THE RANKIN INLET CERAMICS PROJECT: A STUDY IN DEVELOPMENT AND INFLUENCE

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ABSTRACT

The Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project:
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In 1962, the North Rankin Nickel Mine Ltd. closed its operations in Rankin Inlet, a community on the west coast of Hudson Bay in the Northwest Territories. This community was established by the mining company and attracted a large Inuit population with its promise of wage employment. When this employment ceased, the Canadian government initiated an arts and crafts program to assist the Inuit. Included in this program was an experiment in pottery-making, which became known as the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project.

Begun in 1963, the project was guided by four arts and crafts officers, Claude Grenier (1963-1970), Bob Billyard (1970-1973), Michael Kusugak (1973-1975) and Ashok Shah, until its collapse in 1977. Funding for the project was initially provided by the Canadian government and later by the Government of the Northwest Territories. The federal government was very supportive of this initiative and was continually making recommendations to improve the project. The territorial government, however, was often indifferent to the project and eventually cut its funding. It is the aim of this thesis to document the project and to examine the role these patrons played in its development. Also, an attempt will be made to demonstrate how their recommendations affected the appearance of the work. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the current revival of ceramic art in Rankin Inlet. This new project will be considered in light of the original one and in the context of recent trends in Inuit art.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Researching my topic was a relatively straightforward process. However, writing it was the real challenge. I would like to thank Dr. Joan Acland for her patience with my sporadic attention to this process and for her encouragement to keep working on it. I am also appreciative of the time and support I received from my readers, Dr. Brian Foss and Dr. Loren Lerner; especially Dr. Foss for his editorial advice. I would like to acknowledge the assistance I received from Diane Adkins and Mary O'Maly for getting this process started and for helping me deal with the critic's voice which is everpresent in my thoughts.

When researching Inuit art, visits to the Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, in Hull, are a necessity. I wish to thank Ingo Hessel, Lori Cutler and July Papatsie for their assistance, and especially Jeanne L'Espérance for always thinking of me when pertinent information about Rankin Inlet crossed her desk.

During my research, I studied the Rankin Inlet ceramics collection at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull. To Odette Leroux thank you for facilitating my access to the work and for your insights into the collection and to Margot Reid and Kelly Cameron for your assistance during my visits. Early in my research, I had the opportunity to study the ceramic work in the Inuit art collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario; for this privilege I would like to extend my appreciation to Norman Zepp for facilitating that visit.

This thesis is dependent on an extremely large variety of archival documents. I must thank Doug Whyte, the archivist responsible for RG 85 at the National Archives of Canada

in Ottawa for my success with this search. Also, I wish to acknowledge the support of the many staff members who assisted me through the maze of inventories, finding aids, and the frustrations of missing documents, enabling me to access the files that were pertinent to my research.

In a thesis dealing with North and South, it is appropriate that several northern institutions were consulted throughout the research process. Thank you to Denise Bekkema of the Nunatta Sunaqutangit Museum in Iqaluit for allowing me to study the Museum's ceramics collection; to Joanne Baird and Glenna Thorpe of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife for providing me with images of the work produced during the later years of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project; and to Jim Shirley of the Matchbox Gallery Ceramics Workshop for your insight into the recent developments in Rankin Inlet and for the images of the new work.

There are several other individuals whose encouragement has helped me toward the completion of this thesis. I am appreciative of the support I received from Mame Jackson, whose positive perspective, enthusiasm, and insight throughout the course of this process helped to keep me inspired. I would also like to acknowledge Paul Cardegna who proofread this document and George Anderson for his technical assistance. There are many others who contributed, in their own way, to the completion of this thesis. Unfortunately, they are too numerous to name but are no less deserving of thanks.

In closing, a special word of appreciation is extended to my parents. They are always first in my thoughts and without their assistance and encouragement this thesis would never have been completed. Thank you.

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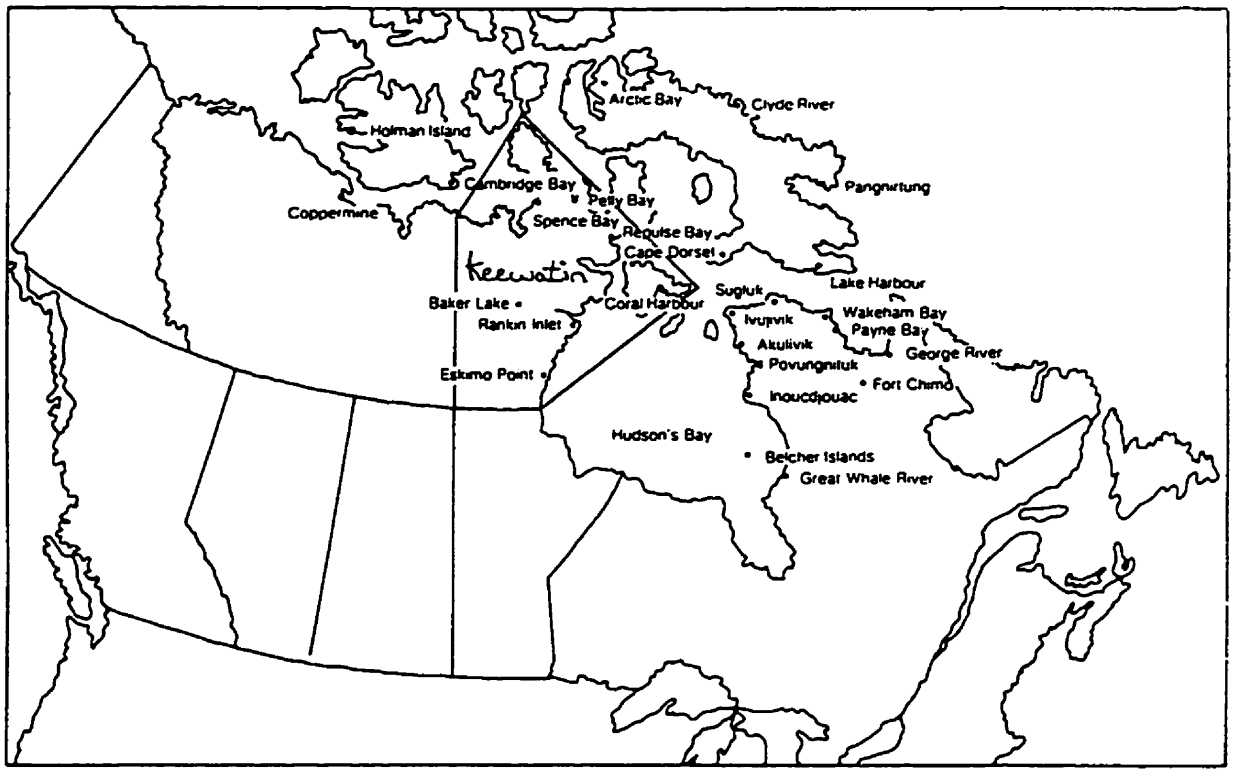

This map of Canada highlights the Inuit communities where the production of contemporary art is an important activity for its residents.

The outline of the District of Keewatin has been added to this map.

MAP II
POTTERY FINDS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

overleaf

LOCATIONS IDENTIFIED ON THE MAP

1. Yellowknife
2. Iqaluit
3. Regina
4. Winnipeg
5. Rankin Inlet

AREAS WHERE SIGNIFICANT POTTERY FINDS ARE LOCATED[1]

A. The Alaskan coastal regions in the north and south have yielded significant archaeological finds which include a variety of pottery shards. These finds date from 1500 B.C. to 1500 A.D. and point to the existence of several cultural periods and technologies.

B. The Western Arctic from Coronation Gulf to Alaska has yielded pottery finds that are considered "typical" of the late Neoeskimo period or Thule culture.

C. In the Mackenzie Delta region pottery shards that date to the late Thule and post-Thule cultures have been found. They are noted for their shape and the tempering of the material.

D. Eastern Arctic has yielded few pottery shards. Samples have been found, for the most part in the High Arctic, on King William Island and Cornwallis Island. They date to the Thule culture and most shards are from Inuit lamps.

E. The Naujan Find consists of three shards that date to the Thule culture.

F. To date, no pottery shards have been found in the central Keewatin.

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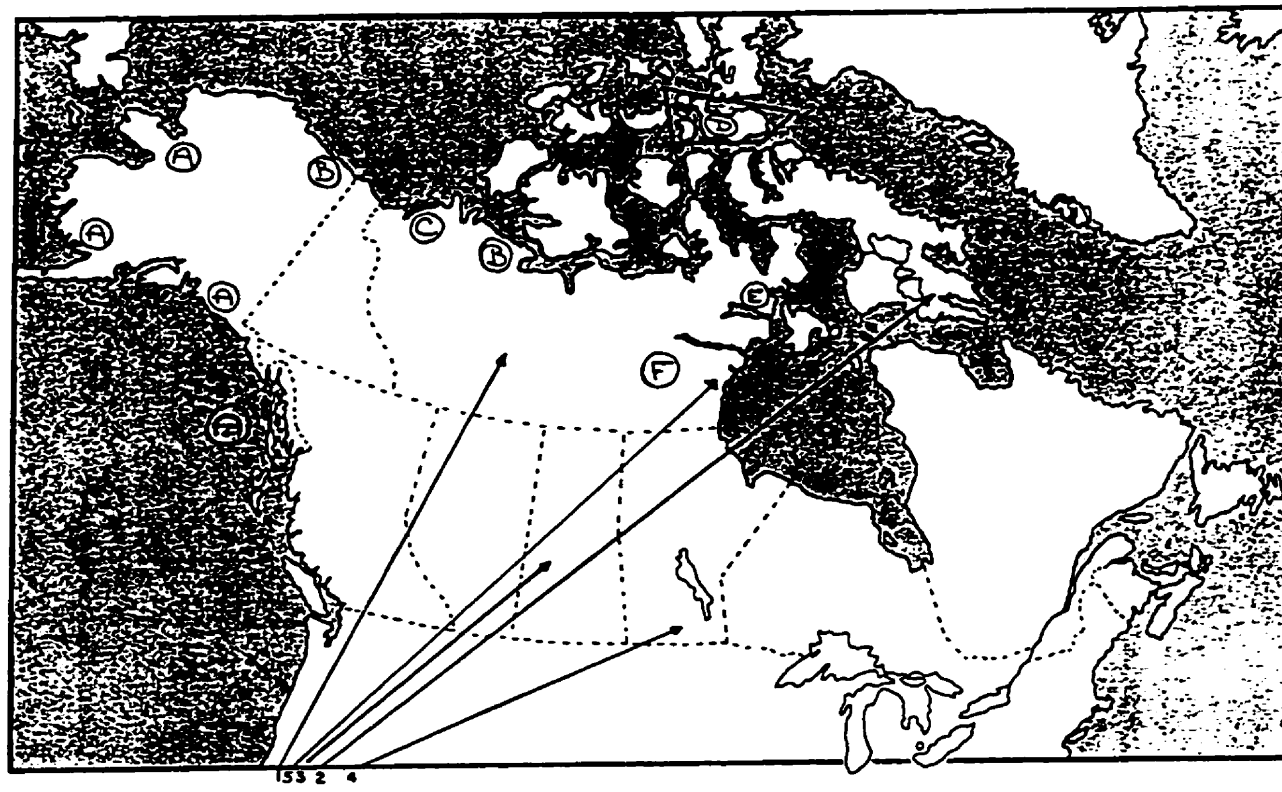
[1] Carole Stimmell, "Going to Pot: A Technological Overview of North American Arctic Ceramics," Threads of Arctic Prehistory: Papers in Honour of William E. Taylor, Jr., eds. David Morrison and Jean-Luc Pilon (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Archaeological Survey of Canada, Mercury Series Paper 149, 1994), 35-56. The discussion of the following locations was culled from this work. The time period of Neoeskimo corresponds to that of the Thule Culture and dates from 1000 A.D. to 1500 A.D.

MAP II
POTTERY FINDS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES



While not comprehensive in its representation, this map identifies the regions where the majority of pottery finds are located. The letter system, developed to facilitate easy recognition of these areas, has been added to the map.

Identifying the community of Rankin Inlet is also an addition to this map.

PREFACE

In the course of researching this thesis, I have come to take certain terms and concepts for granted. I would like to provide the reader with this background information. These terms vary in their importance and are often further explained in the text.

The Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project (1963-1975) was part of a larger arts and crafts program in the community which is located on the west coast of Hudson Bay. This community is part of the administrative region known as the District of Keewatin (Map I). It is simply referred to as the Keewatin which means "North wind." Like most Inuit art initiatives of this era, it was heavily supported by the Canadian government both in terms of funding and guidance. This connection is a focal point of this thesis. Information surrounding this issue was found at the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa, in documents located in the Records of the Northern Affairs Program (RG 85). It is within this record group that information dealing with the Canadian government's involvement with Inuit art can be found. In addition to the archives, information was also located through the Records Department of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in Hull, Quebec. These files came from storage and, in time, will be archived to the Records of the Northern Affairs Program.

The Northern Affairs Program is composed of a progression of departments which had and still have jurisdiction over the administration of policies governing the people and land resources of the Arctic. This progression began in 1873 with the formation of the Department of the Interior, which had "control of all federal lands and natural resources on

the Canadian prairies, the Railway Belt of British Columbia, and in the far North."[1] Over time, this department went through many transitions and operates today as the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Throughout the course of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project, two departments were responsible for its administration: the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, established in 1953, and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, formed in 1966. In 1959, an important reorganization occurred within the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. The following six divisions were created; Territorial, Education, Industrial, Welfare, Resources and Engineering.[2] It was the Industrial Division that would eventually take responsibility for Inuit art, with the Welfare Division often being consulted on issues pertaining to this industry. For the purpose of this thesis, when I use the terms the Department, the government, or Ottawa, it is these departments that I am referring to unless otherwise indicated.

In the late 1960s, the federal government began transferring the base of operations for the North from Ottawa to Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories. Prior to this time, all administrative and legislative decisions were made in Ottawa with a structured system of field officers to manage the daily operations of this region. In 1967, Yellowknife became the capital of the Northwest Territories following the recommendations outlined in the Report of the Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories (Carrothers Report) which was submitted to the House of Commons in 1966. As

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[1] Terry Cook, Records of the Northern Affairs Program (RG 85), General Inventory Series (Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 1982), 1.

[2] Ibid., 17-18.

will be discussed later, this shift in power had a significant impact on the Arts and Crafts Program in Rankin Inlet. Once this change starts to affect the project, I will use the full title to refer to the Government of the Northwest Territories while the Department, the government, or Ottawa will continue to be used to refer to the federal institution.

This need to establish a basic understanding of the role each government played in the development of Inuit art is important because the Rankin Inlet Arts and Crafts Program was dependent on them for funding and promotional support. The federal government, which initiated the program, was a good benefactor, providing it with supplies, suggestions, and most importantly finances. After the transition of powers between the governments, this would change dramatically. The territorial government, now responsible for the Inuit arts and crafts activities, took a very different approach to this industry and called for its privatization. Unfortunately, this led to the closure of many programs across the Arctic, including the one in Rankin Inlet. As a result of this change, government involvement with the ceramics project will be discussed both in terms of its support and later its indifference.

Geographic distinctions are also pertinent to this thesis. The concepts of North/northern and South/southern are important as they denote not only location but ideology. The terms North and its synonym, the Arctic, are more closely linked to their geographical interpretation than to an ideological one. Thus, the North is defined as the area above the tree line and where accessibility and communications are hampered by the harsh climate. Excluded from this very brief definition is a discussion of the complex social, political, and geographic nature of the Northwest Territories which is also defined by the term, North. This vast area north of the sixtieth parallel encompasses several First Nations

groups, the Inuit, the Métis, the Inuvialuit and a significant White population that is entrenched around Yellowknife and along the Mackenzie River to the Beaufort Sea. Generally speaking, the term "northern" refers to the activities and ideas of the people who live in the North.

For anyone living in the North, the South is simply considered any location below the tree line: usually city centres within Canada. The term South, however, has a strong ideological association with Western European thought and its varied establishments. The art industry, comprising galleries, dealers, museum curators, writers, and buyers, is a distinct institution which has specific Western European roots. Therefore, when I use terms such as southern market or southern buyer, it is this power structure that I am referring to. Early in its development, the Inuit art industry was controlled by this southern system which was responsible for marketing schemes during its formative years in the 1950s and 1960s. The ideas generated by those involved in this system have helped define how Inuit art has evolved. In light of this structure, Inuit artists quickly adapted their work to conform to the tastes of the southern buyers which in turn guaranteed the sale of their work.[3] Like so many other art-producing communities in the North, Rankin Inlet was affected by the factors at work in this process.

Qallunaat is the prevailing term used to define White people which describes the outsiders who came North for whatever purpose, be it whaling, exploration, missionary

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[3] Nelson H. H. Graburn, "Some Problems in the Understanding of Contemporary Inuit Art," Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology 4, no. 3 (January 1975): 66.

work, development, or administration. This, however, is not completely accurate. As Minnie Aodla Freeman stated in her introduction in Inuit Women Artists, "It could mean either 'people with beautiful eyebrows' or 'people with beautiful manufactured material.' "[4] The latter seems to be a more appropriate definition considering the trade culture that defines the early history of the North. This term has been spelled a variety of ways, including kabloona, kabluna, kablunait, and kablunak.

The variation in spelling of the term Qallunaat is indicative of how many Inuit terms have evolved. Due to the complex nature of the Inuktitut language, artists's names and most Inuit terms were translated first phonetically and then re-evaluated by linguists in an attempt to standardize the written word. As a result, many artists's names are spelled several different ways and cross-checking references is continually practised among dealers, curators and researchers. In this thesis, the most common spelling of an artist's name will be used in the text and the variations will appear with the artist's biography in Appendix I.

Since this thesis deals with the ceramic medium, it is important for the reader to understand basic concepts inherent in this material. A discussion of this medium is included in Appendix II, which also contains a glossary of terms commonly used in ceramics as well as a description of the specific techniques used by the Rankin Inlet artists. Throughout the history of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project, problems with the kilns were a common occurrence and of one of them, Grenier commented "le four est un fiasco."[5] From the delays

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[4] Minnie Aodla Freeman, "Introduction," Inuit Women Artists, eds. Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson, and Minnie Aodla Freeman (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1994), 16.

[5] DIANA, Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre, Box: Indian and Northern Affairs Archives, file A255-5/184 pt. 8, Claude Grenier to Mr. Abrahamson, 26 July 1969.

in receiving the first one in 1964 to Virginia Watt's recommendation in 1971 that the latest model be scrapped, the technical aspects of firing the work always interfered with the progress of the project. Unfortunately, the line of inquiry this thesis takes precludes an in-depth discussion of this technical aspect of ceramic production.

INTRODUCTION

> Today, contemporary Eskimo art is a highly controversial subject. I hope that it will remain so for years to come. Strong controversy indicates that this virile art form remains alive, that it continues to gain the stimulation to grow and develop in Canada.[1]
>
> James Houston, 1971

Twenty-five years after James Houston wrote this statement, the field of Inuit art is entering a new era which will ensure continued controversy. Artists are calling for the acceptance of a wider range of artistic expression and the freedom to experiment with different media.[2] More artists are attending and teaching workshops in southern schools, such as the Ottawa School of Art, to improve their skills, expand their frame of references, and experiment with new media. The written commentary that supports Inuit art is also in transition. Authors are expanding the understanding of Inuit art by incorporating elements of social and economic history, geography and feminism to gain a better understanding of the visual record of Inuit art.[3] A critique of Western aesthetics as the only model for

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[1] James Houston, "To Find Life in the Stone," Sculpture/Inuit: Sculpture of the Inuit: masterworks of the Canadian Arctic (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 56.

[2] "The Contemporary Living Art," Inuit Art Quarterly 11, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 4-14.

[3] Cynthia Cook, From the Centre: The Drawings of Luke Anguhadluq (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1993). In this text, Cook includes a discussion of the social hardships Anguhadluq faced during his transition from nomadic to settlement living;

Marion E. Jackson, in a lecture given in support of the exhibition Images of the Land, held at the National Gallery of Canada (November 1995 - March 1996), drew heavily on David Pelly's article "How Inuit Find their Way," Canadian Geographic, August-September 1991, 58-64, to illustrate how the Inuit are able to translate their knowledge of the land into visual interpretations that are accurate and representative of their environment; and

Janet Catherine Berlo approaches Inuit art by focusing on female artists and the individual

discussion about this art has also been presented.[4] The increased presence of the artists's voices in the interview section of Inuit Art Quarterly and the inclusion of their comments in such catalogues as Pudlo: Thirty Years of Drawing from 1990 and Inuit Women Artists from 1994 are opening new areas of understanding about the place of art in the lives of these artists.[5] A critical review of the southern institutions that encouraged and supported the Inuit art industry, most notably the Canadian government and the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, is under way.[6] In light of these changes, it is the aim of this thesis to review the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project (1963-1975) in order to gain a deeper understanding of how the structures supporting the Inuit art industry affected the ceramic work in question.

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agency of their work. See "Autobiographical Impulses and Female Identity in the Drawings of Napachie Pootoogook," Inuit Art Quarterly 8, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 4-12.

[4] Ingo Hessel, "Contemporary Inuit Art," Visions of Power (Toronto: The Earth Spirit Festival, 1991), 6-15. Hessel discusses a variety of issues pertaining to this problem. He acknowledges the lack of Inuit writers in the field, questions the criteria for evaluating the work, and points out that the lack of experimentation in Inuit art is due more to the southern market's resistance to change than to the desire of the Inuit to explore more creative forms of expression; and

Christine Lalonde, "How Can We Understand Inuit Art?" Inuit Art Quarterly 10, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 6-14. In this article, Lalonde illustrates the limitations of using Western art historical practices to discuss Inuit art and calls the modification of old tools and the creation of new ones in order to better understand Inuit art.

[5] Marie Routledge and Marion E. Jackson, Pudlo: Thirty Years of Drawing (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1990) and Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson, and Minnie Aodla Freeman, eds., Inuit Women Artists (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1994).

[6] Susan Gustavison, Arctic Expressions: Inuit Art and the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council 1961-1989 (Kleinburg: McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1994); and Helga Goetz, "The Role of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in the Development of Inuit Art," unpublished manuscript (Inuit Art Section, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, June 1985) and "Inuit Art: A History of Government Involvement," In the Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art, ed. Canadian Museum of Civilization (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Canadian Ethnology Service, Mercury Series Paper 124, 1993), 357-381.

I.1 A Brief Introduction to Inuit Art

The history of the Inuit spans many centuries. As a result, authors have established various periods to distinguish the different eras.[7] The information used to establish these periods was gathered using traditional Western European methods of acquiring knowledge through scientific expeditions, ethnographic studies, and archaeological finds. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, this history of the material culture of the Inuit was often used by supporters of Inuit art to authenticate the work produced during the Contemporary Phase. Recently, the Inuit perspective, found in their rich oral tradition and current experiences, is being incorporated into this history as it provides a contrasting view to the European accounts of northern development.[8]

This paper deals exclusively with the Contemporary Phase (1948-present) which is marked by increased government involvement in Inuit affairs which escalated during the 1950s and led to fast acculturation with the building of centralized communities. Contemporary Inuit art emerged from this environment to become an important cultural and economic activity for the Inuit.[9] While the concept of "art for art's sake" was not part of the

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[7] The periods are as follows: Pre-Dorset Culture (approx. 2000-1000 B.C.), Dorset Culture (700 B.C.-1000 A.D.), Thule Culture (1000-1500s A.D.), Historical Period (1500s-early 1900s), the Contemporary Phase (1948-present), and more recently the Post-Contemporary Period (1980s-present). George Swinton, Sculpture of the Inuit (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1992), 111-112, 247.

[8] Alootook Ipellie, "Colonization of the Arctic," Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives, eds. Gerald McMaster and Lee-Ann Martin, (Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1992); Minnie Aodla Freeman, Life Among the Qallunaat (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1978); and Dorothy Eber, ed., Pitseolak: Pictures of My Life, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972).

[9] In the field of Inuit art, the term "contemporary" differs from the Western art historical definition of art that pushes the limits of the existing concepts of art, comments on the current state of society, and is avant-garde in nature.

Inuit's traditional lifestyle, the production of amulets, tools, and eventually ivory trade items, such as cribbage boards, was a significant part of their culture.[10] During the Historic Period of the 1800s, the Inuit bartered with the whalers and explorers for metal objects including rifles, cooking pots, and axes. In exchange for these goods, the Inuit provided these men furs, food, and small carvings. This system of trade was established over an extended period of time. As a result, changes in the lifestyle of the Inuit were slight and only those objects and ideas that eased their harsh existence were incorporated into their traditions. Being accustomed to bartering, the encouragement of creating quality carvings for sale in the South was quickly and enthusiastically accepted by the Inuit. This new form of trade was established after James Houston's concerted efforts, in the late 1940s and 1950s, to develop art projects first in northern Quebec and then on Baffin Island as a means of supplementing the Inuit hunter's income. By this time, the Inuit were dependent on the fur trade, dealing specifically in the white fox. Unfortunately, its numbers were declining after years of trapping and its monetary value had become extremely unstable due to the effects of World War II. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, art initiatives were supported by the Canadian government in the hopes of creating a more stable economy and providing the Inuit with employment opportunities.[11]

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[10] Swinton, Sculpture of the Inuit, 129-134.

[11] Helga Goetz, "Inuit Art: A History of Government Involvement," In the Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art, ed. Canadian Museum of Civilization (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Canadian Ethnology Service, Mercury Series Paper 124, 1993), 359.

The Inuit art industry developed out of "a fortuitous convergence of skill, need, opportunity, and demand."[12] While Houston realized the creation of carvings could help the Inuit he had met, it was the Inuit's willingness to try this new activity and eventually to adopt it into their culture that ensured its success. The immediate interest in the work Houston brought south led to the rapid development of programs across the Arctic. At the time these activities were "literally a lifesaver to the Inuit," as they provided them with a means of overcoming the unstable nature of the fur trade.[13] Despite this commercial success, the production of arts and crafts did not make the Inuit rich but it did provide them with an income "to obtain what they [needed]."[14] To develop markets for this work, a system of support was established in the South by a variety of individuals who came to believe in the artistic potential of the work. Exhibitions were organized to promote the work and articles were written to inform the public about it and the people who created it. During this early period of the Contemporary Phase, sculpture was the first art form to be developed and carvings were made from such materials as soapstone, whale bone, and ivory. The subject matter reinforced Inuit traditional values with scenes of the hunt and illustrations of myths and legends being favoured over depictions of modern life in the North. The early success of Inuit art from Povungnituk, Inukjuak, and Cape Dorset led to a rapid development of art

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[12] Marybelle Mitchell, "Social, Economic, and Political Transformation Among Canadian Inuit from 1950 to 1988," In the Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art, ed. Canadian Museum of Civilization (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Canadian Ethnology Service, Mercury Series Paper 124, 1993), 343.

[13] Ibid., 345.

[14] Ibid., 345.

projects across the Arctic. In time communities from Holman to Pangnirtung and from Baker Lake to Arviat were producing work that had developed a local style which became an identifying feature of each area. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a new medium captured the interest of the Inuit and the art-buying public and the graphic arts of drawing and printmaking became the most successful forms of expression after sculpture. Work in other media such as wall hangings, garments, jewellery, and tapestries has been encouraged and has been met with varying degrees of acceptance. The choice of clay, however, for the Rankin Inlet art program was a unique one and as such, it proved difficult to sell in southern markets.

The Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project developed into one of the most unique programs in the history of Contemporary Inuit art. The community, founded as a mining town in 1953, was in economic upheaval by 1962 due to the closure of the North Rankin Nickel Mine. This closure had a devastating affect on the residents of Rankin Inlet who had come to rely on the wage economy. In 1963 to alleviate this problem, the government established a handicrafts program and hired Claude Grenier as its first arts and crafts officer. He was responsible for its administration and development until his departure in 1970. It was his skill as a ceramist and his enthusiasm for working with clay that set the Rankin Inlet Arts and Crafts Program apart from the other Inuit art initiatives across the North. The program continued under two other advisors, Bob Billyard and Michael Kusugak, but lack of enthusiasm and funding forced its official closure in 1975. During my research, however, information surfaced that indicates the workshop remained open until 1977, under the direction of Ashok Shah.

As the ceramics project progressed through the 1960s, so did the entire field of Inuit art. In fact, the Rankin Inlet Arts and Crafts Program spanned the most important era in the development of the Inuit art industry. Inuit art was swiftly gaining in popularity due to the efforts of many dedicated individuals, including James and Alma Houston, William Larmour and his department colleagues in the Industrial Division, George Swinton, and the members of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild (henceforth referred to as the Guild),[15] and the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council which promoted the art in southern markets. The year 1967, Canada's Centennial, saw Inuit art being exhibited across the country, including a showcase at Expo '67, the World's Fair held in Montreal. It was also featured in a variety of articles and in a special edition of The Beaver, in autumn 1967. By the time the ceramics project closed in 1977, Inuit art was heralded as a national treasure and had toured the world in attempts to promote it internationally thereby developing new markets. The most successful promotional exhibition was Sculpture/Inuit: Sculpture of the Inuit: masterworks from the Canadian Arctic, which focused on sculpture and included three hundred works of art, and began circulating in 1971.[16] Five years later its counterpart, The Inuit Print/L'estampe Inuit, devoted to Inuit graphic arts, also toured extensively.[17]

During the 1960s, the production of Inuit art was encouraged in more communities across the Arctic. Print collections from Povungnituk (1962) and Holman (1965) were

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[15] In 1967 the Canadian Handicrafts Guild became the Canadian Guild of Crafts. It continues to operate at its Peel St. location in Montreal.

[16] Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, Sculpture/Inuit: Sculpture of the Inuit: masterworks of the Canadian Arctic (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971).

[17] Helga Goetz, The Inuit Print/L'estampe Inuit (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1977).

released in an attempt to share in the success of the Cape Dorset project. These were followed by the 1970 release of the Baker Lake collection and the one from Pangnirtung in 1973. All the while, soapstone sculpture from these and other communities was gaining in popularity. This era saw the appointment of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee by the Minister of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, to give guidance to the graphic arts program in Cape Dorset. It soon began advising the Minister on all facets of the Inuit art industry. In 1967 the Committee was reorganized and became the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, which influenced the direction of Inuit art until it was disbanded by the Department in 1989. Today, the Inuit Art Foundation continues to offer the artists support and guidance, having taken over several of the Council's responsibilities when it was incorporated in 1985. Under the Foundation's direction, Inuit art continues to thrive and has taken on an important role as a medium for preserving the traditional ideas of a culture in transition.

I.2 Overview of the Literature Supporting Inuit Art and Archival Research

Over the last fifty years, the literature surrounding contemporary Inuit art has helped shape its understanding and documented its history. The body of writing on this art form began shortly after James Houston's concerted efforts to develop and promote art production in the North and marketing in the South. His first trips to northern Quebec were in the late 1940s and his written contribution began in 1951 with the publication of "Eskimo Sculptors" in The Beaver.[18] His exploits and contributions to this field are well documented and will not

[18] James Houston, "Eskimo Sculptors," The Beaver, June 1951, 34-39.

be repeated here.[19] Since the early 1960s, after Houston established the printing program in Cape Dorset, the literature supporting Inuit art has fallen into two logical categories: sculpture and the graphic arts.

The eclectic nature of the literature devoted to Inuit art has its roots in the early stages of the art's history. During the 1950s and into the 1960s, early writings tended to be informal, designed to introduce the public to this new art, and to promote its merits. This work came to the fore when connoisseurship was a standard method of art criticism. These descriptive articles parallelled the writing style of the day and were published in such varied periodicals as Graphis, Canadian Geographical Journal, Canadian Art, Vie des Arts, North/Nord, and The Beaver. Throughout the 1970s, it was the latter two publications which continued to focus on Inuit art, making it one of their editorial pillars. The articles that appeared in The Beaver, issued by the Hudson's Bay Company, and North/Nord, sponsored by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, were meant to be informative and promotional. They were used as a means of introducing the readers to the Inuit, their communities and their art. As a result, most articles lacked a scholarly sense of research, yet they continue to provide writers with necessary background information.

During the 1960s, George Swinton, an author who would have a profound effect on the direction the literature devoted to Inuit art would take, came to the fore. His efforts to gain a better understanding of this art, led to the development of a scholarly approach to its study. An avid collector, artist, and professor, Swinton was the first author to appreciate and

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[19] Houston's contribution to Inuit art is retold in many other sources. For the most recent account see James Houston, Confessions of an Igloo Dweller (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1995).

promote Inuit artists as individual creators as opposed to continually viewing them as members of a homogeneous group. A prolific writer in this field, his first article, "Eskimo Carving Today," appeared in 1958 in The Beaver.[20] It clearly outlined his belief that Inuit art should be afforded the same consideration as any other fine art form and disclosed his views on the individuality of the artists. In addition to contributing to catalogues, magazines, and anthologies, he has written two major works on the topic: Sculpture esquimaude/Eskimo Sculpture, published in 1965, and Sculpture of the Eskimo, released in 1972 and revised in 1992 under the title Sculpture of the Inuit.[21] In this work, Swinton continued to advance new ideas about this art, most notably the emergence of the Post-Contemporary Period which began in the early 1980s. It relates specifically to work that visually distinguishes itself from ordinary examples of Inuit art, challenges many of the stereotypes associated with this art and is often created by artists who have had access to southern art institutions.[22] Since his written work and his collecting habits span the entire history of contemporary Inuit art, Swinton's ideas have formed the cornerstone of the discipline and have often been used as guideposts by subsequent authors.

By the mid-1970s, a core group of scholars had begun to expand the area of inquiry surrounding Inuit art. Working independently, their ideas now form the basis of study for this art; raising controversial issues and trying to come to terms with the phenomenon that is Inuit

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[20] George Swinton, "Eskimo Carving Today," The Beaver, Spring 1958, 40-47.

[21] George Swinton, Sculpture esquimaude/Eskimo Sculpture (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965) and Sculpture of the Eskimo (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972).

[22] Swinton, Sculpture of the Inuit, 247. Artists include David Ruben Piqtoukun, Abraham Anghik, and Manasie Akpaliapik among others.

art. These authors include Nelson H. H. Graburn, Marion E. Jackson, Jean Blodgett, Bernadette Driscoll, Marybelle Mitchell (formerly Myers), and a variety of curators. The contributions of these authors have been informed by the areas in which they work. Graburn and Jackson, while approaching Inuit art from very different perspectives - issues of acculturation and generational and stylistic evolution in Inuit drawing respectively - have each developed their ideas within the academic milieu. Working from within the museum system, Blodgett, Driscoll, and other curators are responsible for the creation of a number of catalogues that represent a general overview of the field. This work ranges in purpose from thematic exhibitions including Looking South, The Inuit Amautik: I Like My Hood to be Full, and Pure Vision: Keewatin Spirit to studies of given collectors or artists such as The First Passionate Collector: The Ian Lindsay Collection of Inuit Art, and Pudlo: Thirty Years of Drawing.[23] Mitchell's contribution ranges from her early articles devoted to the promotion of the work created by the artists associated with La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec during the 1970s to her current position as editor of Inuit Art Quarterly, which was founded in 1986.

In the context of this thesis, an author who needs further consideration is Nelson H. H. Graburn. As an anthropologist associated with the University of California at Berkeley, he has dealt with issues surrounding the acculturation process, airport art, and the different perspectives the Inuit and the Qallunaat have towards this art. He brings to Inuit art a highly

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[23] Jean Blodgett, Looking South, (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978); Bernadette Driscoll, The Inuit Amautik: I Like My Hood to be Full, (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1980); Norman Zepp, Pure Vision: Keewatin Spirit, (Regina: Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, 1986); Darlene Wight, The First Passionate Collector: The Ian Lindsay Collection of Inuit Art (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1990); and Routledge and Jackson, Pudlo: Thirty Years of Drawing.

analytical approach which is somewhat detached from the work itself, but provides much-needed insight into the circumstances surrounding its production and acceptance. It is this aspect of his work that is pertinent to this thesis as the ceramics produced in Rankin Inlet were developed under specific circumstances and met with a limited amount of acceptance. His significant publications include: "Some Problems in the Understanding of Contemporary Inuit Art," "Inuit Art and the Expression of Eskimo Identity," and Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expression from the Fourth World.[24]

Another area that is pertinent to this thesis is the importance of the government's involvement with Inuit art, which has often been cited by authors but its extent is rarely exposed. Helga Goetz and Susan Gustavison have begun probing the structure of the Inuit art industry and their findings are extensive. Goetz's research provides the reader with a general historical framework of this infamous patron.[25] These works outline how the government established ways for Inuit art to grow through ambitious marketing and exhibition programs, but direct links between policy directives and specific handicraft projects were not part of these studies. On the other hand, Gustavison's work is more focused, dealing exclusively with the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council which was the arms-length advisory board to the government on issues pertaining to Inuit prints, copyright, and

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[24] Nelson H. H. Graburn, "Some Problems in the Understanding of Contemporary Inuit Art," Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology 4, no 3 (January 1975): 63-72; "Inuit Art and the Expression of Eskimo Identity," The American Review of Canadian Studies 17, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 47-66; and ed., Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expression from the Fourth World (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

[25] Goetz, "Inuit Art" and "The Role of the Department".

the general direction this art should follow.[26] Both authors called for further research into these key areas as these aspects of the industry have yet to be fully exploited. It is my intention to expand on this work by relating their findings to the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project. Goetz's work will be used to lay the foundation for the art program that was developed there while Gustavison's will be incorporated into the discussion of how the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council reviewed the ceramic work and evaluated the project.

After almost fifty years of writing, there is an extensive and diverse body of information available on Inuit art. This information, however, is not restricted to the books and catalogues cited above as researchers must turn to periodicals to find additional information to support their ideas. In addition to North/Nord and The Beaver, several periodicals exclusively devoted to Inuit art exist. The multipurpose Arts and Culture of the North, founded in 1976, was published in the form of a newsletter with each issue containing a focal article on an important issue written by a well-respected author from the field. The government trade magazine About Arts and Crafts parallelled its existence but was less scholarly and designed to promote the art projects from various communities. To fill the void when these two magazines folded in the early 1980s, Inuit Art Quarterly was developed in 1986 to provide readers with serious treatment of a multitude of issues concerning contemporary Inuit art. Recently, the inclusion of artist interviews and special commentary sections have provided the artists with a forum to voice their concerns and opinions about the state of the Inuit art industry.

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[26] Gustavison, Arctic Expressions.

Despite the breadth of information found in the aforementioned publications, authors must often go further afield to find pertinent information about their topic. The search for material to support this thesis is indicative of this situation. In addition to North/Nord, The Beaver, About Arts and Crafts, and Inuit Art Quarterly, articles from such diverse periodicals as Musk-Ox, artscanada, American Review of Canadian Studies, and Northwest Explorer were used. It is interesting to note that the most useful magazines have been special editions devoted to Inuit art. The most important and constantly referenced publications of this sort is artscanada's "The Eskimo World," which was issued in December 1971.[27] Containing structured articles on historical and aesthetic topics, this publication clearly separated itself from the informal work of the 1960s and pointed to the development of more focused work for the future. Circulated far from the mainstream press and the usual northern enthusiast publications, The American Review of Canadian Studies marked a high point in the publication of special editions.[28] Released in 1987 to highlight the exhibition Arctic Vision (Art of the Canadian Inuit), it brought the core authors together to consider the questions "Is it Eskimo? Is it Art?" The academic nature of this work has had an impact on subsequent writings devoted to Inuit art. Recent catalogues are more thorough in their treatment of the art, and the feature articles in Inuit Art Quarterly are more complex, often questioning long-held beliefs surrounding Inuit art.

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[27] artscanada, "The Eskimo World," December 1971 - January 1972.

[28] William C. Lipke, ed., "Inuit Art: Contemporary Perspectives," The American Review of Canadian Studies 17, no. 1 (Spring 1987).

Another valuable source of information on Inuit art is a series of catalogues published by the Winnipeg Art Gallery between 1979 and 1982. These catalogues supported annual exhibitions which were devoted to the various art-producing communities in the North.[29] This project was undertaken by Jean Blodgett and completed by her successor, Bernadette Driscoll. They invited well-known researchers and collectors, among them James Houston, George Swinton, Marybelle Myers, and Stanley Zazelenchuk, to contribute to this project. This series when viewed as a whole provides the reader with a strong overview of the development of the art projects in each community and of the artists and collectors associated with a given community, and insight into the style and subject matter of the work created in a specific region. The catalogue supporting the exhibition Rankin Inlet/Kangirlliniq has been a useful source of information for this thesis, especially since secondary sources are so rare.[30]

As seen from this overview, the literature supporting Inuit art is diverse and often uneven in its quality. A common characteristic of this work, however, is that it has remained insular in its approach to the art. The field of anthropology is often cited by the aforementioned authors as they explore the visual elements of Inuit art. Discussions of myths and legends which were recorded by ethnographers and reports of their understanding of hunting rituals, gender roles, and other aspects of the Inuit lifestyle are used to enrich the work of these authors. A broader perspective, however, must be developed in order to gain a better understanding of the environment and circumstances which enabled the Inuit art

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[29] The communities profiled include: Povungnituk (1977), Port Harrison/Inoucdjouac (1977), Repulse Bay (1978), Cape Dorset (1979), Rankin Inlet/Kangirlliniq (1980), Belcher Islands/Sanikiluaq (1981), and Eskimo Point/Arviat (1982).

[30] Bernadette Driscoll, ed. Rankin Inlet/Kangirllinig (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1980).

industry to develop. Works from sociology, history, and political science provide a deeper understanding of the realities the Inuit faced as the impact of the twentieth century quickly altered their culture. The development of Rankin Inlet typifies this advancement and must be considered in the discussion of its arts and crafts program. Several sources, all recently published, were consulted to broaden this study: Arctic Revolution: Social Change in the Northwest Territories 1935-1994, Tammarniit (Mistakes): The Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic 1939-1963, and Relocating Eden: The Image and Politics of the Inuit Exile in the Canadian Arctic.[31]

This thesis is driven by archival material which will be used to trace the decisions that were made which helped shape the development of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project. An extensive search of the Records of the Northern Affairs Program, located in the Federal Archives Division, housed at the National Archives of Canada, yielded a wealth of documents. This information provided great insight into this venture. In addition to this archival material, catalogues, unpublished papers, interview transcripts, and material found in the artist and subject files, housed at the Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre (formerly the Research and Documentation Library of the Inuit Art Section), Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in Hull, will be used to augment government files.

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[31] John David Hamilton, Arctic Revolution: Social Change in the Northwest Territories 1935-1994 (Toronto: Dundurn Press Limited, 1994); Frank Tester and Peter Kulchyski, Tammarniit (Mistakes): The Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic 1939-1963 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994); and Alan Rudolph Marcus, Relocating Eden: The Image and Politics of the Inuit Exile in the Canadian Arctic (Hanover and England, Dartmouth College: University Press of New England, 1995).

The information found in the archival sources consists of monthly reports signed by Claude Grenier, memoranda sent between the regional and area administrators, minutes of meetings held by the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee and its successor, the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, and reports written on the progress of the project by specialists Charles Scott, Alistair MacDuff, and George Swinton among others. The body of knowledge available in the departmental archive covers the first four years of the project, while the information devoted to the Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67 exhibition that was held in Toronto in March 1967 was found in the files held by the records office at Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. By the fall of 1967, the administrative files devoted to northern affairs had been transferred to Yellowknife and the files generated after that time have remained in the Northwest Territories. As it was beyond the scope of this thesis, these files have not been studied. To develop an understanding of the later life of the project, the minutes of meetings and the reports generated by the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council will be used to outline this phase of the project and document the Council's contribution to it.

I.3 Chapter Synopsis

In order to understand the importance of the art industry in the North, a brief discussion of the social and political changes that took place there during the 1950s and 1960s will begin Chapter One. With these changes, came a disruption in the traditional lifestyle of the Inuit. The government viewed the development of an arts and crafts industry as a way of easing the transition and alleviating such problems as unemployment and low morale.[32] The community of Rankin Inlet grew out of a southern industry's need to exploit

[32] Goetz, "Role of the Department," 4.

the mineral deposits that were present in the area. The importance of the North Rankin Nickel Mine, which operated between 1957 and 1962, cannot be overlooked, as it illustrates how the changes in the North affected one settlement. Built as a traditional mining town, Rankin Inlet boasted among other institutions two churches, schools, and a Hudson's Bay Store which serviced the needs of the rising population of southern and Inuit workers. This prosperity was short-lived and the closure of the mine had a dramatic effect on the fate of the community which was based on southern economic standards. In this chapter, the government reaction to this catastrophe will be discussed. One proposed solution was the development of an arts and crafts program. The residents of Rankin Inlet benefited from this as an arts and crafts officer was hired, sewing and carving programs were established, participants received wages in relation to their contribution to the program, and, in time, an arts and crafts centre was built to service the needs of this growing endeavour.

Chapter Two begins with a general discussion of the Rankin Inlet Arts and Crafts Program where the carving and sewing activities form the cornerstone of the program. The development of the ceramics project will be considered throughout the balance of the chapter, which aims to illustrate the variety of influences that affected its direction. Issues as varied as administrative concerns and creative expression will be discussed in an attempt to explain how the work came to look as it does. Monthly reports and early program evaluations will be used to show how the direction of the project was constantly shifting. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the first formal evaluation of the work by the Canadian Eskimo Art Committee and its recommendations for the project. One of them

involved sending specialists north to offer Grenier assistance with glazes. An account of these visits will close Chapter Two.

A detailed investigation of the exhibition Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67, presented in March 1967 at the Toronto Public Library, forms the core of Chapter Three. This inaugural exhibition marked a high point for the project and was designed to promote the ceramics to ensure future sales. A discussion of the role of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee in the selection of the work for this event will be included. The issues of authenticity in Inuit art and how indigenous qualities were emphasized in order to sell the ceramics will be examined in this chapter. The timing of this exhibition not only coincided with Canada's Centennial but with the planning of the interior designs for Habitat which was built for Expo '67. The importance of these events cannot be overlooked as they marked an important moment in the development of the Inuit art industry. The Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project profited greatly from this association, as will be explained in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four focuses on the demise of the ceramics project. As the project faltered, the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council's involvement with it increased. It was responsible for several reports, which began appearing in 1968 and were aimed at redirecting it. Their recommendations will be discussed throughout this chapter. Changes in arts and crafts officers will be examined in light of their effects on the project. Bob Billyard, Michael Kusugak, and Ashok Shah each brought a different approach to the project yet they all struggled with the lack of funding and government support. This change in policy toward Inuit art was the result of the transition of power between the federal and territorial governments. This issue will be discussed briefly and the territorial government's policy will

be touched on as well. Despite the best efforts of the Council and the various arts and crafts officers, the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project closed in 1977.

Prior to the concluding remarks of this thesis, the Conclusion will consider the revival of ceramics in Rankin Inlet, begun in 1993 under the direction of Jim Shirley, a long-time resident of the community. This project has brought together several of the original artists who work alongside the younger generation, creating images that are, at once, reminiscent of the old project yet are very distinct pieces in their own right. It is the belief of this author that this new venture will help to challenge the long-held beliefs surrounding Inuit art that the old project failed to breach. The new work has been exhibited and reviewed and its reception will be examined in light of the limited acceptance of new media by consumers of Inuit art.

CHAPTER 1: NORTHERN CHANGE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARTS AND CRAFTS INDUSTRY FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMUNITY OF RANKIN INLET

> We wonder that such beauty, vitality, joy, and eloquence can pour forth from a culture under severe stress from rapid, deep and pervasive change.[1]
>
> William Taylor, Jr., 1977.

While inspired by the print images presented in the exhibition The Inuit Print/L'estampe Inuit, William Taylor's statement can be applied to all forms of contemporary Inuit art as it developed under a unique set of circumstances. The Inuit art industry evolved at a time when the traditional Inuit way of life was changing irreversibly due to the effects of industrial development and social change in the North. This situation resulted in the need for the Inuit to enter the era of wage economy. In the 1950s and 1960s, Inuit art was seen by many people in the South as a solution that would draw on the existing skills of the Inuit, thereby enabling them to participate in this new economy without the need for excessive and possibly detrimental retraining. The development of this industry began after World War II when social and political interests in the North became acute. It is the purpose of this chapter to briefly discuss some of these changes. The development of the mining community in Rankin Inlet parallels these changes and their effects on the Inuit. Also, the government's involvement with the early stages of the Inuit art industry will be reviewed and attempts will be made to situate this industry within the policy structure of the day. By

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[1] William Taylor, Jr. "Foreword," Inuit Print/L'estampe Inuit (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1977), 22.

1962, Rankin Inlet was in need of economic development, so this chapter will conclude with a discussion of how the Arts and Crafts Program was established and why it was an appropriate solution at the time.

1.1 Changes in Canada's North and the Development of Rankin Inlet

Canada's North was the last region of the country to be touched by colonial expansion and industrial development. Prior to the turn of the century, the only resources the area had that were of interest to the Qallunaat were whales, various furs, and the elusive Northwest Passage. The quest for the passage and the expansion of the fur trade led to the extensive exploration of the Arctic and the charting of the coastal regions. Early development of the North followed the fierce competition of the trading companies: "In the east, the HBC [Hudson's Bay Company] fur traders huddled around the edge of the Hudson Bay and let the aboriginals come to them. In the west, the Nor'Westers went after the furs themselves and opened up the whole continent."[2] Despite this expansion and the advent of the trade culture, the Inuit and most other indigenous peoples who lived in the Northwest Territories were able to retain their autonomy until the late 1800s and in many cases the early 1900s. Considered the fiefdom of the Hudson's Bay Company and known as Rupert's Land, this area had been claimed for England.[3] The British government eventually gave this land to Canada through

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[2] Hamilton, Arctic Revolution, 10. The Western Arctic developed in a different manner than did the eastern region. This can be attributed to environmental differences and the availability of resources in each area. Hamilton provides the reader with a clear discussion of the forces that affected this development and the impact they had on the political direction of the Northwest Territories.

[3] This area of land was extensive, ranging from the Alaska border and the Rockies in the west to the east coast of Labrador. Areas in southern Canada, including a tiny portion which was Manitoba, lower Ontario and parts of Quebec along the St. Lawrence corridor, marked the southern border of

an Order in Council in 1870 but its control was not a real factor until well into the twentieth century. While missionaries, fur traders, and RCMP officers had been in contact with the Inuit for decades, the government policies which would affect life in the North would be developed after World War II. It was, in fact, "by the admission...of the Prime Minister [Louis St. Laurent] that until this moment, the nation's administration of its northern territories had been characterised by some degree of 'absence of mind.' "[4] The moment he was referring to was the creation of the federal Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources in 1953. After the War, the bureaucratic structure of administering the North began to take shape and expansion was swift. The Department was established, St. Laurent said "to give new emphasis and scope to work already being done, and to indicate...the fact that the centre of gravity...is being moved north."[5]

Rankin Inlet was a community that came to symbolize this new vision for the North (ill. 1). It was named after British explorer John Rankin, who charted the area while in search of the Northwest Passage in the 1600s.[6] The area, however, was known to the Inuit as a

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the territory while its northern perimeter was the top of the world. The Maritime region was not part of this claim nor was British Columbia.

In time, this vast expanse was divided into the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, Manitoba was expanded, and the territories of the Yukon and Northwest Territories were established. Each area developed at its own pace, with the three provinces expanding swiftly due to the advancement of the railway.

[4] Robert Williamson, Eskimo Underground: Socio-Cultural Change in the Canadian Central Arctic (Sweden: Uppsala University, 1974), 7.

[5] Cook, Records of the Northern Affairs Program, 15.

[6] R. Allerston, "Your Guide to Rankin Inlet," Northern Explorer, August-September 1991, 15.

fishing site but was not popular because hunting conditions were poor.[7] Except for a few families who wintered there, the area remained unpopulated as subsistence needs could not be met. Therefore, interest in its resources lay not with the Inuit but with the Qallunaat who had come North during the 1920s to survey the area for mineral deposits and in 1928 found nickel.[8] In time, the area around Rankin Inlet was developed by the Rankin Inlet Nickel Mine Limited, when in the early 1950s it became viable for a mine to be built in such an inhospitable climate.[9] By 1960, the community was a beacon attracting Inuit with the promises of employment.

This kind of development, synonymous with Western European notions of possession and property claims, was at odds with the Inuit's concept of land and its natural resources. This world-view holds that the elements of the land are intricately linked and must be respected as the Inuit's survival depends on it. Their nomadic lifestyle ensured that the natural resources they needed would not be exhausted and that migratory paths would be preserved. This practice, however, was not without complications as changes in migratory activity often resulted in severe hardship and starvation. Included in this lifestyle was the

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[7] Robert G. Williamson, "The Keewatin Settlements," The Musk-Ox 8 (1971): 21.

[8] D. M. LeBourdais, Metals and Men: The Story of Canadian Mining (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1957), 311. The Cyril Knight Prospecting Company Limited sent four prospectors to the area along the west coat of Hudson Bay during the summer of 1928. At Rankin Inlet, they "[noticed] gossan signs near the water's edge....some samples [were cut] which, when assayed, showed promise." In 1929, drilling took place yet despite good mineral yields, financing could not be secured until 1951.

Surveyed and developed in an era before the need for environmental impact studies and land claims resolutions, the mining company simply leased the rights from the Canadian government and built the mine with private funds.

[9] This viability was the result of advancements in technology and a rise in the price of nickel due to the effects of the Korean War (1950-1953).

development of different survival technologies based on the areas the Inuit frequented. In their exhaustive study of Inuit relocations, Frank James Tester and Peter Kulchyski went to great lengths to explain the differences between inland and coastal technologies.[10] The coastal Inuit relied on sea mammals and birds for their needs while the inland Inuit were dependent on caribou and fish. In the early 1950s when the caribou's migration path changed and their numbers dwindled, starvation resulted. Southern pressure on politicians and government officials to solve this problem became acute when it was brought to the public's attention after the publication of Farley Mowat's book The People of the Deer (1952).[11] At the time, consultation with and understanding of the needs of the Inuit was not a consideration of government officials. As Tester and Kulchyski point out, the solution, relocation, resulted in controversy.

Finding solutions to administering social assistance needs such as family allowance, health care, and education led to a series of complex decisions that dramatically affected the Inuit way of life.[12] With hunting activities being curtailed, the Inuit's diet changed dramatically and with fewer traditional supplies being available, a reliance on store-bought goods developed. Social concerns collided with those of the state and issues of northern

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[10] Tester and Kulchyski, Tammarniit (Mistakes). In this text, the authors elaborated on many aspects of the Inuit's traditional lifestyles to demonstrate how southern bureaucrats made most of their decisions based on misunderstandings and the lack of real knowledge about the North and the Inuit culture.

[11] Marcus, Relocating Eden, 16-25. Here the author documents how the government went to great lengths to discredit Mowat's work when it was first published. Despite Mowat's lack of accuracy, the public outrage at the conditions in the North forced the government into action.

