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**Sanajatsarq: Reactions, Productions, and the Transformation of Promotional Practice**
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**Focus on**

**Shirley Moorhouse: Doing What She Can**

Textile artist Shirley Moorhouse sees her art, and the process that goes into creating it, as a simple ordinary thing. But it is her own way of doing what she can in a culture and world where ideas are rapidly changing.

**Sharing Skills in Dorset**

A Baffin Island workshop addresses the skills young artists require to carve quality sculptures.

**Artists in their Studios**

The lack of adequate studio space in the North is an ongoing concern. This photo essay shows examples of the workspaces — the studios — in which most northern carvers create their work.

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"The North is our Cuba" • Nunavut Commissioner's Arts Awards and more...

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**Cover Image:**
Lucy Tasseor carves near her home in Arviat. See page 36 to read more about artists in their studios.

*Photo: Ernie Bies*


Commercial Galleries


PUBLIC EXHIBITION DETAILS

The First Tourist: Selections from the Permanent Collection, sculpture, dolls and prints that illustrate how tourism has affected Inuit art, guest curated by Nancy Campbell, at the McMaster Museum of Art, 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, from September 6, 2007 to February 23, 2008. Telephone: (905) 525-9140.

The Lure of the Arctic: Eskimo and Inuit Artifacts from the W. Roger and Patricia K. Fry Collection at the Cincinnati Art Museum, 953 Eden Park Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio, from November 3, 2007 to January 6, 2008. This exhibition features utilitarian objects created by the people of the North American Arctic. Telephone: (513) 639-2995.

Nanouk, ours polaire, at the Musee et Chiens du Saint-Bernard in Martigny, Switzerland, from June 2, 2007 to January 31, 2008. The work comes from the private collections of Raymond Brousseau and Bernard de Watteville, and from the Musee National des Beaux-Arts du Quebec.


Inuit Games, sculpture, prints and drawings from the gallery’s collection, at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, 300 Memorial Boulevard, Winnipeg, until March 9, 2008. Telephone: (204) 786-6641.


TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS

Cultural Reflection — Inuit Art from the Collection of the Dennos Museum Center, a travelling exhibit organized by the Dennos Museum Center, at the Bermuda National Gallery in Hamilton, Bermuda, January 31 to April 4, 2008. Telephone: (441) 295-9428.


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- Chedoke Hospital of Hamilton Health Sciences (Hamilton)
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- Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto)
- Toronto-Dominion Gallery of Inuit Art (Toronto)

Quebec
- Canadian Guild of Crafts (Montreal)
- Canadian Museum of Civilization (Gatineau)
- McCord Museum of Canadian History (Montreal)
- Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (Montreal)
- Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (Quebec)

Manitoba
- Crafts Museum, Crafts Guild of Manitoba (Winnipeg)
- Eskimo Museum (Churchill)
- Winnipeg Art Gallery (Winnipeg)

Nunavik
- Pingualuit National Park Visitor’s Centre (Kangiqsujuap)
- Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum (Iqaluit)

United States
- Dennos Museum Center ( Traverse City, Michigan)
- Alaska Museum of History and Art (Anchorage, Alaska)

INUIT ART QUARTERLY | 5
Sanaugait, the Government of Nunavut’s recently released strategy for developing its arts and craft sector, is both encouraging and disappointing. Encouraging, because it acknowledges the importance of the sector, and disappointing because it depends upon a vague hope of finding funding partners.

Using what must be interpreted as soft, rather than hard figures/facts, Sanaugait stresses the importance to the territorial economy of an industry in which 4,000 people rely on arts and crafts for some or all of their income. Making art is way up there, with mining, fisheries and tourism, as a significant source of revenue for an estimated 20 per cent of the workforce over the age of 14.

The new strategy, along with a separate action plan to remedy the problems of getting carvingstone to artists, follows on the heels of the 2003 National Economic Development Strategy, which singled out the making of art as a "potential high growth" sector and optimistically predicted a 66 per cent increase within 10 years.

We can certainly quarrel with some of the statistics (I happen to know, for instance, where the estimate that Nunavut artists are responsible for 10 per cent of the international sales of Canadian art came from and that they got it wrong), but it is hard to quarrel with the goal of increasing production and sales to $50M/year from an estimated $30M/year (is this wholesale or retail?).

It is not clear, however, that the resources exist to back this up. In fact, shortly after the release of Sanaugait, Beth Beattie, Executive Director of the Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association (NACA), told CBC news that the government provided little support to this important industry and that she was planning to raise a petition from among NACA’s 750 members to insist that the association be given the funding it needs to implement the arts strategy (CBC 11.7.07).

The response, from Paul Suvega, Assistant Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, the department that issued the strategy, is telling: “All of the partners involved,” he said, “including Beattie’s organization, will have to work within the current amount of funding available.” Furthermore, while he acknowledged that “arts certainly is one of the major components of economic development, one assumes, everyone’s in the same boat, everyone is screaming for more money” and “it’s difficult to try and spread that money out as evenly as possible.”

Indeed, very little new money is recommended in the strategy paper. An assumption throughout seems to be that existing budgets can be tapped to fund many of the proposed activities. On page 28, we are told that $600k will be needed over the next two years “to attain the outcomes outlined in this plan” and that “these financial resources are now available.”

It appears that what is being referred to is a pool of resources controlled by other players, such as the federal government, the private sector, and non-government agencies like NACA, resources that just need to be “unlocked.” This does seem simplistic, given that there is little evidence as to the intentions of these agencies to allocate their budgets to the programs being advanced in Sanaugait.

Indeed, NACA has already complained about the expectations being placed upon it. A dubious assumption is that this non-government agency will lead the way in implementing what is touted as the Nunavut Government’s arts and crafts strategy. On page 17, NACA is referred to as “the key partner agency,” through which many services will be delivered; whereas, the Nunavut Government’s role is described as being one of merely assisting NACA to “lead in the implementation of the strategy.”

The language is vague and contradictory, and it begs the question as to why a non-government agency would be expected to implement a government plan.

It also sheds light on the media debate between Beattie and Suvega. Beattie complained about promises not backed by funding and Suvega told the CBC that his department would help NACA find money from other agencies, including the federal government. (It doesn’t augur well, however, that the federal government appears not to have been consulted about the recommendation that the igloo tag be “augmented” so that it can more efficiently protect against misuse, a rather naive statement in light of the time and money that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is now devoting to re-examining the utility of this tag and the government’s ability to monitor its use.)

Assisting Artists

Getting assistance to artists is overdue and, for the most part, Sanaugait hits the nail on the head in terms of pinpointing and describing what artists need and want. The big problem is, of course, a regular supply of stone. Lesser issues have to do with safe places in which to work (“studios” is too grand a word at this stage, see photo essay p. 36 in this issue) and the desire artists have for training.

We at the Inuit Art Foundation have been nagging for many years about the problems artists have getting stone (yes, we know some people are tired of hearing about that!), but a survey we did in 2006 revealed that the problems continue. So, it is with great interest that
I turned to Ukkusiksaltarvik: the Carving Stone Supply Action Plan accompanying the arts strategy. Keeping in mind that what we have is a plan that can only be realized when funds and partners are found, this is a detailed and mostly practical prescription for action to address a really longstanding problem. The good news is that it is to begin this year and the business — of providing stone to carvers — is to be “viable” by 2010. But, again, money to increase the quantity of stone discovered and quarried and to distribute it to carvers is to come from “existing budgets” (was the money just sitting there waiting to be spent?). And the money to fund a coordinator position to facilitate stone transportation will have to come from unspecified “external sources.”

