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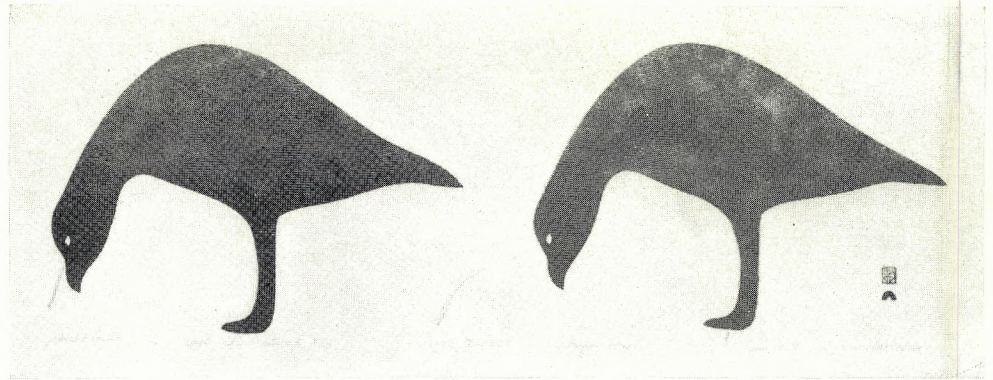
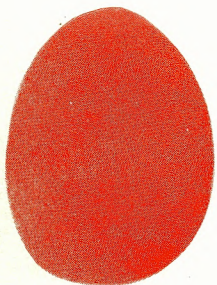
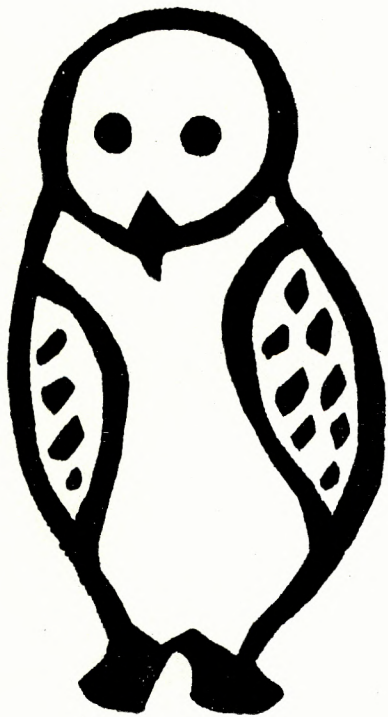
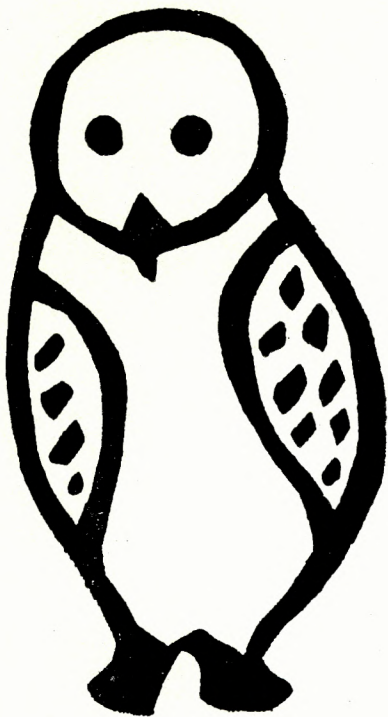
71

below:  
*Joyfully I See Ten Cariboo*  
*Stonecut by Pootagok*



## ESKIMO GRAPHIC ART

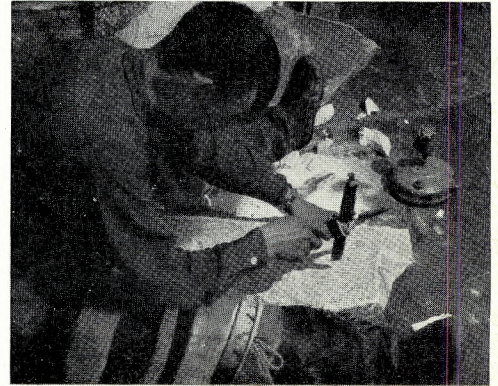
*Issued under the authority of the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources*