[12] Tester and Kulchyski, Tammarniit (Mistakes), provide a detailed discussion of how the government policy of the day affected the Inuit way of life.

sovereignty to create settlements that facilitated administration and limited Inuit traditions and lifestyles. Relocation to the High Arctic and from the interior to coastal locations during the famine of 1953 were seen by bureaucrats as solutions to southern concerns for the well-being of the Inuit. In reality, though, these relocations resulted in a breakdown of the Inuit's way of life, altering kinship groups, hunting traditions and the apprentice system of teaching children. Itvia, a small settlement near Rankin Inlet, was a relocation centre for the inland Inuit from Garry Lake. It was established by the government in 1958 to service the needs of the victims of the severe starvation that had affected the region.[13] In 1960 Robert Williamson arrived there to work as the Superintendent of the Keewatin Rehabilitation Project. Fluent in Inuktitut, he became a long-time resident of Rankin Inlet and a close ally and staunch advocate of the Inuit. His support was extended to the ceramics project as will be discussed later in Chapter Four. Through his work with the rehabilitation project, he assisted several Inuit in gaining employment at the mine while others participated in a handicrafts program.[14]

The 1950s and 1960s witnessed extensive change in the Arctic, from a social and from an administrative perspective. The early years of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project correspond to this era when the administrative structure was being developed. In 1959, the structure of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources was reorganized and

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[13] Terrence W. Foster, "Rankin Inlet: a Lesson in Survival," The Musk-Ox 10 (1972): 34.

[14] Archival records show that this venture was ill-fated and most of the garments produced were not fit for sale. National Archives of Canada, Records of the Northern Affairs Program, Record Group 85, vol. 678, file A255-5/184 pt. 1; various sources in this file document the poor quality of the work being produced at that time. (Hereafter, the archival references will be cited as follows: NAC, RG 85, volume no., file no., and document information.)

six divisions emerged to facilitate the bureaucratic process and ensure that all policies concerning the North were considered from all angles.[15] While these divisions were preoccupied with the larger issues of housing, education, welfare, and natural resources, the need to develop stable economic opportunities was always a concern. While the Western Arctic was benefiting from the presence of the oil and mining industries, the Eastern Arctic lacked such resources. The Rankin Inlet Nickel Mine Limited, however, saw potential in a nickel deposit located on the west coast of Hudson Bay.

As early as 1953, the company began work by unloading a meticulously packed ship where the mine would eventually be built. As is the nature of northern development, they brought everything they possibly needed with them, from heavy equipment such as a compressor and truck to pre-fab buildings and the fuel necessary to run their operation.[16] In all, 1,500 tons of supplies were unloaded in fourteen days and within eleven months a community was starting to take form.[17] Operations did not run that smoothly and finances became a concern, but by August 1956 additional supplies were unloaded and the renamed mine, North Rankin Nickel Mine Limited, was proceeding with its plans.[18] From May 1957 to 1962 the mine was in full operation and the economy of Rankin Inlet was booming. This northern settlement developed swiftly and without concern for the consequences should the mine close. It soon became just like any other mining town in Canada as support business

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[15] Cook, Records of the Northern Affairs Program, 17.

[16] Foster, "Rankin Inlet," 33.

[17] Ibid., 34.

[18] Ibid., 34.

developed alongside the mine. A Hudson's Bay store, a nursing station, a school, and several missions were all built to service the needs of the employees.[19]

Inuit employment with the mine first started with the off-loading of the first supply ship in 1953 and good workers were retained to help build the mine and the community.[20] Considered a bold undertaking in the 1950s, North Rankin Nickel Mine Limited employed Inuit in all aspects of its operation and when it closed in 1962, 80% of its work force was Inuit. A first in Canada, this experiment introduced the Inuit to the ways of the industrial world.[21] This association was not without some difficulties as there were significant cultural adjustments to be made by both the Inuit and the Qallunaat. Not accustomed to the repetitive and structured nature of industrial employment, the Inuit found the drudgery of working in the mine a strain and being in such an enclosed environment was also difficult for them.[22] They sought refuge and relief from this experience by spending time on the land, hunting, and enjoying the open spaces.[23] At times, this resulted in incidences of absenteeism which the mining officials worked around by training several employees to do the same job.[24] The Inuit proved to be good employees and many were promoted. The pay, however, was questionable, but it was steady employment and this attracted many Inuit from the Keewatin

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[19] Ibid., 35.

[20] Ibid., 33.

[21] Ibid., 35.

[22] Williamson, Eskimo Underground, 115.

[23] Ibid., 116.

[24] Ibid., 116.

and beyond to Rankin Inlet. This made it a unique settlement where Inuit of different subcultures worked together and eventually built a strong community.[25]

With so many Inuit employed by the mine, a dependency on the wage economy quickly developed and swift acculturation also took place. The government, eager for the Inuit to find gainful employment in order to become self-sufficient and to stay off social assistance programs, was ill-prepared for the catastrophe that was about to take place. When the mine closed in 1962, most Inuit had grown accustomed to the wage economy and were reluctant or unable to return to the land. The community was devastated by the closure and alternative forms of employment had to be found as most of Rankin Inlet's citizens were collecting social assistance. A government report prepared by D. M. Brack and D. McIntosh of the Industrial Division of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources concluded that Rankin Inlet was overpopulated and outlined ways of eliminating the problem:

1) Returning the Eskimo people to a land based economy.
2) Opening up job opportunities for Eskimo miners in other mining centres.
3) Relocation of Eskimos into settlements that, theoretically, were underpopulated.
4) Creating small industries in Rankin Inlet.[26]

For a variety of reasons the first three options did not meet with the desired results and the population, while decreasing slightly, remained high.[27] Ultimately, the government's

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[25] Williamson, "The Keewatin Settlements," 21.

[26] D. M. Brack and D. McIntosh, Keewatin Mainland Area Economic Survey and Regional Appraisal (Ottawa: Industrial Division, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, 1963); quoted in Foster, "Rankin Inlet," 38.

[27] See Foster, "Rankin Inlet," 38-39, for a discussion of the other schemes.

favourite plan was firm: "this little town was 'phasing out', and funds were not available for art or anything creative, new or practical."[28] This was met with strong resistance by the several hundred people who had made a home for themselves there and refused to leave. The move to settlement living, had provided the Inuit with a regular income and access to "improved living conditions and health, education, and retail facilities [which] all combined to motivate the majority of the Rankin Inlet Eskimo population toward a way of life which would perpetuate the enjoyment of such advantages."[29] From this perspective, it is not surprising that returning to the uncertainty of nomadic living was not appealing. Also, as Williamson points out, many Inuit "had relinquished their dog teams, disposed of their skin clothing and indeed some of the weapons they needed for the hunt."[30]

Thus, option four was further explored. A cannery and an arts and crafts centre were built and attempts at creating a tourist industry also took place. Throughout the 1960s, these activities met with varying degrees of success. Slowly, Rankin Inlet began to rebound from its earlier setback as the infrastructure that the mine created became an important element in the community's survival. Housing, schools, and other southern conveniences were in place to support the next phase of northern development. In the early 1970s, after the transition of power from the federal government to the Northwest Territories, the administrative centre for the District of the Keewatin was moved from Churchill to the old

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[28] Robert Williamson, "Creativity in Kangirlliniq," Rankin Inlet/Kangirlliniq (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1981), 18.

[29] Williamson, Eskimo Underground, 127.

[30] Ibid., 127.

mining town. Rankin Inlet as a government town continues to thrive. Today, with a population of roughly 1,400, it has become an important communication and transportation centre for the Eastern Arctic and services the needs of all its northern citizens. Unlike the communities of Baker Lake and Cape Dorset, Rankin Inlet has never been able to define itself as an art centre even though many of its artists gained international reputations during the productive 1960s and art continues to be an important factor in a city that is dominated by Western economies.

1.2 Establishing the Arts and Crafts Industry

It is commonly accepted that the combined forces of James Houston, the Guild, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Canadian government were responsible for the early development of the contemporary Inuit art industry.[31] This industry, however, could not have flourished had the Inuit not seen the potential in Houston's suggestion. They approached this initiative by being "very creative [and by] trying new things which might improve their livelihood and their satisfactions."[32] They adapted their existing skills to create images they thought "the white man wanted"; sometimes with great success and other times not, but the Inuit continued with this new endeavour. Of the various supporters of Inuit art, it is the government's role that is of particular interest. Its association with Inuit art dates from the 1920s and is characterized by its complex role as one of the institutions that "conspired to

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[31] For a history of this early initiative, see: Houston, Confessions of an Igloo Dweller and The Permanent Collection: Inuit Arts and Crafts, c. 1900-1980 (Montreal: Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec, 1980) With essays by Virginia Watt, Helga Goetz, and Marybelle Myers.

[32] Nelson H. H. Graburn, "Inuit Art and the Expression of Eskimo Identity," 53.

encourage, discourage, and alter the work of Inuit artists."[33] As Helga Goetz points out "[an] astonishing percentage of...cultural-change agents were civil servants, formulating or carrying out government policy, and all art programmes depended to some extent on government funding."[34] The Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project was one such program and this connection to government involvement is a recurring theme in this thesis. After the initial promotion of Inuit art in the early 1950s by Houston and the Guild, it was the government that had the financial and administrative means to facilitate its expansion. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, it gave direction and support to an industry that in its view was "beneficial to the economy of the Inuit but also [contributed] to self-esteem and psychological well-being."[35] Its support was characterized by the sponsorship of development programs for arts initiatives, the providing of instructors to give direction on techniques, the mounting and promoting of exhibitions of the work, and, as will be discussed below, the establishing of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council.

An example of the government's control over the Inuit art industry can be seen in the following discussion of policy directive. As this industry began to grow, several divisions within the Northern Affairs Branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, among them welfare and education, saw it as the solution to their diverse problems. In an attempt to clarify tasks and responsibilities with regard to handicraft production, a policy directive was issued by R. A. J. Phillips then the Assistant Director,

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[33] Goetz, "Inuit Art," 357.

[34] Ibid., 357.

[35] Goetz, "Role of the Department," 4.

Plans and Policies of the Department. In this 1959 document, he identified the lack of coordination between divisions as a major problem in administering the area of arts and crafts. He proposed that this be solved immediately in order to avoid "unnecessary spending of public funds and provisions for staff who may not be needed."[36] With the demand for Inuit handicrafts growing, Phillips's interest in making the industry successful are clear and his desire to coordinate activities lay at the root of his concern:

> Unless immediate centralization and orientation take place in our handicraft production efforts, this opportunity to create a lasting, worthwhile industry among the Eskimo people will be lost. It is, therefore, necessary to centralize our efforts in the field related to the production of handicrafts.[37]

He lists seven steps that outline how the Industrial Division will take control of this important industry. These steps are primarily concerned with issues relating to money (salaries for instructors, purchasing supplies, and the maintenance of facilities) and to staff (hiring qualified instructors and training them). Ultimately, in Phillips's plan the Industrial Division was responsible for "all policy matters related to handicraft production and marketing."[38]

By situating Inuit art within the Industrial Division, the production of arts and crafts was often treated as an income-generating activity. This perspective tended to overshadow other aspects of art production such as its aesthetic value, the quality of workmanship, and the artists's artistic potential. In the 1950s the Department used the Northern Service Officers

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[36] NAC, RG 85, vol. 1279, file 255-1 vol. 11, R. A. J. Phillips, Policy Directive, 17 July 1959, [1].

[37] Ibid., [1].

[38] Ibid., [1].

to administer the arts and crafts programs, their main responsibility, however, was to ensure that the community's needs for housing and supplies were met. As a result, several of them found that managing the handicrafts program was the most time-consuming and difficult part of their job. One exception was James Houston, who used his posting in Cape Dorset to develop its arts program and to establish the very successful printing project. By the 1960s, arts and crafts officers were being hired with the specific purpose of dealing with the handicrafts industry. They administered the programs in specific communities; buying the work, shipping it south, doing the necessary paper work, and instructing and advising the Inuit in the area of technical development. In many cases the arts and crafts officers established successful programs but their efforts were hampered by poor communications with Ottawa and chronic problems in receiving supplies.[39]

As the popularity of this industry grew, more Inuit began participating in these initiatives and a link between them and the southern support system had to be developed. The arts and crafts officers filled that role well, but their limited access to the market called for yet another contact. In the communities, co-operatives had been established by the government as "the best vehicle of joining the two activities of culture and money."[40] Involved in a variety of commercial enterprises, several of these co-ops became noted for buying and selling the artists's work. In some communities like Cape Dorset, the co-op was at the core of a very successful arts venture. These co-ops were designed by the government

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[39] Goetz, "Role of the Department," 55.

[40] Mitchell, "Social, Economic, and Political Transformation," 342; quoting Louis Tapardjuk, a past President of Canadian Arctic Co-operatives Federation Limited.

to be run by the Inuit, for their benefit and in time they became influential institutions, taking on political issues like self-determination.[41] While the Kissarvik Co-operative of Rankin Inlet sold the artists's work, it did not participate as fully in the development of the community's arts and crafts program as other co-ops had done. As a result, it will not be discussed in this thesis. These co-ops sold the work to larger wholesalers who had access to the commercial gallery system in the South. One such wholesaler was the Canadian Arctic Producers and it was to play an active part in the marketing of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project. Established in 1965 by the government, this wholesaler was mandated to encourage "the development of a viable on-going market for Inuit arts and crafts in Canada and around the world."[42] In time "[this] emphasis on economic rather that artistic concerns" began to permeate the government's view towards the advancement of the Inuit art industry and this "remained an inherent problem in its approach to Inuit art."[43]

In addition to developing economic policies and structures for the Inuit art industry, the Department also formulated directives that provided field workers, especially arts and crafts officers, with guidelines for establishing their handicrafts programs. Emphasis on carving and sewing was encouraged because indigenous skills, materials, and subject matter

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[41] Ibid., 346.

[42] Canadian Arctic Producers Co-operative Limited, promotion brochure, 1980. In CAP subject file at the Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Hull.

The Canadian Arctic Producers Co-operative Limited is known simply as CAP and this term is used throughout this thesis. 1982 saw the amalgamation of CAP with the Canadian Arctic Cooperatives Limited, another wholesaler, to become Arctic Co-operatives Limited. ("History at a Glance," Inuit Art Quarterly 5, no. 4 (Fall 1990-Winter 1991): 25.)

[43] Goetz, "Role of the Department," 39.

were used in their creation, thus ensuring that the work would be accepted based on its authenticity. In a statement of basic principles published in 1967, the Department's objectives for the Inuit art industry were as follows:

> A) To assess the skills of the Northern craftsman through which new arts and crafts projects may be developed.
> B) To assess and direct existing programs through which to better the economy of the Northern settlements.
> C) To keep alive the traditions of the Northern culture by encouraging continued production of traditional forms, at the same time directing the skills of the artists to new media and contemporary application of these.
> D) To conduct development projects in such a manner, so that once the economic viability has been proven, the projects may evolve into co-operatives or other forms of private enterprise.
> E) To train and develop management and recording skills among the local people so that they may be prepared to assume effective management of co-operatives or other private enterprise organizations.[44]

The Rankin Inlet Arts and Crafts Program was directed by policies similar to these. As will become apparent latter in this thesis, "directing the skills of the artists to new media" was an easily attainable goal while developing a market for the new work was an illusive pursuit. With all these principles and policies in place, the government bureaucrats were ready to expand the industry across the North and around the world.

1.3 The Canadian Eskimo Arts Council

While the government was willing to develop and support arts and crafts programs in the North, it was anxious to distance itself from the areas of marketing, and, by extension, evaluation. As a result, the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee was established in 1961 with

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[44] DIANA, Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre, Box: Indian and Northern Affairs Archives, file T255-1 [3], A. M. Millican to Administrators of the Mackenzie and Arctic, 13 September 1967, [1].

the mandate to develop marketing schemes for the annual print collections being released by the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative in Cape Dorset. To fill this Committee, government officials appointed people from the private sector who had the expertise necessary to organize and promote the maturing Inuit art industry.[45] Its importance grew swiftly, and in 1967 its status was changed and it became the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council.[46] By the time it was disbanded in 1989, there was no area of the industry that had not felt the Council's influence. As Gustavison pointed out in her work on this institution, it was "without precedent": "Never before, or since, has the art production of a people been treated as an entity that could be scrutinized, directed, protected, and promoted like the art of the Inuit."[47] Its history, while straightforward, is highly controversial and is intricately linked to the development of Inuit art as a viable commodity.[48] For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to understand the principles guiding the direction of the Council, as it played a major role in how the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project was handled and marketed in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The Council remained consistent in its direction due in part to the limited changes in its membership and its clearly defined mission as an art agent charged with developing a marketing system for the Inuit artists. New Council members were nominated by existing

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[45] Gustavison, Arctic Expression, 13.

[46] For the ease of the discussion in this section, the Council will stand for both organizations.

[47] Gustavison, Arctic Expression, 11.

[48] For a complete history of the Council see: Gustavison, Arctic Expressions; and Richard Simmins, Report - Canadian Eskimo Arts Council Program Evaluation (Ottawa: Bureau of Management Consulting, Department Supply and Services Canada, March 1979).

members and appointed by the Minister of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (later the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs). Entry was limited "to persons with distinguished reputations in fields that would contribute to the development of Eskimo arts and crafts."[49] These individuals included artists, curators, writers, and gallery owners who were well-versed in the graphic arts. Among the early members were Paul Arthur, Managing Editor of Canadian Art; M. F. (Budd) Feheley, President of T. D. F. Artists Ltd. and an art collector; Dr. Evan Turner, Director of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; George Elliot, Vice-president and Director of MacLaren Advertising Company; and John Robertson, a noted gallery owner. They each brought their views about art to the table and left behind clear ideas as to the direction the Council should take. Their views were often driven by notions of connoisseurship and the quest for excellence, tempered by their understanding of the current trends in the contemporary art world. "A genuine concern existed...that [this] new and unique art form could be ruthlessly exploited" and the Council, believing in the importance of Inuit art, positioned itself to provide "enlightened assistance" to the government and the Inuit.[50] Conspicuously absent from this advisory board was Inuit representation. In 1974, after much discussion this changed and Joanasie Salomonie and Armand Tagoona were appointed to the Council.[51] Others followed throughout the 1970s and 1980s, including Michael Kusugak and David Ruben Piqtoukun.

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[49] Simmins, Report - Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, 17.

[50] Ibid., 10.

[51] Gustavison, Arctic Expressions, 45. Tagoona, however, did not sit on the Council as "he [resigned] before attending a meeting."

Between its first meeting in 1961 and the formulation of its "Frames of Reference" in 1973, very little of its philosophy had changed. Four main areas of concern drove the Council in all its activities:

1. maintaining high standards of quality in the arts and crafts;
2. advising on promotion in present and future markets;
3. instruction in arts and crafts, including the introduction of new techniques.
4. copyright protection and compensation. (original emphasis)[52]

Also included in its concerns was the need to develop strong channels of communication between the Council and other art industry workers, and the artists in the different communities. This was a difficult challenge but in time meetings began taking place in the North[53] and conferences were arranged in the South to promote exchange between artists from different communities.[54] The Council also recommended that printmakers from Cape Dorset visited other communities, most notably Holman, to share their knowledge of this profession.[55] Ultimately, it was the attention to the issues involving quality that came to define the Council and, in this context its relationship with the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project.

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[52] Simmins, Report - Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, 27.

[53] Gustavison, Arctic Expressions, 40. While various members of the Council had gone North prior to this moment, the first northern Council meeting took place in Iqaluit on 29 April 1971.

[54] Ibid., 46. The most significant one was the Arctic Women Workshop which took place in June 1972 in Toronto and was attended by over 120 delegates. They came to exchange ideas and participate in practical sessions.

[55] Ibid., 31.

Quality - the significant art historical term used to define works of greatness and importance - was the only criteria the Council members seemed to use for evaluating the art under their mandate. Today, the importance of quality as defined by a Western or Eurocentric standpoint is being questioned; "Whose quality?" and "What or whose criteria is or was being used to define quality?" Nelson H. H. Graburn's work in this area during the 1970s raised many questions and brought to light the notion that the Inuit view of quality was vastly different from that of those who were buying the art.[56] The Council seems to have remained oblivious to Graburn's ideas and continued with its policy of "[encouraging] 'museum art'."[57] Its "functions were interlocking, and theoretically connected with quality": galleries were based on their prestige; works were adjudicated with the fine arts market in mind; instruction was given to improve craftsmanship; and copyright protection was championed to eliminate the threat of inferior work from infiltrating the industry.[58] Throughout its existence, controversy followed many of the Council's decisions, especially those involving the early print collections from Povugnirtuk and Holman, which were often rejected. Always cognizant of the Inuit communities's need to generate income and of the fact that demand

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[56] Graburn, "Some Problems in the Understanding of Contemporary Inuit Art." In this article he discussed how the Inuit and the Qallunaat define such terms as quality and protection in Inuit art. Language differences are at the root of their contrasting views.

Graburn "White Evaluation of the Quality of Inuit Sculpture," 271. In this study, he found that not only do Inuit and Qallunaat evaluate the art differently but there was "a remarkable lack of agreement among the White evaluators ...[and]...more variance in the responses of White experts than novices." This could help explain the various opinions that surrounded the adjudications of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project.

[57] Simmins, Report - Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, 43.

[58] Ibid., 27.

for prints and other art forms was insatiable, the Council clung to its beliefs and direction in the face of much criticism.[59]

1.4 Arts and Crafts Come to Rankin Inlet

As the government placed more and more emphasis on developing the arts and crafts industry, the location of the various programs became of prime importance: "Decisions on where to establish projects was generally based directly on economic need rather than on any special interest by the local Inuit to produce arts and crafts."[60] It is not surprising, then, that the Keewatin was identified as an area requiring such development. Devastated by the closure of the mine, the people of Rankin Inlet desperately needed employment opportunities for economic reasons and to improve morale. By the early 1960s, the Department had begun emphasizing more structured programs such as printmaking and various craft initiatives, leaving the carving industry to develop independently.[61] This new directive often called for "a special building and a planned programme...[which] imposed a structure foreign to the experience of the new townspeople they were designed to serve."[62] In Rankin Inlet, however, the adaptation to working in the mine had left the Inuit with a clear impression of structured employment. Being a member of the new arts and crafts program was seen as a positive sign as they received a steady income, which enabled them to provide for the needs of their families through the Western wage economy. The abandoned mining facilities also provided

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[59] Gustavison, Arctic Expressions, 17.

[60] Goetz, "The Role of the Department," 43.

[61] Ibid., 44.

[62] Ibid., 44.

the Department with buildings that could be transformed into a modest studio space. This was significant; Goetz explained, as many arts and crafts officers arrived North "[w]ith no northern experience and faced very difficult conditions. Promised buildings were not in place, supplies did not arrive, living conditions were primitive, and they did not speak the language of the people they were to inspire."[63] The Arts and Crafts Program that was about to be established in Rankin Inlet suffered from most of these ailments. However, the use of the bunkhouse did ease its development somewhat.

With the Keewatin identified as an area in need, attempts at consolidating earlier and sporadic arts and crafts activities began in the early 1960s. In March 1963 the Industrial Division received funding through the Treasury Board to hire contract employees to go North with the specific purpose of establishing structured arts and crafts programs in the Keewatin.[64] Claude Grenier was among the first arts and crafts officers hired. He was charged with creating a program that would be economically viable and artistically unique. The desire to create unique results was a government concern aimed at decreasing the creation of identical objects and increasing diversity of styles in Inuit art.[65] This uniqueness would be pursued through the development of the ceramics project. Rankin Inlet carvers also established their own recognizable style which was noted for its minimalist presentation. In

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[63] Goetz, "Inuit Art," 370.

[64] NAC, RG 85, vol. 678, A255-5/184 pt. 1, Director to Administrator of the Arctic, 2 April 1963.

[65] NAC, RG 85, vol. 678, file A255-5/184 pt. 1, D. Snowden, Chief Industrial Division, to W. Rudnicki, 23 June 1960, [1].

March Grenier arrived in the community for a one year stay in the Keewatin that evolved into a seven-year sojourn.

A unilingual francophone from Chicoutimi, Grenier was trained as a ceramist at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Québec, and he taught at the Ecole de Céramique Chicoutimi prior to his departure north in 1963.[66] This experience would have made him well-suited to the position of teacher and advisor. His role was diverse and shifted according to the needs of the various media the artists worked with. In the areas of sculpture and sewing, he provided the artists with constructive suggestions, generally of a technical nature. More organization was needed for the development of the ceramics project. Grenier was responsible for teaching the use of the medium and for the technical elements of creating glazes, experimenting with the clay bodies, running the kiln and firing the work. As arts and crafts officer, it was his responsibility to look after the administrative duties of filing progress and financial reports with Ottawa, arranging for the delivery of necessary supplies, sending completed work south to be evaluated for the market and paying the Inuit for their work. In addition to his duties in Rankin Inlet, the Department had him travelling to Whale Cove and Chesterfield Inlet, on a somewhat regular basis, to establish arts and crafts programs in these communities.

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[66] "On enseignera la céramique à Chicoutimi," Le Progrès du Saguenay, 4 mars 1959.

CHAPTER 2: DEVELOPING THE RANKIN INLET CERAMICS PROJECT

> I teach the technique only but the design never. I say nothing about that because the Eskimo knows. He is filled with art.[1]
>
> Claude Grenier, 1967.

Grenier's statement, made during the press conference for the exhibition Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67, points to the murky area of influence. In the field of Inuit art, this is an awkward topic to discuss as the work is often affected by a variety of influences including general market shifts, the introduction of new media, the tastes of demanding co-op managers, and the suggestions from advisors and specialists. The Inuit's ability to adapt is cited as one of their most important attributes which has helped in their survival. This quality has been transferred to the area of art, where suggestions are accepted and rejected without truly altering the "Inuitness" of their work. It is the purpose of this chapter to explore the various influences, that took the form of constructive criticism and technical improvements, and were designed to improve the products the artists of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project were creating. Since the project was new, every effort was being made to guide it in a prosperous direction. Prior to this discussion, the development of the Rankin Inlet Arts and Crafts Program, including the ceramics project, will be examined. This chapter will conclude by considering how the ceramics project became dependent on the ideas expressed by the

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[1] "Artist Teaches Eskimos Technique but Never Design," Toronto Globe and Mail, 1 March 1967.

members of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee and will take into account the visits of two ceramic specialists that were made at the suggestion of the Committee.

2.1 Establishing the Arts and Crafts Program

Prior to his departure north, Grenier was briefed in Ottawa by Department officials, J. W. Evans and William Larmour, as to the nature and the direction they expected the Rankin Inlet Arts and Crafts Program to take. They stated: "The basis of your program...will be the production of arts and crafts familiar to the people."[2] As a result, the program was a multifaceted endeavour, with carving initiatives in ivory and soapstone and an extensive sewing project being central to its early success. Over time, printmaking and tapestries were experimented with as well, but the lack of written information and images precludes discussing them. Grenier was advised:

> As a newcomer, the Eskimo people [would] be exceedingly interested in [his] attitude toward their traditional forms of arts and crafts. If they [saw] that [he understood] and [appreciated] this work it [would] lay an important groundwork for further development.[3]

Despite language and cultural barriers, Grenier succeeded in gaining the participants's trust and, throughout his stay in Rankin Inlet, the arts industry thrived. The addition of the ceramics project tends to overshadow these important activities. It received a disproportionate amount of support from the Department, both financially and in terms of artistic guidance, during its productive period. It was reviewed frequently and advice from

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[2] NAC, RG 85, vol. 678, file A255-5/184 pt. 1, Terms of Reference for Mr. Claude Grenier - Arts and Crafts Supervisor - Rankin Inlet, April 1963, 2.

