaluit, Nunavut (sepia tint,
hand coloured; 18 x 13 in.)
$395
On the anniversary of her first solo exhibition, Feheley Fine Arts presents a memorial exhibition featuring graphics spanning the brief career of Sheojuk Etidlooie until her untimely death in May 1999. We are particularly proud to introduce her recent oil stick paintings.

A commemorative print has been commissioned, to be released during the exhibition. Drawn on the plate by Sheojuk Etidlooie, the etching was in progress at the time of her death, and is being editioned by Paul Machnik Studios.

Please contact us for more information.
EXHIBITS

Edmonton

Provincial Museum of Alberta: Worlds of the Inuit: Through the Artists’ Eyes, curated by Charles Moore, May 8 to September 6, 1999; Siganiq: Under the Same Sun, curated by Paul George, May 8 to September 6, 1999. Tel: (780) 453-9100.

Ottawa-Hull


Carleton University Art Gallery: The Intelligent Eye: The Ron D. Bell Collection of Inuit Art, August 15 to October 31, 1999; Parallel Visions: Prints from the Tyler/Brooks Collection of Inuit Art, August 15 to October 31, 1999. Tel: (613) 520-2120.

National Gallery of Canada: Uqarrinuit: Drawings and Prints from Pangnirtung, curated by Christine Lalonde, April 1 to October 31, 1999, Tel: (613) 990-1985.

Rideau Hall: Nunavut Artists: Artwork from the Collection of the Inuit Art Centre, March 1 until September 1999. Tel: (613) 993-8200.

Regina

MacKenzie Art Gallery: Creation and Continuity: Inuit Art from the Shumilader Collection, guest curated by Darlene Coward Wight (Winnipeg Art Gallery), October 25, 1998 until September 1999, Tel: (306) 522-4242.

Toronto Area


Vancouver

Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia: Nunavutmiutnik: A Tribute to the People of Nunavut, co-curated by Rosa Ho and July Papatsie, March 30 to September 6, 1999; A Break in the Ice: Inuit Prints and Drawings from the Linda J. Lemmens Collection, curated by anthropology students of the University of British Columbia, March 30 to September 6, 1999. Tel: (604) 822-5087.

Winnipeg

Winnipeg Art Gallery: The Inuit Sea Goddess, curated by Darlene Coward Wight, April 10 to November 21, 1999; Nunavut: Inuit Art from a New Territory, curated by Darlene Coward Wight, June 12 to September 19, 1999; Elsie Klenenberg: Legend of Uvajuq, curated by Darlene Coward Wight, October 9, 1999 to January 9, 2000. Tel: (204) 786-6641.

United States


University of Alaska Museum (Fairbanks, Alaska): Not Just a Pretty Face: Dolls and Human Figures in Inuit Native Cultures, June 5 until December 1999. Tel: (907) 474-7505.

TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS


Events

Fall Qaggiq 99, Inuit Art Foundation, Nepean, Ontario, October 30-31, 1999. An Inuit cultural event featuring presentations, seminars and carving demonstrations by several of the foundation's artists-directors as well as guest carvers from the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut, an opportunity for interaction with several artists. For more information, call (613) 224-8189.

Inuit Expressions: Art, Culture, Discovery, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, May to October 31, 1999. Exhibits of Inuit art at the McMichael will be complemented by a series of programming events, including hands-on activities, artists' demonstrations and talks by experts in the field. For more information, call (905) 893-0344.

50th Anniversary of the First Exhibition of Inuit Art, Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec, Montreal, Quebec. Schedule of events: September 30, 1999. Slide lecture about the early days of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild by author Ellen Easton McLeod; October 7, 1999: Lecture by author Dorothy H. Eber; October 14, 1999: Lecture and slide presentation by author Betty Kobayashi Issenman; October 21, 1999: Inuit artists panel, moderated by Inuit Art Quarterly editor Marybelle Mitchell. For more information, call (514) 849-6091.
FOR THE RECORD

In my survey of printmaking (Inuit Art Quarterly Summer 1998), I seem to be implying that James Houston had his conversation with Osuitok Ipeelee about the sailor on the cigarette packages after he had gone to Japan. For the historical record, a recent discussion with him has revealed the following facts: James Houston had his now-legendary conversation with Osuitok some time before 1957. It was, in fact, this conversation that sparked the idea of starting a printmaking venture in Cape Dorset. Houston began training a group of printmakers in 1957 only to discover that he himself did not have sufficient background. He therefore took off in October 1958, arrived in Japan in November 1958 and stayed until February 1959. Thus, contrary to a recent statement in The Beaver (February/March 1999: 14), he stayed four months, not one month, to study under the print master Unichi Hiratsuka.

Maria von Finckenstein
Ottawa, Ontario

MAPS A GOOD IDEA

The Quarterly goes a long way in my family. It has travelled to a son in Bend, Oregon on the other side of the country; to a sister in Cheshire, Connecticut and to a nephew in Charlottesville, Virginia. I hope you'll hear from them some day. However, people involved with the IAQ may be too close to the picture to think of spreading more knowledge. Is there some way that occasional maps of the Arctic could be included, so we may know – for instance – exactly where Rankin Inlet is? I don't know how it could be done, but I think the idea is worth pursuing. Maine's Down East Magazine pinpoints places that have articles written about them on tiny maps in each issue. Especially with the new changes, you would also be performing a service for the artists mentioned. Do consider this matter with your editorial board.

Carol Howe (niece of Alice Lighthall)
Rockland, Maine

CORRECTION

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Twilight Owl, Innuquajuia. Stonecut, 1962