2

*James Houston*

James Houston was born in Toronto and is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art. He spent part of his service with the Toronto Scottish Regiment during the Second World War in the Aleutian Islands and Goose Bay, Labrador. He later spent considerable time in the southwestern United States and Mexico studying Indian art. After a year in Europe, and several years in the north with the Canadian Handicrafts Guild and the Department of Northern Affairs, he finally joined the latter in 1953. He is now a Northern Service Officer at Cape Dorset, on southwestern Baffin Island, where, in addition to his other duties, he supervises Eskimo crafts



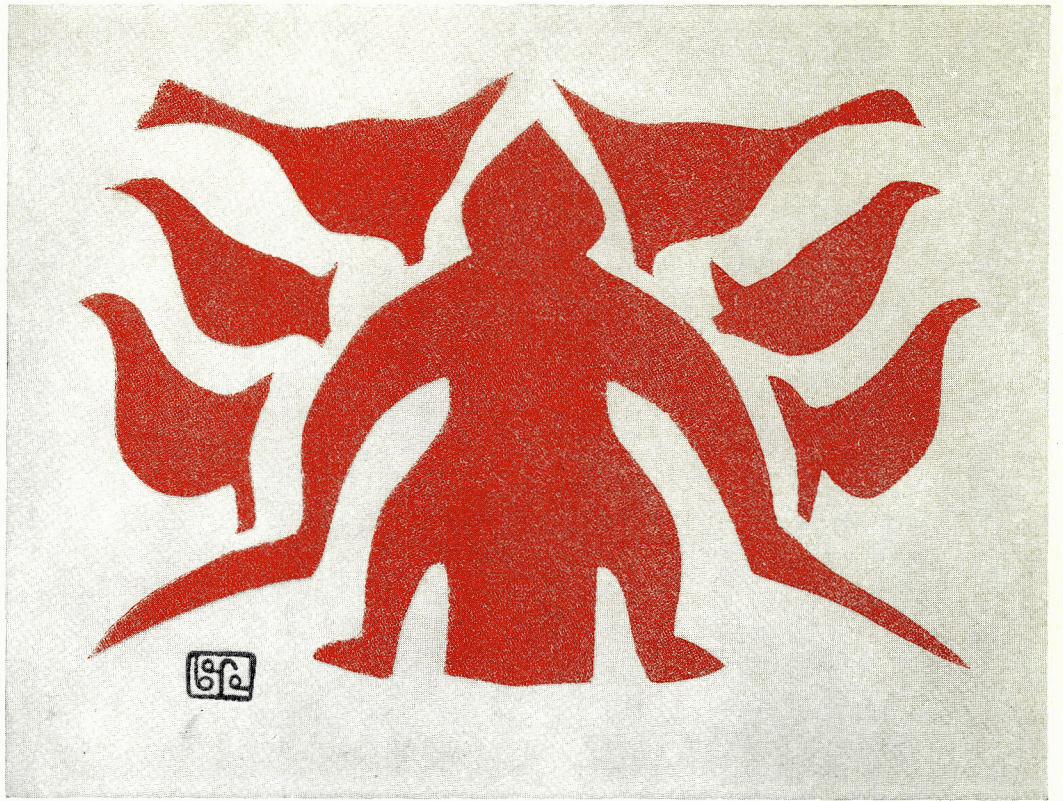
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The Eskimo people are one of the most widely distributed races on earth. Their prehistoric nomadic wanderings have scattered them halfway around the globe, from northeast Asia across arctic America to Greenland. Excavations of their early dwellings show us that, running parallel with the development of their beautifully functional tools, they have at all times felt the need to create artistic objects expressing their feelings about the wonder of existence, their religion and life around them.

Their art has taken three predominant forms: the plastic art of stone and ivory carving, the art of incised drawings on stone and bone, and the skin *appliqué* (the cutting out and intricate marrying of dark- and light-coloured skins to form patterns for the decoration of their clothing).