[3] Ibid., 2.

outside specialists was always forthcoming. Before considering the ceramics project, a brief discussion of the other aspects of the program is in order.

Soapstone sculpture is the cornerstone of the Inuit art industry. It was the first medium to be encouraged by Houston and the Guild, to be written about by Swinton and to boast "old masters" to which Rankin Inlet can claim its share. Carving already had a small following by the time Grenier arrived. It was encouraged mostly among those who were no longer able to work in the mine. In 1963 John Tiktak, who had been injured in a mining accident, set a precedent by dedicating himself to carving "professionally."[4] This action "signalled a change in the Inuit cultural tradition as well as a new development in the young history of Inuit art," where the prestige of being an accomplished hunter was transferred to successful carvers.[5] The carving activities drew many participants, several of whom, including John Tiktak, Pierre Karlik, John Kavik, and George Arluk, gained international recognition. Collectively, these artists, along with others from Baker Lake and Eskimo Point, created a style which has become identified as the "Keewatin aesthetic". Their work, known for "its strong emphasis on form and line, appears decidedly minimal. This is not a negative observation, but rather, it refers to the vitality and immediacy of expression common to art stripped of superfluous detail and reduced to its essential form."[6] Other defining elements of this style are the medium, a dark grey stone that is difficult to work with, and subject

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[4] Bernadette Driscoll, "Rankin Inlet Art: The Winnipeg Art Gallery Collection," Rankin Inlet/Kangirlliniq (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1981), 36; quoting George Swinton, Tiktak: Sculptor from Rankin Inlet, N.W.T. (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1970).

[5] Ibid., 36 and Swinton, Sculpture of the Inuit, 23.

[6] Zepp, Pure Vision, 35.

matter which emphasizes the human figure over the narrative scenes of myths and the hunt which were common in other areas of the Arctic.[7] A sampling of Tiktak's and Kavik's work can be seen in illustrations 2 and 3. For Grenier, administering the carving program was a straightforward task, unlike the situation with regard to the ceramics and sewing projects. He was responsible for ensuring that a steady supply of soapstone and ivory was available for the artists as were the necessary tools. Also, he advised the artists on any improvements they could make to the work, purchased the pieces as they were offered, and did the necessary paper work to ship the work south for sale.

The sewing project was more structured. It required more organization, as material had to be cut to various pattern sizes and orders had to be filled according to market demands and the specific criteria of the buyers. It was also dependent on the importation of duffle fabric and notions. Over time, Cécile Grenier, Claude's wife, organized the women in sewing projects which included making parkas, mittens and slippers. She developed a system whereby seamstresses could pick up "kits" of pre-cut patterns, embroidery thread, and needles and take them home to sew.[8] When they returned with the finished product, the women were paid for their work. The parkas were decorated with embroidered and appliqued "motifs such as hunting scenes, figures, animals, birds or representations of the local flora."[9]

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[7] For a detailed discussion of the history of this aesthetic, see Zepp's Pure Vision and The Williamson Collection of Inuit Art (Regina: Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, 1987) and Swinton, Sculpture of the Inuit.

[8] Claude Grenier, "Some Wonderful, Creative Years in Rankin Inlet," About Arts and Crafts 5, no. 1 (1982): 31.

[9] Ibid., 34.

Under her guidance, the sewing project flourished. The needlework consistently received high praise, being of "excellent quality." Cécile was cited as being "a very competent person who has made a valuable contribution to the handicrafts project at Rankin."[10] Like the ceramics project, the success of the sewing industry in Rankin Inlet was closely related to the Greniers' stay in the community and, after their departure in 1970, its structure dwindled. The significance of this decline cannot be overlooked as it was symptomatic of the Inuit art industry at the time and as such it will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

It is important to keep in mind that the transition from a nomadic hunting lifestyle to settlement living was not an easy one to make. The development of the Inuit art industry helped ease this transition for many of its participants by enabling them to use their existing skills to create objects for monetary exchange. For women who were skilled with a needle and thread, sewing for commercial gains became an extremely important activity. It provided them with an opportunity to participate in the new wage economy by creating Inuit-styled clothing for sale in the south. In traditional Inuit culture, sewing is regarded as the most valuable skill a woman can possess and bestows upon her "an important status, as her hunter husband depended on her sewing for his survival just as much as she depended on the food from the animals that he hunted."[11] This was a practical exchange, as clothes needed to be durable and effective for long journeys across the Arctic and for the arduous task of hunting.

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[10] NAC, RG 85, vol. 1918, file 255-5/184 vol. 4, A. Stevenson, Administrator of the Arctic, to Director, 4 February 1966, 2. As a result of her volunteer contribution, she eventually received funds to offset the babysitting costs she incurred while running the sewing project.

[11] Maria Muehlen, "Inuit Textile Arts," In the Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art, ed. Canadian Museum of Civilization (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Canadian Ethnology Service, Mercury Series Paper 124, 1993), 479.

Like most traditional activities, the production of clothing was endowed with spiritual qualities and was governed by strict taboos of when to sew and when the work must be completed. In settlement life, this activity lost its importance as the convenience of store-bought goods took hold. By participating in the sewing activities, the women were able "to continue their status as equal partners in their households...through their skill in creating [sewn garments]."[12] At the time, this economic contribution "[involved] every home in Rankin Inlet, and in over half of them this has become a major source of income. Indeed, in many families in Keewatin, the women's skills have proven to be a more steady source of income than men's endeavours."[13] Thus, these sewing activities, along with carving projects, became important avenues for the Inuit to adapt to the new system and to retain the essence of their culture. While the carving and sewing projects formed an important part of the history of the Rankin Inlet Arts and Crafts Program, they will not be discussed any further as the focus of this thesis remains the ceramics project.

Between May and December 1963, Grenier developed the carving and sewing projects. In his monthly reports he was optimistic about the direction the program was taking. In his "Summary of 1963 Activities" he indicated that the efforts to develop a handicraft program were bearing fruit. After purchasing objects of "no or very little artistic value," he was able, through these transactions, to encourage the Inuit to improve their workmanship.[14]

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[12] Ibid., 493.

[13] Williamson, Eskimo Underground, 164-165.

[14] NAC, RG 85, vol. 678, file A255-5/184 pt. 1, Rankin Inlet - Handicrafts Centre - Summary of 1963 Activities, Claude Grenier, n. d., [1].

As a result, work "progressed constantly and perseveringly. 125 Eskimos... reported for work connected with our program which does not prevent them to devote their time to hunting, fishing, or traping (sic)."[15] Throughout the program, the largest number of participants were associated with the sewing initiatives and they too were receiving much praise and encouragement from Grenier. He was, however, becoming increasingly frustrated at the delays in establishing the ceramics project.[16] Grenier's original contract was for twelve months and by September 1963 he had yet to receive the ceramic supplies he had requisitioned that April. After a flurry of correspondence on this issue, a new order was made and Grenier received his supplies by the year's end.[17] In light of this delay, officials in Ottawa extended his contract for another year so he could properly develop this new project.

2.2 Why Clay?

Throughout the history of contemporary Inuit art, a variety of media has been introduced to Inuit artists by outsiders. The most famous is the successful printing industry that developed during the 1960s. Begun in Cape Dorset under the direction of James Houston and Oshuitok Ipeelee, a respected hunter and carver, graphic arts became a staple of the Inuit art industry across the North. During the 1970s, the creation of wall hangings, tapestries, and

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[15] Ibid., [1].

[16] In separate incidents both Robert and Jean Williamson indicate that the ceramics project did not receive supplies until the winter of 1964-1965. However, the trail of government documents I found shows that the work began in January 1964. (Williamson, Eskimo Underground, 110; Jean Williamson, interviewed by David Zimmerly, Interview Transcript, March 1985, [10].)

[17] NAC, RG 85, vol. 678, file A255-5/184 pt. 1, Correspondence between the Area Administrator and officials in Ottawa on the issue of ceramic supplies began in October 1963 and ended that December.

jewellery was encouraged in a variety of communities, notably Baker Lake and Pangnirtung.[18] Why and how certain media are advanced in different communities is often explained by the presence of a specific individual or individuals who saw the potential for a given product. In addition to Houston, Father Henri Tardy of Holman and Victor Tinkl of Povungnituk are cited as assisting the artists in establishing graphic arts programs in their respective communities,[19] while Jack and Sheila Butler guided the Baker Lake artists through what is considered to be that community's most fruitful period in the early 1970s. For the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project, answers to the illusive questions "Why clay?" and "Who proposed its introduction?" have been difficult to find. The evidence, however, points to the fact that the ceramics project was planned and discussed prior to Grenier's departure north and possibly at his request, considering he was a ceramist.

As discussed in Chapter One, government officials believed that the Inuit art industry was the golden solution to the various problems facing the Inuit. There was, however, a limitation to its success as more and more communities began to produce quality carvings and graphic arts collections. As a result, a quest for variety was undertaken by officials in the Industrial Division. It is quite possible that clay was considered a potential medium within the Department. Two separate incidents support this notion. The first is correspondence between Alma Houston and R. A. J. Phillips concerning the introduction of ceramics to the

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[18] The creation of wall hangings in Baker Lake began in 1970 during the Butlers' tenure. The Weave Shop in Pangnirtung was started in 1970 by the territorial government but the development of the tapestries only took hold in 1978. (Muehlen, "Inuit Textile Arts," 479-480, 487.)

[19] Working during the early 1960s, Father Tardy and Victor Tinkl both experienced difficulties when dealing with the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee, which rejected or held back prints from their graphic arts collections on a regular basis. (Gustavison, Arctic Expressions, 21, 24.)

artists in Cape Dorset. The second is Grenier's "Terms of Reference," which clearly indicates that the introduction of ceramics was part of his responsibilities.

By 1960, the art program at Cape Dorset was well established and the fledgling print shop was receiving strong encouragement from the southern market. I do not know what prompted the notion of working with clay but interest in the medium was strong enough that Makitoo, a Cape Dorset artist, accompanied Alma Houston to Ann Arbour, Michigan to study ceramics in the fall of 1960.[20] She had a strong aptitude for the medium yet, despite having received training in pottery-making, plans for establishing a ceramics program in Cape Dorset were never truly developed. The possible introduction of ceramics to Cape Dorset prompted Alma Houston to ask several questions, two of which received significant answers. The first, the issue of power, was directly related to running the kiln and the second concerned itself with "[the] question of pottery-making in early Eskimo culture."[21]

Power in the Arctic, like many other southern amenities, was still a precious commodity in the early 1960s. In 1961, Cape Dorset was to receive a new power plant and it would generate enough surplus power to run a kiln at off-hours. This information was gathered based on the specifications of a kiln that used 5000 watts of 110 volts and would be fired at a temperature of 2000 F for 4 to 6 hours.[22] Beyond this firing time, it would be

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[20] NAC, RG 85, vol. 384, file 255-1-2 pt. 3, Director to Mr. Snowden, 17 October 1960, [1].

[21] NAC, RG 85, vol. 453, file 255-1-2 pt. 4, R. A. J. Phillips to Alma Houston, 17 November 1960, [1].

[22] Ibid., [1].

difficult to run without interfering with the peak-load of the community.[23] The choice of the electric kiln over a fuel one was an economic necessity, since the cost of importing fuel to the Arctic was prohibitive. Alice Lighthall, a member of the Guild's Indian-Eskimo Committee and an influential supporter of Inuit art, was opposed to this new venture. Her main impetus for "[speaking] so vigorously against Arctic pottery-making" was financial: "It could only be uneconomical owing to the high cost of fuel for firing the kiln."[24] Little did the government know how true her objection would become; the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project was to have a poor economic return on its investment. The issue of power in the North was a fundamental one that could easily be overlooked by southern decision-makers who took this precious commodity for granted. The choice of Rankin Inlet as the location to explore the potential of ceramics was logical. The abandoned mining facilities not only provided the first studio space for the project but the existing power supply would easily have met the demand of continuously running an electric kiln.

Alma Houston's second concern dealt with the possibility of the Inuit having created pottery in the past. Her queries about archaeological finds and Inuit pottery-making in earlier times would be exploited later as a selling feature of the Rankin Inlet work. D. Snowden, Chief of the Industrial Division, approached the National Museum of Man on behalf of Phillips to get information about the possibility of these ancestral links. The response from Mr. Wight of the National Museum of Man was clear:

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[23] Ibid., [1].

[24] NAC, RG 85, vol. 384, file 255-1-2 pt. 3, Director to Mr. Snowden, 17 October 1960, [1].

> examples of Eskimo pottery have been found in the western Arctic but these all show a strong Indian influence. [He] said that as far as he could determine, pottery-making was not traditionally a part of Eskimo culture and it only developed in areas where Eskimos and Indians were living in close association.[25]

The ambiguity associated with this situation developed much later, when the work of the Rankin Inlet ceramists was exhibited in 1967. This historical link would became a key factor in the marketing of these pieces. Taking a statement from Phillips's memorandum to Snowden over the response from the Museum, the marketing scheme played on the notion that "[if] pottery, even suitable for local use, was once made by Eskimos, there would be a stronger case for reviving the art, providing it does not have to be heavily subsidized."[26] Upon further review of the material surrounding the exhibition, this position was favoured as it brought an indigenous quality to the ceramic work produced during the 1960s. The importance of this situation cannot be overlooked and it will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three. While a few pieces of pottery are known to have come from Cape Dorset, the establishment of a full-fledged program there did not materialize. It was not until the need to develop a handicrafts program at Rankin Inlet, in 1962-1963, that the idea of pottery-making resurfaced.

The second indication that the introduction of clay came from within the Division is found in Grenier's "Terms of Reference." They state: "Once you feel you have established yourself with the Eskimo artists and craftsmen you should feel free to begin to carry out

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[25] NAC, RG 85, vol. 453, file 255-1-2 pt. 4, D. Snowden to Mr. Phillips, 8 November 1960, [1]-2.

[26] NAC, RG 85, vol. 384, file 255-1-2 pt. 3, Director to D. Snowden, 17 October 1960, 2.

development work with the people in ceramic art."[27] As was discussed earlier, Grenier had great difficulty beginning this experiment due to the lack of supplies. The archival record shows that despite these delays, it was something Grenier was hired to do and was an art form that "[the Department officials were] most hopeful that this form of artistic expression will be appealing to the Eskimo and that through it they will find new ways of expressing their ideas and earning additional income."[28] How the Department came to believe in the potential of pottery-making is not clear. Several references indicate Grenier proposed its introduction and was successfully able to convince officials prior to his departure North that it would be a worthwhile project to pursue. Working with the understanding that the Inuit's Mongolian ancestors "were excellent potters, and that archaeologists had found pottery sherds in the excavations of pre-Dorset camps in the central Arctic, [Grenier] was convinced that the Rankin Inuit-turned -miners could revive this ancient art."[29] Despite the government's desire to develop traditional arts and crafts, it made a conscious decision to encourage and support the introduction of this new medium. In the beginning, Grenier's requests for supplies, new kilns, and expanded facilities were approved and the ceramics project flourished. While Department officials knew pottery-making would become part of the Rankin Inlet Arts and Crafts Program, there is no indication that the Inuit participants were aware of this scheme prior to Grenier's arrival. While he waited for supplies, Grenier

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[27] NAC, RG 85, vol. 679, file A255-5/184 pt. 1, Terms of Reference for Mr. Claude Grenier - Arts and Crafts Supervisor - Rankin Inlet, April 1963, 2.

[28] Ibid., 2.

[29] Grenier, "Some Wonderful, Creative Years," 29. As mentioned elsewhere, the connection of the new work to an ancestral tradition will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

discussed his plans with the artists and encouraged them to try it when the clay arrived. During its course, the project was often referred to as an experiment: an accurate definition, since the artists were encouraged to try a medium without any real knowledge of its origins, functions, physical properties, or artistic potential. Seen from this perspective, the project was an artistic gamble the Industrial Division seemed willing to take. Regardless of where the idea of working with clay originated, the ceramics project came to define the activities of the Rankin Inlet Arts and Crafts Program.

2.3 The Recommendations Begin

After waiting out the delays for supplies, especially the kiln, Grenier began to recruit individuals to work in the ceramics project and by January 1964 the first clay pieces had begun to appear. Grenier characterized the artists's efforts as "full of rich promise...[and they] are very much interested in the moulding and enjoying their work immensely."[30] At this early stage it is difficult to say what kinds of objects were being produced, as extensive experimentation with the medium would have taken place. Grenier had to teach the basic techniques of pottery-making, as this medium was vastly different from the hard stone the carvers were accustomed to. All utilitarian objects and later trade items were carved from stone, bone, or ivory, which were durable materials and well-suited to the difficulties of northern living. Foreign to the Inuit's method of creating objects, the malleable nature of clay may have been considered by some to be difficult to work with while others would have welcomed its diverse properties. As a result, the ceramic work produced by these artists

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[30] NAC, RG 85, vol. 698, file A255-5/184 pt. 1, Monthly Report for January 1964, Claude Grenier, 3 February 1964.

demonstrates a unique combination of moulded clay forms with carved details such as eyes, feathers, and mouths.

The Arts and Crafts Shop in Rankin Inlet became the gathering centre for the artists of the community. It was filled with an exciting energy that was fuelled by camaraderie and creativity. Reflecting on his days as arts and crafts officer, Grenier wrote: "I think back to the big crafts studio where the artists sang softly as they worked, where everyone stopped at midday for a bite of whale muktuk and a good hot cup of tea. During those exciting years the community seemed to come alive."[31] Laughter was also something that resonated from the workshop as humour was often a source of inspiration for many of the artists. During Grenier's tenure with the project, the artists were encouraged to use their imaginations to create their ceramic work. What resulted were sculptures in the shape of heads, with animals in place of ears and nose, and pots with hunting or fishing scenes decorating their bellies. While created much later in the course of the project, Robert Tatty's Three Faces with Animal Noses (ill. 14), Pie Kukshout's Many Faces with Three Seals (ill. 15), and Donat Anawak's Vessel with Animals as Legs and Heads on Bowls (ill. 16) demonstrate these artists had a strong command of the clay medium. This work also prove that it was capable of rivalling the stone sculptures which were the mainstay of Inuit art at the time. Other artists who joined the workshop in those formative years included Phillip Hakuluk, Joseph Patterk, Octave Kappi, Yvo Samgushak, and John Kavik, who was already a noted carver.

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[31] Grenier, "Some Wonderful, Creative Years," 34.

By February 1964 the bureaucrats in Ottawa had received these early efforts and had made their first critique. Less elaborate than the images cited above, the work must have been of a sculptural nature to have prompted the following critique:

> INITIAL POTTERY PROJECT WAS FOR BOWLS WITH ESKIMO MOTIFS. PLS UNDERTAKE THIS WORK IMMEDIATELY. HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT CLAY VERSIONS OF TRADITIONAL STONE CARVING FORMS. UNDOUBTEDLY DAMAGING TO CARVING MARKET. PLS STOP PRODUCTION OF FIGURINES IN CLAY UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. [32]

This radiogram is telling for a variety of reasons. The "doubts about clay versions" of carvings would become a recurring concern of all those involved with the project. It was generally agreed that figurine forms would be problematic in that they would be competing with the carvings for a niche in the market and as implied by the message would be a damaging factor. This fear, however, was never justified. The desire for the project to take utilitarian direction with an emphasis on "bowls with Eskimo motifs" as opposed to a fine arts one is also an underlying concern of this message, and one that also plagued the project. Ultimately, the radiogram set the tone for the project, with Grenier and the artists being pulled in a variety of directions by bureaucrats, advisors, and critics who believed strongly in their convictions about what direction the project should take, despite the fact that few of them had visited Rankin Inlet for more than a day or two and their knowledge of art was limited.

Grenier responded to this radiogram rapidly and with an appeasing tone:

> In answer to your radiogram asking me to undertake immediately the initial pottery project, ie. bowls with Eskimo motifs, I am pleased to inform

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[32] NAC, RG 85, vol. 488, file 255-5/184 vol. 2, Radiogram, D. Snowden to Claude Grenier, 14 February 1964.

> you that we have already started as all previous work has been a mere preparation, as, no doubt, you know, this is a completely new project for our Eskimo artists who had first to be accustomed to the art of modelling clay. After the first attempts at throwing, I am confident that we are on the way to success and we hope to have some specimens to send to you when possible.[33]

Throwing and working the wheel never really appealed to the artists, but they excelled at handbuilding. Despite Grenier's assurances that the sculptural work would be discontinued, many of the artists persisted in producing sculptural images that played on the malleable quality of the clay and that were free of the constraints associated with soapstone carving. John Kavik's sculptural Seated Couple with Animals (ill. 4) clearly illustrates this point as he created an image that is intricately linked to his experiences on the land and shows the animals emerging from the surrounding base. The major art historical problem with the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project is that of dating the work. While the artists were encouraged to sign the bottom of their pieces, often including their disc number,[34] dating the object was not a concern. As a result, it is difficult to say when Kavik actually created this piece. It is evident, however, that he had a certain amount of proficiency with the clay before this image was made. Nevertheless, Grenier's reports during the first year of experimentation claimed favourable results, but it was not until 1965 that the project gathered real momentum.

With a wide range of objects being created during this first year, J. N. Watney and R. A. J. Phillips visited the community in the winter of 1965. The most unfortunate aspect of this visit was that Grenier was not present when these officials came to call. As a result,

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[33] NAC, RG 85, vol. 488, file 255-5/184 vol. 2, Grenier to D. Snowden, 17 February 1964.

[34] A disc number was assigned to each Inuit by the government for administrative purposes during the 1940s. This practice was discontinued in the mid-1960s.

a meeting was held that April in Ottawa, at which Watney related their concerns to Grenier.[35] Watney's May 1965 report of that meeting sheds some light on the government's position vis-à-vis the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project. In it, Grenier's work and progress were praised but a call for an examination of the project "in the light of a truly Eskimo art form"[36] was issued. This reflects the government's position towards encouraging arts and crafts initiatives that drew on the traditional aspects of the Inuit culture. Watney worded it best:

> It was decided that the Eskimo decoration of pottery was of the highest quality and spoke well of Mr. Grenier's experimental project. However, fear was expressed of subjecting Eskimo decoration to pottery forms that are not indigenous to their culture. It was suggested that experimentation could be carried out using the natural decorative ability of the Eskimo on a flat or nearly flat surface.[37]

The balance of the report went on to extol the virtues of the flat forms, which included ease of "packaging, shipping, firing and display," and it was felt an increase in production would be realized. As for the creative side of this shift, it was believed that experimentation in "modelling, technique, glaze, texture, and design" the flat surface would be "a great new challenging and rewarding field...[for] the Eskimo artist of Rankin Inlet."[38] By October 1965, Grenier reported: "We have started the experiments with glazes, murals, tiles."[39] However, it did not seem to be an activity that gained much support. It is interesting to note that Alistair

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[35] NAC, RG 85, vol. 679, file A255-5/184 pt. 2, Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project, J. N. Watney, 20 May 1965.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] NAC, RG 85, vol. 1050, file A255-5/184 pt. 3, Monthly Report, C. Grenier, 6 October 1965.

MacDuff of Canadian Arctic Producers would make a similar recommendation several years later and it also met with disappointing results. His ideas will be discussed in Chapter Four. Despite this directive from Ottawa, the artists continued to produce sculptures and vases with distinct decorative features.

Another interesting point raised by Watney dealt with the notion of authenticating the pottery. It was believed that by using the flat form, "a very careful marketing control could be exerted as the finished pieces could have a registered symbol glazed or fired into the item itself."[40] This concept is in keeping with the review process of the graphic arts, whereby the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee and its successor stamped the approved prints with a special chop or seal. By encouraging this same system for the ceramics, it was felt that their acceptance as an Inuit product was assured. Over the course of the project, the recommendation to issue limited edition pieces, again mirroring the printing industry, was often raised. Neither of these suggestions seems to have taken hold in Rankin Inlet, as none of the pieces I saw had any such markings.[41] Repetition of images, however, was common among the artists and was often cited as a concern by advisors from the South. A successful example of this practice was Joseph Patterk's depiction of the legend of the family who travelled on a wild goose (ill. 7). From the visual documentation available, it seems he created several pieces devoted to this theme. The most problematic aspect of multiple images

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[40] NAC, RG 85, vol. 679 file A255-5/184 pt. 2, Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project, J. N. Watney, 20 May 1965.

[41] This includes roughly 170 pieces at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, 30 at the Nunatta Sunaqutangit Museum, and a dozen or so at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

was the proliferation of grotesque heads (ill. 19 and 32), which will be discussed in Chapter Four.

2.4 Adjudication and Refinements

By spring 1965, Grenier felt that the artists had reached a level of success with their work and it was ready for the southern market. Unfortunately, government officials did not share Grenier's view and insisted that the work be evaluated for its artistic potential, quality, and marketability. To this end, the bureaucrats approached the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee to adjudicate the ceramics. By 1965, the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee was well established and its opinions on the direction the Inuit art industry should take were being favourably received by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Thus, turning to the Committee was a logical decision. The first contact the Committee had with Grenier was when he attended its April 1963 meeting prior to his departure north. He outlined his plans for the Arts and Crafts Program and discussed his ideas for the introduction of pottery-making to the Inuit, "first as objects of utility and then possibly as a medium of Eskimo design."[42] Any reservations or concerns the Committee members may have had at that time about this new venture are not known as there is no record of any official discussion about the project in the minutes of that meeting. Having begun working with the clay in early 1964, and having achieved promising results within the year, Grenier

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[42] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2172, Canadian Eskimo Arts Council Papers, Minutes of meeting, 18 April 1963, 3. These papers included those of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee which was its predecessor. These papers will be cited as follows: NAC, RG 85, specific vol., CEAC Papers, document information, author, and date.

and the artists had to wait until the Committee could be assembled before this official evaluation occurred. As it turned out, the adjudication did not happen until December 1965.

This delay was a source of great frustration to Grenier, as he believed the work was ready for sale and this lack of endorsement kept it from being sold either in the South or in the community.[43] G. L. Thompson, the Area Administrator, shared his concerns and began lobbying Ottawa for a review of the work, but to no avail. While his "comments on the dearth of information and feed-back concerning the ceramic bowls was well taken," the only explanation for the lack of review was the difficulty in getting the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee to meet.[44] In the meantime, George Swinton visited the community and he too believed in the readiness of the work. Representing the Toronto Dominion Bank as a member of an art advisory committee, he selected thirty-one ceramic pieces he believed would complement the Inuit art collection the Bank was amassing as its Centennial project.[45] This sale was dependent on a positive evaluation and, in the end, the chosen pieces were not released to the Bank. Swinton's enthusiasm and support for the ceramic work led to a lengthy association with the project and he was present when the work was finally adjudicated.

The Committee members were joined for their December 8, 1965 meeting by Claude Grenier, Gabriel Gély, George Swinton, and J. W. Evans, who were all invited to the

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[43] NAC, RG 85, vol. 1918, file 255-5/184 pt. 4, Gordon Gibson to G. Rheaume, 18 August 1965.

[44] NAC, RG 85, vol. 1050, file A255-5/184 pt. 3, A. Stevenson, Area Administrator to Regional Administrator, 24 November 1965, [1]. This memorandum is part of a series that began in July 1965 and ended December 3 which documents the frustration with the lack of adjudication.

