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Untitled (Spirits), 1990, Emily Pungnerk Illuitok, Kugaaruk (bone, hair, horn, daw, 15 x 10 x 5 in.; collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery)

Photo: Ernest Meyer, Winnipeg Art Gallery
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There are a surprisingly large number of Inuit organizations serving a very small population (Statistics Canada says 41,000; Inuit Tapirirt Kanatami says 50,000). Several of these organizations are involved, in one way or another, with the arts and culture, but they tend not to be well-known to the art-appreciating public. We are, therefore, undertaking to profile the key Inuit arts and cultural organizations in Inuit Art Quarterly, beginning in this issue with a profile of Avataq Cultural Institute by staff writer Michael Olson on page 10.

Established as a result of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement - the first treaty signed by Canadian Inuit with the state - Avataq is committed to cultural preservation for Nunavik's Inuit. It was one of the recipients of artworks from the collection of the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, disbursed in 1990 to various arts institutions, including the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the National Gallery of Canada.

Not only does Avataq archive art and cultural materials, but it also undertakes to exhibit its collections. The most recent project was Tamivut: Traces of Our Footsteps, which was displayed in the former headquarters of the Royal Bank in Montreal from June 8 to October 14, 2001. Dedicated to shoring up Inuit language and culture in Nunavik, Avataq has held several elders' conferences over the years and recently organized the first-ever throat Singers' symposium.

By now, almost everyone will have heard about Waddington's record-setting Inuit art auction in Toronto last November. Duncan McLean, a co-owner of Waddington's, says that the million dollars plus brought in over the course of two evenings was a record for any Waddington art auction. Given global economic conditions, it was a surprise to see art setting sales records. Pointing out that Kenojuak's Enchanted Owl is now in a category of its own (having achieved the highest price at auction ever for a Canadian print), McLean feels that Inuit art has truly come into its own.

He credits the auction with having established a new level of credibility for Inuit art which, he says, has been slow to find acceptance in our gatekeeping art institutions. (The National Gallery of Canada began collecting it in earnest only in 1986.) He may, however, be overstating resistance to Inuit art; people might just be unsure what to do with it, given that there is a lot being produced and it tends to defy categories. But I have written at length about these matters and won't say more here except to note that the Ottawa Citizen reported on February 10 that the National Gallery of Canada (NGC) and the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) are abandoning Aboriginal art's "cultural apartheid.

Apparently, Aboriginal artworks -- the historic materials anyhow -- are about to be treated as "fine art," rather than "curiosities." The AGO will be displaying Aboriginal art with European and Canadian art from the same period and, at the NGC, Aboriginal work will be displayed chronologically, geographically, and thematically with other works.

This means, says Marie Routledge, Associate Curator of Inuit art, that First Nations art will be included in the historic Canadian galleries, "so, when you enter those galleries, you will be greeted with Aboriginal art rather than Quebec church art." Among Inuit works to be represented at other points will be decorated clothing from the contact period and pre-1970 sculpture, the cut-off date for the historic Canadian galleries.

Some feel that this move to integrate Aboriginal work with that of other Canadians is long overdue, but it will not please everyone. Although critics have long deplored the physical separation of Inuit art in our major galleries, there are others who see this separation as a tribute. For instance, most Inuit artists I have spoken with about this like having separate Inuit galleries at the NGC.

Although critics have long deplored the physical separation of Inuit art in our major galleries, there are others who see this separation as a tribute.

Another problem raised is that the incorporating of pre- and early contact Aboriginal artwork with other Canadian art of the same period leaves the contemporary artists somewhere in limbo. Viviane Gray, Chief of the Indian and Inuit Art Centres at the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada would like to see the work of major, living Aboriginal artists exhibited alongside other living artists in the contemporary galleries at the NGC -- something that has happened only infrequently since the 1980s. It is one thing to rewrite the historical record, but it begs the question of how and when contemporary Native art will be fully incorporated into a contemporary art history.

As a postscript, Dr. Daniel Albrecht, a director and former President of the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, is researching Inuit fabric design made in Cape Dorset in the sixties. If any of our readers have any information about this apparently short-lived venture, we would be glad to pass it on to Dr. Albrecht. MM

Inuit Art Quarterly is a publication of the Inuit Art Foundation, a non-profit organization governed by a board of Inuit artists. The foundation's mission is to assist Inuit in the development of their professional skills and the marketing of their art and to promote Inuit art through exhibitions, publications and films. The foundation is funded by grants from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and other public and private agencies, as well as private donations from individuals. Wherever possible, it operates on a cost recovery basis.
The first-ever exhibition of Inuit tapestries at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Nuvisavik, "The Place Where We Weave," includes Lady with Bird, 1977, by Malaya Akulukjuk and Nukinga Maniapik. On display from February 21 to September 8, 2003, Nuvisavik features evocative, painstakingly crafted works by the artists in Pangnirtung, home to the North's only textile studio. Most of the 49 tapestries on display have never before been publicly displayed.

Fetching Water is included in an exhibition of works by Inukjuak sculptor Johnny Aculiaq from April 11 to May 31 at the Inuit Art Centre in Hull, Quebec. Described as a "carver's carver," Aculiaq brings humour and a strong sense of narrative to his masterful renderings of animals and hunters.

Man and Wife, 1978, by Jessie Oonark is included in the first exhibition of Canadian Inuit art ever to be shown in Austria, opening in May at the Art History Institute, Leopold Franzens University, Innsbruck, Austria. Organized with the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, the exhibit presents fabric works and drawings by 14 artists from Baker Lake and Cape Dorset. Entitled Asingit, an Inuktitut word meaning "their others," the exhibition evokes themes of transformation, reflecting the belief that every animate and inanimate object has both a spiritual and physical aspect.
Amayuqyuq and Qallupilluq by Judas Ullulaq conveys the timeless quality lingering in the haunting works making up Bones Beneath, an exhibition of bone sculptures on display at the Winnipeg Art Gallery from April 2 to August 19.

A solo show dedicated to the realistic northern animals of Kimmirut carver Mattoo Michael is on display at The Guild Shop in Toronto from August 8 to September 8.

For over two decades, lvujivik sculptor Mattiusi Iyaituk has fused different types of stone with inlaid antler and muskox hair to create highly abstracted, dynamic works. This spring, his sensuous, free-flowing sculptures could be seen in two separate solo exhibitions. Canadian Arctic Gallery in Basel, Switzerland featured recent sculpture by Iyaituk from March 3 to April 13 and the artist attended the opening of a retrospective of his works, including Singing to her Crying Baby, at Toronto’s Gallery Phillip, on display from April 13 to May 16.

Inuit Art: the 21st Century is on display at Arctic Artistry Gallery in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. The exhibition, which features works such as Mother Owl and Two Chicks by Padlaya Qiatsuk, runs from May 4 through August 2002.

Chicago’s Orca Aart Gallery presents Spirit Flight from April 1 to May 31. Days of Open Water, featuring works by Nalenik Temela, Pits Omiripik, Mattiusi Iyaituk and Abraham Anghik Ruben, celebrates the warmth and abundance of summer. The exhibition is on display from July 1 to August 31.

Joe Ekidlak, Sanikiluaq

Chicago’s Orca Aart Gallery presents Spirit Flight from April 1 to May 31. Days of Open Water, featuring works by Nalenik Temela, Pits Omiripik, Mattiusi Iyaituk and Abraham Anghik Ruben, celebrates the warmth and abundance of summer. The exhibition is on display from July 1 to August 31.
Exhibition Details

Asingit: Inuit Art from the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, curated by Judith Nasby, opening at the Art History Institute, Leopold Franzens University, Innsbruck, Austria, May 2002. Telephone: (519) 837-0010.

Sun and Moon, Victoria Momnguqsuoluq, Boker Lake


Bones Beneath, curated by Darlene Coward Wight, Winnipeg Art Gallery, 300 Memorial Boulevard, Winnipeg, Manitoba, April 2 to August 19, 2002. Telephone: (204) 786-6641.


Travelling Exhibitions


Inuit Art of Canada, co-curated by Ryan Rice and Barry Pottle, organized by the Indian and Inuit Art Centre, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Itinerary: Art Gallery of Southern Manitoba, Brandon, Manitoba, July 11 to August 30, 2002; Prince of Wales Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, September to December 30, 2003. Telephone: (819) 997-8311.

Transitions 2: Contemporary Indian and Inuit Art of Canada, co-curated by Ryan Rice and Barry Pottle, organized by the Indian and Inuit Art Centre, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Itinerary: Art Gallery of Southern Manitoba, Brandon, Manitoba, July 11 to August 30, 2002; Prince of Wales Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, September to December 30, 2003. Telephone: (819) 997-8311.

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Canadian Guild of Crafts (Montreal)
McCord Museum of Canadian History (Montreal)
Musée d’art Inuit Brousseau (Quebec City)

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Mary Palliser in a photograph taken in 1992. During her term as president of Avataq (1992 to 1998), one of Palliser’s main goals was to establish a program to protect Inuktitut in the region.

Cultural Institute: Keeping Inuit

Speaking before an assembly of elders at a community hall in northern Quebec, Annie Aupaluk of Akulivik describes how, the day before, she had watched a group of younger Inuit trying without success to build an igloo.

At the inaugural Northern Quebec Inuit Elders Conference, held in Kangirsuk in April 1981, other speakers proffer similar accounts of how traditional skills and knowledge are slipping away from the Inuit.

Elder Johnny Papituqak Berthe of Tasiujaq laments that the younger people in his community do not have “peace of mind” when they are hunting on the land. He believes this lack of confidence can be attributed to the fact that they were never exposed to long-known, traditional skills.

An elder from Kangiqsujuaq, Mathewie Sakiagak, says he sympathizes with the young. Sakiagak himself has trouble understanding all the Inuktitut words and expressions spoken by other elders, and can easily imagine the difficulties faced by younger Inuit. Echoing the sentiments expressed by many of the participants, he says: “For those of us who have had the benefit of exposure to the true Inuit elders and their wisdom, our responsibility to younger people is very clear.”

Organized by the Avataq Cultural Institute, this seminal gathering marked the first time that elders from across Nunavik, or northern Quebec, were able to meet and share their concerns about cultural disruption. The fledgling institute, which had come into being just six months prior — in November 1980 — was given its mandate in response to the wide array of problems raised at the conference.

Although some cultural matters were included in the mandate of Makivik Corporation, the body set up to represent the Nunavimmiut following the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975, there were many who thought there was a need for a separate organization dedicated exclusively to the preservation of culture.

At the 1981 conference, Charlie Watt, then president of Makivik and now serving as a Liberal Senator, conveyed the corporation’s agreement that Avataq should assume responsibility for cultural affairs. Avataq Cultural Institute, a non-profit and non-political organization, became the first such body in the region to work for the preservation of Inuit culture with a mandate to do so.
Culture Afloat

BY MICHAEL OLSON

During his tenure as president, Robert Watt sought to improve Avataq's financial position through innovative means, such as the Northern Delights line of herbal teas.

The latter resolution reflects the fact that from the outset, Inuituq, or elders, have been recognized as indispensable to the success of the institute. In the foreword to the published account of the 1981 conference, Avataq's first president, Johnny Epoo, wrote: "Our Elders are assets in our society which we can ill afford to bypass or ignore. Not only do they provide stability in times of change, their knowledge, wisdom and experience provide a continuing link with our past, maintaining it for the benefit of future generations." Today, Epoo says he feels the role played by elders is no less important. "The elders are the only ones who keep Avataq running every year. If they don't continue to meet, Inuit culture has a much greater chance of disappearing."

The elders' conferences, held annually until 1988, after which they were held every two years, provide the organization with crucial direction for the development of its programs and activities. Each community in Nunavik is represented by one or more elders, selected by members of that community. Epoo, who has attended a conference as an elder himself since retiring as Avataq president, says the initial gatherings in particular meant a great deal to the community.

Avataq Cultural Institute has emerged as the leading agency in the struggle to preserve Inuit values and objects of historical importance.