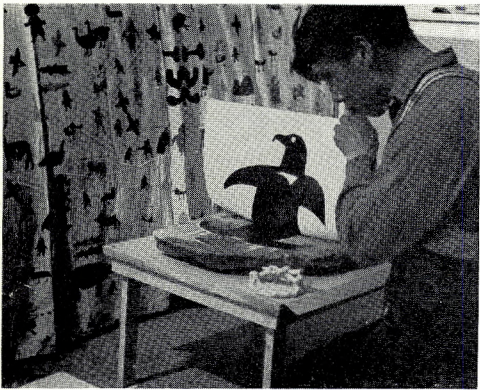
The Cape Dorset Eskimos in particular are famous for their expressive stone and ivory carvings and the work of such artists as Munname, Tudlik, Oshawcetuk, Niviaksiak and many others has been shown in many galleries throughout the world.

Cape Dorset is the English name for Kingnait, and designates Foxe Peninsula, an area of some eighteen thousand square miles populated by three hundred semi-nomadic Eskimos who trade into the small settlement which includes only seven

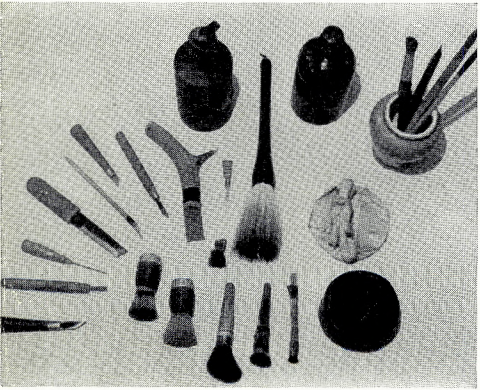


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3)4) Tudlik at work on a stonecut. In 3) he is shown smoothing the stone – a locally found soapstone – which is then carved with a knife in the manner of a woodcut. The image is transferred to the paper either by rubbing with a tampon or by pressure. Finally 4) the paper is peeled from the stone. – 5) Tools used by the artists in making prints. Brushes are made from seal and polar-bear hair. Inks consist of mixtures of commercial paint and seal oil



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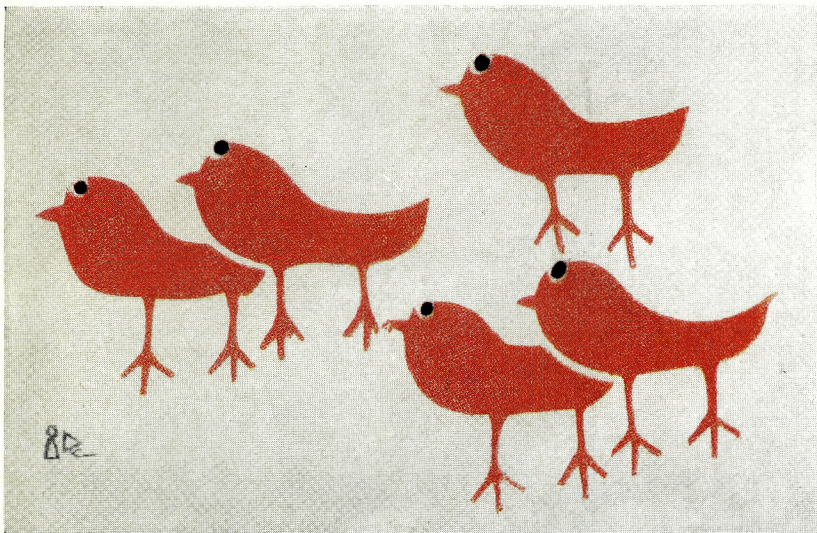
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1) Snowy Owls and Egg. Combination stonecut and sealskin stencil by Iyola. 18 " x 6 ". – 2) Arctic Gulls. Sealskin stencil in dark blue and pink by Niviaksiak. 8 " x 21<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> ". – 6) Dream of Birds. Sealskin stencil by Kananginak. 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> " x 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ". – 7) Blue Geese on Snow. Sealskin stencil with blue background by Mungituk. 10<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> " x 7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> "