**Reinventing the Wheel**

Implementation without some new dollars will be, I think, a challenge. But, apart from that, my main concern is the uncritical perpetuation of an idea that has been circulating in various forums for the past several years; namely, that artists would be well advised to start selling their work on the Internet. I have been puzzled by this as, for the most part, the artists we talk to here are not online. For another, it simply doesn't make sense to encourage artists to compete with a system that is the envy of the world. Cooperatives are given rather short shrift in the Sanaugait strategy paper, but they have been largely responsible for the placing of Canadian Inuit art productions — at all levels — in price categories far above those of other indigenous arts. Why on earth would anyone advocate competing with this Inuit-owned marketing structure?

The seven principal goals and 20 specific objectives of the new strategy mainly have to do with marketing and money: the quality of Nunavut art is to be improved; fakelore is to be combatted; brand recognition is to be enhanced (through touring exhibitions and a permanent collection housed in a heritage centre); new markets are to be found, and profits to artists are to be maximized through direct marketing. The strategy even advocates the creation of “Nunavut artist entrepreneurs!”

The authors were reacting to complaints from producers about not getting their fair share of the selling price, which is not a new complaint. I have long been involved in explaining to artists and others how the system works: costs at all levels — production, wholesale and retail — must be recouped from the final selling price. It is naive to think that artists can “start” and “run” their own arts wholesale and retail enterprises without incurring similar costs — and without damaging the credibility (hence the monetary value) of the art. Marketing doesn’t end with a website. Infrastructure is required to store, pack and ship work, not to mention the expertise and resources required to collect payment and keep records. And how many northern artists can afford to wait for payment and absorb losses?

What is the point of setting up an alternative structure — perhaps many alternative structures — which will, surely, just be less efficient and cost more than the local cooperatives?

"...everyone's in the same boat, everyone is screaming for more money...and it's difficult to try to spread that money out as evenly as possible." — Paul Suvega, Assistant Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Government of Nunavut

And what about the importance of presenting the art at a high level, as happens now in professional galleries in Canada and abroad? The Art Dealers' Association of Canada makes the point that virtual art galleries should be expected to subscribe to the same standards and practices as all professional galleries, which includes an exhibition policy as well as a “primary interest in promoting fine art and artists of merit.”

It appears, however, that the promoters of online marketing are not thinking in terms of fine art. Indeed, one rationale I have heard for the Internet option is that it would be an alternative for those artists who now peddle carvings door-to-door as happens in bigger places like Iqaluit. No longer confined to the streets of their hometowns, they would now have access to the world.

The direct marketing recommendations strike me as being poorly informed. While artists are enjoined to become entrepreneurs and sell their own work online, Sanaugait also endorses NACA's plan to set up an online retail shop on its website (with money that Beattie complains is not forthcoming). And all of this, it is assumed, will occur in such a way that "the value of art on the retail market [will not be] compromised." The naive expectation is that the result of this free-for-all will be "a rational and coordinated system...for marketing the work of Nunavut artists in which government agencies and the private sector will work in partnership."

The next steps involve preparing a detailed implementation plan, working closely with NACA and developing partnerships (on which much depends). Hopefully, the implementation plan will be based on wider consultation — starting with some art dealers and others involved in marketing and promoting art as well as souvenirs. There also needs to be a more thorough analysis of options. Paying heed to the lessons of history will help you to invent a better — not just a different — wheel. MM
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Sanajatsarq\textsuperscript{1}: Reactions, Productions, and the Transformation of Promotional Practice

...Houston's single greatest feat on behalf of the Inuit arts industry lies in how quickly he perceived the shortcomings of Sunuyuksuk and the handicrafts initiative and executed an about-face.

BY HEATHER IGLOLIOHTE

While doing an internship at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in 2005, I came across Sanajatsarq: Eskimo Handicrafts, a government-sponsored instructional booklet for Inuit, written and illustrated by James Houston. Published in 1951, the 28-page booklet was filled with suggestions of crafts and carvings that the Inuit could make for sale in the South. I was intrigued. While some of the clothing and carvings depicted were familiar, I could not recall ever having seen a soapstone ashtray nor an Inuit "totem pole." I assumed that the booklet was a mere blip on the map of Inuit artistic development, an idiosyncratic publication that had little impact on contemporary Inuit art. However, over the course of the following year, as I visited other institutions with Inuit art holdings, I became aware of the many Inuit carvings and objects made specifically for trade in the late historical and early contemporary periods. For example, as I later discovered, the Canadian Museum of Civilization has a whole drawer containing ivory cribbage boards, a rifle case, and assorted clothing and accessories similar to those illustrated in the Houston booklet. In addition, the National Gallery of Canada has a set of stone buttons that resemble drawings in the book. However, the most significant collection of objects resembling Houston's examples is most certainly that of now-deceased Inuit art collector Ian Lindsay, whose collection is housed at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. In fact, a number of objects in the Lindsay Collection served as the models for Houston's drawings.

If so many objects in our national public and private collections resemble objects depicted in Sanajatsarq, perhaps the booklet had a greater impact than I had first thought. Curiosity piqued, I made Sanajatsarq: Eskimo Handicrafts the focus of my Masters of Arts thesis research. What had been written about the booklet? How had it been used? What influence, if any, had it exerted on contemporary Inuit art?

\textbf{Sanajatsarq in the History of Inuit Art}

In a review of the scholarly references to Sanajatsarq, it is interesting to note that, while a number of significant texts make mention of the booklet, citations are usually brief,
and often relegated to an aside or a footnote. Houston, himself, seems to have ignored it. His only reference to the booklet may be his comment in his memoir Confessions of an Igloo Dweller that “this childish pamphlet fortunately had little or no effect” on carvers and craftspeople (Houston 1996:156). Nelson Graburn had identified the booklet as being modeled on 1940s Alaskan Native Arts and Crafts (ANAC) catalogues, a discovery he attributes to his former student, Molly Lee (1987a:3–4). Graburn also wrote about the booklet’s northern distribution via RCMP officers and government administrators (ibid.) and, more significantly, in another essay (1987b:52), he mentioned that some Inuit used the booklet as a “Bible.”

Helga Goetz twice mentioned the booklet: in a chapter of the 1993 book In the Shadow of the Sun, as well as in a government publication during her tenure as head of the Inuit Art Section of the federal Ministry of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (1985:15–16). In the 1985 work, Goetz reprinted the introductory page verbatim, noting the similarities between it and a previous one-page list of suggestions from the Canadian Guild of Crafts first printed in 1941. In contrast to the negative commentary the booklet received from the department in later years, Goetz considered that a positive effect of the booklet had been to increase craft production.

Charles Martijn addressed the guide more analytically than most, demonstrating in two articles some of the contradictions between the archaeological facts and Houston’s writing. For example, while it was stated in the booklet (p. 1) that use of wood by Inuit carvers “destroys the true Eskimo quality,” Martijn pointed out that the ancestors of the Inuit often used wood for carvings (1967:15–16). He also noted that Houston, perhaps inadvertently, encouraged Inuit to ignore regional differences by advising that while “all articles illustrated are not produced in all regions of the Arctic they are purely Eskimo and could be made from whatever materials available” (p. 1).

In The First Passionate Collector: The Ian Lindsay Collection of Inuit Art (1990), Winnipeg Art Gallery curator Darlene Coward Wight dedicated approximately three pages of her essay to examining Sanajatsarq in relation to Houston’s early instructional practices, including his encouragement of the practice of decorating functional objects for sale, and using drawings to bridge the communicative barriers between English and Inuktitut. She also alludes to the controversial question of whether or not Houston exerted undue artistic influence during the early years (pp. 80–81).

Finally, George Swinton weighed in heavily on the impact of Sanajatsarq: Eskimo Handicrafts. In response to the accusations that “White men and White values have changed and corrupted Eskimo art,” Swinton’s rebuttal was that White influence had altered but not degraded Inuit art (1999:131–133). His argument was that, while Houston’s booklet might have had a beneficial impact on early Inuit art, a major problem was that it led Inuit to
believe that the southern market was interested in only the exact objects depicted, and no others.