The institute's name was an appropriate choice, given that Avataq endeavours to keep Inuit culture afloat — literally. An avataq, a device used in hunting marine mammals, consists of an inflated sealskin float secured to the head of a harpoon by a cable. After the animal is harpooned, the avataq slows its flight and prevents it from sinking to the bottom.

Keeping Inuit culture afloat

The institute's name was an appropriate choice, given that Avataq endeavours to keep Inuit culture afloat — literally. An avataq, a device used in hunting marine mammals, consists of an inflated sealskin float secured to the head of a harpoon by a cable. After the animal is harpooned, the avataq slows its flight and prevents it from sinking to the bottom.

At the inaugural elders' conference in 1981, alarming accounts from participants conveyed a feeling that Inuit practices were in real danger of disappearing under the waves forever. Although many issues were identified as being of major importance, participants agreed that three in particular should be addressed first: instructing the younger generation in passing ways of life, such as techniques for hunting, cooking and making clothes; defining and making official lnuktitut geographical and family names; and establishing elders' conferences on a permanent basis.


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participants, as many of them had not seen relatives from other communities since they were teenagers.


Numerous and diverse programs

After identifying immediate priorities at the first elders' conference, the objectives of the institute grew more numerous and diverse with each passing year. Today, Avataq's 15 core staff, with headquarters in Inukjuak, provide a wide range of programs for the Nunavimmiut, including:

- a program to protect the language in the region
- an archaeology department, established in 1985 to study and protect existing sites on the recommendation of elders (the department has identified over 500 new sites covering almost 4,000 years of history)
- a program to patriate cultural artefacts from the South and around the world
- a documentation centre which includes a wealth of historical documents and photographs, as well as a collection of over 500 oral history interviews with Inuit elders dating back to 1959
- a series of over 1,200 original drawings depicting past Inuit ways of life by Kangirsuk artist Tuumasi Kudluk, used for educational purposes and to be transferred to CD-ROM in the near future
- research programs covering a range of topics, including Inuit surnames and genealogy, Inuit healing, the safe preparation of igunaq and other country foods and identification of Nunavik flora (the extensive Nunatop Place Names Project has collected some 8,600 Inuit names for places and landscape features, which were officially recognized by the Quebec government in 1987).

Support for Inuit artists in Nunavik

In more recent years, the institute has been able to devote more attention to Inuit artists, through its Artists' Support Program. Avataq has a mandate to help disseminate the work of Inuit artists - especially those working in the fields of literature and the performing arts - to ensure that their work becomes known within the territory of Nunavik, across Canada and internationally. The institute functions as an agent for artists working in a number of disciplines.

In 1996, Avataq organized European tours for a number of kattajajit, or throatsingers, making it possible for them to display their talents in France, Finland and England. Recently, Avataq organized the inaugural Inuit Throatsingers' Gathering, held in Puvirnituq in September of 2001 (see "Throatsinging: More Than a Game" in IAQ Winter 2001, pp. 6-17). Over 60 singers participated in the five-day symposium, which was billed as an exchange of ideas on kattajajag and its importance to Inuit culture. Participants also elected a working group to investigate the possibility of creating an association representing throatsingers.
Avataq is also the custodian of an historically significant collection of more than 1,100 Inuit artefacts and artworks. The Nunavik Inuit Art Collection, transferred to Avataq from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in 1990, includes sculpture produced mainly between the 1940s and 1960s, but also as late as 1984; prints and other works on paper, mostly from the 1960s and 70s; handicrafts from 1960 to 1975; and reproductions of traditional objects.

Due to a lack of venues for exhibition and other resources, the collection is currently stored in a warehouse. An inventory of the entire collection was completed in early 1997, and a virtual exhibition containing a representative selection of work can be seen on Avataq's website at http://www.avataq.qc.ca/anglais/index_nac.html.

Avataq has a mandate to help disseminate the work of Inuit artists, especially those working in the fields of literature and the performing arts designed to broaden the public's understanding of Nunavik through panoramic photographs, everyday objects, arts and crafts, legends, Internet sites and an interactive game based on Tuumasi Kudluk's drawings. A travelling version of the exhibit will be shown in Kuujjuaq, before moving to other Canadian venues.

Avataq's archaeology program is one among the organization's many successful initiatives. Shown here are Bobby Grey from Kangirsuk and Annie Weetaluktuk of Inukjuak at the Quaqtaq Field School in 1985.
Besides its research projects and other programs, Avataq has also effected other changes, less tangible perhaps, but certainly no less important. Former president Robert Watt, who stepped down in the summer of 2001 to join the National Aboriginal Health Organization as Inuit health coordinator, says the institute has been able to help bridge the cultural gap formed when Inuit youth were taken away from the land or their home communities and placed in residential schools. "There's a really strong bond between elders and youth now," he says. "Through the conferences, youth and elders are able to exchange their concerns with regards to the social fabric."

The spectre of inadequate funding
At the second elders' conference, participants spoke of the pressing need for increased cooperation between Avataq and other Nunavimmiut organizations, in light of the provincial government's reluctance to provide adequate funding. Indeed, as is the case with most small, non-profit organizations, lack of funding has been a perpetual thorn in Avataq's side. The institute was unable to increase its core funding in the 15 years following its inception. Avataq negotiates three-year funding agreements with Quebec's Ministry of Culture and Communications, which currently contributes $265,000 annually. Through the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the federal government provides $200,000 per year, as well as additional funding for specific projects. In early February, Avataq and Air Inuit signed a five-year agreement worth $200,000 per year. Makivik Corporation also provides financial assistance. Avataq's annual budget is approximately $1.5 million, although the exact amount fluctuates each year according to specific projects.

Epoo says the constant struggle to secure funding has meant that certain issues raised at conferences have not been dealt with adequately, while some have never been addressed at all. The spectre of inadequate funding haunts even those projects that could easily be deemed successful, such as the joint attempts by Avataq and the Kiviuq School Board to preserve the Inuktitut language in Nunavik. While Epoo feels that the Inuktitut language could have been lost without those efforts, he says that, due to funding constraints, the language program has never really taken off as Avataq had hoped.

Mary Palliser, who served as president between 1992 and 1998, says that provisions to preserve and promote Inuit language and culture were not included in the original James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, and that Avataq's perennial budget problems can be traced back to this omission. Like Epoo, she laments that funding problems have forestalled some programs, especially the plan to implement museums in every Nunavik community. While Avataq managed to open one such cultural centre in Inukjuak in 1992, Palliser says that lack of funding forced the institute to close the museum two years ago.

Echoing her concerns, Watt says that during his tenure as president, his biggest goal was to find ways to reduce...
Avataq’s reliance on financial contributions. In an attempt to increase the annual budget, the institute created *Northern Delights*, a line of herbal teas made from hand-picked flora native to the Nunavik region.

Charlie Arnagq, appointed to the presidency after Watt resigned, says much of his current efforts revolve around securing more funding for Avataq. And although the institute is a non-political body, he is heavily involved with negotiations for self-government. Avataq’s goal is to be established as a department of culture within the proposed Nunavik Assembly, rather than being merged with other portfolios such as sports or recreation. Arnagq says he believes the institute would be able to achieve even more under self-rule by the Nunavimmut.

Notwithstanding its financial challenges, Watt says Avataq has become a role model, both in Nunavik and elsewhere. “I think Avataq has given a lot of people the pride they have in our language and way of life,” he says. The Government of Nunavut, for example, has patterned several of its cultural policies after successful Avataq initiatives. But Watt says that, despite the tangible improvements fostered by the institute over the years, its continued existence remains as crucial as ever in the present era of globalization. “It’s important in our society now that we’re part of a global village,” he says. “Our population is so small compared to the rest of the world.”

—— with files from Michaela Rodrigue and Henry Kudluk

"Avataq is important ... now that we’re part of a global village. Our population is so small compared to the rest of the world" Robert Watt

Robert Watt and elder Mina Weetaluktuk from Kuujjuaq, at the Nunavik Inuit Elders Conference, held in Akulivik in 2000.
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Most Inuit artists are recognized for their soapstone carvings or prints, but Sammy Kudluk from Nunavik is making a name for himself with acrylic paintings which decorate many public buildings in Kuujjuaq and Inuit offices in Montreal.

Kudluk, 42, was born in Kangirsuk, studied art at Dawson College in Montreal and now lives in Kuujjuaq. His paintings reflect northern themes and scenery. In one recent work, Berry Pickers, the painted scene is picture perfect: at sunset, two women in amautiit gather berries against the changing colours of the land. The sky above them is a pale blue and the clouds are edged in gold. You can almost feel the growing chill in the September air. The style of this painting owes something to the French impressionists of the 1800s, but its subject matter is altogether northern.

Kudluk says the colours in his artwork became even more intense after he went on an exchange trip to Mexico a few years ago. There, he experienced an entirely new palette. "They said, when you go back, you're going to have a lot of colour in your work," he recalls.

Kudluk also works in other media, drawing in pen and ink and creating sculptures of bone and stone. The stained-glass windows he designed for the headoffice of Makivik Corporation in Kuujjuaq send rainbows of colour streaming into the building.

Kudluk says he inherited his creative spirit from his artistic mother and his father, who carved intricate objects. Soapstone carvers he knew while growing up in Kangirsuk also influenced his art. "They're not well known, but they do their work from stories and legends. I was inspired by them," he says.

As a visit to Inuvik's Great Northern Arts Festival three years ago encouraged Kudluk to experiment even more with sculpture. Contact with artists from other regions also opened up new ways of working with conventional materials. Kudluk began seeing shapes in the natural forms of walrus, caribou and muskox bones - a wolf, the face of a creature, Sedna. "It was like they were talking to me and saying, this is what happened before," he says.

As he holds one of his pieces in his hand, it's almost as if Kudluk is speaking to a living sculpture. His treatment of the stone and bone brings the shapes he sees to the surface. In Nanuk Graveyard, Kudluk has arranged bones on a small rock painted red. Despite its small size, this piece radiates a huge sense of mystery. The portrait of Sleeping Sedna, based on rock and muskox skull, has wavy lines like seashells or water.

Kudluk sells most of his work through Kuujjuaq's Tivi Galleries, (where he also works occasionally pricing artwork), or La Federation des cooperatives du Nouveau-Quebec in Montreal.

Kudluk says his decision to stop drinking 10 months ago is letting him concentrate wholly on his art. "I love what I'm doing now," he says.

Kudluk employs a variety of materials to create his striking works.
The fall of 2001 was scarred by a spate of singularly turbulent events and a marked retreat to cocooning and hunkering down. In New York, several major art auctions were cancelled or postponed, while minor sales achieved only modest results. Against this gloomy backdrop, the annual Inuit art auction was held in early November at Waddington’s in Toronto.

The record results defied everyone’s predictions. The total sales of $1.2 million had never before been achieved at an Inuit art auction. Selling for $58,650, *The Enchanted Owl* by Kenojuak Ashevak (1960) set a new record for a Canadian print at auction. One of Joe Talirunili’s *Migration* boats sold for $87,500, the highest price ever paid for an Inuit sculpture at auction. And a fourth benchmark was set – the highest price for a single lot of Inuit art – when a set of the 39 prints released in Cape Dorset’s inaugural collection in 1959 sold for $186,300. (All figures include the 15 per cent buyer’s premium added to the hammer price).

While these events set the Inuit art world abuzz, they received remarkably little or no coverage in the daily press, apart from an article in *Nunatsiaq News*, published weekly in Iqaluit. In light of the inauspicious environment for a sale of any kind, let alone an art sale, the auction merits some post-mortem analysis.

For collectors and dealers, Waddington’s Inuit art auction has become an annual November pilgrimage to Toronto. The event has mushroomed to a long weekend or more of cultural activities to entertain and educate those interested in Inuit art.
Through these events, collectors from near and far have come to know each other personally and many have even visited each others' collections.