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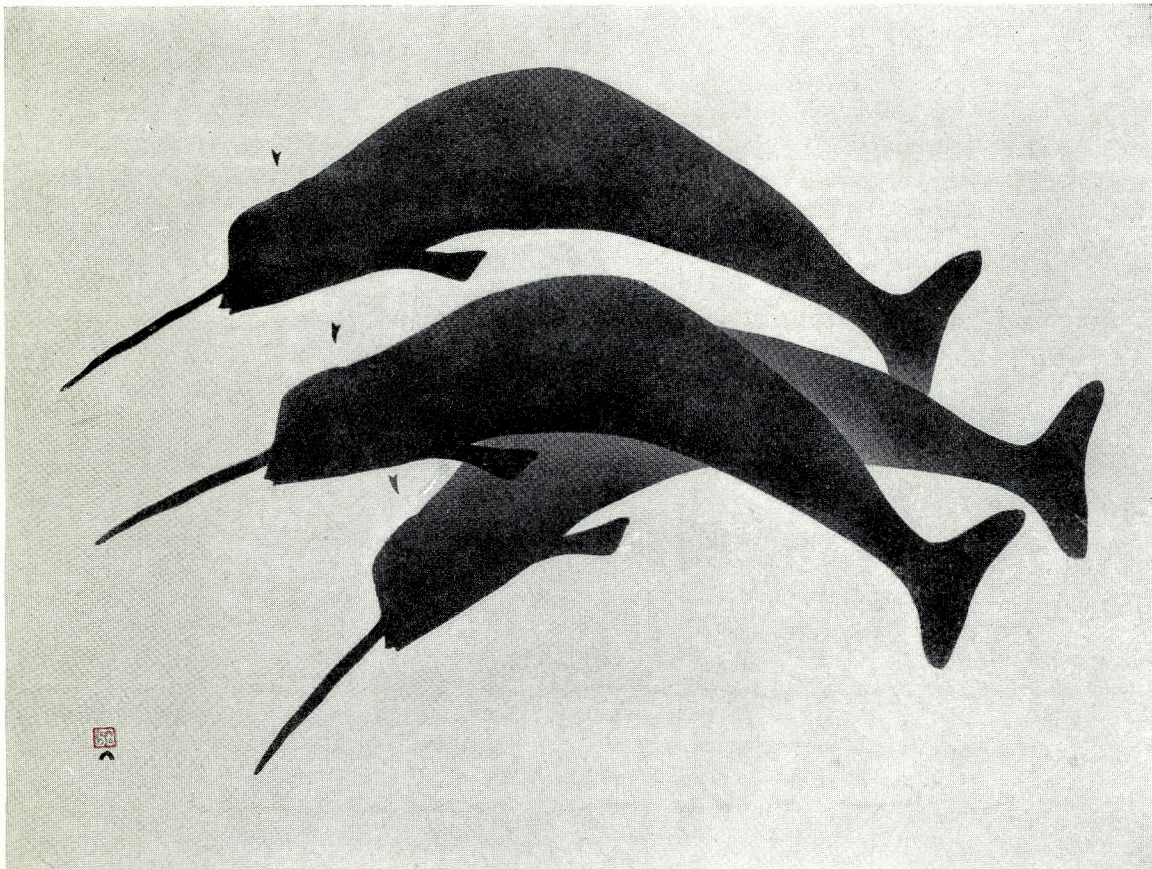
ESKIMO GRAPHIC ART



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whites. It is an isolated place, remote from even the nearest Eskimo group. Here, the Eskimos have recently developed what is, for them, a new method of artistic communication: the stonecut print and the sealskin stencil. In them, Tudlik shows us the secrets of dreams, Iyola and Luktak the rhythm in a flight of geese, Kananginak the power of the sea beasts, Niviaksiak the exuberance of the hunter.

For the first time in their lives, they have suitable paper and the use of colour becomes possible. When making a stonecut they carefully flatten and polish a stone-block, then carve out in low relief the forms and figures they desire. They ink the block and place a sheet of fine paper on it. Then by gently rubbing the paper with their fingers or a small tampon, they achieve the effect they want. This method is slow, but produces more sensitive results than any press.

The practice of cutting out skin *appliqués* for the decoration of clothing is traditionally Eskimo, but they have discovered that they can also force paint through the openings in this *appliqué* to form pictures and designs. With typical Eskimo ingenuity they are developing their own special knives and brushes of polar-bear hair for this other aspect of their new-found graphic art.