[45] NAC, RG 85, vol. 678, A255-5/184 pt.3, Director to Administrator of the Arctic, 26 July 1965, [1].

evaluation.[46] Response to the work was mixed. James Houston was the most critical, with comments ranging from calling for "[the] removal of the Eskimo names and number from the designs" to questioning "whether the ceramics should continue."[47] The igloo pot by Laurent Aksadjuak (ill. 5) illustrates this point as his name appearing in syllabics is placed on the edge of the neck. Houston's concerns about the poor finish of the work and lack of quality glazing were shared by others members of the Committee. The most objectionable aspect was the use of shoe polish to glaze the work. Its removal and its discontinuation was the most significant recommendation the Committee made.[48] At a private viewing, Paul Arthur was extremely pointed in his criticism:

> There is no question in my mind...that the artists have used the clay in a valid, interesting, dynamic and altogether convincing way. On the other hand, ...the catastrophic use of colour...is deliberately designed to create the illusion of wood, Honduras mahogany to be exact...[and] in my view the colour alone is sufficient to invalidate the whole exercise.[49]

In retrospect, it is interesting to note that the shoe-polished pieces are often cited as the more engaging examples from the project. This could be the result of several factors. Created before too many recommendations were imposed, these early examples are small, expressive, and inventive images made with imported clay. As the project progressed, the work increased

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[46] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2172, CEAC Papers, Minutes of meeting, 8 December 1965, 3. A regular meeting was held then the invited guests joined the members for the evaluation.

[47] Ibid., 4.

[48] In fact, Houston asked if the shoe polish could be removed. Grenier believed that it could. Examples on the shelves at that Canadian Museum of Civilization indicate that attempts were made to remove it but seem to have met with unsatisfactory results.

[49] NAC, RG 85, vol. 1918, file 255-5/184, vol. 4, Paul Arthur to William Larmour, 2 September 1965. It is not clear whether or not Arthur was still a member of the Committee at this time. Gustavison listed his dates as 1961 to 1965. (Gustavison, Arctic Expressions, 88.)

in size with an expanded range of subject matter, which resulted in images that were less intimate. Composition of People by John Kavik (ill. 6) is another example of the work that was being adjudicated. Utilitarian in nature, this pot reflected the bureaucratic direction the project was taking and it encompassed Kavik's dynamic style and expressive nature in the presentation of the figures surrounding its belly. Throughout this difficult session, George Elliot, the chairman, was the most positive, citing market potential for high-quality pieces, stressing the importance of local materials and acknowledging that the Inuit seem to be comfortable creating ceramic forms.[50] Ultimately, "he acknowledged the enormous potential of the ceramics project in Rankin Inlet...[stating] that ceramics and pottery must be a building process, not just anti-carving."[51] In the end, however, the Committee refused to release the work, stating that further experimentation needed to take place, especially with glazes and surface treatment. They suggested a specialist visit Rankin Inlet to assist in this area.

The importance of the debates about the use of glazes cannot be overlooked. The question of colour dominated the Committee's discussion. A wide range of opinions on this topic exist. Elliot

> felt that he would like to see colours of the Arctic environment used. He stressed the importance of pure local colours and felt that by using them the Eskimo would be able to see more of the colour in his land and thereby be able to express himself more readily.[52]

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[50] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2172, CEAC Papers, Minutes of meeting, 8 December 1965, 4, 5.

[51] Ibid., 4.

[52] Ibid., 5-6.

Alma Houston held a different view, believing that the Inuit, "particularly the women, were rather conservative," especially with regards to colour.[53] In this regard, Grenier reinforced her view and observed "that the Eskimo was simply not interested in colour and that form had a far greater importance."[54] Experiments were carried out using local materials for glazing and a soapstone-type glaze was developed, but its use was limited and quickly discontinued. Commercial glazes, often deemed unsatisfactory by Grenier, were used with varying degrees of success throughout the duration of the project. In the end the Inuit ceramists never took to the coloured glazes and when they did, the results were often unsatisfactory. Most of the glazed work I saw was garish in nature and the vibrant orange and green colours interfered with the naturalistic images that the artists had created. Another problem with the glazing was that it was often applied like paint to canvas and not in the ceramics tradition of enhancing the surface. In defence of these artists, glazing is the most difficult aspect of working with clay, and it takes time to master its properties. Later in the project, however, glazing was used more professionally and logically.

To address the issue of glazing, Charles Scott, a ceramist from the University of Manitoba, was sent north for a week in December 1965. His report was highly technical and focused on the nature of glazing, especially the importance of testing the glaze.[55] He felt that the glaze he and Grenier worked with was not "wholly satisfactory,...because it has a

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[53] Ibid., 6.

[54] Ibid., 6.

[55] NAC, RG 85, vol. 1918 file 255-5/184 vol. 4, Report Persuant to Contract A.255-5/184, Charles Scott, n. d., [1].

tendency to obscure small details."[56] He continued: "This detail is extremely important aesthetically to the Eskimo's art and if it is obscured, the pieces suffer immeasurably by it."[57] As a result, he recommended that salt glazing be introduced to the project and the balance of his report explains the technique and requirements necessary to use it effectively. Grenier, however, did not support this suggestion and outlined his concerns in an appendix to his March 1966 Monthly Report. In it, he listed all his concerns about using salt glazing in Rankin Inlet. In addition to having a dedicated kiln for this glaze, the major factor in his displeasure was the glaze's corrosive effect on the kiln and the burners, and its tendency to glaze the shelves in the process.[58] Grenier also felt the salt glaze was limited in its use, leaving the surface shiny, sometimes bumpy, and its transparent quality demanded a specific clay body be used.[59] It is interesting to note that much later in the project, experiments with this technique did take place and the results, as seen in Robert Tatty's Bird with Spread Wings (ill. 24), proved interesting.

In the spring of 1966, the Department sent yet another ceramist north to show Grenier "a few tricks." Alla Bjorkman, a ceramist working out of Toronto "with an affinity for the North," was hired to help develop better finishes and experiment with the local clay.[60]

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[56] Ibid., [2].

[57] Ibid., [2].

[58] NAC, RG 85, vol. 1918, file 255-5/184 vol. 4, Appendix to March Monthly Report; Comments on Report Submitted by Mr. C. Scott on Rankin Inlet Ceramics, Claude Grenier, April 1966, [1]-2.

[59] Ibid., 2.

[60] NAC, RG 85, vol. 1918, file 255-5/184, vol. 4, A. M. Millican to Mr. Bolger, 19 April 1966.

Bjorkman found upon her arrival that Grenier had already begun work with the local clay and stated in her report: "Concerning the equipment...it is amazing that such fine results have been obtained with such amateurish gear."[61] She was also thoroughly impressed with the quality of work the artists had achieved with the clay in such a short period of time: "I came expecting to find the simple work of beginners. Instead I found these beautiful, wonderful pieces. They are very, very alive and impressive. The first pieces the Eskimos produced weren't very good, but neither were mine."[62] She made the following suggestions: glazing should be kept to a minimum; utility pottery should be encouraged among those participants who, while being good craftsmen, might not excel as artists; innovations should be made continuously as the artists of Rankin Inlet are very responsive to new ideas; and promised supplies, a ball-mill and sagger clay, should be delivered as soon as possible.[63] The most notable suggestion was to increase the number of administrative assistants so that Grenier could spend more time with the artists, a task she believed suited his "particular gifts." It is not clear how many of her suggestions were implemented but Grenier again responded defensively.[64] In the memoranda surrounding the hiring of these two specialists, officials in

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[61] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 7267, Box 31, file Eskimo Crafts - Rankin Inlet NWT 6/66-2/70, "Report on Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project," Alla Bjorkman, n. d. (stamped received August 2, 1966), [1].

[62] "Eskimos Turn to Clay," Toronto Globe and Mail, 3 December 1966.

[63] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 7267, Box 31, file Eskimo Crafts - Rankin Inlet NWT 6/66-2/70, "Report on Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project," Alla Bjorkman, n. d. (stamped received August 2, 1966), [1-2].

[64] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, Claude Grenier, 2 August 1966. In this response, he counters each of her suggestions point for point with things that he has already done or was planning to do in the near future.

Ottawa intended that these consultations be viewed as a form of professional development aimed at improving the ceramic work and in no way intended them to be perceived as criticism of Grenier's work.[65] While they commended Grenier's contribution to the project, they also wanted to "prevent possible criticism at a later date which might be levelled [at the Department] if no other authority had been consulted during the development period."[66] The aim was simply to develop the best possible product and this pattern of second guessing plagued the project until well into the 1970s.

During the 1960s, the Rankin Inlet Arts and Crafts Program was considered a successful arts venture. Its monetary success can be questioned, as Grenier's budget for wages seemed meagre. He was allowed to buy $5,000.00 worth of goods per month and this money was divided among the participants according to how much they brought in for sale. The number of workers was constantly increasing and the majority of them were seamstresses. Grenier and the Area Administrator lobbied southern officials for more funds but the budget remained fixed.[67] The real success, however, can be seen in a renewed sense of purpose the project brought to the community and how it enabled many residents an opportunity to be productive again. In supporting Grenier's contract renewal in 1965, A. M. Millican, the Regional Administrator, wrote:

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[65] NAC, RG 85, vol. 1918, file 255-5/184 vol. 4, A. Stevenson, Administrator of the Arctic, to A/Regional Administrator, 29 April 1966.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Williamson, Eskimo Underground, 110. The budget was increased at one point, only to be reduced by funding cuts.

> I have no way of appraising the economic success... but it would be remiss of me...if I did not echo Mr. Thompson's sentiment by stating that the [program] is accomplishing a great deal for many Eskimo. Beyond its economic effect for these people, [it] is responsible for a noticeable moral uplift. Certainly it would seem...that providing the out-put...is saleable and providing also [its] net cost to the Department is not too severe, it should be continued.[68]

The program did remain in operation. The most significant benefit it brought to the community was an arts and crafts centre was built to accommodate its expanding needs, especially those of the ceramics project. In an era when construction in the North was costly and limited to essential projects like housing, schools, and hospitals, this new building can be seen as a concrete belief in the work Grenier and the artists were doing and in the direction the project was taking.

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[68] NAC, RG 85, vol. 679, file A255-5/184 pt. 2, A. M. Millican to Administrator of the Arctic, 4 January 1965.

CHAPTER 3: KEEWATIN ESKIMO CERAMICS '67: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INAUGURAL EXHIBITION

> For the Centennial Year of Canada, the Eskimo people of Rankin Inlet have offered the results of a recent adventure in the arts. Their achievement in ceramics proves to be one of the more remarkable efforts of the Eskimo to convey to us an idea of their Arctic world.[1]
>
> William Larmour, 1967.

This opening statement from the exhibition catalogue Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67 conveys to the reader the nature and importance of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project. Seen as experimental, the work produced by several of the artists exceeded expectations as it was expressive and imaginative and the workmanship was, for the most part, of high quality. The exhibition held at the Toronto Public Library, was a significant event in the history of the project. It was used to launch this new product and the publicity it generated was designed to promote sales and develop a strong market. The exhibition received considerable media attention, as a press conference was held in conjunction with the opening and the initial response from the art industry was positive. Unfortunately, this was the only major exhibition to be mounted during the course of the project, as interest in the new art form was slow to materialize. The period after this event, which will be discussed in Chapter Four, was marked by a steady decline in enthusiasm and funding. In this chapter, the elements of this exhibition, its organization, the publicity, and the catalogue, will be discussed in order to demonstrate how the presentation of the Rankin Inlet ceramics was

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[1] William Larmour, Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67 (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1967), 9.

manipulated to ensure market acceptance. Also, the timing of this exhibition coincided with Canada's Centennial celebrations and this chapter will consider how this event contributed to the publicity of Inuit art in general, and ceramic work in particular.

By 1966, the need to start exhibiting the work had become a concern of those involved with the project, especially Grenier, as it was approaching readiness and was accumulating in the shop. Unlike the soapstone sculptures that were created through a direct method of carving and polishing the stone, the pottery was the result of a multi-step process. Creating the work, allowing it to dry and firing it takes time and is a lengthy process. In Rankin Inlet this process took even longer because of an unreliable kiln. Since the artists were enthusiastic about their work and kept creating new objects, the backlog of greenware and unglazed pieces continued to grow. Because the project was considered experimental and the work had yet to be approved for sale, a ban on local and southern retailing was in effect.[2] As a result, the ceramic pieces remained in the North, invisible to southern markets. Thus, it was understandable that Grenier was anxious to have an exhibition as soon as possible. It was this access to the art-buying public and its support for this endeavour that would ultimately be the measure of the project's success or failure.

3.1 Logistics of the Exhibition

During the 1960s, "promotional exhibits directly related to development and marketing were the primary consideration of the Department."[3] The aim of these exhibitions

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[2] NAC, RG 85, vol. 1918, 255-5/184 vol. 4, Gordon Gibson, Executive Assistant to Minister, to Gene Rheaume, 18 August 1965.

[3] Goetz, "The Role of the Department," 51.

was to generate sales and interest, and Inuit art became an extremely popular commodity.[4] These exhibitions were supported by special events, such as formal dinners, that became part of the social scene of the day, with dignitaries in attendance and speech-making the order of the evening.[5] In time, one or two Inuuk artists who were represented in the exhibitions attended the openings, travelling south at the Department's expense.[6] These events were often sponsored by the volunteer associations of the host institutions which, in conjunction with the Department, helped organize these exhibitions. The most notable association was with the Women's Committee of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, where Inuit art had been one of the major domains since 1953.[7] The efforts and commitment to promoting this art led to the development of the gallery's extensive collection which includes eighteen pieces from the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project, eight of them donated by the Women's Committee.[8] The exhibition of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project would open in grand style with two ceramists, Michel Angutituar and Phillip Hakuluk, in attendance and Arthur Laing, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, giving the opening address.

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[4] Ibid., 51.

[5] Ibid., 50.

[6] Ibid., 51.

[7] Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Records Department, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, J. W. Evans to Mrs. John Shortly, 11 October 1966. [1]. (Hereafter: DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot number, Box number, file number, and specific document information.) and Ferdinand Eckhardt, The First Ten Years of the Women's Committee: An Enthusiastic Venture (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1961), 1.

[8] These eight pieces are part of the larger Swinton Collection.

By October 1966 the Department had received a proposal from the Junior League of Toronto (hereafter the Junior League) to assist in organizing an exhibition of the Rankin Inlet ceramic work. It was through W. J. Withrow, then Director of the Art Gallery of Ontario, that this partnership was arranged, as several of the gallery's volunteers were also active in the Junior League.[9] At this time, the Department was the primary source for access to works and information about Inuit art. As a result, its resources were being taxed and any assistance it received was appreciated. These partnerships were successful, with the volunteers being responsible for the promotion and sale of the work. They also organized the special events that were held during the exhibitions, as these were beyond the scope of the Department's mandate. These associations had access to funds that covered the cost of these special events and their membership was often drawn from those who travelled in social circles which brought prestige to the events. The Department was responsible for the curatorial elements of the exhibition, selecting the work and writing the catalogue. Thus, the Junior League, an organization that works to improve the quality of life in the community,[10] was well-situated to assist the Department with the arrangement for the Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67 exhibition.

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[9] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, J. W. Evans to Chief of Welfare Division, 3 November 1966, [1].

[10] Personal conversation with Sue Winsor, a former President of the Montreal Junior League, September 1996. She pointed out that the mandate of the Junior League can change from city to city and as the needs in each community change, so do those of the Junior League. The organization is committed to volunteerism and fund raising with the aim of assisting community groups to establish projects that will become self-supporting and will improve the quality of life in their area.

"A great deal of effort was put into...earlier exhibits,"[11] as J. W. Evans, Chief, Industrial Division, wrote to Mrs. John Shortly, Art Director of the Toronto Junior League, during their negotiations to mount an exhibition of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project together. He continued: "[A]ll those concerned...entered their engagements with a great deal of trepidation and...hope. [The exhibitions] were exciting experiences, but nobody knew until opening night whether the art presented would be a success. We are in the same boat now."[12] This correspondence outlined the proposed responsibilities for organizing the exhibition. The proposal was exploratory in nature and contingent on several conditions; first the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee had to approve the work, a point that will be discussed later, and the Junior League had to confirm its support (which was received that November). The ceramics were not for sale, and glass cabinets had to be furnished to protect the work.[13] The suggested responsibilities of the Junior League were as follows:

1. Will be responsible for the organization and arrangements for opening ceremonies including invitations to persons and institutions to be invited for this event in Ontario and outside.
2. The opening itself should be made an outstanding event with an important speaker.
3. Any social occasion attending the ceremonial opening would be at the discretion of the Junior League.
4. Will arrange Toronto press, radio and television coverage in consultation if necessary with the Information Services of the Department.

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[11] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, J. W. Evans to Mrs. John Shortly, 11 October 1966, 2.

[12] Ibid., 2.

[13] Ibid., 2.

5. Would advise and assist the Department in provisions of props and setting up the exhibition.[14]

This list of tasks was strictly social in nature, with no opportunity for the members of the Junior League to contribute any critical or insightful thoughts about the work being presented. Unable to spend any funds of its own, the Junior League assisted with setting up the exhibition by "[acquiring] co-operation from private persons, institutions and companies...which in itself would be a costly business if [the Department] had to pay for it outright."[15] The balance of the tasks, from producing the graphic and photographic materials to organizing national press coverage, was to be carried out by the Department. It was also responsible for defining the features of the exhibition, controlling the funding, writing the catalogue and choosing the work.

In addition to finding appropriate co-sponsors, the Department spent much time debating the best location for launching the new work. Locations such as Montreal and Winnipeg were considered safe centres for Inuit art, while cities like Saint John were chosen with a view to expanding the market. In this case, the Department sought "a major Canadian city where there [was] an established market for ceramic art."[16] As a city on the move with a strong artistic community, Toronto was seen as a logical choice. Also, its distance from Montreal and the Expo '67 frenzy which was gripping that city was seen as a positive

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[14] Ibid., 2-3.

[15] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, J. W. Evans to the Director, 2 February 1967, [1].

[16] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, J. H. Gordon to G. F. Gibson, 3 February 1967.

element, ensuring that the media would focus on the exhibition.[17] In conjunction with this exhibition, Av Isaacs, owner of the Isaacs Gallery in Toronto, agreed to sell the Rankin Inlet ceramics during the run of the exhibition. In Montreal, work was offered for sale through the Lippel Gallery of Primitive Art.[18]

Selecting a building to hold the exhibition was the next critical decision. The Toronto Public Library, located in Toronto's new City Hall and designed by Viljo Revell, was an obvious choice. Opened in 1965, the municipal complex was a modern addition to a city steeped in history and tradition. Eric Arthur, an acknowledged professor of architecture and author, predicted it would be "a supremely great building in terms of function and the monumentality of its public spaces,..." and went on "to forecast that it will also be an edifice where citizens, for centuries, can see all that was best in art in this generation."[19] While the city Councillors did not fill the complex with art, it continues to be used as a temporary exhibition space.[20] Evans was confident in this choice stating: "I need scarcely underline the desirability of this place for the exhibit. It has been used successfully already by the National Gallery of Canada."[21] By placing the exhibition in a prestigious building and using the

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[17] Ibid.

[18] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, J. W. Evans to C. T. W. Hyslop, 1 March 1967.

[19] Eric Arthur, Toronto, No Mean City (1962, revised by Stephen A. Otto, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 228.

[20] Ibid., 230. An 'Art in the Park' event continues to take place in Nathan Phillips Square every summer.

[21] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, J. W. Evans to Chief, Welfare Division, 3 November 1966, [1].

resources of an important service organization, the Department was well on its way to providing the ceramic work with an environment which would signal its importance as a valuable addition to the field of Inuit art and worthy of serious attention.

3.2 Publicity and Potential Sales

The publicity for the exhibition included posters, invitations, and extensive press coverage. The focus here will be the press conference which was scheduled for 28 February 1967 and was organized jointly by Mrs. Burgess of the Information Services Division and Mrs. Thurston of the Junior League.[22] It was held at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto. Claude Grenier, Michel Angutituar, Phillip Hakuluk, and Rupert Tinling, the translator, were in attendance to field questions about the art and about their own experiences. The memorandum devoted to publicity indicated that extensive coverage was sought in the radio, television, and newspaper forums. In addition to the opening night being covered on its newscast, CBC television showcased the ceramic work on two programs, "Take Thirty" and "The Elwood Glover Show."[23] Grenier was also interviewed in French for a CBC radio broadcast in Montreal.[24] Several art critics were contacted including Sandra Gwyn of Time Magazine, Carl Weiselberger of The Ottawa Citizen, and Robert Ayre of The Montreal Star, and writers from Chatelaine and Maclean's agreed to do short items on the work.[25] Press kits

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[22] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, Irene Baird to Director, Northern Affairs Branch, 8 February 1967, [1].

[23] Ibid., 2.

[24] Ibid., 2.

[25] Ibid., 2, 3.

were provided and they included a copy of the catalogue, biographical information on Grenier and the artists, the Department press release, and photographs of the work. It is not surprising then that most of the resulting articles contain similar passages about the origins of the project and often the same quote by Grenier: "I teach the technique only but the design never."[26] As a result, it is difficult to gain a complete understanding of the information disseminated at the event. What is clear, however, is that any comments Angutituar and Hakuluk may have made about their work were eclipsed by Grenier's explanation of how they adjusted to city living and that they "[found] Toronto so warm that they [walked] around without overcoats or parkas"[27] even though they arrived during the last week of February.

The exhibition was conceived solely as a promotional event for the ceramic work. The sixty-five pieces displayed in Toronto were kept by the Department for its ever-expanding Inuit art collection. This collection was used throughout the 1960s and 1970s for promotional exhibitions in Canada and abroad. Evidence that the ceramics exhibition toured includes letters and requests made to the Department in response to the Toronto showing. Newspaper articles with the same text and photographs from 1967 continued to appear well into 1968.[28] The most significant request came from Illi-Maria Harff, a curator at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. At Swinton's urging, she approached the Department to have the

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[26] "Artist Teaches Eskimos Technique but Never Design," Toronto Globe and Mail, 1 March 1967.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Articles include: "Old Eskimo Art Reborn with the Arrival of Hydro," Prince George Citizen, B.C., 27 March 1967; "Ceramics Experiment...," Ottawa Citizen, 6 July 1968; "Eskimos Excel in Ceramics," St. John's Evening Telegraph, 15 October 1968; and "Eskimo Revive Ancestors' Art," Ottawa Citizen, 5 October 1968.

exhibition, in its entirety, shown in Winnipeg.[29] The negotiations that followed all point to the exhibition being scheduled to take place November 1967.[30] Unfortunately, confirmation of this event could not be guaranteed.[31] These indications of prolonged promotion continued into 1969 with the appearance of an article in a Chicoutimi newspaper announcing the dates and times of a local exhibition of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project, held under the patronage of Jean Chrétien, then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.[32]

After promoting the work, sales became the focus. Once the exhibition closed, the Canadian Arctic Producers (hereafter referred to as CAP) became formally involved with the work. Alma Houston, a driving force behind CAP's success, expanded its mandate:

> We have to put these things [Inuit arts and crafts] in the right place at the right time and maintain the integrity of the art. We have to keep the pressure off the artist and act as a buffer so that the market doesn't crowd him. We have a responsibility to these artists.[33]

While this may seem paternalistic today, the intention was sincere. At the time, the market was faced with a growing demand for Inuit art, the possibility of artists being exploited by this growth, and an imbalance in the quality of the work due to the pressures of this demand.

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[29] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, Illi-Maria Harff to J. W. Evans, 14 February 1967.

[30] These negotiations were between the Gallery's Director Ferdinand Eckhardt and William Larmour of the Industrial Division. Several documents on this subject were found in two files from the DIANA, Storage: Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1, vol. 1. and Review/Lot no. 714, Box 33, file 255-4-3, vol. 13.

[31] Correspondence between author and Darlene Wight, curator of Inuit art, and Dyane Cameron at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, 25 June, 1996.

[32] "Exposition d'art esquimau à l'Auditorium Dufour," Le Progrès du Saguenay, 16 février 1969.

[33] Maurice Cutler, "Marketing Eskimo Art: Demand is Greater than Supply," The Business Quarterly, Winter 1972, 80-81.

Fears of inferior work flooding the market and causing the industry to collapse were never far from the minds of those who worked to develop the industry. What was important to CAP was that "the finest pieces be distributed through the most prestiges (sic), outlets that they not only enhance the reputation of the individual artist but also give a greater financial renumeration for his work."[34] This sentiment was extended to the work of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project. Seen from this perspective, it is not surprising that discussions concerning the ceramic work revolved around ways and means of increasing craftsmanship, perfecting the glaze finishes, and establishing a profitable product line. In order to ensure or anticipate sales, the Department relied heavily on the advice of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee as to the readiness of the work and in which market the work should be promoted.

The work was evaluated for pricing by a committee consisting of gallery owners, Department officials, and members from both CAP and the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee.[35] It was believed that the success of the ceramics would be found in the fine art market as opposed to the crafts domain. As a result, the work was priced very high in keeping with the elitist nature of the art market.[36] When this committee convened in March of 1967, it assessed the work and established a price schedule with a range between $75 and

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[34] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 7267, Box 31, file 255-5/184 vol. 5, E. H. Mitchell to J. W. Evans, 20 October 1967, 2.

[35] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, J. W. Evans to C. T. W. Hyslop, 1 March 1967. Specific committee members were listed as Mr. & Mrs. Lippel of Lippel Galleries of Montreal, Mr. Isaacs of Toronto, Mr. Larmour and Mr. Bromfield of [the Industrial] Division and Mr. Mitchell and Mrs. Alma Houston of Canadian Arctic Producers. Mr. Houston and Mr. Feheley of the [Canadian] Eskimo Arts Council provided Evans with suggestions at a previous time.

[36] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, F. J. Neville to Chief, Industrial Division, 29 November 1966, 2.

$250.[37] This proved to be a fatal mistake, as the high cost was viewed as one of the reasons for the project's failure. Gallery owner and a proponent of both African and Inuit art Leon Lippel noted "that the public response was warm although guarded in purchasing, and a good job was done to introduce this new medium."[38] This sentiment was confirmed in August 1967 by CAP, which reported "that the sales potential has not yet been established and that sales so far have been slow."[39]

A concern raised by E. H. Mitchell, manager of CAP, was that there was "[a] limited number of ceramic pieces available and numerous exhibitions planned."[40] He continued by stating, "Dealers are not always considerate with the problems involved in marketing Eskimo art. They feel that anything we carry in our warehouse should be made immediately available to them."[41] Mitchell's concern at this time was not having a sufficient selection of work to mount a proposed exhibition in New York.[42] It is interesting to note that his concerns were in direct conflict with Swinton's enthusiastic stance regarding the quantity of quality work in Rankin Inlet the previous August:

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[37] Ibid., 2.

[38] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, Leon Lippel to Mr. William Larmour, 29 May 1967.

[39] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, J. W. Evans to Administrator of the Arctic, 18 August 1967.

[40] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184 vol. 5, E. H. Mitchell to J. W. Evans, 20 October 1967, [1].

[41] Ibid., [1].

[42] Ibid., [1].

> There cannot be any doubt that not all the ceramics are good; indeed, no art produced by the Eskimo (or anybody else) can possibly be universally good. However, the amount of good pottery is simply staggering and the most important task, therefore, is the selection of the best work.[43]

This situation raises many questions that are beyond the scope of this research. Primarily, how did Swinton's perspective differ from that of those who were charged with the decision-making powers, what work reached Ottawa, did the work Swinton value actually get shipped south, and whose criteria of quality was being favoured? What is clear, however, is that the problem of supply was never one the project had to overcome, as the work proved difficult to sell.

3.3 The Ceramic Work

The exhibition may not have occurred had the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee not approved the work. After holding back its approval in December 1965, the Committee met again in September 1966 to review the ceramics for a second time, approving the work and agreeing to its display in Toronto. Caution accompanied this acceptance, with "Mr. Houston, Mr. Feheley and Mrs. Houston [thinking] that a careful selection should be made in order to exclude any of the less successful pieces from the exhibition collection."[44] The Committee went on to stress "that since the Toronto show will greatly influence the future of public acceptance of Eskimo ceramics, the exhibition should therefore be of outstanding quality."[45]

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[43] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184 vol. 5, George Swinton to J. W. Evans, 23 August 1966, [1].