An auction preview reception before the November auction featured Labrador artists and Leander Baikie from Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The Toronto galleries showcased their best offerings, including hosting a visiting artist to highlight a special exhibition. I asked several collectors and dealers for their general impressions of this year's auction. Patricia Feheley of Feheley Fine Arts in Toronto told me:

It's not the kind of market anymore where people go after the five names that they've heard of. There are people out there with very good eyes who have done their homework. There is a serious demand for a broad spectrum of artworks. Buyers are not just after trophies. That, in my mind, is a much healthier market. Literally, every year there is a greater group of people coming from a wider demographic. You sure don't get any deals anymore.

As a dealer selling older pieces, Feheley considers that the auction is the way to put prices in context: "It's very helpful. You can't argue with this strong interest base. Internationally, Inuit art is being taken very seriously. It's very good for Inuit art in general."

This teapot by Mike Massie of Happy Valley-Goose Bay sold for $4,890. The proceeds were donated to the New York City Police and Fire Widows and Children's Benefit Fund.
The Enchanted Owl, 1960, Kenojuak Ashevak, Cape Dorset (stonecut, 24 x 26 in.). This famous print set a new record at auction when it sold for $58,650, making it the highest selling price for any Canadian print at auction.

The Migration, c.1960, Joe Talirunili, Puvirnituq (dark grey soapstone, wood and hide; 11 in.).

As for the effect of foreign buyers in the marketplace, Feheley considers that "the Canadian market for sculpture, whether Inuit or not, has never been strong." As she says:

"Any contemporary gallery will say that sculpture is a very tough sell in Canada. Put that side by side with a prevailing attitude that Inuit art is not fine art and that it's now tainted anyway [due to acculturation] - that's an attitude that you get more in Canada. People coming in from outside Canada don't carry any of that baggage. To a great degree, it has initially been Europeans and, increasingly, Americans, who come in with clean eyes, as it were. They are amazed by the quality and by the number of first-generation artists whose work is still very affordable and furthermore, by the quantity that is still on the secondary market. Normally, the kind of quality pieces coming up in any other art form discovered 'a hundred years ago' would be off the secondary market and in museums. There is a really good amount of quality Inuit material that has yet to go into public collections. The international buyers have brought that recognition. So I think it is very healthy. The market is well-supported."

To delve below the surface of this year's auction, I interviewed Duncan McLean, one of the principals of Waddington's Auctioneers in Toronto:

Susan Gustavison: What led Waddington's, in 1978, to hold its first auction dedicated to Inuit art?

Duncan McLean: I had been working for Waddington's, my family's business, for six or eight months when William Eccles, owner of The Eskimo House gallery located in the Royal York Hotel [in Toronto], died without a will. His estate was taken over by the Public Trustee of Ontario which, in turn, asked Waddington's to sell the content of his shop and his personal collections. My father assigned the sale to me, saying, "You're looking for something to do. Work with this."

There were a thousand or so pieces to sell. Bill Eccles had a reputation as an eccentric; if he didn't like you, he wouldn't sell to you. I knew nothing about Inuit art, but called [the late]
That sale was written up in the financial section of the Toronto Star. A newly retired bush pilot who was moving to Australia read the article. He asked me to sell his collection of Inuit art. Again, that was written up in the newspaper. Fred Coman, an entrepreneur in Iqaluit, had a lot of carvings in the basement of his mother's house in Mississauga. She wanted them out of there, so she called me. That was the third sale and it has just gone on from there.

The last two or three were very strong but nothing like this. I think people understand that there is a new level of pricing for great pieces of Inuit art. Maybe the high prices were a surprise to some people – the Joe Talirunili boat at $87,500 was a lot of money – but we sold one at $50,000 a year or two ago and maybe that was more of a surprise then.

We now have a track record at auction. People have seen how well things are doing – how people enjoy it, how the prices go up every time, and how it’s a strong market. No matter how much people love the artform, there has to be confidence that it’s a good investment before they will put out fifty, thirty, or even twenty grand for an Inuit artwork, or for any art.

These are not privately conducted sales that no one hears about. These are public auctions; people can watch the strength year after year. The whole market has been helped by these auctions because they are reassuring for collectors.

Gustavison: Are you saying that the resale market is helping the new production market?

Mclean: Well, yes. Nobody is going to buy a new sculpture if it can never be sold again and if it is an artform that is not holding its own. If I see that in one night one million dollars of Inuit art sold to a room of 300 people, and that everything did really, really well, and that the pieces selling were the early stuff, that gives me faith. Then I have confidence to go to a gallery opening and buy a contemporary Inuit artwork. But if an auction flops, and nobody is interested, I would be less likely to go to a gallery opening and buy. Art is built on its history, on its track record in the marketplace.

It’s hard for me to talk about this; it’s like blowing my own horn. Yes, we made some money. But I love this stuff. I do this because I really enjoy it. It’s rewarding to see Inuit art finally get recognition and achieve price levels that should have been there years ago.

"Art is built on its history, on its track record in the marketplace"
All through the eighties, which is not that long ago, I'd be trying to get four or five thousand dollars for a piece. I'd have an auction that included a great early Port Harrison [Inukjuak] Mother and Child. I'd get $5,600 or $3,500 and that would be the highlight of the sale. Every so often there would be a blip. I remember a great, three-foot-high Johnny Inukpuk years ago that brought $10,000, an unheard of amount of money. That sculpture would bring – I don't know what now. Inuit art has been underpriced for years. There were certain Toronto collectors who could buy what they wanted at more or less

much. A great piece might fetch $8,000 to $10,000; then, all of a sudden, the artform was discovered by people outside Canada, particularly by Americans. They would come to Toronto for the auction; they would compete and pay a lot of money, and the prices started going up for the better things.

Gustavison: When I looked at the price list, it seemed that quite a number of items didn't sell.

McLean: Nothing major. Our buy-in rate was the smallest I've ever had for an Inuit sale, and probably for a Canadian art sale, or anything else I've ever been involved in. If I'm selling something that I know is worth $3,000 and it doesn't happen to be getting much interest, I would buy it in. It really wasn't an issue in this sale. We had the strongest bidding of any sale that I've ever had, not just Inuit.

Gustavison: Do you have a sense of where the bidders came from?

McLean: I know that for this sale, we sold items into Mannheim, Germany, into Paris, France and into Cambridge, England. We sold things into the United States – Texas, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Illinois, Washington, D.C., and Washington state. It's so diverse. Even for a European art sale – our company's most international sale – the vast majority of items go to London, New York or a few other capitals. But the Inuit market is so diverse now. There were major pieces sold

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into Regina, Saskatoon, Vancouver and Edmonton. The big print set [1959 Cape Dorset print collection] that brought $186,300 stayed in Toronto. The Pangnark that sold for $21,850 went to Montreal. The three wall hangings by Onark went to the Canadian prairies.

Gustavison: I often have an impression that the good things are all going to the United States.

McLean: No, that's absolutely not true. There were probably two sales in a row in which the prices, because of the American interest, escalated pretty substantially. All of a sudden, I was getting ten, fifteen, twenty thousand dollars for things that before would go for four, five and six. The Canadian collectors had to catch their breath and get used to the prices. Now, they are totally back in the fray again. About three years ago, a collector said to me, "Well, the Americans are here. I won't be able to afford to buy any of this anymore." The same fellow bought a Lalique vase for $12,000 at our sale two weeks later. So it was not that he couldn't afford to buy it. He just had to get his head around the new market values for Inuit art.

Gustavison: So the strength of the American dollar in bringing the collectors here has helped the market in general, rather than distorting it?

McLean: Yes, it has raised the values to where they should have been years ago. It didn't happen relying solely on the Canadian market. The person who was paying $4,000, now has to pay $12,000, or whatever. It's a market correction that was needed. Inuit art was underpriced and under-appreciated for years. That stems not just from the dollar values, but from the way it is treated in our public institutions. It’s always second cousin. If any of our public galleries had a choice between a great Inuit piece and an American abstract, they would take the American abstract. That percolates down, but this latest sale makes it hard now for the mainstream Canadian art market to ignore Inuit art and treat it as a cute, craft-type industry. This is wonderfully important.

The previous record for a Canadian print was David Blackwood's Fire Down on the Labrador. We sold it

"I think the sort of confidence that is created by the auctions bubbles over. People are going to the galleries and they are buying things"
in 1998 for $25,300, the record for a Canadian artist’s print at auction. Well, that record is now held by Kenojuak Ashevak’s The Enchanted Owl. With the buyer’s premium it is now established at $58,650, more than double the previous record.

That puts Kenojuak Ashevak ahead of Riopelle, Milne, Blackwood, and any other Canadian artist you want to mention. She holds the record for Canadian art, not just for Inuit art. That speaks volumes.

And then you get into the dollars and cents of it. We sold the Joe Talirunili boat for $87,500; the 1959 Cape Dorset print set for $186,300; the Karoo Ashevak for $23,575; and a Pangnark for $21,850. The sale total was $1.2 million. That is close to half what Joyner might do for a major Canadian record. I think it’s arrived and I think it’s great.

Gustavison: Do vendors just appear on your doorstep or do you have to seek them out?

Mclean: The vendors just seek us out. For this last sale, there was a collection of ivories from Houston, Texas. Some of the better, early carvings came from a major estate from Toronto. It’s not just an interesting craft; it’s an artform that is commanding big prices and has a major Canadian record. I think it’s arrived and I think it’s great.

"That puts Kenojuak Ashevak ahead of Riopelle, Milne, Blackwood, and any other Canadian artist you want to mention. She holds the record for Canadian art, not just for Inuit art"
auctions bubbles over. People are going to the galleries and they are buying things.

Gustavison: I would expect that the Toronto dealers – because the auction draws so many people from all over – must see their sales spike in the weeks surrounding the auction. I was interested in a dealer’s comment: “Before the auction my clients buy contemporary pieces. I won’t sell any old pieces until the auction is over and the collectors have seen what they got.”

McLean: We don’t compete with the new things. I try not to get too involved with the contemporary stuff. The contemporary is more the realm of the galleries that present it properly and provide a context. It cannot be had for a gallery to have the whole city full of Inuit people for a weekend. Shows of contemporary Inuit art don’t compete with the auction. Two years ago, Feheley Fine Arts held a Sheojuk Erolloooie show as a complement to the auction. It helps to have things happening apart from an auction, to attract people from out of town. On Saturday night, we had the Inuit artists who were in town and some of the clients who made the effort to fly here from a distance to a caribou stew dinner. There was also a gallery opening Saturday and, on Sunday, there was the auction preview; Sunday night there was another dinner. Waddington’s and Feheley’s also co-hosted a reception preview featuring a speaker from Labrador. There was a whole weekend of events surrounding Inuit art and culture. It’s the one time of year that everyone in the Inuit art world gets together.

The collectors of Inuit art are knowledgeable about the culture. Chances are they have taken a trip to the Arctic. The culture and the art are all sort of woven into one for them. In dealing with European art or antique furniture, it’s more business-like. There is nowhere near the passion and warm camaraderie that you find with the Inuit collectors. I like being involved in it.

Gustavison: I came away feeling that the collectors – and it was more obvious at this sale than ever before – knew or recognized the good pieces. They weren’t there to buy Inuit art in general. The bidding for the significant pieces and the important artists was intense. For the so-so pieces, there was much more limited interest.

McLean: Well, that’s always the way for any artform. They’re knowledgeable collectors and they know what they are doing. There was a lot of anxiety before this sale, given the economy and September 11. Was anybody willing to fly in for this sale? Well, yes, everybody came. And good things always do well, regardless of the state of the economy. If you have something great, it’s going to do well, but you might lose a bit on the more mediocre works.

From one end to the other, this sale was really strong. The great things exceeded anybody’s dreams, but even the smaller things did well. That little caribou with the stone antlers [by Mary Egutak Anguryuak] sold for $3,220. I estimated $1,500 for an early little woman with the child on her back [lot 407 by an unidentified artist], but it brought $4,255. Usually, the 1960 Cape Dorset prints fetch $1,000, $1,500, $1,800, but this time they sold for $3,500 and $4,500. Jessie Oonark’s Inland Eskimo Woman went for $8,050, an unheard of amount of money. So, it was not just the top three pieces that sold well. There was nothing given away. Even little engravings sold strongly, for example, $920 for the little one by Pauta [Saila].