The Department of Northern Affairs has assisted these artists by erecting a small heated building, and by supplying them with the necessary papers and inks, encouragement and some technical assistance. The production of prints by either process is slow and painstaking, and only a limited number are carefully taken from each original block or stencil.

The department will further assist the Eskimos through the marketing of their prints by distributing them through art galleries and art dealers in Canada, the United States and Great Britain.

8) Snow Birds. *Sealskin stencil* by Iyola.  $3\frac{1}{2}'' \times 5\frac{1}{2}''$

9) December Ptarmigan. *Sealskin stencil* by Mungituk.  $6\frac{1}{4}'' \times 4\frac{3}{4}''$

10) Arctic Gulls. *Sealskin stencil*.  $6\frac{1}{4}'' \times 4\frac{3}{4}''$

11) Birds. *Sealskin stencil*.  $6\frac{1}{4}'' \times 4\frac{3}{4}''$

12) Three Narwhals. *Sealskin stencil* by Kananginak.  $18'' \times 24''$



13

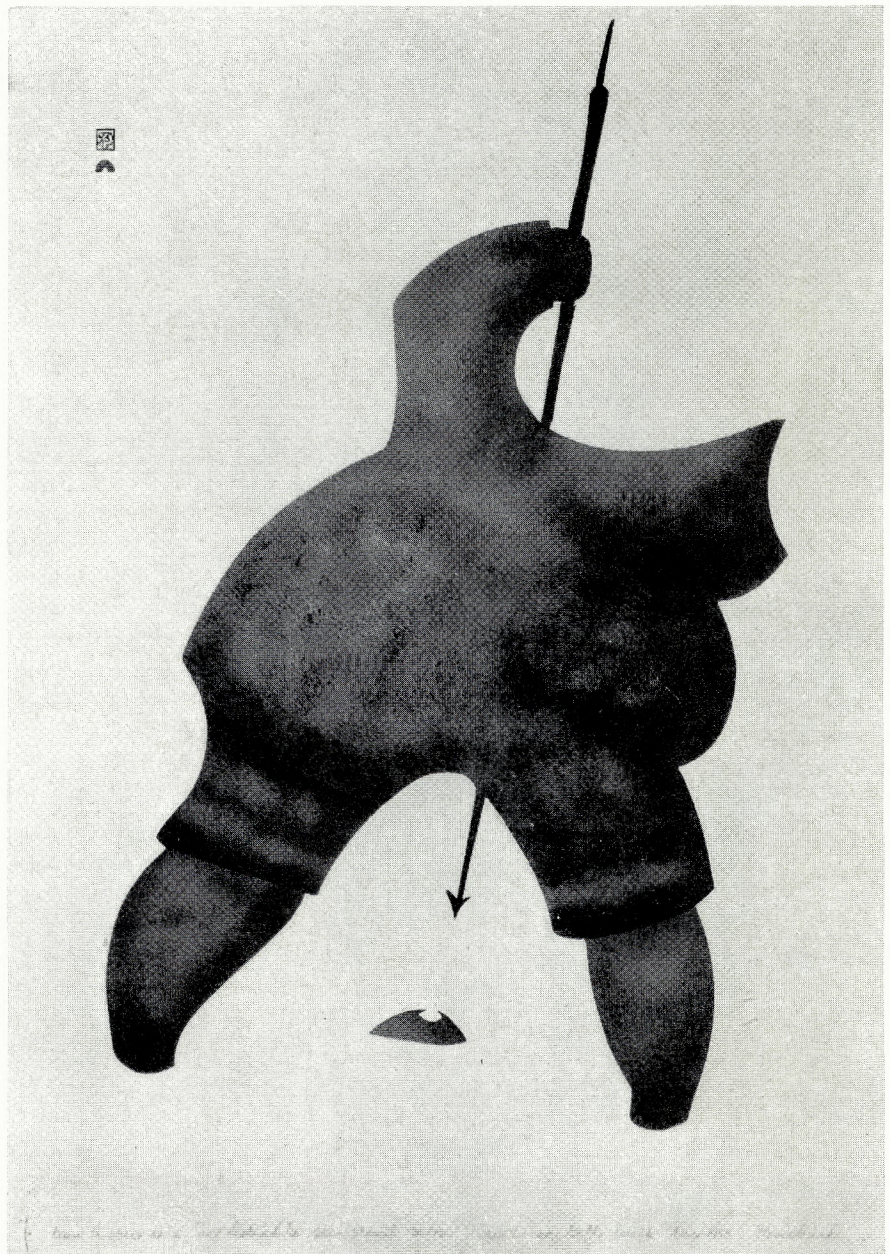
13) Canada Goose. Sealskin stencil in dark blue by Luktak.  $6\frac{1}{4}$ " x  $4\frac{3}{4}$ "