Swinton's view was that this miscommunication between instructor and artists had a result opposite to Houston's original intentions; yet, he immediately followed that statement by claiming that, "generally speaking, the booklet was largely ignored by the 'good' carvers and only affected the marginal carvers who could do no better than to produce for the souvenir market.

And that was precisely the pamphlet's purpose; for it was issued to provide some sort of economic base, other than welfare, in those areas that were economically depressed. The book never reached far beyond Ungava. I could find traces of it only in Port Harrison, Povungnituk, and Ottawa — and it was withdrawn from circulation and even office use before the middle [19]50s" (ibid.).

Swinton's position was, then, that Sanajatsarq had had a negligible impact on Inuit art because it was aimed at souvenir production, and because it had very limited circulation. To be fair, Swinton had an interest in downplaying the commercial and tourist elements of early Inuit "art," in order to make it appealing to those collectors who valued an "authentic" Inuit art.

However, for a brief period in the mid-20th century, the booklet was widely distributed in the Canadian Arctic, resulting in an abundance of crafts and carvings produced in a variety of places. In some communities, RCMP officers reported distributing the booklet to every family. At the National Archives, I discovered an invoice for 1,500 copies that had been shipped North in 1951 with as many as 70 or 80 copies being distributed to various settlements. Furthermore, the production of carvings and handicrafts increased dramatically in the communities that received the booklet; purchases in Port Harrison
(Inukjuak), for example, increased from $76 in 1948 to $11,700 in 1952. In Povungnituk (Puvirnituq), the increase was from $90 to $1,900 in the same time span (Goetz 1985: 22). The decline in the fur trade had left many newly urbanized Inuit dependent upon government support, but in communities that participated in the handicrafts industry, the distribution of relief funds was considerably decreased and an overall improvement in self-esteem was reported.

In addition, Houston's booklet was very well received and promoted throughout the Canadian Arctic, especially by RCMP officers, teachers, missionaries and Hudson's Bay Company traders. In the introductory text, Houston had announced that the booklet was to be the first of a series, not a one-time publication.

At the time, with so many people beginning to make art, Sanajatsarq was widely regarded as a good thing; it offered guidance to carvers and craftspeople on what objects would be valued cross-culturally.

Nonetheless, shortly after publication, Sanajatsarq was withdrawn from circulation. What had at first been so enthusiastically supported was now considered an embarrassment. It seems to me, however, that Sanajatsarq: Eskimo Handicrafts — as an extension of Houston's activities and, later, as a catalyst of that momentous shift from crafts to fine art — had a greater impact on the development of contemporary Inuit art than has previously been considered.

The naive booklet was, in part, responsible for the dramatic shift away from handicraft production and towards the development of fine art, including an increase in scale, the heightened importance of stone carving, and the new focus on promoting and fostering the talents of individual artists. This new direction was a reaction to the unpopularity of curio carvings and the mass production of acculturated objects.

It is possible, then, to imagine that the real success of Sanajatsarq was, paradoxically, that it failed. Had the standardized crafts produced in response to the booklet's suggestions been a "success" in the South, in a matter of years mass-produced knickknacks would have undoubtedly lost their appeal. In light of the low, souvenir status of "Indian" crafts in the mid-20th century, and the competition from a flood of imported Japanese fakes, it can be argued that one of Houston's greatest achievements in this transitional period was that, almost immediately following Sanajatsarq's debut, he perceived the limitations of the souvenir trade, changed direction, and addressed himself to the revitalization of Inuit artistic production.

A Brief Look at the Content of the Booklet

The 30-page booklet was illustrated with images that suggested what types of traditional objects would appeal to the southern market. In the introduction, Houston wrote that all the objects depicted were "purely Eskimo." In addition, he included drawings of acculturated or transcultural objects — cribbage boards, bracelets and matchstick holders — all decorated with Inuit motifs and made from materials indigenous to the Arctic. Four pages were dedicated to grass basketry; there were many items of Inuit clothing, and several pages depicting traditional tools, such as a harpoon head, a model snow knife, an ulu and a goose wing brush. The Canadian Handicrafts Guild and the public valued these functional objects as "curiosities," and to make them appealing as "collectibles," Houston repeatedly instructed Inuit to carefully clean and polish every item — especially those of skin or bone — to ensure that all smell was removed. He frequently emphasized the importance of finishing items according to

A Brief Look at the Content of the Booklet

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Western tastes, all the while keeping the “Native” character.

While a number of curious objects are illustrated in the booklet, the most controversial — and confusing — inclusion is undoubtedly a drawing of a “totem pole” on page 11. While it is clearly drawn in a Northwest Coast style, sculpting in the vertical is often used by Inuit to represent the transformation from humans to animals, or to express kinship between people and the natural world. Also, real-life examples of totem poles made by Inuit predate the booklet’s publication. The Ian Lindsay Collection, for example, includes numerous examples, several of which were created by anonymous Inuit in 1950.

Houston never refers to the piece illustrated in his booklet as a totem pole, describing it only as “animals carved from a single piece of stone.” Arguably, this drawing influenced the production of several later, similar carvings in the Lindsay collection, including at least one in the Canadian Museum of Civilization (donated by Lindsay, who was well known for having personally purchased large numbers of the first items Houston brought back in 1949 and 1950). Winnipeg Art Gallery curator Wight has suggested that Houston was inspired to combine this “transformation” style imagery with “his own Northwest Coast-flavoured drawings,” drawn prior to his first Arctic trips (Wight 1990:65).

One final possibility that I would add is that Houston was inspired to suggest the creation of totem poles based on those he had seen in Alaskan Native Arts and Crafts (ANAC) catalogues, which he had been directed by a Government official to use as models for Sanajatsarq. Indeed, D.L. Burrus of ANAC had sent R.A. Gibson, then Deputy Commissioner of the Northwest Administration Office, a copy of a catalogue from the Alaskan clearinghouse as a suggested format, along with a letter of suggestions. This was, in turn, passed to Houston who, presumably, used it as a model (Burrus 1949).

Although ANAC reproduced photographs and Houston used drawings, there are many similarities between these catalogues and Houston’s. It is even plausible that Houston was responsible for the production of totem poles predating the booklet since, before writing Sanajatsarq: Eskimo Handicrafts, he had been circulating drawings of the carvings and crafts he wanted people to copy through Hudson’s Bay Company stores. There is a 1950 National Film Board photograph of a shop display in Inukjuak, in which can be seen a poster of drawings and Inuktitut instructions in what is unmistakably Houston’s hand. Below this, a few small totem poles are displayed, which leads me to think that Houston may very well have played a direct role in encouraging these early Inuit art anomalies.

As for the inclusion of the other cross-cultural objects, it is interesting to note that all parties involved — the guild, the government, and the HBC — agreed that these were objects that would be “useful and acceptable to the white man.” (Houston 1951: 1) It soon became evident, however, that these items were not seen as authentic by southern buyers, whose preferences were deeply entrenched in the mid-century belief that Inuit were primitive, unspoiled people.

Fortunately for the Inuit art industry, the failed attempts to foster handicrafts in the Arctic in the pre-war period now worked to good advantage. The exotic unfamiliarity of this undiscovered art and its northern origin fostered the growth of an unbridled romanticization of Inuit art and artists; the primitive art market was quick to accept this invented mythology.
Between 1951 and 1953, following the publication of Sanajatsarq: Eskimo Handicrafts, the Inuit arts and crafts industry, as it had been known and imagined, dramatically changed in unforeseen ways. I would argue that there is a direct link between the acceptance of this new modern, "primitive" art and the rejection of crafts and carvings that contradicted the image of the "unspoiled" civilization. Many of those "acculturated" items, such as the ashtrays and rifle cases promoted in Sanajatsarq, were quickly replaced by the production of Inuit fine arts.