I know from doing many of auctions that it takes a lot of selling to get to a million dollars. We’ve never done that with Canadian art. We’ve never done it with furniture and decorative arts, or any of the other more traditional art forms.

Gustavison: You and your company must be thrilled.

McLean: Yes, there is the obvious monetary aspect of it. But it is also very gratifying, after all these years of working and fighting the prejudices, to see this level of acceptance for Inuit art.

Gustavison: Do you personally do all the cataloguing for the Inuit art auction?

McLean: Yes, I do absolutely everything with Inuit. I start by taking out the best pieces and cataloguing them. I work down until I’ve catalogued all the pieces worthy of selling on their own. Since I have to sell everything, I then find four little pieces that are similar and make a lot out of them. I try to keep the settlements together so I put all the Salluit, all the Baker Lake, all the Rankin Inlet material together. Next I put the sale together the way I want it to flow. I don’t want one of the big works coming up in the first five lots of the sale before the crowd is ready. I don’t want it in the last five lots either. I choreograph the order, maybe splitting Cape Dorset in two as highlights. It’s not an accident that a great work will be followed by some more pedestrian stuff, and then another great work. I create little peaks and valleys to keep people interested, to make the most of the evening.

Gustavison: To keep them there until midnight?

McLean: It was after midnight, wasn’t it? You know why it took so long? I sold about the same number of lots last year in less time. That’s because there was more bidding. I started the Joe [Talirunili] boat at $25,000 and it had to go all the way up to $87,500.

Gustavison: Is the Joe Talirunili boat staying in Canada?

McLean: No, but I don’t think it’s a big issue anymore. This sale was absolutely not an American rape and pillage. There were far more pieces bought by Canadians than anybody else. It’s just not the issue that it used to be, judging from my sales. Two or three years ago, it was a higher ratio. The Americans came in, prices went up, people had to shake their heads and regroup. And they have. For the last sale, and certainly this sale,
Canadian buyers may be at a disadvantage, but they held their own. A lot more stayed in Canada than left, and a lot more of the great pieces stayed in Canada than have in the past. Still, people in the United States, Germany, England, and France all bought Inuit art from this sale which is not something that the Canadian mainstream artists ever accomplish. For the most part, the Group of Seven, David Milne, Riopelle, or Painters Eleven don't sell outside our borders.

Mainstream Canadian art is reliant on the Canadian market; whereas Inuit [art] now is internationally pursued. Yes, on the one hand there are pieces leaving the country but, on the other, there aren't too many artforms that can boast of an international market. Northwest Coast Indian has always been an international market - artforms from Oceania and Africa, they sell here and everywhere.

**Gustavison:** Some people ask me why I sit through the sale when I'm not buying. I find that if I just go to the preview and later receive the price list, it is too abstract for me to really absorb what happened.

**Mclean:** There were more people in the room that night that didn't bid, than did. A lot of people were there for the entertainment, for the spectacle, for the excitement. The vendors were there. If you're interested, you're interested, whether you can buy or not. How does a sale like this impact a young artist in Iqaluit selling to galleries? Possibly, it could be an incentive to carve, to be part of a rich tradition. I guess, to a degree, the artists that Waddington's is auctioning are the foundation of current art production. If the older people hadn't been doing it in 1952 in Port Harrison, there wouldn't be anybody sculpting now in Iqaluit at the age of 23. I think it gives today's artists something to grow on. It gives them an incentive and shows what's possible. Art is one of the great things that the Inuit do. I hope it is known in the North that it is so successful and popular. It's a tribute to the culture.

I think we have had a lot to do with the success of Inuit art's battle for credibility and for expanding its borders. A lot of people find out about the auction, they come here, and then they buy retail, not the other way round. So I just feel personally that we've made a difference and I'm quite proud of it. Auctioneering is an old and competitive business. You can go through a lifetime of working at any of these auctions, and do a good job without leaving any lasting impression. But to have been able to make a contribution, and for such a worthwhile, wonderful culture with a unique artform, it's really gratifying.

**Gustavison:** Are you the sole owner of Waddington's?

**Mclean:** There are two brothers and myself. Our staff are experts in things like English furniture and European painting. I quite enjoy it when somebody comes to visit and I can talk Inuit art. I had a great evening with Pat Feheley and Terry Ryan getting ready for the sale. I had a whole bunch of sticky notes on sculptures that I wanted to ask about. I would pull out a really nice piece - a mother and child by Saggiak that brought a couple of thousand dollars - and Terry would say: "Oh, that's Saggiak," and it would remind him of a story about Saggiak. It's just the best, those evenings.

I'm really glad that I got involved with Inuit art. It's unique to the world. There is no other Arctic. They do some work in Greenland, but nothing at all like the work that comes out of our Arctic. And if it hadn't been for the art, I would never have gone to the Arctic, the greatest place on earth. You can buy so many other kinds of art and not care at all about the culture or where it came from. With Inuit, you buy the art and you want to know the people and you want to know the story. My stories are where I find things. I find Inuit art in the most amazing places. It tends to come by surprise. I've done many estate sales and people say things like, “Oh, my grandfather used to go up [to the Arctic] ...

**Gustavison:** Do you have to turn things away?

**Mclean:** Tons. I'm turning away things that aren't quality. If I had really wanted to maximize the November sale, I could easily have put in 1,500 lots. But the quality wouldn't have been there.

**Gustavison:** Does much come from the dealers?

**Mclean:** No. The limiting factor is the supply. Which also makes me wonder how long I can keep on doing this.

**Susan Gustavison** is an independent curator and writer.

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This bone and stone standing figure by the late Taloyoak artist Karoo Ashvak sold for $23,585, more than triple the estimated price of $5,000-$7,000.
Annual collections sponsored by La Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec may be a thing of the past in Nunavik, but the enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by Victoria Grey, Maggie Kiatainaq and Jusi Sivuarapik may lead to some individual — and innovative — plans to produce original prints.

BY CLARE PORTEOUS-SAFFORD AND MICHAEL OLSON

In September 2000, the Inuit Art Foundation organized the Nunavik Printmaking Workshop — Phase I at the West Baffin Studios in Cape Dorset, also known as Kinngait. Six Nunavik artists spent three weeks learning stencil printing, stonecut and lithography techniques. The artists also discussed marketing ideas and other issues related to the business of artmaking.

For two weeks last winter, Maggie Kiatainaq felt like one of the luckiest women alive. An artist herself, she had the rare opportunity to work alongside some of the most prominent names in Inuit art today, luminaries such as Kenojuak Ashevak, Pitloosie Siala, Kananginak Pootoogook and Shuvainai AChoona. Kiatainaq had travelled from Kuujjuaq in northern Quebec to the Cape Dorset studios as part of the second phase of the Nunavik Printmaking Workshop, organized by the Inuit Art Foundation in November 2001. Along with two of the original six artists — Victoria Grey, also of Kuujjuaq and Jusi Sivuarapik of Puvirnituq — Kiatainaq returned to hone her artistic skills at the renowned studios of the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative.

The co-op had once again agreed to host the workshop, in spite of being busily engaged in determining which prints to include in its upcoming collection. The visiting artists from Nunavik had enough previous experience to blend in with this lively studio process and benefitted greatly from seeing how the highly anticipated Cape Dorset Annual Collection comes into being. As the workshop’s tight schedule kept the three Nunavik artists extremely busy themselves, they couldn’t ask as many questions of the legendary printmakers as they would have liked, but Kiatainaq says just being around them made quite an impression.

The second phase of the Nunavik Printmaking Workshop consisted mainly of directed studio experience, allowing the trio to reinforce the techniques they had acquired in the workshop a year earlier. This time, the lessons focused on drawing skills, composition, colour proofing and editioning of images, all in the interest of providing the artists with the skills needed to create and market their own work.

Getting started
Jimmy Manning, manager of the Kinngait Studios, welcomed the Nunavik artists and interviewed them in Inuktitut to determine what they hoped to gain from the workshop. He recounted the history of the cooperative and showed a num-
Nunavik Printmaking Workshop — Phase II

The visiting artists from Nunavik had enough previous experience to blend in with the lively studio process and benefitted greatly from seeing how the highly anticipated Cape Dorset Annual Collection comes into being.
Although Grey has been committed to making art for the past 16 years and has been doing stencil printmaking for some time, these workshops have helped her to develop a more professional technique and greater artistic fluency. The benefit of stencil work is that it can be done at home with few supplies and a costly press is not required to complete editions.

Sivuarapik is also comfortable with stencil, but his natural ability with line made lithography the most appropriate printmaking method for his work. Last year, he learned the technique by working on aluminium litho plates; this year, he tried traditional lithography stones. He found the finely ground surface of the Jurassic limestone to be a great improvement and his elegant drawings flowed easily. During the workshop, Sivuarapik created images of a snow goose and a man packing up his kamotik. Harmer says he shows a natural flair for working with pencil on litho stones, especially for someone without formal training or much experience in drawing. “People sometimes find the black and white nature of lithography somewhat dull compared to coloured stencils,” says Harmer, “but Justi’s works show such character that they always sustain the interest of the viewer.”

Confident in the studio environment, the Nunavik artists worked fairly independently to complete drawings and then to start the editioning process. Grey and Kiatainaq were greatly assisted at this stage by Kavavow Manomee, one of Dorset’s most experienced printers who had also worked with the group last year. He taught the students how to apply a thin wax coating to a heavy bond paper to create more durable stencils when supplies are not readily available. Grey took photographs of the set-up so she could build herself a stencil-making station at home. Harmer assisted Sivuarapik in editioning his work on the lithography press and, by the end of the two-week period, the three artists had successfully completed several editions of marketable prints.

Artistic exchanges
Nunavut Arctic College held a printmaking course in Cape Dorset which ran concurrently with the Nunavik Printmaking Workshop. Instructor David Armstrong was working in an adjacent studio with his group of seven students – Inuluk Samayualie, Enoosik Ottokie, Sheojuke Toonoo, Meesa Qinnujoaq, Padloo Samayualie, Qiatsuq Ragee and Sitaralak Niviaqsi.

The students were working on miniature etchings and linocut images for Christmas cards, both of which turned out to be successful projects. They were also trying their hand at a variety of techniques – oil painting, watercolour, etching, linocut and stencilling – and the Nunavik trio...
found it intriguing to see what other artists were doing, regardless of the medium they were using. The proximity between the two studios provided another opportunity for an exchange between artists. One entire afternoon was devoted to studio visits and reviewing each other's work which sparked lively dialogue between the groups.

New technology and printmaking
The Nunavik artists also had the opportunity to watch master printer Bill Ritchie refining the 2002 Cape Dorset collection with a new, computerized colour proofing system. Using Adobe Photoshop, Ritchie works with individual artists to preview different colour schemes. This innovative process takes only minutes compared to the manual colour proofing process which can take many hours.

Although this kind of technology is not now available to the Nunavik artists, they were glad to see how a professional studio operates. Both Harmer and Ritchie gave the group ideas on how they could start with a basic stencil studio set-up and work towards adding other features as they secure funding and a permanent space to work. Grey has already enquired about the possibility of acquiring studio space at the local arena in Kuujjuaq.

Upon returning home
Shortly after returning to Kuujjuaq, Grey approached the manager of the local hotel to ask if she and Kiatainaq could use it as a venue in which to sell the work they had completed during the workshop. The two set up tables where they could market their work. They also gave a public demonstration of the techniques she has learned. Grey plans to gauge the interest in printmaking among local adolescents by holding a stencil workshop one evening in the spring. She would then try to solicit funds for materials for the students.

As Sivuarapik lives in Puvirnituq with little opportunity to market his work locally, Grey has agreed to help him sell his work in Kuujjuaq. He will be able to work towards producing prints for the ICC Conference and Aqpik Jam and will visit Kuujjuaq at that time, in the hope of connecting with a market.