14) Man Hunting at a Seal Hole in the Ice. Sealskin print in green by Niviaksiak. 21" x 15"

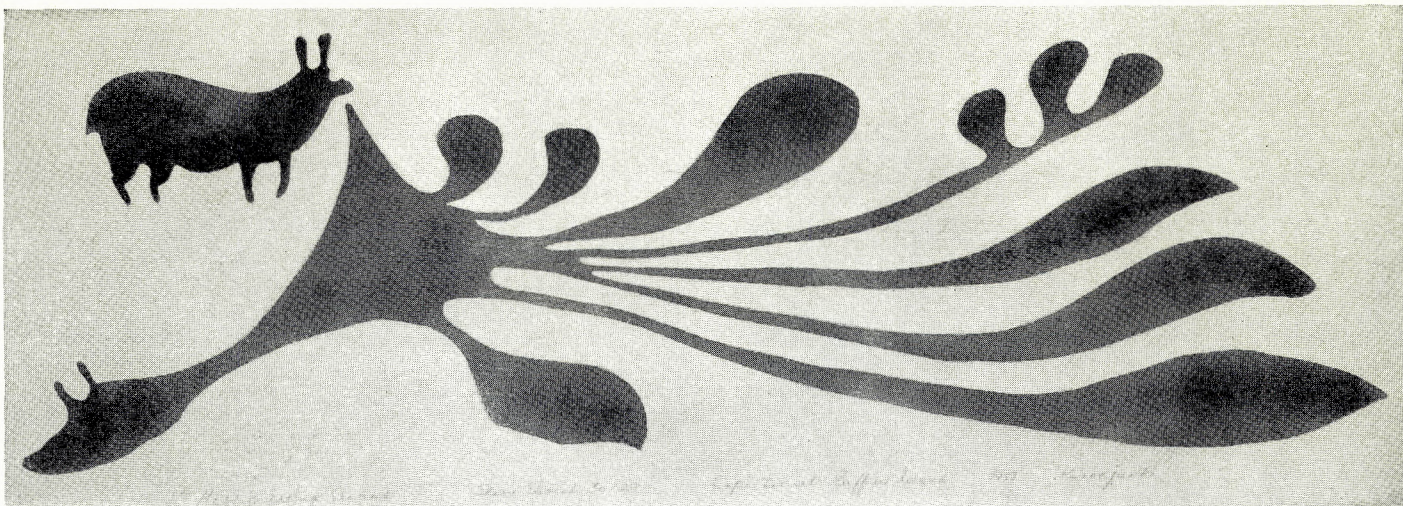
15) Rabbit Eating Seaweed. Sealskin stencil in bright green by Kinoajvak, a rare instance of a woman Eskimo artist.  $7\frac{7}{8}$ " x 22"

16) Four Muskoxen. Sealskin stencil in various browns and yellows by Oshaweetuk. 12" x 24"