Finally, the booklet itself began to attract criticism for both its didactic tone and its content. Particularly objectionable were the condescending captions that accompanied some illustrations. For example: "The small Eskimo man and woman...are carefully smoothed and polished. Can you make one?" Also, statements such as "a man standing over the seal hole; snow blocks for protection. Dressed in skins; ivory face; harpoon in hand," or "they can be made in any position, either sitting or walking" seem, paradoxically, restrictive.

The nature of the "suggestions" left little room for creativity. Some Inuit might have interpreted the booklet as a definitive set of rules, producing large quantities of exact replicas with little deviation from Houston's drawings. At the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in Montreal, large quantities of grass basketry and the "hideously odorous" sealskin clothing, rifle cases, and accessories sat on the shelves for months (Goetz 1985:22).

**Stone Art Takes Over**

Criticisms of souvenir art were many, but the new stone carvings started to attract the attention of the southern art elite. Cheaper than ivory, with infinitely more potential to be worked in large scale, the prices for stone carvings increased rapidly. The public reacted to the "Eskimo-ness" of these new works, responding positively to the rounded, reductive, and simplified forms of figures and animals, forms which conformed to romantic notions of the "Eskimo," closely associated with the rugged arctic tundra and the wild arctic animals.

Since the 1940s, "primitive" art had begun to be identified with modern art of the avant-garde. Historically, Inuit had rarely used soapstone for anything but seal oil lamps and cooking pots (Burch 1993:305), but small numbers of diminutive soapstone carvings — like the caribou Houston had been given on his first trip to Inukjuak [Port Harrison] — had begun appearing in the late contact period.

(below) Ashtray with two Walrus, c. 1950s, unknown artist (stone, ivory; Canadian Museum of Civilization: Tom Kramer Collection).
Houston foresaw that stone — less expensive to purchase and in ready supply — would be an ideal replacement for ivory, which, by the late 1940s, was becoming hard to obtain. Found walrus tusk had to sit at least one year to ensure that it would not warp or crack, and, since it had a high intrinsic value, post managers were reluctant to allow children or novice carvers to practice with it (Wight 1990:71). Because Houston tried to encourage people by purchasing everything produced, stone was an ideal material to give to inexperienced carvers.

In addition, stone facilitated work on a larger scale. As correspondence between the guild and the Hudson’s Bay Company has revealed, Sanajatsaq was designed to create a viable “curio” market (Molson 1949). The suggestions were for “some small things you can make.” Although scale was never directly mentioned in the booklet, Inuit were told that either stone or ivory could be used for all images, implying that a fairly small scale would be suitable. Whereas ivory pieces — such as those that inspired the illustrations in Sanajatsaq — were, on average, three inches long, the new stone carvings grew first to six or eight inches, then to pedestal or tabletop dimensions (Swinton 1999:142).

With the change in scale, it became more difficult to marginalize these works as souvenirs or “Native” crafts. However, as is described in Ian Lindsay’s firsthand account, not all collectors were enthusiastic about this new development; some maintained that the change in scale would fundamentally alter the character of the art (1990:21). Other critics denigrated the shift in material and size as products of Western influence (Carpenter 1973:195).
In spite of such criticisms, a market did develop for larger scale works and, in the minds of collectors, stone quickly became the favoured material. Gradually, each community was developing recognizable traits, based in part on the different colours and veins of stone. Large-scale antler and whale bone would also gain favour in the southern art market over the following decades.

Beyond the individual characteristics of each community, an Inuit style was beginning to emerge, modified as much through outside preferences as by internal choices. The formal aesthetic traits of Inuit carvings came under external influence in the form of direct suggestions and through the emulation of other artists whose works were purchased in the South or at the trading post. In "Inuit Art and the Expression of Eskimo Identity," published in 1987, Grabum repeated the findings of Eigil Knuth who, in 1957, reported that a central common feature of Inuit stone carvings from Greenland and Canada was their "klumpen" appearance; namely, works that were "clumped, rounded, lumpy, or thick," as opposed to linear, angular, separated or delicate (1987b:59–61). While this style quickly became recognizable as Inuit, it was, as Grabum adds, no coincidence that Houston's own artistic sense also displayed "klumpen" characteristics (ibid.).

Indeed, Houston actively encouraged the development of rounded or thick forms. In the introduction to Sanajatsarq, he wrote that as a preventative measure against damage during transport to the South "stone objects should not have delicate projecting portions which may be easily broken." In addition, in the 1953 pamphlet Eskimo Handicrafts: A Private Guide for the Hudson's Bay Company Manager, Houston recommended that managers selectively purchase works that could be shipped without damage: "A carving with delicate protruding pieces, such as birds' wings, presents a difficult handling problem and may be easily broken — the best type is the single carving in fairly solid mass." Inuit were instructed both directly by Houston and indirectly by the purchase of works with a "fairly solid mass" by the managers.

Changes in Promotion: From Carvers to Artists

Even though the market for the new stone carvings was growing, Houston knew that, for this development to be a sustained success, the promotion of both the works and the Inuit who made them would have to change dramatically. It quickly became apparent that the potential of Inuit production had been underestimated. The first task for Houston was to dissociate the curio-style carvings and crafts that had been suggested in Sanajatsarq: Eskimo Handicrafts by their seemingly "vanishing" cultural status. Higher prices and greater appreciation were given to the artistic output of cultures whose disappearance was deemed imminent (Clifford 1988:223). At the time, many people, including George Swinton, were predicting the end of Inuit culture. As he admitted, in 1957, "we looked into the future and said 'How would it be possible for one's art to survive when one's culture is dying?'... We looked at what we thought were its essential factors, and we saw that [Inuit] were gradually disappearing" (1999:107).

Even as late as the 1950s and 1960s, commentators believed that the culture would soon be extinct. In hindsight, Swinton recognized the flaw in his reasoning, but a precept of modernity was the belief that, good or bad, the absolute triumph of modernization was inevitable. In the 1950s, acculturated art was much maligned, and to be "authentically primitive" the arts had to correspond...
to what the Western world thought traditional "primitive" life was like. If the Inuit art industry was to achieve commercial success, it was necessary for Houston to counteract any suggestions of Inuit "civilization" or commercialism that would detract from the public reception of this new modern art form.

Houston, who wrote numerous promotional articles during the first decade of contemporary Inuit art, promptly shifted his writing style to suit the tastes of a modernist primitive art market. For example, in 1952, following the backlash to Sanajatsarq, he started referring to Inuit as "artists" rather than "carvers," and to their work as "sculpture" rather than "handicraft." Houston's understanding of the modernist market is further illustrated in his romanticization of Inuit society. Appealing to the modernist idealization of pastoral and primitive societies as more peaceful and pure than the industrialized world (Errington 1998:30), Houston wrote: "The Eskimo possesses a cheerfulness and a tranquility of mind to a degree that seems almost unknown in our modern civilization. He finds ample time in his life of hardships to carve fine plastic forms that perfectly portray his cultural rise above his savage surroundings, and show his feelings about the people and the life around them" (1954:41-43).

By the mid 1950s, Inuit art had gained international recognition; markets had been created in the United States, and works had been exhibited in such fine art institutions as Gimpel Fils gallery in London. Houston's writing reflected a keen understanding of this new audience. First, he downplayed commercial production techniques: "files and saws are now used to some extent," he wrote, "but when those are not available the carver readily returns to his old ways," and, "there is no copying of one another in this work" (1954:44; 1952:100). The new art was authenticated by associating Inuit with ancient man, and by the implication that the commercial art derived from the mystical fetishes of a paradoxically prehistoric modern people.