[44] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, F. J. Neville to Chief, Industrial Division, 29 November 1966, [1]. According to this document, only between eight and twelve pieces were considered unsatisfactory.

[45] Ibid., [1].

This form of evaluation process for the ceramic work seems to have been carried out only for this exhibition. Unlike the adjudication for the print collections, the ceramics were evaluated less frequently by the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee, usually as part of larger progress reports on the project. The Committee's involvement with the ceramics was part of its mandate to advise Department officials on the state of the Inuit art industry. Because of the uniqueness of this work, these officials were anxious for reassurances that it met the standards Inuit art was achieving in other areas, and the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee was forthcoming with its opinions. At the September meeting:

> The members also agreed unanimously that the Rankin Inlet ceramics are a most exciting Eskimo art form, with great commercial potential. They believe that careful development and suitable publicity would assure a great artistic and commercial future for Eskimo ceramics.[46]

The Committee's enthusiasm and support for the project was vital to its existence. While the work had to stand on its own, the support of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee brought respectability and validity to the project, and without which the project would have collapsed much earlier than it did.

The sixty pieces that were included in the exhibition were quite varied. The majority of them were not glazed, which left the rough texture of the clay, to add a distinctive feature to the work.[47] Grenier had successfully experimented with the local clay which had been mixed with scrap material from the mine. As one critic observed, the resulting textures "[produced] distinctive, dappled textures, in colours ranging from white, slate grey, and

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[46] Ibid., 2.

[47] Observations made by the author while studying the Rankin Inlet ceramics that are part of the Inuit Art Collection at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in the fall of 1995.

ochre to a rich terra-cotta."[48] Urn with Four Faces by Yvo Samgushak (ill. 8) is an excellent example of this textured clay. Red and white flakes stand out against a deep brown background, creating an interesting surface pattern that complements the image and the size of the urn. The other special effect resulting from the addition of glassy black chips, most likely slag from the mine, to a white clay also produced interesting patterns. Unfortunately, this subtle treatment does not reproduce well. The simplicity in the design of Donat Anawak's Pot (ill. 9) was enhanced by the use of this clay, as it provided an interesting pattern to the uncluttered surface.

Viewed in retrospect, these unglazed works, in addition to the examples which follow, possess a quality that helps define them as a form of genuine Inuit expression which is lost once the work is glazed. Unfortunately, using glaze was stressed as the preferred way to finish the work by the southern advisors. In fact, in an inter-departmental memorandum, the Director of Northern Administration cautioned that "[the project was] still in the development stage..., particularly with regard to the glaze finishes which are all too easily affected by southern trends."[49] Ironically, the unsophisticated nature of these unglazed images brought an air of authenticity that the southern officials so desperately wanted to promote yet failed to capitalize on. Grenier's statement about his experiments reinforces this view: "When baked in the kiln, these mixtures gave our clays and glazes a special 'northern quality' reminiscent of the coloured lichens of the Arctic landscape, and marked our pottery with a

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[48] "The Arts: New Genius in an Old Medium," Time, 17 March 1967.

[49] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184 vol. 1, Director to Mr. Graham Rowley, 31 July 1967, [1].

distinctive and primitive style all its own."[50] However, the abundance of unglazed pieces presented at the exhibition may simply have been the result of a malfunctioning kiln. In December 1966, A. Bromfield, Supervisor of Arts and Crafts, Industrial Division, went to Rankin Inlet as part of his tour through the Keewatin. In his report, he noted: "The pieces now on hand at Rankin Inlet were greenware.... As it is impossible to do anything with ceramic pieces at this stage, it means firing them as fast as possible, to have them out for the exhibition."[51] As a result, acquiring a larger kiln was recommended, but the kiln was never purchased.[52] Regardless of the reason for this lack of glazing, "the later ceramic sculpture of Rankin Inlet remain dramatic, audacious, awesome - and unapologetic."[53]

It is often noted that the soapstone sculpture from Rankin Inlet is distinct from that of other art-producing centres in that it lacks the visual references to the land which are an integral part of Inuit art iconography.[54] This belief is due in part to the success of Tiktak and Kavik whose work, which is primarily figurative, overshadowed most of the art production from that community during the 1960s. Also, the effects of acculturation brought on by the mine and the harsh experiences of many of the artists who survived the inland starvation of

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[50] Grenier, "Some Wonderful, Creative Years," 30.

[51] DIANA, Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre, Box: Indian and Northern Affairs Archives, file A255-5/184 pt. 6, "Tour of the Keewatin Region - December 8-19, 1966," A. Bromfield, 6 February 1967, [1].

[52] A larger kiln was requisitioned and a flurry of memos among various officials debated the topic extensively. Technical difficulties with the all the various kilns plagued the project to the point that they affected the production of the work.

[53] Driscoll, "Rankin Inlet Art," 32.

[54] See: Driscoll, "Rankin Inlet Art," 35 and Zepp, Pure Vision, 35.

the mid-fifties led to a stark and stern appearance in the carvings. It is interesting to note, however, that the artists who took to using clay created images that were in direct contrast to this "Keewatin aesthetic". The past experiences of life on the land were often drawn upon and incorporated into the clay base to create images that were not easily done in soapstone. One shared ordeal, which none of the ceramists explored as subject matter, was their time working for the mine. This was not uncommon as most Inuit artists have refrained from creating work associated with the transition of nomadic to settlement life. While insisting on good craftsmanship, Grenier encouraged the artists to use their imaginations to produce their work. His approach was reiterated by the Director of Northern Administration, who stated: "The main theme in the production of Eskimo ceramics will be the freedom of expression, for this is the beauty of their work."[55] The importance of creative imagery for the artists in the project can be seen in the following statement by Phillip Hakuluk:

> The only meaning behind a vase or other ceramics like that is when you look at a vase itself with no design on it, it's sort of a weird work. But if you were to make a design on it, people would admire it, you know, how fantastic it is.... Once you've put a design on it, you know, it tells sort of a story - it has sort of a story behind it, although it could only be a vase,.... You have to have something behind it in order to make it fantastic or admirable.[56]

The following examples point to this diversity as seen in both subject matter and treatment of the clay.

Decorative Vase (ill. 10) by Donat Anawak is an example of the best the project had to offer. The result of strong craftsmanship, this work represents the connection between man

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[55] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184 vol. 1, Director to Mr. Graham Rowley, 31 July 1967, [1].

[56] Phillip Hakuluk, interviewed by David Zimmerly, Interview Transcript, March 1985, [8].

and animal that exists in the Inuit's world view. The face is simply surrounded by caribou, bears, and dogs in abundance. The technique used for creating this work was the coil method and the figures were sculpted separately and smoothed into the piece to give the appearance of animals emerging from inside. This decorative treatment became a defining feature of the vases and pots produced by the Rankin Inlet ceramists. When interviewed about his ceramic work in general, Anawak explained:

> After you have an exact idea as to what you're going to make and it's really clear in your mind that you're going to be putting animals of different kinds or whatever is in your mind and you already decide what you're going to make, following the vase going up and that's how you - that's how I used to make my carvings, following the decisions that I made already in my mind. It's the easiest way to make a sculpture; if you have something already in your mind.[57]

From the variety of images that Anawak created, it is clear that he drew upon his experiences and observations from his life before moving to Rankin Inlet.

The other notable aspect of the Inuit culture, indeed all cultures, is the importance of the family. Michel Angutituar's Group (ill. 11), which was represented in the catalogue by a detailed image of the two central figures, not only demonstrates the family dynamic but features the qulliq.[58] Hendrika Nagy explained its importance in her article "Pottery in Keewatin": "The lamp formed the centre of family life; a bride used to bring one with her into marriage. It gave light and it gave warmth to the dwelling; pots for cooking hung above

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[57] Donat Anawak, interview by Michael Mitchell, Interview Transcript, March 1985, 2.

[58] The qulliq was previously spelled kudlik. It is a soapstone lamp fuelled by seal or whale oil and kept lit by a moss wick.

its flames, and higher above it there was usually a rack for drying clothes."[59] In this tableau, the figures are seated on the round edge of the qulliq, in what appears to be a deep discussion, possibly about family affairs and making arrangements for what seems to be an imminent birth. By placing the family members around its edge, Angutituar illustrates how the Inuit are dependent on their utensils and tools and how they often have a deeper meaning for the Inuit than just their utility. Unfortunately, the base of this piece was long and wide and would have required a certain amount of space to display it to its advantage. This aspect of size was a factor in the demise of the project, as the larger works were rarely successful visually and proved quite difficult to sell. Despite the interesting union of a traditional utensil with a family gathering, this kind of presentation failed to spark a chord with consumers.

The final illustration (ill. 12) is one of the contact sheets produced by Chris Lund for the catalogue photographs. This contact sheet includes images of five pieces that were in the exhibition but not chosen for the catalogue. Through cross-referencing with the collection at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, three pieces can be identified: John Kavik's Man and Pie Kukshout's Man with Bird and Birds.[60] While this contact sheet was used for selecting the final images, it also illustrates the diversity of the work produced. These five images are examples of the sculptural and figurative work that the southern officials felt would be in direct competition with the soapstone carving. It is apparent that the character of these pieces is warm, approachable, and somewhat humourous in nature. Kavik and

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[59] Hendrika Nagy, "Pottery in Keewatin," The Beaver, Autumn 1967, 64.

[60] A second image, Figure by John Kavik, was identified using an illustration that appeared in Dave Suthertland's article, "The Sad Tale of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Experiment - 1963-1975," Inuit Art Quarterly 9, no.2 (Summer 1994): 53.

Kukshout are two artists who are noted for their sense of humour and these images reflect this.

Man, by Kavik, the image from the left-hand column of the contact sheet, is particularly noteworthy. It demonstrates how Kavik's quick and humourous style was easily transferable to another medium and how he was able to expand his repertoire of images. He was a very prolific artist, both in stone and clay and used the figure almost exclusively for his subject matter. The figure on the top on the second column is also by Kavik and it also illustrates the qualities of his unique style.[61] Another artist who has an equally identifiable style is Kukshout. His work points to his imaginative treatment of the clay and the whimsical presentation of his subject matter. In Man and Bird, the two similar images from the third column, he has used the properties of the clay to advantage by manipulating the surface to create a unique feather pattern and capture a transformation process of man to bird. The quizzical appearance of the bird is repeated in Birds, in the last two frames, as each one gazes at the other to size up the situation.

In the end, these images illustrate how the fears of the southern advisors were misplaced when they viewed the ceramic work as a threat to the stone sculptures. The clay provided these artists with a medium that once mastered, enabled them to create smoother lines and textured surfaces that could be moulded into place as opposed to having to chisel and file the hard stone. Robert Ayre picked up on this aspect as well, commenting that the

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[61] In the catalogue, Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67, eight entries are listed under Kavik's name; three of which are figures. Unfortunately, the only one that can not be confirmed through the visual records is the figure that appears on the bottom of the second row of images on Chris Lund's contact sheet.

clay "makes for more fluency and spontaneity and often subtler expressiveness than you find in the carvings."[62] Each of the thirteen artists included in the exhibition brought a different interpretation to this new medium that they had been encouraged to try roughly three years before. Elsewhere in this thesis, other examples from the ceramics project will be used to illustrate various points pertaining to its development. These images will provide the reader with an idea of the diversity and talent that was available in Rankin Inlet. In addition to Angutituar and Hakuluk, who travelled to Toronto, and Anawak, Kavik, and Kukshout, whose work was just discussed, the following potters were included in the exhibition: Angataguak, Kapik, Nilaula, Patterk, Samgushak, Tatty, Tikeayak, and Tutuk.

3.4 Archaeology, Authenticity and the Catalogue Text

The catalogue is the defining feature of any exhibition, as it is what remains after the exhibition has been dismantled. Over time, its importance has increased as more complex issues about art are being raised in the exhibitions they support. This is also true in the Inuit art field, as catalogues, such as Inuit Women Artists and In Cape Dorset We Do It this Way, provide the reader with greater insight into the work and its place in the lives of the artists.[63] In the 1960s, however, the catalogues devoted to Inuit art had a simple purpose: to introduce the work to the public. Typically, they were visual documents filled with many illustrations

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[62] Robert Ayre, "Eskimo Ceramics: A Revelation from Keewatin," Montreal Star, 8 April 1967.

[63] Jean Blodgett, In Cape Dorset We Do It This Way: Three Decades of Printmaking in Cape Dorset (Kleinburg: McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1991) and Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, eds., Inuit Women Artists.

and a modest text.[64] For its time, Keewatin Eskimo Ceramic '67, written by William Larmour, provides the reader with a lengthy essay that serves as an overview of the project. It is, however, not without its failings, as Larmour does not discuss individual pieces, nor does he provide any biographical information on the artists. The latter approach was also typical of the era. At this time, Inuit art was being promoted as a collective product that was directly tied to the Inuit's traditional nomadic and hunting lifestyle. This served a variety of functions with regard to marketing. By dealing with a collective, what were deemed to be weaker pieces could be sold based on the strength of the better ones from the same area. Also, when information on the artists was scarce, it was sufficient to say they came from a given community and if applicable were related to other artists. The limited subject matter affected the marketing of the work as well, as it fed into the mid-century desire to salvage and save lost cultures. It was not until 1965, with the publication of Sculpture esquimaude/Eskimo Sculpture by George Swinton that the perspective toward Inuit artists and their work slowly began to change. This book marked the culmination of eight years of research and pondering by Swinton and Jerry Twomey as to the notion of Inuit artists as the individuals who created distinct works of art.[65] Written before Swinton's ideas took hold, Larmour's essay presents the project as a collective effort by the community and discusses

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[64] See: W. T. Larmour, Eskimo Carvers of the Keewatin N.W.T. (Ottawa: Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, 1964) and P. Taylor, Arctic Values '65 (Ottawa: Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, 1965).

[65] Darlene Wight, The Swinton Collection of Inuit Art (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1987), 13. Twomey, a noted collector of Inuit art, was interested in genetics and arranged his collection according to family name, community, and region. This organizational style led him and Swinton to recognize artists as individuals with unique approaches to their work. Ibid., 7.

the ceramic work in terms of technique, its value as a medium of expression for the Inuit, and the historical association of the ancestral use of pottery. As seen in the illustrations provided in this thesis, the variety of work in the project was extensive. Unfortunately, Larmour did not capitalize on this fact, but chose instead to exploit the ties to the past.

In the literature surrounding the exhibition, references to ancestral pottery-making are used to substantiate the new work. This line of reasoning, which had its roots in the catalogue text, is seen in the reviews and promotional articles and was reiterated in Arthur Laing's speech. Titles such as "Old Eskimo Art Reborn with Arrival of Hydro"[66] and "The Arts: New Genius in an Old Medium,"[67] and passages like "Primitive pottery, dating back to the ninth century A. D. was known in the Thule culture"[68] and "It is not as generally known that subsequently the Eskimo people in the Keewatin region, attempted to produce clay pottery. Shards of clay vessels..."[69] illustrate the pervasiveness of this connection and point to the need to authenticate the new work. Using the catalogue as the primary example of this connection, Larmour includes a lengthy discussion on the Naujan find from the Fifth Thule Expedition. He quotes from the expedition's findings, highlighting the appearance and makeup of the shards, thus associating the new work with ancient artifacts. It is interesting

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[66] "Old Eskimo Art Reborn with the Arrival of Hydro," Prince George Citizen, B.C., 27 March 1967.

[67] "The Arts: New Genius in an Old Medium," Time, 17 March 1967.

[68] Helen Burgess, "Eskimo Ceramics," North/Nord, July - August 1967, 42.

[69] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, Remarks by The Honourable Arthur Laing, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, at the Opening of the Exhibition 'Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67' at the Toronto City Hall, 2 March 1967, [1].

to note that in the passages he chose, he inadvertently demonstrates that the method of production of the ancient shards and the makeup of the clay bear no resemblance to the new work at all:

> The vessel has been made in the hand out of a lump of clay and not built up out of strips....
> ...The shard...proved to be quite saturated with fat, probably whale oil.... The remainder consisted of a mixture of calcareous and ferruginous clay.... The whole chemical composition of the sample showed that the vessel cannot have been subjected to any actual baking operation.[70]

In contrast, the work being produced in Rankin Inlet was the result of sophisticated handbuilding techniques and used a combination of imported and local clays which were fired once they reached the greenware stage. Also, the actual shards from the Naujan find (ill. 13) were very plain and strictly utilitarian in design, while the new work was elaborate and decorative in function. Despite the evidence, this connection reinforced the belief that the Inuit culture was frozen in its development and that what was being created was an extension of a traditional lifestyle. In retrospect Larmour's argument for supporting the ceramic work seems seriously flawed. His approach remained focused on validating the clay images so the work would be considered a genuine form of Inuit art by the southern market.

The question then is why include this line of reasoning at all? The early success of Inuit art lay in its connection to the romanticized notions of a traditional lifestyle understood as primitive, a quality that was appealing to the southern consumer. This link was easily exploited in discussions about carving as the technique, tools, and medium were all things that the Inuit used in order to survive. This kind of association had its beginnings in the late

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[70] Larmour, Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67, 12.

1940s and early 1950s when "attempts were made in many quarters to give respectability to the new movement by linking it with the past."[71] Since clay was generally not part of the Qallunaat's understanding of Inuit culture and was a completely foreign medium to the artists associated with the project, ways and means of justifying its use in this program had to be found. Even within the Department there was some question "of [the] degree of authentic tradition among the Eskimo of Keewatin in the art of ceramics in prehistoric times."[72] That pottery finds did exist across the Arctic made it easier to exploit this ancestral connection even if the locations of the archaeological sites were not close to Rankin Inlet. Another concern raised by C. M. Bolger was that "[m]any people, and certainly many critics, attach importance to tradition in Eskimo art and are apt to become derogatory if they think that some new way of doing things has been totally imposed on the Eskimos by our culture."[73] As a result, the emphasis on an ancestral association was a logical one. When pottery was actually used by the Inuit and to what extent it was used, was never clearly addressed by Larmour. Most finds date from the Thule culture whose traditions and technologies were quite removed from the contemporary Inuit of Rankin Inlet. It is interesting to note that incidences of Inuit using clay were reported by E. W. Nelson in the nineteenth century and by Vilhjalmur Stefansson in the early twentieth century but its use was not common and quickly died out due to the abundance of soapstone and metal trade goods which were both

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[71] George Swinton, "Contemporary Canadian Eskimo Sculpture," Sculpture/Inuit: Sculpture of the Inuit: masterworks of the Canadian Arctic (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 36.

[72] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box no. 31, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, C. M. Bolger, Director, to Dr. R. G. Glover, National Museum of Canada, 24 February 1967.

[73] Ibid.

more durable.[74] In the exhibition itself, examples of pottery shards were included, loaned by the National Museum of Man in Ottawa. This further reinforced the ancestral connection and created the mistaken belief that the new work was deeply rooted in traditional Inuit activities. In retrospect this connection to the archaeological finds seems to be misguided with its only purpose being to authenticate the new ceramics.

Archaeologists develop their theories by studying objects from past cultures. This practice can attract notions of romanticism and conger ideas of hidden treasures that are valuable at once as art objects and for the knowledge they hold. Unfortunately, the reality is less glamorous, as it is a collection of routine objects and their regular appearance over time that provides them with truly valuable information. Northern archaeology is no different. Across the Arctic, many sites have yielded a wealth of insight into the various technologies the Inuit have used to survive in this climate. Pottery, however, holds a tenuous place in these past technologies. Finds have been located in specific regions in Alaska and the areas surrounding and including the Mackenzie Delta; dating ranges from 500 B. C. to 1500 A. D., covering many periods of development (Map II).[75] The example Larmour uses as his reference point was from the Naujan find near Repulse Bay where three pottery shards were found in one excavation site. During the Fifth Thule expedition archaeology played a

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[74] Hendrika Nagy, "Pottery in Keewatin," The Beaver, Autumn 1967, 61. These explorers gathered their information about the use of clay in Western Arctic.

[75] Carole Stimmell, "Going to Pot: a Technological Overview of North American Arctic Ceramics," Threads of Arctic Prehistory: Papers in Honour of William E. Taylor, Jr., eds. David Morrison and Jean-Luc Pilon (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Archaeological Survey of Canada, Mercury Series Paper 149, 1994), 36.

significant part in the study of the Inuit culture and filled two volumes in the report.[76] Therkel Mathiassen began his brief section on the small find as follows: "It was rather surprising to find 3 shards of pottery in Naujan; hitherto pottery has not been known anywhere in the Eskimo region east of Coronation Gulf."[77] Later in this report, he concedes that "[t]he pieces are all so small that nothing can be deduced as to the shape and size of the vessels; the very presence of pottery here, however, is of great interest,...now these pieces carry [the use of clay] right over to Hudson Bay."[78] With such inconclusive results, it is difficult to accept Larmour's association of the Rankin Inlet work to this find and by not citing other examples, his argument seems lacking in credibility. Upon further investigation, the appearance of pottery in the North is limited in both the amount of significant samples found and the time periods they cover. In fact, no pottery has been located in the central Keewatin at all.[79] My comments on this subject are not meant to dismiss the importance of historical information and archaeological finds to the study of the Inuit culture, but to highlight what I believe was their misuse. It is easy, in retrospect, to find fault in an argument that was developed to suit the tenets of its day. Larmour's position, and to some extent the Department's, was encouraged to tap into the marketing and promotional activities that had been successful for other Inuit arts and crafts products. Unfortunately, the clay medium was unlike anything else

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[76] Mathiassen Therkel, "Archaeology of the Central Eskimo," Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition 4, no. 1-2 (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1927).

[77] Ibid., 66.

[78] Ibid., 105.

[79] Brian Gordon, Archaeologist of the Keewatin, Canadian Museum of Civilization. Conversation with the author, 10 November 1995.

that had come before and a special strategy should have been devised to suit the work's unique appearance. In fact, one government official commented: "[T]he end result is a contemporary ceramic form and should not be related in any direct way to primitive ceramics."[80] This view of the work, however, was never fully exploited and the promotion of the historic links took precedent over innovation. This reality begs the question "What, if any, ancestral connection did the Inuit participants feel towards working in clay?" Unfortunately, this question cannot be answered. Considering that many of the Inuit who lived in Rankin Inlet came from regions where there have been no pottery finds, it can be argued that no inherent affinity to this medium existed prior to Grenier's arrival.

Other authors have investigated the connection between historic Inuit objects and contemporary Inuit art with varying degrees of success. In 1966, Hendrika Nagy, then a student of George Swinton, wrote a thesis devoted to Inuit pottery and her work was clearly divided between the ancient finds and the new ceramics being produced in Rankin Inlet.[81] After chronicling the development of ceramic techniques and styles across the Arctic and Alaska through the various time periods, Nagy did not make any attempt to link the old and the new work. Instead, she discussed the new pottery based on its own merit and pointed to the use of local clay as a strong identifying feature. She did, however, build the case that the artists used the ceramic support not just to illustrate their legends and traditions but to

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[80] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box no. 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, J. H. Gordon, Assistant Deputy Minister, to Mr. G. F. Gibson, 23 January 1967, [1].

[81] Hendrika Tasnadi-Nagy, "Eskimo as a Potter," Bachelor of Fine Arts thesis, University of Manitoba, 1967.

express them in a dynamic way that "[flows] forth directly from the Eskimo views on life."[82] Had Larmour taken her lead and highlighted the uniqueness of the individual pieces and the innovative use of the materials, the promotion of the work may have taken a different and more positive direction. He, however, insisted on exploiting the ancestral connection and with a limited selection of examples to discuss, Larmour had difficulty establishing a solid connection. An author who had an extensive history from which she could draw many examples and develop a solid theory was Joan Vastokas. In 1971, she published "Continuities in Eskimo Graphic Style," in which she outlined the association between patterning on tools and utensils with those design features found on contemporary prints.[83] While her article works to validate and authenticate the contemporary work, Vastokas's purpose was not to convince the viewer that the new work was genuine but to expand the body of knowledge surrounding Inuit graphic art. Citing decorative designs on historic tools, and the graphic images on items like cribbage boards, and the fact that missionaries and explorers introduced paper and pencil to the Inuit before the turn of the century, she successfully related the two distinct artistic traditions. In a field that was heavily dependent on proving authenticity, exposing ties to the past was an essential tool in establishing the art object's lineage. With the pervasive use of this kind of reasoning dominating the early literature supporting Inuit art, it is not surprising that Larmour took this route when it was time to introduce the Rankin Inlet ceramics to the market place.

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[82] Ibid., 26.

[83] Joan Vastokas, "Continuities in Eskimo Graphic Style," artscanada, December 1971-January 1972, 69-83.

The quest for authenticity is important as it could provide the strongest case for the ceramic works's failure on the market. The clay work was different from soapstone carving in many respects. The malleable nature allowed for a variety of images and ideas to be expressed that would have impossible to accomplish in stone. Robert Tatty's Three Faces with Aminal Noses (ill. 14), Pie Kukshout's Many Faces with Three Seals (ill. 15), and Donat Anawak's Vessel with Animals as Legs and Heads on Bowl (ill. 16) are examples of how the artists were able to create images and combine elements drawn from experience and imagination to create distinctive works of art. The intricacies of Kukshout's design - suited both the properties of the clay and Inuit traditions - were not practical for reproduction in stone, especially the kind found near Rankin Inlet, which was hard and not easily carved. The choice of media, then, was crucial for the Inuit as it was one of the strongest identifiers of Inuit art; another being subject matter. As Nelson H. H. Graburn pointed out: "Antler, ivory, bone, and to some extent wood are all part of the traditional 'strong and hard materials' complex of Inuit culture."[84] The texture of the soapstone sculptures contributed to Inuit art being defined as cool, heavy, solid, and dominant. Whale bone also left a distinct impression with the viewer as the rough surface texture could be equated to the harsh existence the Inuit experienced living on the land. Taken from this perspective, the ceramic work had to be reconciled with the stereotypic views of the southern market. The malleable quality and the soft texture of the clay combined with the need for intense heat to fire it, psychologically worked against its acceptance as a genuine form of Inuit art. As a result, the clay medium could not successfully challenge the stereotypical ideas surrounding Inuit art and northern

[84] Graburn, "Inuit Art and the Expression of Eskimo Identity," 58.

existence. Thus the link to ancestral activity and the archaeological finds became key to reconciling the northern project with the southern medium.

In addition to media, subject matter was taken directly from previous experiences which drew on past scenes of traditional Inuit life and by extension reinforced the mistaken belief that the Inuit lived a fixed existence. The development of this subject matter had its roots in Thule culture with the creation of figurines which "were conceptual, deriving from the idea, essence or soul of the subject matter, rather than perceptual attempts to reproduce them as the eye saw them."[85] This manner of creating images was continued into the Historic Period when the Inuit created miniatures and replicas of the world around them, ranging from traditional items like sledges and kayaks to modern amenities such as rifles and telescopes, to use in trading.[86] This exchange with these Qallunaat impressed upon the Inuit "two things: that depictive models could be successfully made for trade, and that some white people like realistic, perceptual creations of the real world of the Inuit."[87] With the swift development of contemporary Inuit art for commercial gains, adapting to the tastes of the consumer further structured the range of "acceptable" subject matter as only images from the Inuit's traditional life could be depicted in their work.[88] The more the Arctic was transformed by twentieth century advancements, the more the consumer expected to see "primitive" images chronicling past activities that were in danger of disappearing from the Inuit's culture.

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[85] Ibid., 51.