Stirring the pot
Although it would be nice to see printmaking in Nunavik revived, foundation staff consider that they have succeeded only in stirring the pot. Annual collections sponsored by La Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec (FCNQ) may lead to some individual - and innovative - plans to produce original prints.

The three Nunavik artists effectively managed to stretch a two-week workshop into three by working every day, including weekends, and most nights until ten or eleven, even closing the studio one morning at two o'clock. The sheer effort expended by so few participants made this one of the most successful workshops ever coordinated by the Inuit Art Foundation. The sponsorship of the Canada Council for the Arts and Makivik Corporation is gratefully acknowledged. Their financial support was well invested in the seeds of a new generation of artists eager to explore all artistic media.

Note
1. The West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative, formed in 1959, has preferred in recent years to go by Kimgait, the Inuktitut name for Cape Dorset.
The Inuit Art Foundation supports artists’ initiatives

Last year — from your donations — the foundation provided grants to these artists’ associations:

- **Carvers’ Association of Akulivik** $2,000 for transportation, gas, food and labour for winter quarrying
- **Carvers’ Society of Baker Lake** $2,000 for gas, oil and labour for trip to quarry
- **Clyde River Carvers’ Committee** $5,000 for purchase and shipping of carvingstone; and a carving workshop
- **Taloyoak Carvers’ Association** $5,000 to purchase quarry drill, gas and food for quarrying
- **Avataq Cultural Institute** $2,000 funding for transportation for throatsingers to attend in inaugural throatsingers’ symposium in Puvirnituq
- **Association for Aboriginal Artists of Newfoundland and Labrador** $5,000 to help with start-up costs for association: travel, printing, publication and website

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During the recent opening of the Canadian Museum of Civilization exhibition, Nuvisavik, "The Place Where We Weave", I had the opportunity to sit down with Joel Maniapik, one of the artists represented in the exhibition. Born in 1960 in Pangnirtung, Maniapik is the cousin of Josea Maniapik, one of Pangnirtung's most prominent printmakers. He is married to Saa Pitsiulak, an instructor at Nunavut Arctic College. The couple have four children, and Maniapik has recently accepted a position in adult education in Iqaluit.

During our conversation, it became apparent that Maniapik has always used drawing as a way to calm himself in times of crisis and also as a way to relax and enjoy life. We discussed four of his images and the personal meanings they have for him.

In the Nuvisavik catalogue, I speak about the difference between the older generation of Pangnirtung artists and Maniapik's generation. While the elders seem to reflect the experiences of the group, or the communal self, Maniapik's art is a reflection of the individual self. To put it differently, the elders were interested in documenting the outer reality as they had experienced it, while Maniapik's art is often a reflection of his inner reality.

Maria von Finckenstein is curator of Contemporary Inuit Art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec.
Maniapik remembers clearly the time when he did this drawing. The Pangnirtung Tapestry Studio was holding a drawing competition, to which he submitted three drawings. Two were very carefully executed landscapes, while The Storyteller had been sketched quite spontaneously without much forethought. To his surprise, it won first prize. While he was doing the drawing, he thought he was depicting a drumdancer telling the story of a polar bear hunt. Afterwards, he realized that he had, in fact, drawn the scene of a recurring nightmare from which he was suffering at the time. He would dream that he was being chased by a polar bear. When the bear came close enough, he would freeze and could not kill him. In that moment, he would wake up. That is the moment captured in the drawing.
This lovely and serene image is an example in which the artist has used a happy experience as inspiration for his art. On this day, he had gone hunting caribou with his brothers. When they came to the Clearwater Fjord, there was a slight drizzle. Everything was tranquil; seals would pop up now and then. He was deeply moved by the beauty of the scene and, when he came home, he did this watercolour – on which this tapestry is based – from memory.

During the 1970s, Pangnirtung experienced a series of very strong winds, during which some roofs of houses were lifted. Ever since, people become anxious when a storm is announced on the radio. Maniapik says he tried to capture the sense of impending doom, the apprehension felt by everybody in anticipation of a storm. He was also intrigued by the compositional challenge of putting an inuksuk in front of the picture plane which makes the landscape in the background recede much more effectively into a seemingly endless distance.

On the surface, this looks like a walrus coming up for air. It is a beautiful image rendered in the realistic style prevalent among artists who, like Maniapik, have been born and raised in Pangnirtung. However, there is a second layer of meaning which Maniapik explained in a guided tour of the exhibition. He remembers that he was intent on rendering the details of the waves and the nuances in the grey sky. It was only after he had finished it that he realized that he had depicted his own inner state. He was doing the drawing in a time of crisis, a time when he "barely managed to keep his head above water." His unconscious had produced an image that was a perfect reflection of his inner reality.

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Ohito Ashoona

COMMUNITY
Cape Dorset

BORN
1952

MEDIUM
Stone

HAS BEEN CARVING SINCE
1964

BACKGROUND
Ohito Ashoona was born in Cape Dorset, but lived mainly on the land at a nearby outpost camp until the age of 29. He grew up surrounded by several prominent Inuit artists – his father, the late sculptor Kaka Ashoona, his grandmother, Pitseolak Ashoona, and his uncle, Kiawak Ashoona. As a small child, Ohito watched his father carve and would occasionally help him sand and file his pieces. He began to create work of his own when he was about 12 years old. In 1981, Ohito moved from the outpost camp to Cape Dorset where he continues to carve when not fishing or hunting caribou, walrus or seal. Due to his extensive experience on the land, Ashoona is one of the few Inuit hunters in the region to have qualified for certification as a Level I Outfitting Guide.

HONOURS
Over the past two decades, Ashoona’s work has been included in exhibitions both in Canada and in the United States. Since 1989, he has also had three solo exhibitions in Toronto and Stratford, Ontario. His work can be found in several public collections, including the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Canada Council’s Art Bank, the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery and the Winnipeg Art Gallery. His polar bears have been presented as awards to musicians, such as David Bowie and Yoko Ono, and the winners of professional sports events held in Canada, including the Molson Indy and World Cup Downhill Skiing. In March 2002, Ashoona was awarded the National Aboriginal Achievement Award for the Visual Arts (see Update, p. 59).

Throat Singers, 2000, Ohito Ashoona, Cape Dorset (stone; 6 x 9.25 x 3 in.).

Two Bears on a Rock, date unknown, Ohito Ashoona, Cape Dorset (serpentine; 6 x 11 x 4 in.).
NOMINATED BY

Sandra Tenus of the Eskimo Art Gallery in Toronto, who says: "The execution of his work is remarkable. The proportions are always perfect, the lines and flow of the carving beautiful, and the movement incredible. Ohito consistently shows great imagination, humour and uniqueness in his delightful carvings, which are unmatched by any of the other artists I carry.

"The love and respect he holds for his culture, the environment and arctic animals are apparent in his work. As an avid hunter, he is able to capture the movement and vitality of the animals he sees first-hand. He usually carves birds, walrus and muskoxen, although his preferred subjects are polar bears. While he employs a highly realistic style, many of his animals take on human characteristics as they swim, crouch, sleep, prowl or embrace their young. His endearing scenes of a mother bear and her cubs display a tenderness rarely seen in stone sculpture.

"When not carving animals, Ashoona creates scenes depicting the past way of life of the Inuit, such as a woman making a pair of kamit or a man building an inuksuk. Themes of shamanism and mythology occur frequently and occupy a special place in his work."
BONES BENEATH

At the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba
April 2 to August 19, 2002
Curated by Darlene Coward Wight

This exhibition features sculpture made of bone from the Winnipeg Art Gallery's Inuit art collection. The bone used by artists from a number of Canadian arctic communities varies in appearance, from dense, smooth and white to porous, rugged and dark brown or black. It comes from a variety of arctic game animals including whales, walruses, caribou and foxes, and has been salvaged by carvers from the tundra after decades or even centuries of drying through exposure to the elements. Bones from different parts of animal skeletons have been used, giving a variety of shapes and sizes. Sculpture created from ivory, horn, and antler has not been included.

Bones for carving have often come from ancient Thule campsites dating from 1000-1600 A.D., when this culture flourished in the Canadian Arctic. Thule people hunted the large bowhead whale that was attracted to summer waters of the Arctic. The whales provided food and oil and their bones were used to make weapons and implements. The large rib bones were used in the construction of rock and sod houses and these old campsites have become rich sources of the weathered bone used by modern-day Inuit for carving.

Ancient whale bone became a popular carving material for Inuit sculptors in the 1960s. It supplemented supplies of carvingstone which were insufficient in areas such as Pangnirtung, Taloyoak and Igloolik. For artists such as Karoo Ashevak and Charlie Ugyuk of Taloyoak, the natural shapes of bones from different parts of whale skeletons were a powerful impetus to the imagination and had a strong influence on the composition of their sculpture. Ashevak's success in the early 1970s did much to increase the popularity of whale bone as a medium. Since then, export restrictions for marine mammals to countries such as the United States have caused a decline in the use of bone.

Not all the bone used for carvings in the Arctic comes from prehistoric sites. In some areas, artists use the dried and weather-hardened bone from beached whales, and it is this kind of bone which was used by Arctic Bay artists such as Elisapee Alooloo in the 1960s. Unlike bone sculpture from Taloyoak, the original shape of the bone is completely reshaped into small-scale, realistic works. This also describes pieces by Arviat artists Jacob Inuk and John Attok.

The title of this exhibition also alludes to spiritual and shamanic aspects of Inuit culture. The Inuit shaman was aided in his or her mystical duties by helping spirits, or familiars, which were often animals. They first came to the shaman during an initiation which involved isolation and fasting to enable mystical events. The initiate's flesh might be devoured by a bear or other animal, reducing him or her to a skeleton.

As bone is considered the source of life in a hunting culture (being the part that is the most enduring), the skeleton symbolizes rebirth, renewal, and, for the shaman, transcendence over the human condition. Growing new flesh through the power of meditation, the shaman achieves a new transtemporal perspective and gains the ability to take on the form of his or her spirit helpers, assuming their powers. Several works in the exhibition, such as Arluk's Shaman and Spirits, show this magical merging of shaman and animal.

Shamanic responsibilities included healing the sick or injured which was aided by the ability to see through flesh to the interior of a person's body to locate the cause of the illness and the possible presence of a malevolent spirit. Four prints and drawings by William Noah have been included in the exhibition to visually express the special X-ray vision possessed by the shaman. In three of these, as well as Charlie Ugyuk's Winged Shaman, one is able to quite literally see the bones beneath. In a sense, the bone media of the sculptures in the exhibition become a symbol of the shaman's supernatural abilities and of the life beneath.

Note
1. Thule culture is named after the site in Greenland where archaeological remains were first identified.

Darlene Coward Wight is curator of Inuit art at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

(for right) Untitled (Spirit Head), 1992, Augustin Anaituq, Kugaaruk (whale bone, antler, ivory, wolf fur, black inlay; 5 x 7 x 3 in.; collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery).

(tr) Untitled (Walrus Skull with Animals), 1991, Mark Nakoolak, Coral Harbour (bone, ivory, black inlay; 5.5 x 7 x 5.75 in.; collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery; acquired with funds from The Winnipeg Art Gallery Foundation Inc.).
There is no question but that the northern landscape is the quintessential expression of Canadian identity in art. Although it may seem to be absent from the artwork of the people who live there, it is simply portrayed differently, reflecting a differing perception of and relationship with the land.

To the Inuit artist, the arctic countryside is not an abstract symbol, but the field of practical and social experience. The land and sea are not merely hunting grounds, but the places where spirits live, where generations of ancestors lie buried under stones, and where animals abound according to the seasons. Even today, many Inuit divide their time between the village and the land, often spending the summer at semi-permanent campsites.