The mythology Houston created was perpetuated through secondary sources that reported his observations and opinions as fact. In a review of Houston's Canadian Eskimo Art, Henry Strub repeats: "Contact with white men has not yet affected their style which is not self-consciously primitive but is in the living tradition...Much of the work is evidently done just for fun, but some of it attempts and achieves a deeper meaning and inevitably calls for comparison with some of our greater contemporary sculptors such as Henry Moore (1954:32).

Ironically, however fictitious, Houston's published work facilitated acceptance of the art as authentic. Exhibitions began to publicize emerging master artists. Boosted by Houston's articles, certain artists became sought-after by private and public collectors alike, beginning a newfound, if slow to develop, appreciation for Inuit...
artists as individual talents rather than anonymous carvers.

**Encouraging New Work**

In the Arctic as in the South, Houston significantly altered his practices in the production, purchase and promotion of works in the years following publication of *Sanajatsarq*. In 1953, he wrote again in *Eskimo Bulletin* with new instructions and suggestions, prefaced with the information that, "the things some of you make are very good and many people in the white men's countries buy them and like them very much. Some things they like better than others and it is to let you know which things are best liked that we are writing this article" (1953a:1-2).

Two of the four pages of the handout are dedicated to illustrations, but it is interesting to note that, while the handout is titled "Handicrafts," it contains only images of and suggestions for carvings. This is telling. While Houston continued to refer to "handicrafts" activities in reports to the guild, many of these activities had, in fact, been discontinued due to poor sales. Most significantly, on the page before the illustrations, and separated from other text, Houston wrote: "The pictures here are some of the things that have been made by Eskimos. They are not shown to have you copy them but to give you an idea of some things that are wanted. Make your own carvings the way you want but try hard to make them the best you can" (ibid.). Clearly, Houston was trying to pitfalls of *Sanajatsarq*. *Eskimo Handicrafts* by encouraging the Inuit to experiment, even if the format and delivery of his new message was very similar to that of *Sanajatsarq*. In contrast to the arts of other Native North Americans, the public could easily understand this contemporary art form. Free from abstracted or coded symbolic meanings, the expressive forms and recognizable subject matter catered to the market for so-called "primitive art." The logic of consumerism in a cross-cultural tourist art market, as Ruth Phillips has indicated (1998:10), encourages art producers to use iconic, generic imagery in their work. Furthermore, as Eric Cohen has suggested (1993:5), the trend towards naturalism and recognition in tourist art is often accompanied by an opposite trend towards modern-influenced abstraction. Again, Inuit sculpture fits the bill.

Houston was a modernist artist, whose exposure to the Group of Seven and life-long interest in primitive peoples as well as his arts education made him extremely receptive to the precepts of mid-century modernist primitivism. Houston had studied art in France in 1947, at a time when, as James Clifford has noted, primitive art had begun to be closely associated with the modern art of the avant-garde (1988:242).

**The Aesthetic Appeal of Inuit Art**

This shift would not have been possible if not for the widespread appeal of contemporary Inuit art to both the general public and discerning modern cognoscenti. One of the contributing factors was the ease with which meaning could be deciphered from modern Inuit art.
It was Charles Martijn’s conclusion that “as an artist in his own right, and having been imbued at art school with all of the values and ideas peculiar to Western art tradition, [Houston] could not help but interpret Eskimo carving wholly on the basis of what his training had taught him. Almost unconsciously, Houston ended up imposing his Euro-Canadian art concepts on the acquiescent Eskimo carvers who benefited from his hints and advice by making their handiwork as acceptable as possible to southern buyers” (1964:577).

Conclusion
Sanajatsarq: Eskimo Handicrafts has been characterized as inconsequential, due to its negative reception in the South and the poor quality of the resulting production. It is my view, however, that, while it began as an extension of Houston’s activities to promote handicrafts, it soon became a catalyst of change that ultimately separated souvenir crafts from the more successful stone sculpture. Consequently, it has had a greater impact on the development of contemporary Inuit art than has been previously recognized, although there are undoubtedly many other factors and figures that contributed to the unanticipated success of this contemporary art form.

By 1953, the end of the handicrafts experiment, Inuit art had been catapulted into the international art market. The Canadian Handicrafts Guild was overwhelmed with the number of works and the volume of sales, and Houston had to find other outlets in the United States to accommodate the demand for Inuit art. The troika comprised of the Guild, the government, and the Hudson’s Bay Company had laid the foundation of the carving industry in the 1950s but, by the end of that decade, Inuit cooperatives were taking over what was to become a multi-million dollar business (Mitchell 1993:343). Cape Dorset, for example, was recently acclaimed in the Canadian media as the country’s most artistic community, with more artists per capita than anywhere else in the country.

In light of all this, perhaps Houston’s single greatest feat on behalf of the Inuit arts industry lies in how quickly he perceived the shortcomings of Sanajatsarq and the handicrafts initiative and executed an about-face. This shift is evident in his promotional activities in both the North and South, in his writing and collecting and, especially, in his instructional practices. The evolution from handicrafts and carvings to sculpture, drawing, and printmaking might have happened gradually in any case, but Houston had the power to precipitate an almost immediate shift. It now appears that the failure of Sanajatsarq: Eskimo Handicrafts had a tangible impact on the development of contemporary Inuit art.

NOTES
1 Sanajatsarq, the correct Nunavik spelling of the booklet’s title, is commonly misspelled as “Sunuyuksuk”.

2 Nelson H. H. Graburn noted that an Inuk in Sugluk (Salluit) told him that, in the 1940s, before soapstone was regularly carved, he ran out of ivory, carved some souvenirs out of a used soapstone pot and sold them to whalers. The Hudson’s Bay Company would not purchase the soapstone items at that time, but he could trade them to sailors, which encouraged other Inuit to also begin carving soapstone for trade (1976:42–43).
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Shirley Moorhouse: Doing What She Can

Shirley Moorhouse's outgoing personality ensures that anyone asking about her work will get an earful of an answer and go away with a greater appreciation of the effort that goes into making art.

Moorhouse demonstrated her art — lively, innovative tapestries made of textiles and found materials stitched onto backgrounds of black stroud — at a closing talk in early September for the Aboriginal art exhibition, ANTHEM: Perspectives on Home and Native Land, in Ottawa. Curator Ryan Rice featured several of her hangings in the Carleton University Art Gallery exhibit, including Crimson Northern Lights (2007) and Goddess of the Sea (2006). For her talk, Moorhouse brought along extra pieces in various stages of construction.

Tanned caribou hides can become a face or other major feature, and flaws in the materials just make the work more interesting. Hides that are over-smoked by hanging too close to the fire develop small holes, which mimic eyes in Moorhouse's creations. Some caribou develop bumps in their skin from parasites, which add three-dimensional life to her work.

Moorhouse follows other Inuit women in using wall hangings to tell a story or illustrate a point, expressing contemporary thoughts using available materials. Crimson Northern Lights, she explained, with

In My Backyard After Three Beers, 2006, Shirley Moorhouse, Happy Valley-Goose Bay (black stroud, fur, beads, hide, metal, found materials, silk, rayon, wool, nylon, chicken wire).

Photo: Adam Isac
Shirley Moorhouse at the Inuit Art Foundation offices

its deep red tones, is an oblique reference to her thoughts on suicide in the North and in Aboriginal communities in general. Other pieces, such as her series featuring designs based on the ulu, reference the continuity of Inuit culture.

Moorhouse was taught to sew as a child by her grandmother and mother, although she picked up her current style later in life. Several years ago, she placed one small person, a young girl, in one of her compositions. The figure was holding the thread from a kite whose tail and body were shaped like ulu knives, soaring into the sky. One of Moorhouse's three daughters objected, insisting that the girl in the hanging had to have someone younger to tease. Moorhouse dutifully added a second, smaller figure, to join the other in looking up and admiring the kite.