[86] Ibid., 51.

[87] Ibid., 51.

[88] Ibid., 52.

Believing these qualities existed in all media, the southern buyers had difficulty identifying the ceramics as genuine because the sculptural heads, that dominated production, and the isolated animals, that were the most common features decorating the vases, were not easily identified as traditional Inuit art. In addition to these constraints, the soapstone sculptures being created in Rankin Inlet tended to be images of figures that were minimalistic in nature and shied away from the elaborate, narrative work that was common in other communities.[89] In contrast, the ceramists embraced the opportunity to make expressive vases and sculptures. The work, already cited attests to this. Like the criteria for media, subject matter was also affected by the tastes of southern buyers and, in the end, the ceramic work had to compete with the popularity of sculptures and prints which they deemed to be genuine Inuit art.

3.5 The Centennial Connection

While strictly a coincidence, the timing of the Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67 exhibition could not have been better. Held in March 1967, it benefited from the increased interest Inuit art was receiving as a result of Canada's Centennial year celebrations. Proclaimed as a national treasure,[90] Inuit art was firmly established in the Canadian art market and expansion to international venues had begun. Centennial events focused attention on the arts and culture through special funding programs and general interest in all things Canadian ensured their success. Inuit art was featured extensively in these schemes as newspaper and magazine articles focused on this art and special exhibitions were organized

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[89] Pierre Karlik is an notable exception to this perception of the Rankin Inlet "school" as he created elaborate works in soapstone and ivory.

[90] Nelson H. H. Graburn, "Inuit Art and Canadian Nationalism," Inuit Art Quarterly 1, no. 3 (Fall 1986): 6.

by various museums. The most notable contribution was the unveiling of the Toronto Dominion Bank's Inuit Art Collection, which had been amassed during the previous few years and included several pieces from Rankin Inlet. As part of its contribution to the festivities, The Beaver issued a special issue devoted exclusively to Inuit art.[91] This issue contained the most substantial contemporaneous article on the Rankin Inlet work ever written. "Pottery in Keewatin" by Hendrika Nagy chronicled the development of the project and outlined the ancestral use of pottery. In this well-illustrated essay, the author also discussed several of the pieces in detail, providing the reader with insight into what was then a new art form. The publication of this article was timely and was designed to be promotional in nature as it gave the project a positive and glowing review.

Among the Centennial celebrations, no event loomed larger than Expo '67 held in Montreal. It was a six-month celebration which brought millions of visitors to the city and transformed its landscape. In addition to creating Ile Notre-Dame with reclaimed land and redeveloping Ile St. Hélène, the organizers of Expo '67 built an experimental project that has become an international landmark. Located at Cité du Havre, Habitat, Moshie Safdie's graduate project for McGill University's School of Architecture, continues to grace the Montreal's harbour with a modernist presence that remains avant-garde against the historical buildings of Old Montreal and the industrial architecture of the Old Port.

Habitat is remembered as "the most explicit statement of the soaringly ambitious spirit that lay behind [Expo '67]."[92] This ambitious spirit carried through to the interior

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[91] "Eskimo Art," The Beaver, Autumn 1967.

[92] Robert Fulford, This Was Expo (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1968), 109.

designs of the thirty-six units open for display. The Advisory Committee for Habitat '67 used these units to showcase Canadian talent. Work by designers, artists, and craftspeople was used to furnish "the home of the future." Barbara MacLennan, Decorator Service Consultant for Chatelaine magazine and committee member, approached the Canadian government to borrow works from its permanent collection of Inuit art. Twenty-nine works including ten ceramic pieces, were used to decorate ten apartments.[93] The ceramic work was incorporated after MacLennan had seen Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67 in Toronto. An image of one of the interiors (ill. 17) shows the sharp contrast between the contemporary, hard-edged furniture and the expressive Inuit art that filled the room. Of this interior, MacLennan stated:

> This house [number 1027] is one of the more successful ones, to my mind: quite modern in furnishings, but with none of the coldness sometimes associated with the style. Colour scheme is largely black and white with strong accents of pink, red and orange.[94]

By including Inuit art, the Advisory Committee signalled that this art form was world-class and could exist in a modern home despite its narrative appeal. This inclusion was in line with Department plans from the previous year "to put the pottery on display in the Canadian government pavilion...[as it would] be an excellent opportunity to promote the new work of the Rankin Inlet artists and we should take advantage of it."[95]

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[93] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. , Box , file 255-4-3, Barbara MacLennan to William Larmour, 13 June 1967, [3-4].

[94] Ibid., [1-2].

[95] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box no. 35, file 255-5/184-1 vol. 1, J. W. Evans to Administrator of the Arctic, 15 June 1966.

Expo '67, an event celebrating "Man and His World," showcased Inuit art in some of its other displays as well. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development was involved in the creation of the "Man and the Polar World" exhibition and the development of La Toundra Restaurant in the Canadian Pavilion. "Man and the Polar World" was used to showcase the changes in the North and "[featured] developments in polar research from around the world."[96] In that pavilion, images of Inuit life were presented to provide the viewer with an idea of northern living, a filtered view but informative nonetheless. In this display, art objects were included as a matter of course but they were not singled out for special consideration. An extensive mural, created by Eliyuh and Kumukaloo of Cape Dorset, was also installed. The two artists spent several months in Montreal completing this work, as well as the mural for La Toundra Restaurant which served country food, buffalo, smoked Arctic char, and muktuk.[97] In the planning stages for the restaurant, sculptural groups were to be designed as centrepieces for the tables. Alma Houston put forth this request at the 8 December meeting of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council and it was suggested that "a rendering [of the requested sculpture] be sent to Mr. Grenier to decide whether he could, or would like to, take on the project."[98] In his April 1966 Monthly Report, Grenier indicated that samples for the restaurant project had been sent south but "[the] experiments...had to be limited because of lack time and some unexpected bad luck during

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[96] Helen Burgess, "Arctic Highlights at Expo," North/Nord, March-April 1967, 53.

[97] Ibid., 53-54.

[98] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2172, CEAC Papers, Minutes of meeting, 8 December 1965, 6.

firing and glazing procedures."[99] G. L. Thompson, the Area Administrator, added "we believe they are very beautiful and will satisfy the most exacting standards."[100] Unfortunately, any further reference to this commission has yet to surface and it seems likely that it was never brought to fruition.

This brief discussion of how the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project benefited from the timing of the Centennial celebrations shows that the support for the project was strong and that it entered the market at a time when Inuit art was extremely popular. As may be seen from the information presented in this chapter, the project received extensive support from various sections within the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee, and many art critics of the day. In fact, it was accorded all the pomp and excitement that the annual sale of the graphics collections received at the time. In thanking the members of the Junior League of Toronto for their efforts, J. W. Evans observed: "We have learned from all sorts of sources that the exhibition was literally a smashing success. It accomplished for the ceramic sculptures all that we could have hoped for."[101] Unfortunately, this success was short-lived. While every effort had been made to give the work a proper introduction, sales did not follow. Despite the fact that the exhibition toured twenty-four cities and the work was showcased in a variety of galleries including the Lippel Gallery of Primitive Art in Montreal and the Isaacs Gallery in Toronto, the ceramic

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[99] NAC, RG 85, vol. 1918, file A255-5/184 pt. 4, Monthly Report, Claude Grenier, 4 May 1966.

[100] Ibid., Area Administrator's Report, G. L. Thompson, 4 May 1966, 2.

[101] DIANA, Storage, Review/Lot no. 714, Box no. 35, file 255-5/184 vol. 1, J. W. Evans to Mrs. Kennish, 20 June, 1967.

work failed to develop a sufficient following to make the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project economically viable.[102] As a result, the project lost momentum and began to drift. In Chapter Four, its demise will be investigated and some thoughts on its lack of success will be put forth.

[102] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2160, CEAC Papers, "Report - Rankin Inlet Ceramics," John Robertson, 1970. [1]-2.

CHAPTER 4: THE DEMISE OF THE PROJECT

> We must ask ourselves whether this project is worth maintaining, and obviously, from the very good report of Miss Watt, and from the Robertson-Swinton-Williamson report, it is.... We have said that this project should continue. But we have been informed that money is not available from the NWT Territories' budget, but perhaps funds could be obtained from the Secretary of State. We should recommend to the Minister that money should be found, and that the project should continue.[1]
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> Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, 1971.

This statement came four years after the success of the Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67 exhibition and was prompted by the Council's belief in the project. During this time, production continued unabated but difficulties in bringing the work to market, combined with technical problems, began to negatively affect the direction of the project. This chapter, then, covers the period from 1968 to the project's close in 1977.[2] This era is marked by a steady decline in interest, enthusiasm, and funding as well as a renewed sense of hope after a change of the arts and crafts officer in 1970. Like the stages before it, this part of the project was subjected to a multitude of evaluation reports. The problems and recommendations these reports highlighted will be examined in terms of how they affected its direction and subsequently the work being produced. This period also saw a change in the

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[1] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2172, CEAC Papers, Minutes of meeting, 10 November 1971, 6.

[2] Most sources indicate that the project closed in 1975, however, research has shown, it continued until 1977. See: Pat Verge, "Pottery Shop in Rankin Inlet May Close," Northern News Report, 23 June 1977, 12-14, and Sutherland, "Rankin Inlet Ceramics Experiment," 52-55. This information was reiterated by John McGrath during an e-mail interview with author, September 1996.

government structure of the Northwest Territories which not only affected the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project but had a strong impact on the entire Inuit art industry. It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss this tumultuous period which resulted in the demise of this unique project.

4.1 Reports and Recommendations

After the critical success of the Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67 exhibition, the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project seemed to lose momentum and direction. While the artists continued creating, the market support necessary to make the project viable failed to materialize. This situation prompted southern officials and advisors into action: developing reports, making recommendations, and reviewing marketing strategies. Numerous reports were issued by the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council and they revealed a dismal state of affairs, citing a drop in morale, lack of inspiration, loss of direction, and a limited market as causes for the decline. What is difficult to ascertain is how the project deteriorated so quickly, considering Grenier's continued association with it and the continued scrutiny it was receiving from Ottawa. Despite this attention and the support of the Council, the project ultimately closed.

In 1968, the proliferation of progress reports began. The first of two issued by Alistair MacDuff focused on the marketability of the work.[3] MacDuff, Director of the Gallery of the Arctic in Victoria (1967-77) and associated with the Fine Arts Division of the Canadian Arctic Producers (CAP) during that time, was a ceramist himself, trained in the area of

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[3] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2160, CEAC Papers, file Report - Rankin Inlet Ceramics, "An appraisal of the ceramics of Rankin Inlet," Alistair MacDuff, 1968.

industrial design. Upon hearing that the artists of Rankin Inlet were working in clay, he became "certain and utterly convinced, not by preknowledge but by [his] instincts that the Eskimo potters would produce something of immeasurable value."[4] In many respects, his instincts were correct. As a result, his views were geared towards encouraging an art form he strongly supported, and his "suggestions [were] aimed at widening the scope of activities and increasing the market."[5] The first report, "An Appraisal of the Ceramics of Rankin Inlet," dealt with the work that reached the South for resale through CAP between the fall of 1967 and the time he wrote about his findings in 1968. After highlighting the work of Phillip Hakuluk, Robert Tatty, and Michel Angutituar as being of museum or collector quality, his comments concerning the rest of the shipments were quite critical. The most serious failing he cited was the lack of commercial value.[6] Of that work, mostly pots and sculpted heads, he wrote:

> Those pieces are poorly modelled, ugly and grotesque, having little to commend them, either in terms of interest or beauty or skill, and I feel almost certain, by my own experience and instincts that they would be almost impossible to sell, even at very low prices.[7]

These sentiments would continue to permeate not only his next report but also those of others who attempted to assist what had become a floundering project. What was apparent to MacDuff was that an imbalance in the quality of the work and the ability of the artists existed

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[4] Alistair MacDuff, "Through the Eyes of a Potter," The Beaver, Spring 1969, 14.

[5] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2160, CEAC Papers, file Report - Rankin Inlet Ceramics, Alistair MacDuff to Alma Houston, 1 March 1968, 2.

[6] MacDuff, "An Appraisal of the Ceramics," 2.

[7] Ibid., 2.

in the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project. His attempts, through CAP, to sell the ceramics bore out his fear "that a difficult and demoralizing situation is taking place, insofar as a group of people, many very talented, [were] producing work, a small proportion of which, [could] only be sold through pure fine art sources, the remainder 'falling between two stools.'"[8] In an attempt to rectify this situation, MacDuff offered several recommendations based on his knowledge of ceramics and the art market. In a style that was rare for its day, he prefaced his suggestions by stating:

> ...I am offering again in all humility, as one who is ignorant of life in the Arctic - the working conditions, the availability of suitable materials and equipment, personnel problems, and many other imponderables,...but my suggestions are based on my experiences as an industrial designer in the ceramics industry,....[9]

The first recommendation, which will be discussed later, was the introduction of architectural tiles. The second one called for the creation of "pots and bowls...made and offered for their beauty of form and quality, texture and colour of glaze."[10] The essence of his comments, the attention to surface detail, was similar to those presented earlier during the original evaluation by the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee. In his discussion of the work, however, it is very clear that MacDuff called for exacting standards of technical and aesthetic criteria: southern market aesthetics, gallery owner criteria, and an understanding of what was needed in order for the work to sell.

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[8] Ibid., 2.

[9] Ibid., 2. Indeed the artists were handicapped by many factors that other ceramists need not worry about: delays in supplies, chronic problems with the kiln, and the effects of the cold weather on the firing process, to name a few.

[10] Ibid., 3.

Later in 1968, MacDuff had the opportunity to tour the Keewatin on behalf of CAP, visiting such communities as Baker Lake, Eskimo Point, Whale Cove, and Rankin Inlet. His second report was written after this visit and it begins on a telling note. He described an "oppressive" environment where

> amongst the Eskimos and the white population.... The standards are generally low, and there are conditions of sliminess and degradation...
> ...I feel very sad to see the Eskimo people exposed to the lowest standards which white people are capable of.[11]

While no reports or documentation support this notion, it seems quite possible that the lack of direction of the project may have been symptomatic of the general lack of morale and crisis within the community itself. It must be remembered that Rankin Inlet did not fully recover from the mine's closure until it became the administrative centre for the Keewatin in the early 1970s. Despite this grim state of affairs, MacDuff found his time at the Arts and Crafts Centre beneficial as he was able to talk to the artists and "convey to all the potters and carvers, the importance of their work and the value of their contributions."[12] His apprehension about the project was confirmed during his visit. Only a small number of artists were "creating museum quality pieces" and even fewer were making "saleable items."[13] "Lack of aptitude and skill, lack of artistic talent, and the tendency to make many very ugly and almost revolting subjects"[14] were at the root of the problem. What is not clear is how -

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[11] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2160, CEAC Papers, file Report - Rankin Inlet Ceramics, "Report on visit to several Arctic Communities," Alistair MacDuff, 1968, 2.

[12] Ibid., 2.

[13] Ibid., 2-3.

[14] Ibid., 3.

with Grenier's presence and the constant influx of constructive criticism from southern advisors - production could have been so inconsistent and how the project could have deteriorated so quickly?

MacDuff continued his very direct evaluation, citing more problems with the wheel-thrown work, which was "devoid of skill," and the attempts at glazing which "suffered from inexperience."[15] Despite such discouraging reviews, he noted that Grenier "was trying to bring about some changes, to improve the existing situation," and held his achievements in high regard.[16] MacDuff believed strongly in the endeavour as it "[contained] brilliant artists, by world standards, who [had] already made a great and valuable contribution to the arts. They [deserved] every possible help, from any organization or individual who has something to offer."[17] That organization would be the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council.

It is difficult to assess whether or not MacDuff's advice had any real effect, as subsequent reports seem to imply that the same problems continued unabated. One suggestion, he made in his first report, was to encourage the production of architectural tiles. He proposed the creation of these tiles because they offered the widest range of creative experimentation while being produced exclusively for a commercial market.[18] Decorative techniques ranging from sculpting to scraffito to the use of coloured slips and glazes would

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[15] Ibid., 6.

[16] Ibid., 5.

[17] Ibid., 7-8.

[18] MacDuff, "An appraisal of the ceramics," 3.

provide the artists with yet another way to express their ideas. Unfortunately, when MacDuff saw early examples of his proposed idea, they did not meet his specific expectations;

> The tiles as they stand even at this early stage, have a real honesty and look hand made and professional. They are...lacking imagination, both in subject matter and decoration techniques, but they are very new and are being pursued along the right lines.[19]

While not a new idea,[20] it seems that action was taken on MacDuff's suggestion. What the artists needed, and which was not forthcoming, was more instruction as to the techniques of working with tiles and a deeper understanding of their use and purpose. A sampling of these tiles can be seen in illustration 18. Heavy and bulky in design, it is obvious that these pieces were not created with a full understanding of MacDuff's intentions. They are, however, interesting in their own right and, with more time for the artists to master this new art form, more sophisticated examples might have found a niche in the coveted Inuit art industry.

1968 was an important year for the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council as it marked the beginning of an extensive period of northern travel by its members. These trips several days in length, typically involved stops for a day or two in four or five art-producing communities in either the Keewatin, Northern Quebec, or on Baffin Island. They provided the Council members with the opportunity to meet the artists and to see first-hand the conditions in which they worked. While the frequency of these trips subsided over the years, they continued until the Council folded in 1989. For the purpose of this thesis, it is the information found in the

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[19] MacDuff, "Report on visit," 6.

[20] As was discussed in Chapter Two, Watney proposed the introduction of flat forms in 1964. His reasoning was based on practical concerns of cost, production, and shipping. MacDuff's suggestion, however, was one based on artistic potential.

reports generated from these visits to Rankin Inlet that are crucial in understanding how the ceramics project fared in the last six years of its existence.

Between 1968 and 1971, Council members were responsible for nine reports, which ranged in importance from simple overviews of the project to critical reviews containing several recommendations. The combined results of their observations tell the same tale that MacDuff recounted after his earlier travels. The Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project was in trouble and a restructuring was needed for any possible recovery to occur. One of the first trips to the Keewatin took place in the winter of 1968 and the participants were Alma Houston, executive secretary of the Council; John Robertson, Council member and owner of Robertson Galleries, Ottawa; Jean Bruce, from the Commission on the Status of Women; Don Trent, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development; and John Reeves, a photographer with the National Film Board of Canada.[21] While Alma Houston's report was very brief, offering no new insights into the project's failings, John Robertson's was broad in scope. He began his report by citing the need to acknowledge the emergence of individual artists and to cease treating northern arts initiatives as "welfare projects" and to consider them "as cultural projects, on the same basis as cultural projects elsewhere in Canada."[22] His comments about the Rankin Inlet Arts and Crafts Program were, for the most part, positive. He cited the atmosphere in the workshop as being agreeable and

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[21] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2160, CEAC Papers, "Report - Keewatin," Alma Houston, 21 March 1968, cover page.

[22] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2160, CEAC Papers, "Report - Keewatin: A Tour of the District," John Robertson, 1968, [1].

> one has the feeling that the work is being produced not solely from economic necessity but from a very real interest in the results. The productivity and quality at Rankin Inlet appear to be due to the combination of adequate facilities and imaginative direction - and, of course adequate funds. However, there may be a danger at Rankin Inlet of an over-production of a particular style of work.[23]

These works were the grostesque heads (ill. 19) "which while fascinating to the objective observer may adversely affect their saleability."[24] Robertson made many interesting recommendations for the continued development of the arts and crafts industry in the Keewatin. These included, among other ideas: the creation of a film showing the arrival of Inuit art in the South which would be shown to the artists to give them a better understanding of how the retail process worked; mounting small exhibitions of the best work produced during a given period which would tour the North so the artists could see the work of their colleagues from other communities; and creating a position of roving arts and crafts officers to help the artists in the numerous communities that were without such a position.[25] Robertson's only comments directed specifically at the ceramics project were to question whether or not the artists, having "reached this level of technical competence and imagination, [had] quite possibly...reached a plateau and now required a new direction" and

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[23] Ibid., 3.

[24] Ibid., 3.

[25] Ibid., 6. Most of his suggestions were never implemented, however, in 1971 the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council sponsored Eskimo Sky Museum. This travelling exhibition stopped in eighteen communities across the Arctic and the cargo plane, that transported the works of art, was used as the exhibition space which the visitors filed through to see it. (Gustavison, Arctic Expressions, 36).

if Grenier was the right person for this task, despite having praised his initial "accomplishment [as being] remarkable."[26]

Another evaluator who pondered the notion of replacing Grenier as a means of revitalizing the ceramics project was Gabriel Gély, then an employee of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. He accompanied Doris Shadbolt and George Swinton on the second Canadian Eskimo Arts Council trip to the Keewatin in 1968. The purpose of this trip "was to hold discussions with artists, craftsmen, and Department personnel: to advise them on general arts and crafts, marketing conditions, and to clarify certain important issues in connection with the pricing and sale of arts and crafts in the North."[27] Gély's comments were the most pessimistic of all the reports. He pointed out that the work was still experimental, finding a market would be difficult, the technical nature of ceramics involved many years training before it can be fully mastered, and creative renewal was needed in order for the project to continue.[28] His most interesting comment, however, undermined earlier recommedations of most evaluators who insisted that glazing was essential to make the work marketable. He wrote: "The dubious theory that glazing applied systematically to the present unsaleable products would cure market resistance is pure speculation. Such piece-meal or any other half-measures are no panacea because they evade the issue of personality."[29] Considering Gély had a clear understanding of the project, the role

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[26] Ibid., 3.

[27] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2160, CEAC Papers, "Report - Keewatin," Gabriel Gély, 1968, cover page.

[28] Ibid., 4.

[29] Ibid., 4.

of an arts and crafts officer, and the Inuit art market, it is unfortunate that his four recommendations revolved around one theme: a change in mangement in order to renew creative interest in the ceramics project.

George Swinton's report, "Keewatin Art and Craft Activities," is also a result from that visit and is worth examining because he explores the notion that the economic aspect of the Inuit art industry could no longer be ignored by the Council, which until that time focused almost exclusively on the aesthetic qualities of this art.[30] For the Inuit, this aspect was always important and the Council's attitude towards it had serious ramifications for such communities as Holman and Povungnituk that were trying to establish viable printing projects only to be informed that their print collections were rejected after a considerable investment of time and money.[31] Working from this perspective, he emphasized that:

> neither I personally, nor the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council,... can afford to deal with Eskimo artists and art in terms of merely aesthetic considerations. The Council's involvement in the entire picture of art and craft production demands a much more positive involvement in economic considerations and in the shaping of intergrated aesthetic,...[32]

His comments on the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project are based on this notion and are quite direct. Swinton followed Robertson's lead by discussing the connection between the various arts and crafts programs across the Keewatin and the "welfare programs" in each community. This close association was "not conducive toward maintaining high standards and a healthy

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[30] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2160, CEAC Papers, "Report - Art and Craft Activities," George Swinton, 1968, cover page.

[31] Gustavison, Arctic Expressions, 15.

[32] Swinton, "Report - Art and Craft Activities," cover page.

art production."[33] He believed that the manner of payment for the work contributed to this situation as "self-liquidating, fixed, monthly 'budgets' " precluded the use of a "flexible ...[payment scale] geared to the quality" of the work and the changes in the level of production due to variables such as weather and hunting conditions.[34] As seen from the constant creation of work and the steady attendance of roughly twenty-two potters, the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project seemed to illustrate this situation. Swinton placed some of the negative concerns on the fact that

> our prevailling attitudes to the...project have been marked by an excessive amount of doubt rather than of caution. Within this set of false attitudes it was expected that, similar to Dorset prints, only the "most exquisite works would continuously flow onto the market".[35]

His belief in the project's future and the strength of the outstanding pieces was evident, as he claimed "if properly handled [it] still has a highly explosive (i.e. exciting) potential."[36] To capitalize on this possibility, he made several recommendations including launching the ceramics in a New York gallery, producing a variety of items from fine art and series pieces to utility ware, and that the southern advisors start believing enthusiastically about the project and the work being produced.

Inferred from the reports that began appearing in 1968, was the vast discrepancy in the quality of the work seemed to be a major concern. Since the emphasis of the project,

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[33] Ibid., 2.

[34] Ibid., 2.

[35] Ibid., 12.

[36] Ibid., 12.

under Grenier's tenure, had been on creative experimentation, all pieces were encouraged and fired despite their saleability. The shop provided a wage income where "men who worked steadily in the ceramics room could earn as much as forty dollars a week."[37] This environment resulted in the proliferation of objects being created. From the information available, it appears that Grenier did not discourage any of the potters from participating in the project nor did he administer any form of evaluation process. As a result, a significant portion of work was not acceptable to the art-buying public. Notions of quality can vary greatly and depend on the evaluator's perspective towards the given product. For instance, Swinton commented in his report that works he found to be of an outstanding nature "[were] often considered 'failures'[and] some of the pieces, I personally dislike, would sell...extremely well."[38] It is not surprising, then that with the imbalance in the quality of the work and the diversity of opinions towards it, CAP found it extremely difficult to sell the work. By 1970 only $12,370 worth of ceramics had been sold, not a very good return for a project of which so much was expected.[39] In this second report by Robertson, he listed roughly thirty galleries that sponsored exhibitions or sales of the work. These institutions were located around the world and included the American Indian Art Centre, New York; Gallerie Les Caves, Paris and Bordeaux; Konstframjandet, Stockholm; and several in

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[37] Williamson, Eskimo Underground, 133.

[38] Swinton, "Report - Art and Craft Activities," [12].

[39] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2160, CEAC Papers, "Report - Rankin Inlet Ceramics," John Robertson, September 1970, 2.

Arizona and Texas, two prominent locations for Native American pottery.[40] It was his belief that such exposure was adequate for testing the marketability of the work and "the results [proved] extremely disappointing."[41] He cited three factors that were at the root of the pottery's market failure:

(a) the initial high price [$75.00 to $250.00]
(b) failure of the large kiln to operate satisfactorily
(c) the nature of the product (reduction in price has had little effect)[42]

Having previously discussed how the ceramics work failed to meet the existing expectations surrounding Inuit art, I would like to reiterate that the lack of sales stemmed from the fact that the art-buying public refused to expand its expectations of what ceramic art was and what Inuit art could become. Intuitively a viewer responds to a medium based on preconceived notions of how it is meant to look or to be manipulated. In the field of Inuit art, the soapstone sculptures, which were cool to the touch and often highly polished, came to define this art and, in turn, it became associated it with an image of the hostile North. By its nature, the unglazed ceramic work retained a warm and inviting quality, which was associated with extreme heat. While the images and subject matter presented in the ceramic work spoke directly to the experiences of life on the land and Inuit traditions, the clay medium supporting those ideas was not compatible with them.

Looking at these reports collectively, the members of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council tried to find workable solutions to the problems plaguing the ceramics project. They

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[40] Ibid., [1]-2.

[41] Ibid., 2.

[42] Ibid., 2.

discussed the imbalance in the quality of the work and proposed ways to rectify it. In 1968 a decision, typical of the Council's objectives, was reached and it stated: "a recommendation [be made] to the Minister that Rankin Inlet ceramics be treated the same way as prints, i.e. the Council would approve or reject pieces for the market."[43] There, however, is no evidence that this idea was actually turned into policy. The members also suggested that Grenier visit with representatives of CAP to help develop marketing schemes which he did.[44] The solutions, they were searching for, had to be devised in such a manner that action would result and a visible change in the project would occur. It appears that at this time, none of the ideas put forth affected any real improvements in the ceramics project. One recommendation, that kept reappearing in these reports, called for a change in arts and crafts officer but it was not pursued by the Council. This solution came to pass when Grenier retired in 1970 and a new advisor began altering the direction of the project.