For first-generation artist Luke Anguadluq, the land is an existential space, constructed of beliefs and experience (Cook 1993: 50). There are as many variations on this subjective, existential approach to land and space as there are artists. Pitseolak Ashoona depicts self-contained worlds of camp life; Pudlo Pudlat details the textures and colours of ice floes, wet snow and tundra grasses. Teevee's perception of space in Strangers in Our Camp is dependent on the community relations of the figures; Mamnguqmaaluk's spatial relations are governed by the flow of the narrative in the Qiviuq legend.

Inuit living in towns and settlements no longer enjoy the closeness to the land they once did. Perhaps this is one reason why such second-generation artists as Pitseolak Niviaqsi have begun to depict landscapes in the "southern" style. It may be that, as in the South, "landscape [has come] to represent a territory of mind and spirit in need of reclamation and protection, in consequence of [the] pressures of urbanization and technology" (Roskill 1997: 2).
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Strangers in Our Camp, 1977, Jamasia Teevee, Cape Dorset (stonecut and stencil; 25 x 34.5 in.; collection of the Carleton University Art Gallery; Priscilla Tyler and Maree Brooks collection of Inuit art).
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“Romancing the Stone” for 30 years
The exhibition *Inuit Art 1950-2000* provides a 50-year overview through a display of 40 drawings, prints, wall hangings, tapestry and sculpture selected from the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre's extensive Inuit art collection.

The 1950s period is represented by a number of works, including an early pencil drawing signed and dated October 1950 by Joe Alikak, a Nunavik artist who had been a patient at the Moose Factory Indian Hospital in the early 1950s. Alikak's drawing is reminiscent of images inscribed on prehistoric ivory and bone implements. His remarkably simple silhouettes convey accurate descriptions of walrus and seal hunting techniques.

Thirteen sculptures from the Ridd collection and from a grouping donated by Marie C. Gasparski are featured in the exhibition. These small carvings are all anonymous with the exception of a sculpture of a hunter above a seal hole which is one of the few documented by Peesee Osuitoq (1913-1979) of Cape Dorset. This carving was made while the artist was a patient at the Mountain Sanatorium in Hamilton around 1955.

Another work is an ashtray decorated with a nest filled with ivory eggs and a flying bird mounted on a post. This playful, yet functional piece represents tourist art initiatives made during this period. Among the Ridd donations is a wooden model showing a seal hunter positioned behind a portable wooden blind which has a small viewing hole. The hunter is slowly pushing the device forward on its runners towards a seal positioned above a seal hole.

There are two oil paintings dated 1960 by Pierre Nauja (1914-1977) of Rankin Inlet, one of the few Inuit artists who chose this medium. He was known as a skilled carver before he began painting, using old plywood, discarded house paint and cut-down canoe “brushes.” Anthropologist Robert Wilson of Rankin Inlet provided Nauja with oils, brushes and canvas.

Of Nauja's two landscapes in the exhibition, one has a vivid green coloration, depicting the islands in the bay in front of Rankin Inlet and hunters in Peterhead boats and kayaks engaged in a walrus hunt. The second painting, with an overall pinkish coloration, depicts a winter caribou hunting scene. This painting is a recent gift from Avrom Isaacs.
Also among the works dated 1960 are a drawing and a steelecott of transforming birds in flight, both by Kenojuak Ashevak. In comparison to Kenojuak's flowing imagery, a 1960 drawing by Jessie Oonark of a hunter throwing a bola at birds reveals her characteristic approach of compressing narrative into abstract symbols.

The 1970s period includes works such as a 1976 printstone by Joe Talirunili of Puvirnituq. The stone is richly carved with a densely laid out scene of summer and winter camp activities featuring themes of housing and transportation.

Talirunili's trademark owl dominates the scene. A large carving of a hunter in a kayak being upset by a massive walrus is by Markusi Nungaaq Kuanana.

A tranquil drawing by E tidlooke E tidlooke of Cape Dorset shows a hunter in a kayak being upset by a massive walrus. An elegant drawing by Pitaloosie Saima shows a mother and her four children in a cut-away view of an igloo. This drawing was collected and donated by artist K.M. Graham who made a number of trips to Cape Dorset to paint and work with various artists.

During the 1980s, a tapestry by Pangnirtung artist Ekidluak Komoartok depicting twin birds transforming into humans, and a powerful carving by Cape Dorset artist Aoudla Pee of a Sedna figure resting on her hands as her tail changes into the head of a seal, was collected and donated by artist K.M. Graham who made a number of trips to Cape Dorset to paint and work with various artists.
Walrus Hunting from Boats with a view of the Islands from Rankin Inlet, c.1960, Pierre Nauja, Rankin Inlet (oil on masonite; 18 x 35 in.; purchased with funds raised by the Art Centre Volunteers, 2001).

Seal Spirit, a miniature bone carving by Nick Sikkauk, shows a flying seal with a demonic human face.

Also featured from the 1990s is a densely embroidered wall hanging by Elizabeth Angnaaqquaaq. Her different textures and colour modulations convey the impression of bird feathers, animal fur and the tundra in bloom. She uses target forms with circular chain-stitch patterns to represent bird nests holding a single egg.

Fellow Baker Lake artist Myra Kukiyaut imagines what a mining camp might look like in her work. Her 1998 drawing shows a blue and red plane approaching a landing strip surrounded by multi-hued buildings, including an outhouse. People are shown looking out the windows as they watch for the plane to arrive, while others wait with their luggage beside the landing strip.

The exhibition concludes with a brilliant red and yellow wall hanging by Irene Avaalaaqiq made in 2000. It shows a woman who has become frightened by human heads and birds emerging from the border of the wall hanging. Human heads are sprouting from the sides of the woman’s leggings. These human heads speak to the woman and encourage her to escape by transforming into a bird. She is in the process of doing this as her arms turn into large bird heads.

The exhibition is on view until July 14, 2002. The gallery will be closed for renovations from July 15 to September 30, 2002, but the exhibition will resume from October 5, 2002 until August 1, 2003.

Judith Nasby is director of the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre in Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Her book Irene Avaalaaqiq: Myth and Reality will be published by McGill-Queen’s University Press in the fall of 2002.
The Voice of the Natives: The Canadian North and Alaska
Photography by Hans-Ludwig Blohm
Penumbra Press, 2001
200 pages, 128 full-colour photographs, 40 archival black and white photographs

REVIEWED BY JOSE A. KUSUGAK

If I hadn’t been asked to review this book, I would not have been able to get through it as quickly as I did, but would have lingered over its pages. I first skimmed through the archival pictures: on page 11 is a picture of Uvinik, or Jimmy Gibbons, who we knew as “the first Eskimo” because his disc number was El-1. Uvinik was a special constable with the RCMP in Arviat for over 30 years. My eldest daughter, Aliisa Uvinik, is named after him.

On page 22 is a picture of my mother carrying my older brother Michael Arvaarluk in her amauti. My brother is being introduced to pablum, a form of cereal we ate as children.

Page 26 caused me to sniff a fox skin I had hanging in my Ottawa office! I was raised at the Naujaat (Repulse Bay) trading post where my mother would clean raw furs in the spring, getting them ready for the sealift later that summer.

Many of Hans Blohm’s photographs freeze in time real histories that the subjects in these archival pictures could never have foreseen, such as the photo on page 126, in which I am shown addressing dignitaries and others during the inauguration of Nunavut in 1999.

This book brings a whole new meaning to the phrase “every picture tells a story.” The photographs are worth savouring for their beauty, sadness, triumphs, good times and bad times. They are flawless and should be shared with all as another way of telling the story of the Arctic.

Jose Kusugak is president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Canada’s national Inuit organization.

Tagoona and Alootook Ipellie, however, are worth many readings. “The History of My Forefathers” by the late Reverend Tagoona makes you want to read more of his writing.

It is hard to be critical of this wonderful pictorial book as many Inuit leaders contributed to it and, in effect, are now part of this historical production. I remember when Hans Blohm came to my office at Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami to show me the cover which depicts the Iqaluit dance group: I could almost hear their powerful beat and youthful contemporary style of drum dancing.

There is much movement and variation in this book; it is worth going through it at a very slow pace.

Jose Kusugak is president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Canada’s national Inuit organization.
Weavers create monumental tapestry

Weavers from the tapestry studio of the Uqqurmiut Centre for Arts and Crafts in Pangnirtung are working on a mural-sized tapestry destined to hang in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly building in Iqaluit. The monumental work, which will measure 10 by 22 feet, is based on an original watercolour by artist Joel Maniapik and involves the collaboration of 10 weavers with arts advisor Deborah Hickman. The tapestry is expected to be finished and installed by the fall, coinciding with a visit by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

NorthwestTel has selected a Pangnirtung tapestry to grace the cover of the 2002 telephone directory for Nunavut. Entitled Fear of Killer Whale, the work is from the 1999 tapestry collection, and based on original artwork by Andrew Qappik, designer of the Nunavut coat of arms. The directory will include brief biographies of the artist and weavers, as well as an account of the tapestry studio.

The 2002 Pangnirtung Community Print Collection will open June 21 at art galleries across North America.

Heritage Centre planned for Nunavut artefacts

The Government of Nunavut's Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth has awarded a $300,000 contract to an international firm to develop a strategic plan for a Nunavut Heritage Centre.

Management Limited, a company specializing in museum, archive and heritage institution planning, will work in association with Consilium, a planning and organizational development firm with many years' experience working with Nunavut community, land claims and government organizations.

The proposed heritage centre will care for archaeological and natural history collections, as well as ethnographic and art objects, currently housed by institutions in Canada and other countries.

"It's time that we bring these pieces of our culture and history home to Nunavut," said Minister Peter Kattuk. "A heritage centre will give us a safe place to display and care for these items."

The study will consider location, staffing, collaboration with community-based heritage facilities and fundraising. Consultations with the public began in early November. "It is in this very important planning stage that we need to hear from Nunavummiut and we will be listening to what they say they want in a heritage centre," said Minister Kattuk.

The plans flow from regulations introduced in 2001 by the Nunavut government to protect its archaeological and palaeontological heritage. The new guidelines prohibit the sale or possession of artefacts or specimens originating in the territory, and research permits will be issued on more stringent requirements.

Nunavik showcase to open

A Victorian-style building in the heart of Quebec City's tourist district at 555 Grande-Allee East will be home to a showcase of Nunavik's culture and products later this year. It is well situated in an area with a heavy flow of tourists, said Stephen Hendrie, communications officer for Makivik Corporation, which owns the property. Makivik is an Inuit-owned organization dedicated to economic development in northern Quebec, now known as Nunavik.

After renovations, the first floor of the building will house an information centre on Nunavik's products, organizations and tourist attractions.

"Nunavik Inuit certainly have a story to tell about their development over the past quarter-century," said Hendrie. Tourism in the Nunavik region is at a fairly interesting stage, he said, although not as highly developed as in places like Iqaluit. Visitors have previously come to the region for adventure travel, but are now starting to explore Nunavik's culture. As an example, Hendrie mentioned Puvirnituq's annual snow festival which features large-scale snow carvings. Such cultural events will be featured in a brochure specific to the Nunavik region that will be available in the building's information centre.

The building, which will be renamed La Maison du Nunavik, will also contain offices for the Nunavik Commission and the Kativik Regional Government.

Regional organizations will contribute about a third of the $261,000 redesign and renovation costs, with the rest coming from Quebec's economic diversification fund.
ITC changes name to ITK for anniversary

Canada’s national Inuit organization – Inuit Tapirisat of Canada – unveiled plans to update its name at a gala dinner for its thirtieth anniversary in Ottawa on December 2, 2001. The new name, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, was chosen to signal the organization’s strong commitment to the Inuktitut language and Inuit culture, says President Jose Kusugak. Kanatami is the Inuktitut word for Canada. He also says the new name is a better reflection of the gains made by Canada’s Inuit in the years since the organization was founded in 1971. The word “Tapirisat” from the previous name means “we will unite,” and Kusugak says that, after thirty years of advocacy and the signing of four land claims, the organization felt it was time to acknowledge that Inuit are united and are, therefore, “Tapiriit.”