The overall feeling one came away with from Moorhouse's talk was that she sees her art and the process that goes into it as a simple, everyday thing, though that is not at all to say that it is always easy. To start a new hanging, she might initially plunk an interesting found object onto the stroud, improvise and add to it from there, and see what eventually develops, often even removing the initial item from the finished piece.

"I'm trying to do my own thing while big things are going on," says Moorhouse. The role of an artist in a culture, and indeed a world, where ideas are changing at top speed can be unclear. The artist may wonder what he or she can possibly do to help. Moorhouse would respond with a query of her own: Well, what can you do? Adrian Larose
Getting together with an artist, you always learn something," says Palaya Qiqatsuq, an experienced Inuit carver who led a week-long carving workshop in Cape Dorset September 5-9. Qiqatsuq, who lives in Cape Dorset, helped teach about 30 local carvers how to carve more skillfully. The connection between the younger participants and the more experienced ones was important, Qiqatsuq said. "Our younger artists really learned a lot."

"We showed some the old-fashioned way of carving," he explained, techniques that make little use of power tools. "Younger artists are trying to do pretty fast work. We told them, 'Slow down, slow down on your work, the sculpture you are working on — give the sculpture more details, make it a better artwork.'" The importance of early planning and proper finishing of a piece was a message shared with younger carvers such as Ricky Jaw, who was attending a workshop for the first time. "I learned to take time on the carvings, not to rush," Jaw said.

Instruction was also provided by Kyra Fisher, a northern arts worker, who focused on the basics of what makes a thing "art." "They needed an understanding of the elements of design and the principles of art," Fisher said. "What constitutes art is a very elusive concept to convey. Too often, people seem to think that a piece of art needs to be highly..."
polished. How things, like eyes, for example, are executed is extremely important." The principles Fisher covered included proportion, balance, and focal point(s).

Beth Beattie, Executive Director of the Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association (NACA), also served as an instructor. Her role was to explain how grants and festivals can help carvers promote themselves. She also provided information about organizations that exist to help artists, such as NACA and the Inuit Art Foundation.

A major goal for the workshop was to help artists improve their carving skills to ensure that their work is saleable. "None of these people have had a basic art course before," said Tamar Powell, a senior buyer in Dorset with the North West Company's Inuit Art Marketing Service. "It's time that we stand up and make sure that they get the instruction they need." She specifically mentioned finish, workmanship, style and overall quality as sometimes failing to meet buyers' expectations.

Instruction took place in the morning, after which artists were free to carve. Still learning, they carved with experienced artists Quiatsaq, Pootoogook Jaw, Pitselok Niaqsi, Kananginak Pootoogook, and Toonoo Sharky. John Westren, with Dorset Fine Arts, provided critique on the finished work.

Major funding for the workshop came from several organizations: Dorset Fine Arts, the Nunavut government's Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth, the municipality of Cape Dorset, and the North West Company, which provided space for the workshop.

Through working together to produce the workshop, Powell said, the various arts-related organizations learned that they share almost all the same concerns regarding the quality of work, despite superficial differences. "We still share a commonality as to our concerns and appreciation for the industry and the carvings being produced today." If sufficient funding is available, Powell says, she would like to see another workshop in Dorset next year. "The artists need a continual source of information and education to enhance their profession," she said. She would like to add a competition, with a prize for the most creative carving made during the workshop. Also, she hopes to conclude with an exhibition of the work produced, rather than having the artists immediately sell their carvings. This would give residents a chance to see quality works made by their neighbours.

Kyra Fisher pronounced the workshop a success: "The number of artists working in close proximity really generated a lot of positive energy." Still, she said, more such events are needed. "I would like to see more financial assistance from the government in supporting the arts," she said. In spite of the Nunavut government's recent Arts and Crafts Strategy, Sanaugait, "the arts are still undervalued by government," said Fisher.

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Iqaluit artist Mathew Nuqingaq has created a new jewellery studio and workshop in Nunavut's capital. Nuqingaq bought a two-bedroom house earlier this year and, with the help of friends, renovated it to serve as a showroom for his artwork, as well as a workspace he shares with other artists. Aayuraa Studio, named after the Inuit goggles made to protect the eyes from snow blindness, was refurbished entirely with salvaged materials, except for the flooring.

Nuqingaq and studio partner Claude Roussel went to the city dump — "it's like the Canadian Tire store here," Nuqingaq says — where they reclaimed wood, cupboards, countertops, and a sink from a local school. Even the drawer pulls, made from carved caribou bone, cost nothing. The studio boasts a polishing room, bathroom, common room and kitchen area, complete with stainless steel appliances. "Those give it kind of a shop feel," Nuqingaq says.

Also on Baffin Island, Igloolik artist Bart Hanna carves in a very modern studio, fitted with air compressors, pneumatic drills and other top-notch tools, thanks to financial assistance from the Kakivak Association and the Baffin Business Development Corporation.

But Nuqingaq and Hanna are the exceptions. The lack of adequate studio space in the North is an ongoing concern. A survey of 100 artists conducted by the Inuit Art Foundation in the spring of 2006 revealed that more than half work outdoors, that is, outside their house, sometimes in a shed. Only 16 per cent said they work in a studio.

Working outdoors can be challenging in a climate where the thermometer often registers sub-zero temperatures. Even if a carver has a heated shelter, there is the additional need for ventilation to reduce the amount of stone dust inhaled. A meeting of northern cultural workers convened by the Inuit Art Foundation in Ottawa last January emphasized the need to combat the poor working conditions of artists, including the provision of safe workspaces. Below are examples of the workspaces — the studios — in which most northern carvers now work.

(left) Mathew Nuqingaq (inset) refurbished a house in Iqaluit entirely with salvaged materials to serve as a jewellery studio.
1. Simonik Noah Kelly, Cape Dorset
2. Joseph Suqslaq, Gjoa Haven
3. Kelly Gimirkik, Cape Dorset
4. Robert Hallakuk, Arviat
5. Henry Isluunik, Arviat
6. The studio of Jaco Ishuluktak, Pangnirtung
7. The studio of Manasie Maniapik in Pangnirtung
8. Manasie Maniapik, Pangnirtung
9. Billy Kuksuk, Arviat

10. George Arlook, Arviat

11. Harry Ikalukjuak, Iqaluit

12. The studio of Lucy Tasseor in Arviat

13. Lucy Tasseor, Arviat

14. Jaco Peterlucy, Pond Inlet
15. Omolu Oshutsiaq, Cape Dorset
16. Ottochie Samuellie, Cape Dorset
17. Stevie Apalialik, Pangnirtung
18. Henry Isluaniq, Arviat
19. Etulu Etidlooe, Cape Dorset

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About 36 northern artists received instruction in carving, printmaking and beadworking techniques at workshops organized in Ivujivik by the Makivik Corporation this September. The artists, a mix of experts and beginners from Nunavut, took part in simultaneous classes on one of three topics. Carving and beadworking classes covered both traditional and modern techniques, while the printmaking session, led by Jolly Atagoooyuk from Pangnirtung, focused on a simple stencil process that students could implement in their home communities. The workshop concluded with an exhibition of artwork created during the two weeks. The cost of the classes, travel and accommodations were covered by Canadian Heritage and the Kativik Regional Government. Makivik, the development corporation mandated to manage the funds provided to Nunavik Inuit by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, encourages participants to share their skills with others once they return to their home communities. This is the sixth annual workshop.

An Inuit History

The Inuit Heritage Trust recently received almost $200,000 in federal funding for two new projects, but a third project remains in question. The trust and other northern organizations will use part of the federal money to build a public website that recounts Inuit history from the Inuit point of view. "This is primarily an archival project that, where possible, will present the Inuit voice on contact and colonization experiences," said Ericka Chemko, formerly a project manager with the trust. The rest of the funding will help train heritage sector workers throughout Nunavut, including curators, visitors centre managers and parks staff. Canadian Heritage provided the funds under its Canadian Arts and Heritage Sustainability Program. Meanwhile, another project in which the trust is involved has the financial support of the Nunavut government, but is also seeking Canadian Heritage funding. The trust is planning a territorial heritage centre with the Nunavut government and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. The centre would help bring artefacts originally from Nunavut back to the territory, many of which are now stored in the South, or in Yellowknife, due to a lack of suitable facilities in Nunavut.