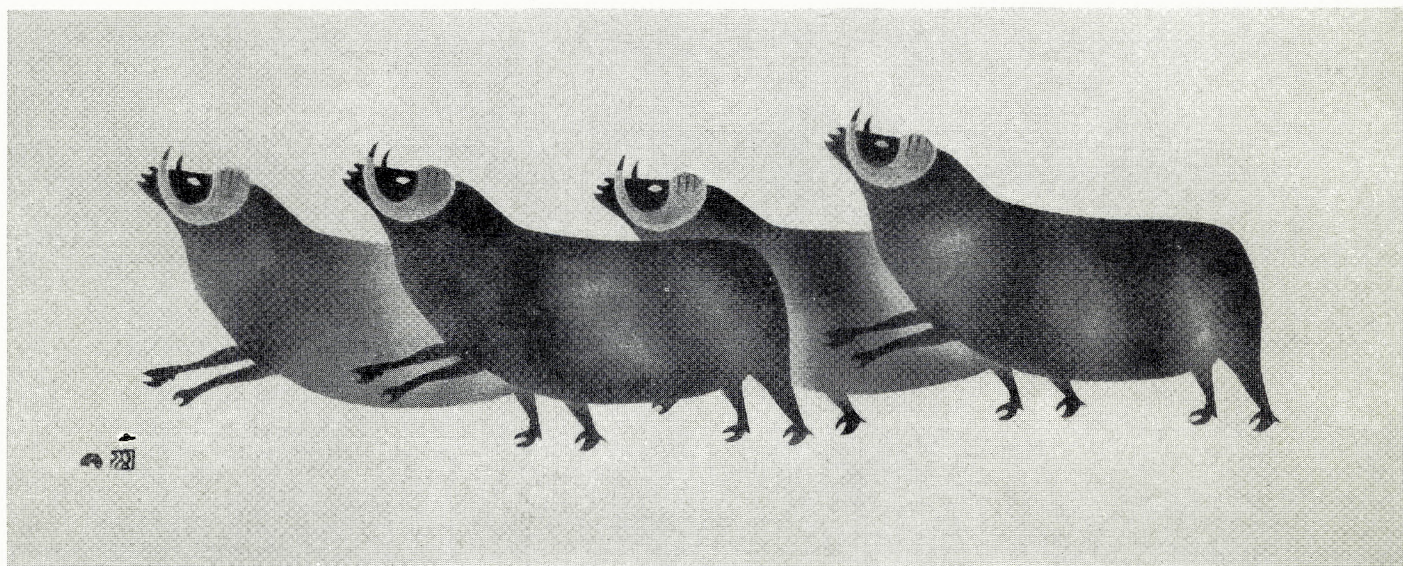
17) Mother and Child. Stonecut by Luktak.  $6\frac{1}{4}$ " x 5"



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The Eskimo craftsmen hope to form a self-supporting co-operative, where people living out on the land may create their original ideas on stone-blocks and bring them to Dorset to print them with the assistance of other Eskimos who are more advanced in this phase of the work.

I have been interested in Eskimo art in all its forms for many years, and I feel that this new and natural development of a graphic art, growing out of a sculptural one, is causing a renaissance among the Dorset people. It is very important to them. The very remoteness from outside art training and influence makes it possible for these men to create at this time the kind of art we see here. The people of Dorset are for the most part living the traditional life of hunters, dependant upon the wind, the weather and the ice. When these conditions are against them, they carve or print, but when it is possible to do so, they hunt.

With our increasing activity in the Arctic, the Eskimos have an even greater need to express themselves. Their language is not the same as ours and we seldom see them in their own surroundings, but through their pictures they tell us that they too are thinking people, aware of the joys of life around them.



17





18) Photograph of the stone for the print shown below. It has been carved with a knife, smoothed with a file and is ready for printing

19) Owl. Rubbing from the stone shown above, by Luktak. 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 19"

20) Bird Dream Forewarning Blizzards. Combination stonecut and sealskin stencil by Tudlik. 24" x 18"