Northern pictorial book launched at National Archives

Penumbra Press held a book launch for The Voice of the Natives: The Canadian North and Alaska at the National Archives in Ottawa on December 14, 2001. Reviewed in this issue on page 53, the pictorial work draws on several decades of photographic work in the North by Hans-Ludwig Blohm, complemented with essays by Inuit and First Nations writers from across North America. The launch featured a reading by artist and poet Alootook Ipellie and a slide presentation by Blohm. The publisher plans to release an Inuktitut language version of the book. While accompanying the Team Canada 2002 trade mission to Europe in February, Blohm signed a contract that will result in the book’s being distributed in Germany.

Blohm’s photograph of the northern lights near Yellowknife, originally published in The Voice of the Natives, is the subject of a new 2002 international postage stamp. Canada Post Corporation also plans to use another of Blohm’s photos for its 2003 program, according to Bill Danard, manager of stamp design. This is the thirteenth time that Blohm’s work has appeared on a Canadian stamp.

Salluit to host popular music festival

The 24th Eastern Arctic Music Festival, held every two years in Nunavik, will take place in Salluit from July 24 to August 2, 2002. In 2000, Inukjuak hosted the festival. Salluit’s seven-member steering committee has decided that the 2002 edition of the music festival will last for 10 days. Festivities will include performances by artists from Nunavik, Nunavut, Labrador, Greenland and southern Canada. One of the festival’s main events will be Peterhead boats arriving as tall ships, to kick off the opening ceremonies. Organizers expect up to 1,500 guests at the festival, which will more than double the community’s size. Information about the festival is available from Noah Koperqualuk at (819) 255-8954.

Wide-screen distribution planned for Atanarjuat

Igloolik Isuma Production’s landmark film, Atanarjuat – The Fast Runner, has descended from the lofty heights of the film festival circuit and taken up residence at local suburban multiplexes across Canada. After purchasing the Canadian rights to the multiple award-winning film last December, distributor Odeon Films launched a wide-screen campaign in April 2002. Atanarjuat, the first feature-length film written, produced, directed and acted by Inuit in Inuktitut, will initially be shown in 7 key Canadian cities, with plans to expand to another 20 or so later in the year. The company also hopes to arrange a tour of small northern towns, possibly using a portable movie projector, according to Mark Slone, Odeon’s vice-president of marketing and publicity. "We have no ideas yet about the logistics," says Slone, "but there is definitely the desire to do it."

In mid-December 2001, Igloolik Isuma Productions offered a limited edition of the film on home video to
Peter-Henry Arnatsiaq plays the role of Oki, Atanarjuat’s devious rival.

Lead actors Lucie Tulugarjuk (Puja) and Madeline Ivalu (Panikpak) from the film Atanarjuat.

In February, the film continued to garner honours at the Genies, Canada’s annual film awards. Atanarjuat won prizes for best picture, director, screenplay, editing and original score. Igloolik Isuma’s Zacharias Kunuk was presented with the Claude Jutra award for first-time director.

**Inuit artists in national snow sculpture competition**

Professional sculptors from across Canada transformed gigantic blocks of snow – measuring 12 by 16 feet – into mythological figures during the fifth annual Canada Snow Sculpture Competition, held at Ottawa’s City Hall from February 5 to 17, 2002. A flagship event of the national capital’s Winterlude festivities, the competition attracts nearly 400,000 visitors each year. The 13 teams, representing every Canadian province and territory, each had 38 hours to realize their fantastic visions drawn from ancient Inuit, Aboriginal, Greek, Roman, Norse and Celtic legends.

First prize and the prestigious Artists’ Choice award went to the Northwest Territories, again represented and Eyesiak Pudoo, full-time artists from Kimmirut, Nunavut, while the latter two from the western Arctic who work in a variety of media. Their work can be found in national and international art collections. This is the team’s third consecutive year participating in the Canada Snow Sculpture Competition. They have previously placed second twice, and won the Artists’ Choice award in 2000.

The Northwest Territories sculpture, *After Ragnarok – A New Beginning*, depicts the penultimate battle between the gods of Inuit, First Nations, Greek and Norse mythology. The densely intertwined figures included the western Arctic shaman Gooblualooq, transforming himself into a bird and winging desperately to the moon before Raven, the First Nations trickster god, could steal its reflected light. The Nunavut team was comprised of Donny Pitsiulak, Ooloopie Killiktee and Eyesiak Pudoo, full-time artists from Kimmirut on Baffin Island. Pitsiulak sculpts in serpentine, marble and soapstone, and raises inukshuit, while the latter two work mainly in soapstone.

The Nunavut sculpture, titled *Luumajuq*, recounts the Inuit story of a woman who is transformed into a white whale.

**NACA’s website provides valuable resource for artists**

After consulting with members, the Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association (NACA) launched its website –
www.NACArts.org – at the organization’s annual general meeting during the third Nunavut Arts Festival in Cambridge Bay in August 2001. The site provides a means for artists living in remote communities to pass on information about their work to galleries and other interested audiences. Both for and about Nunavut artists, it contains a wealth of information on education and training opportunities, suppliers, funding agencies, grants and support organizations. NACA received funding from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and hired Nortext to create the website last year. Staff members began maintaining the site themselves on January 23, 2002, after a brief training session.

Adult education class puts emphasis on learning art
Students at an innovative adult-education program in Rankin Inlet received courses in art along with the more standard classes such as mathematics and reading. The Traditional Arts and Literacy Program was taught by Jim Shirley, a painter and printmaker who started Rankin Inlet’s Matchbox Gallery. He says the program, which ran from October 15, 2001 to February 14, 2002, aims to help its participants get to know themselves and become better people.

Throatsingers get international agents
Partnerships between a Nunavik music label and several international booking agents should make it easier for throatsingers and other musicians from northern Quebec to showcase their talents throughout the world. Inukshuk Productions Inc., has formed associations to promote and present its artists with Mary T. Presents in Canada, Roots Productions in the United States and Bronitsky and Associates for Europe and Asia. Musicians available for booking through Inukshuk Production’s website include Charlie Ningiuk, Charlie Adams, Henoch Townley and the well-known throat-singers Lucy Amarualik and Alacie Tullaugaq.

UNICEF cards to feature Inuit art
Greeting cards made by UNICEF, the children’s fund established by the United Nations, will feature artwork by printmakers Elsie Anaginak Klengenberg of Holman and Sarah Joe Qinuajuq of Puvirnituq. The charitable organization plans to negotiate copyright contracts with other Inuit artists for cards in the future. Approximately 50 per cent of the purchase price from the sale of UNICEF cards and gifts directly support the organization’s programs in over 150 countries around the world.

Inuit culture on the agenda of European trade mission
Inuit throatsingers, samples of caribou and arctic char and a fashion show featuring seal-skin coats from the collection of the Government of Nunavut were all part of the Team Canada 2002 trade mission to Germany in late February.

The day-long northern cultural showcase was part of a program promoting Nunavut to German business interests. Several Inuit artists also accompanied the trade mission, including Yellowknife-based sculptor and painter Bill Nasogoluak, who represented the Northwest Territories, and Sylvia Ivalu, a leading actor in the acclaimed film Atanarjuat – The Fast Runner, who promoted tourism and film production in Nunavut. Prior to arriving in Germany, Team Canada spent a week in Moscow. While there, Nunavut Premier Paul Okalik participated in a roundtable discussion organized by Martha Cerny which focused on the marketing of art by indigenous peoples. He also opened ‘Faces of the Arctic: Chukotka – Canada at the State Museum of Oriental Art. The exhibit was organized by the Cerny Inuit Collection, the Russian Ministry of Culture and the Canadian Embassy to the Russian Federation, with pieces contributed by the Zurich Museum of Native American Arts and Cultures.

Bringing Bearded Seal, 1985 by Sarah Joe Qinuajuq will be reproduced on UNICEF greeting cards.
“Oonark 101” for University of Richmond freshmen

A travelling exhibition of works by the late Baker Lake printmaker Jessie Oonark was part of a mandatory core class for first-year students at the University of Richmond in Virginia. Thirty different classes toured Power of Thought: The Prints of Jessie Oonark, on display at the university’s Marsh Gallery from January 11 to February 24, 2002. The exhibition was used as a starting point for discussions and class work by students across all disciplines, including women’s issues, political science, literature, drama and the visual arts. The unique initiative has helped generate considerable interest in the Canadian Arctic at the university, according to lender Judith Varney Burch, owner of the Arctic Inuit Art Gallery in Richmond. She intends to see if Duke University in Durham, North Carolina would be interested in developing a similar program based on Power of Thought. The exhibition was originally co-curated by Marie Bouchard and Jean Blodgett for the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 1986.

Students graduate from CITP

On March 4, 2002, students of the seventh Cultural Industries Training Program (CITP) graduated in a ceremony held at the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). Lori Johnson (Inuvik), Lindsey Moorhouse (Happy Valley-Goose Bay) and Moses Aupaluktuq (Baker Lake) received a certificate from the Inuit Art Foundation (IAF), organizer of the program, along with one from Algonquin College certifying the completion of an introductory course in exhibition design. They also received a congratulatory commemorative certificate from Nunavut MP Nancy Karetak-Lindell.

Following a reception, the students officially opened their exhibition Polar Pastimes, the final component of the program. Installed near the Kurnik Lodge on the main level of INAC in Hull, Quebec, the exhibition used prints and sculpture borrowed from the Inuit Artists’ Shop to showcase Inuit sports and games.

A six-month program for Inuit living in the Ottawa area, CITP introduces students to a variety of academic and practical subjects, including the sociology and history of Inuit art, retailing theory, computers and communications and cultural sensitivity in the art historical setting. The course also encompasses five-week work placements, this year hosted by the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation and the National Gallery of Canada.

Art by alumni displayed

Selected works from the permanent collection of prints, metalworks and jewellery created by past students of Nunavut Arctic College’s Fine Arts and Crafts Program were exhibited at the Legislative Assembly building in Iqaluit from January 21 to February 15, 2002.

Art at the Arctic Winter Games

The Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association (NACA) coordinated an art exhibition and sale in Iqaluit during the Arctic Winter Games from March 17 to 24, 2002. The exhibition, which was displayed at Nakasuk Elementary School, included art from Nunavut and other circumpolar regions participating in the games. A number of artists were in town to serve as “cultural delegates” for the games. Other artists were in Iqaluit to participate...
in the cultural components of the games, or simply because they wanted to be present. As part of the art exhibition, these artists demonstrated cultural activities, such as throat-singing, drum-dancing and carving. NACA also arranged to bring in work by other artists for the exhibition. Nuuk, Greenland, co-host of the Arctic Winter Games with Iqaluit, staged a similar art exhibition.

PEOPLE
Cape Dorset sculptor Ohito Ashoona received the 2002 National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Visual Arts at a gala dinner held in Winnipeg on March 10, 2002. The award, which is open to all Aboriginal peoples, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit, is decided by a 16-member jury comprised of accomplished Aboriginal people from all disciplines across Canada. While there are several award categories, such as law, medicine, education, social work and youth achievement, only one winner is chosen to represent the visual arts. In the past, the award has been won by Ohito's uncle, Kiawak Ashoona. The ceremony was televised nationally by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which is also preparing an hour-long documentary on the artist. Ashoona, who has been carving since he was 12 years old, has had numerous exhibitions and his work can be found in several public collections in Canada. He is also the subject of this issue's Dealer's Choice (see p. 38).

His work was recently exhibited at Canadian Arctic Gallery in Basel, Switzerland.

Leslie Boyd has taken an extended leave of absence from Dorset Fine Arts, the retail arm of the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative, but will continue to work with the co-op on special projects. Boyd had been with the organization for 20 years, both in the North and at its Toronto location. Manager Terry Ryan plans to undertake research into the gallery's print and drawing archives.

Curator and author Jean Blodgett presented a slide show and talk to the Society of Inuit Art Collectors in Toronto on February 13, 2002. Blodgett's talk, "Visiting the Arctic from the Ground Up," featured highlights of an arctic cruise she took in the summer of 2001 that afforded her an intimate view of the land. She noted that visitors to the North, who fly from one community to another, rarely see much of the local geography and landscape.