**The North is our Cuba**

He art, culture and industry of the Eastern Arctic will be on display in Ottawa this January at the first ever trade show and conference focusing on the area.

Organizers of Northern Lights 2008, a $1.5-million joint venture of the Baffin Regional and Labrador North Chambers of Commerce, expect about 140 exhibitors and between 400 and 500 delegates from Nunavut, Nunavut, Labrador and Nunatsiavut to participate in the event, which runs from January 30 to February 2. Delegates will have the opportunity to attend conference sessions on resource development, tourism and cultural industries, the environment and the economy in the mornings, while the afternoons will be devoted to action on the trade show floor. On February 2, the trade show will be open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Not only will there be delegate booths to visit, but also a variety of artist demonstrations and cultural performances to see.

The idea was hatched a little more than a year ago in an Edmonton hotel room. Representatives from the Baffin and Labrador chambers, along with some senior people from the Nunavut government, were at *Meet the North*, a trade show promoting the North, but mainly focusing on the Northwest Territories, Yukon and northern Alberta.

"We were all sitting around marvelling at the size of the event and asked, ‘Why don’t we do this for our region?’” said Hal Timar, event manager for the Baffin chamber. "Then we said, ‘Yeah, why not? What’s stopping us?’ They came up with a business plan, booked the entire Ottawa Congress Centre and are now working in earnest on the nuts and bolts of the event. And there is a lot to be organized.

“We’ve done lots of trade shows,” said Dave Hunt, president of the Labrador chamber and the event’s co-chair, “but this is the biggest one we’ve ever done.”

Timar says participants will be given a true indication of the potential in the North. "Especially with resource development these days, the North is where it’s at," he said. Other developments, such as the new Nunatsiavut government, create infrastructure requirements, which can create lucrative opportunities for developers.

For the general public, he said, the lure of the Eastern Arctic is its mystery. "It’s our Cuba. They know it is there, but they don’t know all that much about it.”

One way to connect people with the North is through its arts, which differ significantly from those in southern Canada. To highlight the role played by the arts in the Eastern Arctic’s economy, artists from all four regions will demonstrate media such as printmaking, carving, textile art and doll making. There will also be scheduled cultural performances, including fashion shows. "There will be something for everybody," Timar says.

According to Timar, the biggest challenge in organizing a show like this is ensuring that all four regions receive equal play, while recognizing that there are different levels of capacity in each. "For example, Nunavut has a strong arts and culture community so we are very cognizant of the importance of not overwhelming the other regions with our arts and culture," he said.

For more information about the event: [www.northernlightsottawa.com](http://www.northernlightsottawa.com).

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BRIEFLY NOTED

Nunavik Artists Assemble in Ivujivik

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Keeping the Culture Alive

Two Artists Awarded First Nunavut Commissioner’s Arts honour

The first Nunavut Commissioner’s Arts Awards were presented in July to two community-focused Inuit artists. Commissioner Ann Meekitjuk Hanson presented $5,000 cheques to each of the two winners: John Towtongie, a tool carver from Rankin Inlet, and Thomas Ikiraq, a Baker Lake printmaker. They were chosen, from a slate of 30 nominated artists, by a selection committee, consisting of volunteers Jim Shirley (representing the Kivalliq region), Helen Navalik Tologanak (the Kicikiq region), Jimmy Manning (the Baffin region), and Dorothy Eber (southern Canada).

Towtongie has been carving tools for about 50 years. He shapes materials, such as antler and bone, into forms similar to the tools historically used by Inuit. Ikiraq, the other winner, began printmaking around 1970. He has created stonecut, woodcut and stencil prints.

“Both are long-time artists, keeping the culture alive, contributing to their communities and to Nunavut, by teaching, unselfishly, both traditional and modern ways,” said Hanson. “I admire our artists in Nunavut. They do wonderful work and it is not easy. They do so many different things besides keeping their art alive.”

Hanson says artists contribute a great deal to the territory's economy and to reviving Inuit language and culture. “They make our lives more enjoyable and put smiles on our faces,” she said. “They inspire us and make our lives more colourful.”

Funding for the award came entirely from the Nunavut government, and Hanson considers that $10,000 is a significant amount for an award specifically targeting Nunavut artists: "I know that in the southern provinces the awards are more generous, but this is our first time, and it can only get better in the years to come." In the future, the whole amount may go to a single artist. This year, the selection committee decided that Towtongie and Ikiraq were equally deserving.

Some challenges remain: “There is a learning process involved,” said committee member Shirley, co-owner of Rankin Inlet's Matchbox Gallery. Not all Nunavut communities have equal access to the technology, funds and English fluency required to complete applications for such programmes. "Smaller communities lack personnel, equipment, translation and administrative services," he added.

Difficulties reaching such communities prevented the candidates list from being entirely inclusive. Also, since this year's application did not require samples of the artists’ work, the committee chose winners based on community service and willingness to share knowledge rather than on sheer artistic talent.

“People in the communities I have had contact with greatly appreciate this recognition,” Shirley said. “They see it as an important first step. The arts provide more than a source of livelihood. They give people confidence and pride in what they have accomplished as Inuit, and how they have sustained their proud history in the significant upheaval they face in the contemporary world.”

This year’s winners have plans for their award money, Hanson said: “Both of them are using the prize money to buy a new four-wheeler.” Hanson thinks that the Nunavut Commissioner's Arts Award will continue on an annual basis, at least until the end of her term as Commissioner in 2010.

Northern Hearts, Northern Hands

The 2007 Great Northern Arts Festival attracted about 50 artists and plenty of art lovers to Inuvik, Northwest Territories, July 20 to 29. Artists living in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the Yukon, and several northern artists who have moved South, sold their work and took part in workshops, seminars, film screenings, a concert and a fashion show. The annual event is “a celebration of the distinctive common energy and experience that connects Arctic artists, from Nat to Nome,” said Executive Director Marnie Hilash. The 2007 festival, titled Northern Hearts, Northern Hands, allowed artists to make cameo appearances in a film as part of a filmmaking workshop. It also featured a screening of The Journals of Knud Rasmussen by Igloolik Isuma Productions. A new Artists to Market program was introduced, consisting of one-on-one sessions, to assist artists in creating a personalized marketing and promotion strategy. “The program is shaping up to serve as a cornerstone of our professional development programming for years to come,” said Hilash. Several thousand people attended this year’s event, purchasing about $130,000 worth of art. Next year’s theme, 2050: An Arctic Homcoming, will recognize the 20th anniversary of the festival and the 50th anniversary of the incorporation of Inuvik, where the festival has been held every year since 1988. Major funding for the festival currently comes from Canadian Heritage and the Government of the Northwest Territories, supplemented by private sponsorship, various public organizations, and individual donations.

ROM Showcases Storytellers

The work of several contemporary Aboriginal artists is currently being shown in an exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto that runs until the end of March 2008. Shapeshifters, Time Travellers and Storytellers, includes work in such media as video, sound, sculpture and drawing. Filmmakers Zacharias Kunuk and Norman Cohn, of Nunavut’s Igloolik Isuma Productions, and Inuit graphic artist Shuvinai Ashoona are among the eight Aboriginal artists whose work is included. Co-curators Candice Hopkins and Kerry Swanson worked with the imagineNATIVE Film and Media Arts Festival to design the installations. They hope the show will help viewers examine the way in which the past and the present, and the traditional and the contemporary, continue to affect and merge with each other.
BRIEFLY NOTED

Learn Inuktitut On-line
A website developed for the Nunavut government to help English-speakers learn Inuktitut was recently launched. Tusaflanga (www.tusaflanga.ca), an Inuktitut phrase that translates as "let me hear it," evolved from an Inuktitut training program for Nunavut's senior civil servants. Website visitors can work through language lessons and click links to hear accompanying individual words and dialogue, at no cost.