#### ESKIMO GRAPHIC ART

18

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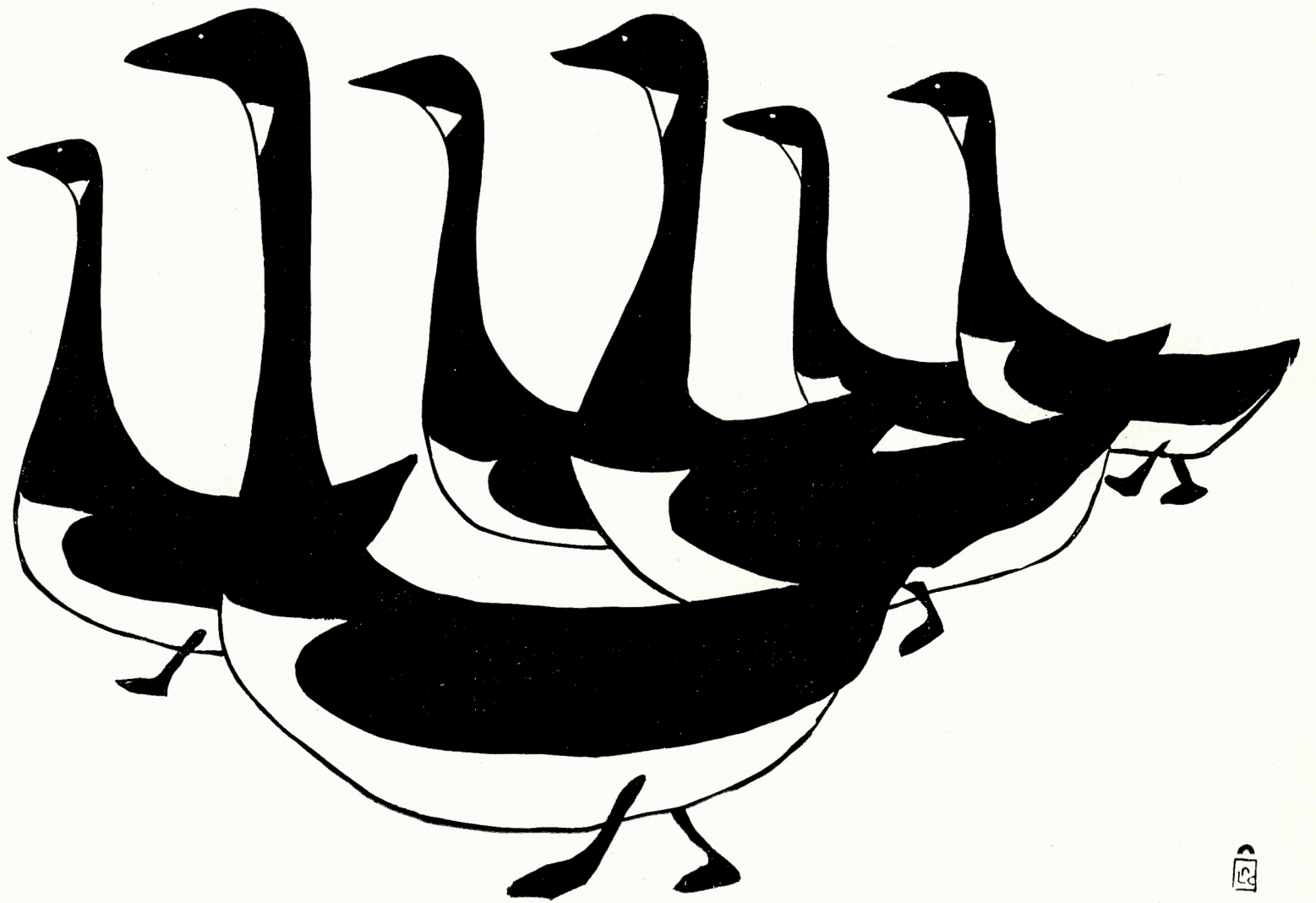




ESKIMO GRAPHIC ART

21) Polar Bear and Cub in Ice. Sealskin stencil in dark blue by Niviaksiak





THE SIGNATURES OF SOME ESKIMO ARTISTS



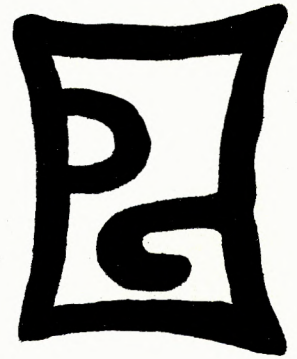
LUKTAK



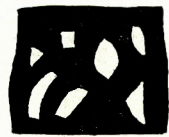
SHEKOALOAK



POOTAGOK



TUDLIK



OSHAWEETUK



IYOLA



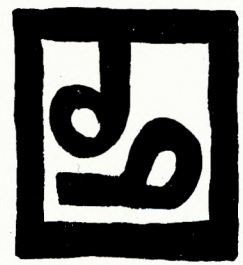
NIVIAKSIK



KANANGINAK



MUNGITUK



KUNU

# ESKIMO GRAPHIC ART



*This symbol is an assurance of authentic Canadian Eskimo art*