Many Inuit artists were present during the 2002 Arctic Winter Games, held in both Iqaluit, Nunavut and Nuuk, Greenland.

Cape Dorset sculptor Ohito Ashoona received the 2002 National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Visual Arts, held in both Iqaluit, Nunavut and Nuuk, Greenland.
Elisapie Isaac, a 24-year-old musician, broadcaster and aspiring filmmaker from Salluit, began a year-long internship at the National Film Board (NFB) in Montreal in November 2001. Isaac won the "Cinéastes autochtones" competition, which provides young Aboriginal filmmakers with a year of guidance and technical training through the NFB’s French-language program. She will also receive a budget to realize her film proposal, a documentary on contemporary issues facing Inuit youth.

Film director and throatsinger Evie Mark was invited to participate in the First Annual New Sun Symposium, held at Carleton University in Ottawa on March 2, 2002. Entitled “Healing Through the Arts in the Aboriginal Community,” the event also featured First Nations presenters from across Canada. Mark is the director, host and co-producer of Before I Was Born, a video on fetal alcohol syndrome produced for Pauktuutit Inuit Women’s Association. Roberta Stout, co-producer, also participated.

Filmmaker and gallery owner John Houston was invited to Zurich in March for a screening of his two documentaries, Songs in Stone and Nuliajuk. A discussion of Houston’s work with Inuit artists and his plans for future film projects followed the screening. The event was jointly sponsored by the Cerny Inuit Collection, the Zurich Museum for Native American Arts and Cultures and the Canadian Arctic Gallery in Basel, Switzerland.
AGNES NANOGAK GOOSE
1925-2001

Agnes Nanogak Goose, considered by many to be one of Canada's major artists, died May 5, 2001. After being diagnosed with lung cancer in August 2000, she returned to her home community of Holman, where she passed away surrounded by family members. She was 75 years old.

One of Holman's most prominent and prolific artists, she was highly driven and spent her entire life putting her memories and her stories into her drawings and prints, of which she produced a huge number.

Goose, better known by her name Nanogak, was born November 12, 1925 on Baillie Island in the Northwest Territories. Her father, Natkutsiak, also known as Billy Banksland, came from Nome, Alaska. Her mother, Topsy Ekiona, grew up in the Mackenzie Delta region, near Tuktoyaktuk. When Nanogak was 12 years old, the family relocated to the present site of Holman on Victoria Island. In 1947, Nanogak married the hunter Wallace Kunak Goose from the Tuktoyaktuk and Kugluktuk areas. Together, the couple raised seven children. Her son, Billy, and grandson, Rex, are also talented artists.

Her father encouraged Nanogak to make drawings even when she was very young and, with support from Father Henri Tardy, her career began in 1967. Her work has appeared in more than 20 annual print collections issued by the Holman cooperative. Her narrative prints and drawings were featured in over 75 exhibitions and can be found in all major collections of Inuit art. Over her lifetime, she was given two solo exhibitions; a third is planned for December 2002 at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

Nanogak initially used graphite pencil, but turned to colourful felt-tip pens when they became available in 1970. At first, she used colour to help guide the printmakers translating her work, but soon adopted colour for its own sake. Besides her vibrant drawings, she also carved and printed many stonecuts. Drawing upon the wealth of stories she heard growing up, her oeuvre is dominated by animal tales and legends of shamans and spirits. She also depicted Inuit life and customs as she saw them. Cultural activities, especially those of a celebratory nature like drumdancing, figure prominently.

A gifted storyteller, Nanogak captivated her audiences with her body language and facial expressions as much as her words. Darlene Coward Wight, curator of Inuit art at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, was one of her many admirers: "She'd go on and on, and tell you this great long story. And then she'd say, with a glint in her eye, 'That's the short version.'"

In 1985, she received an honorary doctorate from Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax for her artistic contributions and her efforts to record her culture. The first Inuk to be so honoured, she was very proud of this distinction and thereafter signed her works, "Dr. Agnes Nanogak." She also kept the ceremonial gown in her closet at home.

Among Nanogak's many achievements, one that stands out for her daughter Beatrice Goose is the book her mother illustrated, Tales from the Igloo, published in 1972. A sequel published in 1986, More Tales from the Igloo, was not only illustrated, but narrated by her as well.

Nanogak's absence is deeply felt in Holman, where she was an integral part of the community. She was involved with the elders' committee and spoke out on issues such as land claims. Nanogak was interested in recording her people's culture and transmitting it to young people in Holman, not just in her art, but through drumdancing and other activities. She travelled throughout the world with the Holman Drummers and Dancers. One of her last trips with the group was to Australia and California in 2000. Beatrice worried about her mother's ability to travel and pleaded with her to stay home, but she would not be dissuaded, refusing to curtail the activities she loved until she became too sick.

When she was diagnosed with cancer, the doctors instructed Nanogak to stay at home and rest. "After I brought her back home, she relaxed for one day," says Beatrice.

Agnes Nanogak Goose.

Photo: Alex Pasutnoy
“Then she was right back into sewing, and busying herself around the house, and even riding around on a four-wheeler.” Although her daughter admonished Nanogak for ignoring the doctor’s advice, Beatrice says she stubbornly refused to remain still until the very end. Among her many qualities, her tenacious spirit made Nanogak a role model for her daughter and many others fortunate enough to know her.

PETER MILLARD
1932-2001

Peter Millard, professor, writer and collector of Inuit art, died in his hometown of Saskatoon on December 8, 2001 after a three-month battle with leukemia. He was 69. Born in South Wales in 1932, Millard emigrated to Canada where he attended McGill University, graduating in 1959 with the highest average in his class. After receiving his PhD from Oxford, Millard returned to Canada where he led a distinguished academic career. He lectured in English at the University of Saskatchewan from 1963 to 1970 and later served as chair of the English department. In 1991, he took early retirement to concentrate on writing about art and literature. Over the years, Millard donated substantial portions of his Inuit collection to the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, the Mackenzie Art Gallery in Regina and the Winnipeg Art Gallery. He donated over 80 pieces to the latter institution, writing during his lifetime that he “respected the fact that Winnipeg has had a strong commitment to Inuit art from the beginning.”

ALSO RECENTLY DECEASED:

Arpik Johnny Tuniq, Kangiqsujuaq, Nunavik (1932-2001)

Ipeelee Alivaktuk, Pangnirtung, Nunavut (1933-2002)

CORRECTIONS:
On page 48 of the Winter 2001 issue of AAO (Vol.16, No.4), the meaning of a sentence was altered by a typographical error in Marie Routledge’s article “Kiakshuk: Images by a Hunter-Artist.” It should have read: “...Kiakshuk’s images of hunting, ancient peoples remembered through oral histories, spirit creatures and camp life are punctuated with glimpses of the new – accordions and fiddles, wooden houses, the sealift [rather than “sea life”] and the making of art itself.” We apologize for this error.
Aboriginal Art on the Web

Advisory Board

Alaska Shop Gallery of Eskimo Art,
Chicago, Illinois

Alaska Shop of Inuit Art
San Francisco, California

Aluixt images

Arctic Artistry
Hastings-on-Hudson, New York

Arctic Inuit Art
Richmond, Virginia

Arts IndiAvuk, Iqaluit, Nunavut
Montreal, Quebec

Canadian Arctic Producers
Toronto, Ontario

Canadian Art Treasures,
World Wide Web

Canadian Guild of Crafts
Montreal, Quebec

Cerny Inuit Collection
Bern, Switzerland

David Ruben
Sutton West, Ontario

Don Morgan Gallery

Eskimo Art Gallery/Can. Arctic Survey
Toronto, Ontario

Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, Ontario

Galerie d'Art Vincent
Ottawa, Ontario; Toronto, Ontario;
Quebec City, Quebec

Galerie Elia London
Montreal, Quebec

Galerie of the Midnight Sun
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Galerie Philippe Deni Mil, Ontario

Great Northern Arts Festival
Iqaluit, Northwest Territories

Harris Gallery, Toronto, Ontario

Home and Away
Kennebunkport, Maine

Igloolik Isusaq Productions
Igloolik, Nunavut

Images Art Gallery
Toronto, Ontario

Inuit Artists' Shop
Ottawa, Ontario

Inuit Art Foundation,
Ottawa, Ontario

Inuit Art Foundation, Donor Ad
Ottawa, Ontario

Inuit Images
Sandwich, Maine

Long Ago and Far Away
Manchester Center, Vermont

Marion Scott Gallery
Vancouver, British Columbia

McGill-Queen's University Press
Montreal, Quebec

Northern Images
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Nunavut Gallery
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Orca Aart Gallery
Chicago, Illinois

Sivertson Gallery
Grand Marais & Duluth, Minnesota

Upstairs Gallery
Winnipeg, Manitoba

© Inuit Art Foundation
More Information on Tigulluraq Artwork

I was delighted to see the piece you wrote for IAQ on Salomonie Tigulluraq, and, particularly, to see illustrated the sculpture I own, the “seated bear shaman.” I can provide you with some additional background on this piece. I acquired it from Images Art Galley (in Toronto) about 10 years ago and Harold Seidelman borrowed it back for his book, *The Inuit Imagination*. As you probably know, this powerful little piece is perhaps one of the most published works in the field, having been illustrated and discussed in Jean Blodgett’s 1978 *The Coming and Going of the Shaman* and George Swinton’s 1982 and 1992 editions of *Sculpture of the Inuit*, as well as in the Seidelman/Turner book. Now, we can add its recognition in the *Inuit Art Quarterly* article to its credentials.

As well as admiring it as a work of art, I have a particular attachment to the piece as the result of a pleasant personal encounter with George Swinton related to the work. When I met him in Winnipeg and told him I owned the piece, he was delighted. He told me it was one of his favourite works and that he had collected it from a nurse who worked in Clyde River. It was Darlene Coward Wight (curator of Inuit art, Winnipeg Art Gallery) who suspected it was by Tigulluraq and subsequently obtained confirmation of the attribution.

John Cowan
Toronto

Daisy Watt Remembered

The In Memoriam article on Daisy Watt brought back fond memories of travelling with Daisy to the International Conference of Arts and Crafts in Japan in 1978. I have enclosed some photos I found, thinking that some of her grandchildren might enjoy them. The two young Japanese women were there – along with others – as hostesses and guides. Anytime we went into a store to do some shopping, the young clerks, thinking Daisy was Japanese, immediately bowed to her – their elder – and ignored the rest of us! It was a great trip.

Dorothy M. Stillwell
Montreal

Dr. Dorothy Stillwell (second from left) with Daisy Watt (third from left) in Japan for the 1978 Arts and Crafts Conference.

Throatsinging

Your excellent article, “Throatsinging: More Than a Game” (IAQ Winter 2001, pp. 6-17), was an outstanding example of how IAQ has brought the Inuit past forward and made it relevant to the present. The enclosed photo of a carving of throatsingers (or “throat chanters” as I have heard them called) might also be of interest to your readers. It was done in 1986 by Levi Qumaluk of Puvirnituq, and it is the only carving of this subject I have seen.

With reference to the Curator’s Choice article “Salomonie Tigulluraq: One of Those Unnoticed Artists” – if this is to be a regular part of IAQ, I suggest that you publish in advance the name(s) of the artists you intend to showcase so that those of us who have these carvings in our collections can submit photos. By this means you can present a fuller spectrum of photos of the artist’s oeuvre.

Thanks for a great publication.

Magdalen M. Metz
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"Polar Bear" Adamie Ashevak, Cape Dorset
12" H x 22" W x 14" D

"Father and Son" Barnabus, Baker Lake
18"H x 8"W x 6" D

"Drum Dancer" Artanguyak Shaa, Cape Dorset
18" H x 16" W x 9" D

"Shaman and Sedna" Lucassie Echalook, Inukjuak
9" H x 14" W x 6" D

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