Guitar Workshop in Coral Harbour
About a dozen residential school survivors met with well-known Nova Scotia guitar maker George Rizsanyi in Coral Harbour this September to learn his craft. Luthier to some famous rock stars, Rizsanyi is known for building the Six String Nation guitar with materials from across Canada, including a Nunavut muskox horn. He planned to fly to the hamlet with the proper wood, since this would be difficult to purchase above the tree line. He hoped that students would also incorporate local materials, such as soapstone, into their guitars. The two-week course targeted students with musical backgrounds. Its goal was to help them connect with each other and to learn an unusual skill. With a budget of about $20,000, the course was funded by Rankin Inlet's Kivalliq Outreach Program and the hamlet of Coral Harbour.

Torgasok Cultural Centre to Get a Home
The Nunatsiavut government is developing plans to construct a building in Nain for the Torgasok Cultural Centre. Community consultations were held in five Nunatsiavut communities this summer as well as in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Southwest River. Officials met with key stakeholders, artists and craftspeople seeking input on what the cultural centre has done so far and what it should do to improve. The cultural centre has been established for more than 30 years but, as director Catharyn Andersen said, there has never been anything permanent in terms of support for artists and craftspeople and this is an area that needs work. It is hoped the proposed building will house a museum, archives, art gallery and language centre. Andersen said the next step is for the centre's working group to meet, write a business plan and then approach possible funders.

Bone Collectors Warned
A Yellowknife man who inadvertently violated Nunavut’s archaeological site regulations will not be allowed to take home the whale bone he collected. He will not, however, be prosecuted for attempting to remove his harvest from Nunavut. Bob Kussy went to Pond Inlet with his stepson Joe Ashoona last summer. The two collected bowhead whale bones, caribou antlers and other art materials, but when Kussy applied for export permits after the fact, he was refused permission to transport the materials to the Northwest Territories. The Nunavut government has a regulation that prohibits anyone from collecting materials that are more than 50 years old and could provide evidence of past human activity. Collectors who suspect that items they harvest could include such materials must get an archaeological permit from the Government of Nunavut before heading out to collect.

(below) Tikiniq (The Arrival), 2007, Kenojuak Ashevak, Cape Dorset (etching and aquatint; six panels, 28 in. x 16 ft. 9 in.). Photo: Courtesy of Dorset Fine Arts

This image was created several years ago as a collaboration with Paul Machnik of Studio PM, when he was in Cape Dorset conducting a workshop. He and Kenojuak Ashevak worked on the first proof together. The edition of 12 was completed at Studio PM in Montreal and hand-coloured by Harold Klunder. Released in October by Dorset Fine Arts to celebrate Kenojuak’s 80th birthday, the six-panel print will be sold for $8,000. Kenojuak says: "I have never worked this way before. It is hard to imagine that this is my work; the images are so loose compared to my other drawings. I remember working directly on the floor using a ketchup bottle filled with ink and dissolved sugar to ‘draw’ on the plates. When I first saw all those plates I thought I would never do it but I just kept going and it was good.”
Napachie Pootoogook on Brazilian Stamp

Brazil chose the 1989 print, *My New Accordion*, by deceased Cape Dorset artist Napachie Pootoogook to grace a recently released commemorative stamp. The stamp marks the 140th anniversary of Brazil’s commercial relations with Canada, the 60th anniversary of the official opening of a Canadian consulate there, and the 35th anniversary of the Canadian embassy in Brazil. It features the Canadian and Brazilian flags, the print’s title, and the artist’s name. The print, itself, is featured in the exhibition, *Isumavut: The Artistic Expression of Nine Cape Dorset Women*, organized by the Canadian Museum of Civilization and now showing in Brazil. Touring internationally for many years, the exhibit has been on display in various Brazilian cities since late June 2007. From August 8 until September 18, it was shown at the Centro Cultural Correios in Rio de Janeiro. It will remain at various Brazilian venues until March 2008. Other artists included in the exhibition are Kenojuak Ashevak, Mayoreak Ashoona, Pitsolak Ashoona, Qaunak Mikkigak, Okpik Pitsolak, Lucy Qinnuayuk, Pitaloosie Saila and Ovilu Tunnillie.

Ohito Ashoona Creates Six Trophies

Cape Dorset carver Ohito Ashoona created six inuksuit trophies for the Champ Car World Series held this summer. Race organizers commissioned him to carve the one-of-a-kind awards, two for each of the three teams that would win the Champ Car Canadian Triple Crown. For
From left: Canada's Consul General for Rio, Jean-Yves Dionne, Canada's Ambassador to Brazil, Guillermo E. Rishchynski, and Lucie Tremblay at the opening of Isuavut: The Artistic Expression of Nine Cape Dorset Women, at the Centro Cultural Correios in Rio de Janeiro. Organized by the Canadian Museum of Civilization and touring internationally for many years, the exhibit has been on display in various Brazilian cities since late June 2007. Photo: Alvaro Victor

the event, first held this year, teams compete in three races, each held in a different Canadian city. The artist has previously carved trophies for other car races. He won a National Aboriginal Achievement Award for arts and culture in 2002. Ashoona's work is in the collections of the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Winnipeg Art Gallery, among others. The winning teams were awarded their trophies on July 22.

Baker Lake Hangings in Latvia
The Canadian Embassy to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania sponsored a colourful exhibit of textile art by Baker Lake women that was held in Latvia late this summer. The wall hangings in the display, Culture on Cloth, came from the collection of Judith Burch, owner of the Arctic Inuit Art gallery (Nova Scotia). They were shown at the Latvian National Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, which is located in a 13th century stone church in Riga, Latvia. Artists include Irene Avaalaaqiaq, Ruth Taparat, Naomi Iyaa, Elizabeth Angnngualaaq and Martha Qarliksaq.

New National Indigenous Curator Position at National Gallery of Canada
Greg Hill, formerly Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Canada, has assumed the newly created position of Curator of Indigenous Art, heading a new Indigenous Art department at the gallery. Hill's new job will allow him to focus full-time on developing indigenous art exhibitions and directing the gallery's research and acquisitions in that area. "It's an expanded role," said Hill, who had been Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art since 2002. His new role and the change it represents at the gallery involve stepping outside the Western lens when examining indigenous art to consider the work from diverse points of view, including those of the artists. This new focus for the gallery involves "recognizing that there is a whole different stream that runs parallel to Western art history, but also separate," Hill said. Before joining the gallery, Hill helped develop the First Peoples Hall at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. His new role will also involve considering artists beyond Canada's borders. "While the focus is still on Aboriginal artists within Canada, indigenous art is global," he said. For Inuit art, this might mean obtaining works from polar regions outside Canada. The new department of Indigenous Art, meanwhile, has its own dedicated staff and acquisition budget. "It really is a step forward," said Hill. Bringing Inuit art out of what some refer to as the "basement" of the building, where it has been exhibited in somewhat isolated rooms, and incorporating it into the gallery's other permanent exhibits is a project Hill said he intends to pursue.
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this graphic interpretation of traditional Inuit life and take advantage of the opportunity to own an artist's proof.

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Magdalene Ikpatiku, Baker Lake stonecut, 24.25" x 19.5" $450

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(sizes 7, 19.5" high)
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Beaded Wall Hanging
Linda Kaviok, Arviat duffle, beads, caribou hide 5.25" x 6" $165

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