4.2 Grenier's Final Years

By the time the Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67 exhibition took place, Grenier had developed a diversified arts and crafts program. As discussed in Chapter Two, carving and sewing programs formed the foundation of the activities in Rankin Inlet and they were successful ventures as the sculptures were in demand and orders for sewn garments were plentiful. In fact, the seamstresses received the commission to create the parkas for the official visit of the Royal Family which toured the North during the Centennial of the

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[43] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2172, CEAC Papers, Minutes of meeting, 29 and 30 April 1968, 3

[44] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2172 , CEAC Papers, Minutes of meeting, 21 November 1968, 7.

Northwest Territories in 1970.[45] The ceramics project, his main focus, was beginning to show signs of deterioration. Encouraged by the critical response of the exhibition, the artists continued to create and soon the work filled most of the storage space in the shop. The limited interest in the work by the art-buying public coupled with chronic problems with the kiln, resulted in an unmanageable situation (ill. 20). Grenier's efforts to get the kiln repaired or replaced fell on deaf ears as the Department was no longer as supportive as it once had been. The inability to develop a solid market for the work was at the root of the problem. By 1968, the artists "[were] well aware of the problem and realized...that they have been accumulating work which is going nowhere."[46] Low morale, discouragement, and disillusionment quickly spread through the project and many of the ceramists looked for employment elsewhere.

Prior to his departure, however, Grenier tried to affect change. He implemented several of the recommendations provided by MacDuff and the Council reports, notably the introduction of the architectural tiles. In an effort to develop a marketing program, he took a short leave in 1969 to work with CAP on strategies for the ceramics project.[47] Information from this visit, while very brief in detail, can be found in a project report submitted by Grenier. Impressed by CAP's operation, he found it unfortunate that their funding was so

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[45] Grenier, "Some Wonderful, Creative Years," 31.

[46] Robertson, "Report - Rankin Inlet Ceramics," 3-4.

[47] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2160, "Report - Keewatin," J. W. Evans, 1968, 3.

limited.[48] He suggested targetting the Francophone milieu, "surtout dans la province de Québec, il y aurait lieu de faire plus de publicité aux produits céramiques esquimaux et d'en faire des expositions éclairs dans certains centres culturels."[49] Proof of this effort was found in a newspaper clipping announcing an exhibition of ceramic work to be held in Chicoutimi.[50] This issue of marketing was an important element in the failure of the project as southern advisors experienced great difficulties encouraging interest in the work. While information about the work was circulated widely in 1967, the momentum of the exhibition failed to carry through to any new promotional activity.

Grenier was an individual with vision and "could see the possibilities of doing so much [with the project] if he had more money [which], of course,...wasn't forthcoming always or, if it did, it was slow."[51] This vision expanded into the general field of Inuit art. He saw the need to create a visual record of the work that was leaving the North so the artists would be able to look back on their oeuvres and he hoped that this record could be expanded to include references as to where the work ended up after it was sold. In 1965 he requisitioned a camera and began taking portraits of the artists holding their work.[52] An "auto-biographical" sheet was included with these photographs which were sent south to be

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[48] DIANA, Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre, Box: Indian and Northern Affairs Archives, file A255-5/184 pt. 8, "Rapport sur le project d'industrie céramique de Rankin Inlet," 2.

[49] Ibid., 2.

[50] "Exposition d'art esquimau à l'Auditorium Dufour," Le Progrès du Saguenay, 16 février 1969.

[51] Jean Williamson, interviewed by David Zimmerly, Interview Transcript, March 1985, [11].

[52] NAC, RG 85, vol. 1650, file A255-5/184 pt. 3, Monthly Report, C. Grenier, 8 November 1965.

held by the Department and to be used as reference material as to who the artists were and the work they were creating. At the time, this was a progressive idea and not all communities had such systems in place. Today through the efforts of the Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre, a biographical data base is now maintained on all the artists from the North. Frustrated by the lack of support for repairing the kiln, the budget cuts, and discouraged by the lack of market interest in the ceramics, Grenier eventually left in 1970.

4.3 New Directions

In 1967, plans to move the seat of government control for the Northwest Territories from Ottawa to Yellowknife began to take shape. This transition was the result of recommendations contained in the Report of the Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories (Carrothers Report). The main objective of the report was to bring to the smaller communities greater access to government, both local and territorial, develop schools, and establish control over community affairs in such areas as economic development, public works, and land management.[53] This transition had far-reaching implications for the Native and non-Native citizens of the Northwest Territories, as it gave them more control over their affairs. The most significant change was the increased representation of Native leaders on the Legislative Assembly and on the executive council.[54] In addition to the increased power in areas of social concern, the Government of the Northwest Territories also gained more control over its economic destiny. The lucrative area

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[53] Hamilton, Arctic Revolution, 101, 102.

[54] In his book, Arctic Revolution, Hamilton documents the development of Native organization and how these groups have become politically active within the system.

of natural resources, however, remained in Ottawa's control but other areas of industrial development, including the Inuit art industry, were administered from Yellowknife.[55] While the federal government remained involved in the art industry,[56] the territorial government was given responsibility for product development, hiring arts and crafts officers, and funding the variety of programs then in existence.[57] In time, the arts and crafts programs that were heavily funded by Ottawa lost significant support regardless of their success as they were no longer a priority for the new government. The Government of the Northwest Territories's objective was to privatize the Inuit arts industry. By the mid-1980s most arts and crafts centres had closed as this goal was often not attainable.[58]

It is not surprising, then, that this change in policy had a direct impact on the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project. Faced with a less than supportive benefactor, it was now in constant danger of closing. An expensive endeavour to operate with no apparent market, its drain on government resources was hard to justify. It has been suggested that the problem with funding was that the project's aesthetic value was not fully understood by the officials in Yellowknife. Nor, it would appear, did they realize the value of the art industry to the Inuit

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[55] Hamilton, Arctic Revolution, 101.

[56] Maria Muehlen, "For the Canadian Government, Handicrafts was an Obvious Answer," Inuit Art Quarterly 5, no. 4 (Fall 1990 - Winter 1991): 39.

The federal government's focus, during the 1970s and early 1980s, was directed towards promotional activities such as the organization of touring exhibitions and the eventual establishment of the Research and Documentation Library of the Inuit Art Section (now the Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre).

[57] "Craft Production, a Priority for the Government of the Northwest Territories," Inuit Art Quarterly 5, no. 4 (Fall 1990 - Winter 1991): 40.

[58] Ibid., 40.

themselves. During a 1971 project review, Donat Anawak put forth the following observation:

> It seems to me and to the local people that the Government has different policies for the Cannery and the Arts and Crafts Project. There seems to be all kinds of money available for equipment for a project which is to be handed over to the white man - while the Eskimo only get wages - (the cannery) - but for the arts and crafts program there is not equally much money available that would go to the good of the Eskimo.[59]

In an effort to turn the project around, the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council continued to use its influence to affect positive change. The transition of power cited above also affected the Council in several ways. Having been so closely associated with the federal government and being able to use its influence extensively, it was now far removed from the decision-making process regarding funding and program evaluations and their recommendations were not always accepted. This difficulty had its roots in the territorial government's belief "that the arts and crafts spectrum is essentially a management organization whose job is one of encouragement, organization, administration and quality control - but, quality control in a technical rather that a professional sense."[60] The territorial government, however, did want the Council to continue its work in the area of quality evaluation. Despite its awkward association with the government officials from the Northwest Territories, the Council continued to support the ceramics project and in 1970 endorsed the appointment of a new arts and crafts officer.

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[59] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2160, CEAC Papers, "Report on Rankin Inlet," J. K. B. Robertson, G. Swinton, and R. G. Williamson, 26 August 1971, 4.

[60] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2172, CEAC Papers, Minutes of meeting, 3 and 4 November 1969, point 18. (Part of synopsis from the presentation given by Mr. Ballantyne, Director of Industry and Development of the Northwest Territories Government, on the first day of the meeting.)

In 1970, Bob Billyard, a graduate of the University of Manitoba's School of Fine Arts, replaced Claude Grenier and would continue with the challenge of making the project viable. He ran the program from 1970 to 1973 only to leave in frustration over the lack of funding and support.[61] His mandate was "to revitalize the artistic qualities of the work while establishing a stable financial base for its continued operations."[62] The first objective was easily attained as those involved in the project were eager to continue. The second one, however, was virtually unattainable. The lack of government funding, which in fact stopped for a short time in 1971, was a chronic problem.[63] Billyard encouraged work on the wheel and a variety of elegant pieces were made during this period. He urged the artists to use glaze in a more successful manner and experiments with salt glazing and Raku were conducted. Despite his short stay, Billyard's contribution to the project is important and worth examining more closely.

Before Billyard could begin his work, an evaluation of the project took place and it was decided that the ceramics in the workshop had to be sorted and the unsuccessful pieces destroyed or recycled. In September 1970, John Robertson of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council visited the community to begin the adjudication process.[64] With Robert Williamson,

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[61] The records indicate that Billyard began his contract in 1970 but he did not begin serious work with the project until January 1971. In this interim period "he very wisely chose first to commit himself to a six week immersion course in the Eskimo language." (Robertson, Swinton, and Williamson, "Report on Rankin Inlet," 2.)

[62] Driscoll, "Rankin Inlet Art," 34.

[63] Sutherland, "Rankin Inlet Ceramics Experiments," 54.

[64] Throughout his stay, Robertson photographed the evaluation process. Unfortunately, these images did not surface in the archives that I searched. Robertson, "Report - Rankin Inlet Ceramics," 7.

a Council member and long-time resident of Rankin Inlet; Dave Sutherland, an employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories; and Bob Billyard, he met with the Inuit on three occasions to consult with them as to how to proceed.[65] Robertson was impressed with the Inuit's "attitude and response...[which] was impressively realistic and frank,"which led him to disclose "that some disposition would have to be made of unsaleable material and that this should be thought about."[66] He explained the criteria, he used, for evaluating the work and the reasons for it to Donat Anawak and Robert Tatty who had expressed an interest in learning about this process.[67] During "a preliminary sorting out...potentially good work was uncovered," and it was kept as a reference for the artists.[68] In addition to adjudicating the work, Robertson and Billyard were also trying to develop interest in the new direction the project was taking. Because many participants had left the project to find gainful employment elsewhere, they were leery of returning to a venture that would not succeed a second time.[69] In order to encourage the revitalization of the project, the workshop would be open at more convenient hours, during the evenings and on weekends. In exchange the Inuit were "asked to give [it] and the new director their interest and support and to continue to

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[65] Robertson, "Report - Rankin Inlet Ceramics," cover page.

The first meeting was used to outline the problems and discuss possible solutions. In attendance were Anawak, spokesman for the group, Tatty, Kavik, Kapik, Kabluitok, Ukaluk and Bernadette Kuki. Subsequent meetings involved more members of the program as word circulated that it was being revitalized and their opinions were important to this process.

[66] Ibid., 4.

[67] Ibid., 4.

[68] Ibid., 4.

[69] Ibid., 5.

work at the centre."[70] At the end of this difficult visit, the workshop had lost its cluttered atmosphere and the artists were ready to begin anew.

Billyard identified several areas of production that could be improved in order to avoid a recurrence of the previous situation. He cited the seasonal imbalance of activity in the workshop as being problematic, as was its diversity and he suggested that the sewing and carving intiatives be moved elsewhere.[71] The issue of what to create had been raised during Robertson's visit and "it was generally agreed that there should be some concentration in functional objects -- bowls, vases, planters, mugs, etc."[72] Billyard added that while the focus would be on the creation of semi-commercial ware, "simultaneous to this would be the production of purely creative pieces. Production would be proportional so that one would sustain the other."[73] Successful results, however, depended on a steady flow of activity, from creating the work to its final firing. Billyard undertook to ensure this process worked smoothly by:

> [carrying] the new work all the way to completion as quickly as possible, so that results would be seen, discussed, and assessed without delay and without the stock-piling of incomplete work. This [process was], of course, predicated on the efficient operation of the kiln, which is essential if results are to be obtained.[74]

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[70] Ibid., 5.

[71] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2160, CEAC Papers, "Preliminary Report on the Ceramics Project at Rankin Inlet," R. J. Billyard, 18 January 1971, 2. By seasonal activity, he meant that the workshop was quiet in the summer and active in the winter. Since this was the result of an increase in hunting activities during the warmer months, I am not sure he succeeded in changing this aspect of the project.

[72] Robertson, "Report - Rankin Inlet Ceramics," 7.

[73] Billyard, "Preliminary Report," [1].

[74] Robertson, "Report - Rankin Inlet Ceramics," 5.

In order to achieve these goals, continued consultation with the Inuit on all aspects of the project was also part of his plan for renewing enthusiasm. He encouraged dialogue groups with the artists. They discussed saleability, quality, and creative expression. In addition, a working committee consisting of five Inuit was established to work with Billyard and "all decisions [were] made co-operatively."[75] The quality of the work began to improve, and the revitalization of the program seemed to be working. With this renewed sense of direction came the devastating blow of funding cuts by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Throughout his three year-stay, Billyard battled in vain to receive the funds necessary to move in a direction that could make the project viable.

The area which needed funding the most was the technical aspect of the project, primarily the kiln. It had been in disrepair for many years and as Robertson was leaving Rankin Inlet, a kiln expert from Winnipeg arrived.[76] In addition, to the mechanical difficulties it "was a health menace to the people working in there, and that also it is a danger from other points of view of safety."[77] It needed to be walled as the dust it generated was causing the most problems. Recommendations issued by the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council called for the purchase of a new electric kiln for glaze firing and "the immediate implementation of the already-approved repairs and improvements to the existing oil-fired

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[75] Billyard, "Preliminary Report," [1].

[76] Robertson, "Report - Rankin Inlet Ceramics," 7.

[77] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2160, CEAC Papers, file Rankin Inlet Arts and Crafts Project, Professor R. G. Williamson to Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, 10 June 1971, [1].

kiln for bisque ware."[78] It estimated this could be done "in the order of $10,000 of which $4,000 [had] already been encumbered."[79] It should come as no surprise that these funds were not invested into the project despite the positve signs of renewal. Billyard also wanted to reorganize the facilities "so that the actual studio area, glazing and clay mixing, and firing are isolated from one another."[80] It is not clear from any of the reports if these physical changes were undertaken or not. Despite all the obstacles facing Billyard and the artists, the work created underwent a metamorphosis in style, moving from the somewhat bulky sculptural forms to more decorative vases.

As discussed previously, establishing precise dates for the Rankin Inlet ceramics work is often difficult. As a result, the following images could have been created during either Billyard's tenure or Kusugak's, nevertheless, they demonstrate the potential of the project's new direction. Yvo Samgushak stands out as an artist who excelled during this phase. Often overshadowed by other artists such as John Kavik and Donat Anawak, Samgushak was cited by Virginia Watt as "unique talent" who knows instinctively how to handle the clay and has "the ability to project design."[81] Elegant and refined, his integrated style of decorative bas reliefs on vases was a distinct departure from the work that had been done during Grenier's time. Vase with Owl Face (ill. 21) is an example of his work from this

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[78] Robertson, Swinton, and Williamson, "Report on Rankin Inlet," 3.

[79] Ibid., 4.

[80] Billyard, "Preliminary Report," [1].

[81] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2161, CEAC Papers, Virginia Watt, "Report on the Ceramics Project at Rankin Inlet," 27 October 1971, 5.

period. Two other artists who were active at this time were Laurent Aksadjuak and Eli Tikeayak. They both improved their skills and began creating more refined pieces. Vase with Two Figures (ill. 22) by Tikeayak and Drummer Vase (ill. 23) by Aksadjuak illustrate the integration of handbuilding techniques with those of the wheel. A characteristic of this phase was the neck and base of a vase were sometimes thrown while its central form was formed by hand. This enabled the artists to continue pursuing their narrative themes in a sculptural manner.

An example of the highest level of potential, for the revitalized project, can be seen in Bird with Spread Wings by Robert Tatty (ill. 24). Completed as part of the salt glazing experiments, this sophisticated piece is far removed from the early attempts at ceramic sculpting. This process highlighted the subtle design and resulted in a cool, glassy finish that evokes images of winter. With the proper marketing schemes, this new style should have helped restore interest in the project. Unfortunately, this was not to be. With limited access to official information from this period, it is difficult to explain why. Possible reasons range from decreased funding and support for the work by the territorial government to the unsaleability of the orginal products. Galleries were leery of supporting the revitalized venture because their memories, of the inconsistent ceramics they had been exposed to, still lingered. Regardless of the reasons, this work, while technically and stylistically better, failed to generate any interest in the southern market at all.

4.4 Lobbying to Prevent the Project's Closure

Six months after Bob Billyard began his attempts at reorganizing the ceramics project, Robert Williamson wrote to his colleagues on the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council about the progress that was being made. He began:

> The arts and crafts program at Rankin Inlet has undergone a resurgence of vitality and hope..., under the quiet, sensitive, and very competent surveillance of Mr. Robert Billyard,.... With Anawak and some indefatigable artists, an arts and crafts situation which had reached its lowest ebb without being completely dead is now coming most perceptibly to life.[82]

He felt, however, that this indication of a successful transformation was in jeopardy because of the prevailing attitude of the Government of the Northwest Territories towards the Inuit art industry and especially the ceramics project. Its "preoccupation with 'commercial viability' " prevented it from seeing the potential that now existed: "the project is amply justifying itself,...[as] in the dead of winter, there were more sales out of the Centre here than in the whole of the previous year. Certainly at least as significant is the burgeoning of new creativity and quiet artistic excitement."[83] Unfortunately, this new direction was in peril because promised renovations to the building and repairs to the kiln had yet to be completed. As a prominent resident of Rankin Inlet, Williamson ran the University of Saskatchewan's Northern Research Centre, which was located within the community, and sat on both the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council and the council of the Government of the Northwest Territories, he felt complelled to use his influence to affect change. He included an

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[82] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2160, CEAC Papers, file Rankin Inlet Arts and Crafts Project, Professor R. G. Williamson to Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, 10 June 1971, [1].

[83] Ibid., [1].

impassioned plea in his letter calling for assistance. He asked the other Council members to direct this need for action "through our channel of communication from the Minister to the Commissioner."[84] The urgency of his request was based on the fact the conditions in the workshop were such that the health authority could close the project down at any time. Williamson believed that if some effort was not made to rectify the situation, then a possible disaster would occur: "[killing]...the economic and artistic and cultural expression [and] hopes of a deserving and powerfully productive group of people."[85]

Work continued throughout the summer and in August 1971 another progress report was prepared on the state of the project. Written jointly by John Robertson, George Swinton and Robert Williamson, it was presented to the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, to be used in its attempts to persuade officials of the Government of the Northwest Territories to keep the project operational. It differed from most of the reports examined to date, as it included some very poignant comments by Donat Anawak on the project and the meaning of the art industry for the Inuit of Rankin Inlet. Robertson, Swinton, and Williamson prefaced their recommendations by quoting the territorial government's policy toward the Inuit art industry. They began:

> In keeping with the stated policy of the N.W.T. Government, i.e., 'to promote the development of viable industries in the interests of the Northwest Territories residents' and to accomplish 'the eventual turn-over to local residents of a financially viable project in which they have expressed an interest' we make the following recommendations."[86]

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[84] Ibid., 2.

[85] Ibid., 2.

[86] Robertson, Swinton, and Williamson, "Report on Rankin Inlet," 3-4.

These included purchasing an electric kiln, after all the technical improvements are complete running the project for a year and then re-evaluate it, and retaining the services of Billyard and Anawak to direct it. They fully believed in its value of the ceramics project and their confidence in the artists to continue led them to "[put their] judgement on the line and [commit] the future credibility of the Council" to this initiative.[87] Virginia Watt reiterated this sentiment as she closed her evaluation by stating:

> The people in Rankin want to work. We are the teachers, the advisors, the experts, the administrators. In effect, we are solely responsible of Ceramics 1. The moment we created Ceramics 2, we accepted responsibility for it's (sic) success or failure. I don't think we can afford to lose face a second time. The only course open to us is to meet our commitment with a responsible support of the program.[88]

Beyond lobbying the governments for assistance, it is difficult to establish what kind of commitment actually resulted from these calls for action. Watt, however, organized a crafts exhibition and included the ceramics project in her plans because of its importance this event is further discussed below. As the new phase of the project began to take shape, Anawak emerged as a vocal and influential artist among its participants. He spoke eloquently about the need for funding and continued support for this endeavour:

> If the Government is not sure about whether it wants to keep going on with the...ceramics, and if they are thinking of stopping it, then they had better have something which we are all sure would be good for us to do before they stop it. Or do they want us first to risk losing work so that we have to have relief?

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[87] Ibid,. 4.

[88] Watt, "Report on Ceramics Project at Rankin Inlet," 13. As a ceramist, she was able to write a very detailed technical evaluation and as such her work, while extremely informative, has not been included in this thesis to any great extent. She used Ceramics 1 to define the project under Grenier's tenure and Ceramics 2 refers to the renewed project under Billyard's direction.

> It would not save the Government money by stopping the...work, because then a lot more money would have to be spent on relief. We would rather earn money, even if it is less money, but earn by ourselves rather that have to wait for handouts.[89]

Anawak continued to elaborate on the importance of art production to the community and how it provides some individuals an opportunity to be productive when other sources of income are not available.[90] Based on the strength of this report and others previously submitted, the Council unanimously agreed to recommend to the Minister "the continuation of the Ceramics Project at Rankin Inlet, being satisfied that ultimately it will be self-supporting."[91]

That the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council actually succeeded in persuading the officials of the Government of the Northwest Territories to keep supporting the ceramics project, can be seen as a small miracle. At its 10 November 1971 meeting, invited guests, Mr. Graham and Mr. Yates of the territorial government, outlined its funding policy. Graham offered the following comments:

> We find ourselves in a rather straitened circumstances and...something has to go. The aim...is to set up projects to the point where they are financially sound, with a view of turning [it] over to the people involved. So, we have arbitrarily set the limit of Government involvement as FIVE YEARS.[92]

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[89] Robertson, Swinton, and Williamson, "Report on Rankin Inlet," 4-5.

[90] Ibid., 5-6. Here, Anawak was referring to artists like Kavik and Tiktak who were old yet became well known because of their work. Swinton quoted extensively from Anawak's comments in his book Sculpture of the Inuit, 23.

[91] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2172, CEAC Papers, Minutes of meeting, 10 November 1971, 7.

[92] Ibid., 4.

Since funding for the project had begun in 1964, albeit federally, and the amount of funds necessary to renovate the equipment was significant, they were "looking rather askance at it" and were only willing to fund it on a yearly basis.[93] A lengthy debate resulted and several interesting comments were raised. Regarding funding, it was noted that it was impractical to fund the project on a yearly basis owing to the experimental nature of ceramics and ideas to seek other sources of monies for the technical improvements were discussed. Again the notions of quality and obtaining a high standard for the product surfaced in the conversation devoted to alternative funding. Watt explained that "dealers will not invest in an idea, but in a product.... I would commit myself to an order, if I could be sure of a standard, and I know a number of dealers who would do so also."[94] Ultimately, the concern for the people of Rankin Inlet was what drove the Council to push its recommendations: "We must consider this in human terms, rather than in purely economic terms. I think that the damage that we could do by letting the project die, even though it would cost money, would be a terrible one in terms of human existence."[95] Unfortunately, the victory of securing the project's future was tainted by the continued frustrations with the lack of supplies and funds, which prompted Bob Billyard to eventually leave.

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[93] Ibid., 4.

[94] Ibid., 6.

[95] Ibid., 6.

4.5 The Last Era of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project

In 1973 Michael Kusugak, a "bright, interested, aggressive"[96] young Inuk, took over the task of running the shop and guiding the project.[97] Despite the fact that he had not been with the project long, he was well suited to the position. He not only possessed the necessary management skills to run the project, but had an artistic sensitivity that was well-suited to working with clay.[98] In 1974, he was appointed to the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, which gave him a greater understanding of the art market and such issues as copyright and funding. Through this direct access to the gallery system, Kusugak promoted the ceramic work and was encouraged by the response he received from the South.[99] Armed with a more refined product and a vision to work towards self-sufficiency, Kusugak saw potential for the Rankin Inlet ceramics work. He lobbied the Department of Economic Development to let him sell the ceramics across Canada so the project could earn more money and, in turn, the good artists would be paid more so they would stop leaving the workshop for other employment opportunities.[100] Unfortunately, these officials

> had a different idea...what they wanted us to do was to produce all the pottery in the shop and sell what we could out of the shop and whatever we didn't sell we boxed up and shipped to Yellowknife. They put it in a warehouse over there and from there I don't really know what happened to it except that

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[96] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2172, CEAC Papers, Minutes of meeting, 31 July 1973, 7.

[97] Sutherland, "Rankin Inlet Ceramics Experiment," 55.

[98] Ibid., 55.

[99] Michael Kusugak, interviewed by David Zimmerly, Interview Transcript, March 1986, [5].

[100] Ibid., [6]. The artist he cited was Robert Tatty who left to work for a garbage collection crew. Donat Anawak had also left the project to drive a taxi.

there was some, I guess there was some pieces that they took down south to the Toronto gift show...[101]

This situation frustrated Kusugak, as his enthusiasm for the project was strong, and left to his own devices he felt he could have promoted the work and shipped it South himself with much success since the galleries "were really screaming for the stuff."[102] Like his predecessors, he eventually experienced the frustration of running a project that was controlled by an indifferent benefactor. Lack of funding, support, and interest by the Department of Economic Development combined with the resistance to the creation of a solid marketing program, prompted him to write a letter to Yellowknife "recommending that they close the place down because, you know, ...I wanted people to remember it as it was rather [than] what it was getting to be, you know, a glorious pottery shop that didn't ever market anything, you know."[103] With his work complete, Kusugak left the project in 1975, moving on to other opportunities which included becoming a noted children's author.

The final person to administer the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project was Ashok Shah. He was hired by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism because these officials "[believed] that there was a need for a more experienced manager."[104] His background experiences included being "in charge of a large production pottery in India and

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[101] Ibid., [5-6].

[102] Ibid., [5].

[103] Ibid., [8].

[104] Sutherland, "Rankin Inlet Ceramics Experiment," 55.

[working] with the Blue Mountain Pottery."[105] All that is known about his stay in Rankin Inlet, is what Dave Sutherland wrote in his article, "The Sad Tale of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Experiment - 1963-1975," chronicling the history of the project. Since his stay was brief, it is difficult to ascertain if he affected any influence on the direction the work was taking. By this time, Rankin Inlet was a more prosperous community and many of the artists had left the program for various types of gainful employment. Bearing this in mind, the number of people remaining in the program would have been minimal, as would their production. Hopefully with more research into the later years of the ceramics project, more information will surface as to Shah's contribution with this endeavour.

This constant and rapid change in arts and crafts officers, during the final era of the project, effected its direction. Each new advisor had his ideas as to how the project should progress and what techniques would be encouraged. As seen from the illustration in this thesis, these views materialized in the appearance of the work. Grenier began the project with handbuilding sculptural images and Billyard and Kusugak continued by encouraging better formed vases and some utility ware. Generally speaking, the role of the advisor is crucial to the success of any given arts and crafts program in the North. It is often stated that arts initiatives benefit from an "upwelling of creative activity...when and wherever an effective catalyst is in place, and subside when that catalyst leaves."[106] These catalysts were often "especially creative outsiders funded by the government"[107] who possessed a good

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[105] Ibid., 55.

[106] Goetz, "Inuit Art," 371.

[107] Ibid., 371.

understanding of the southern art market and how to exploit it. During the 1960s, these individuals established and administered the programs, leaving few opportunities for the Inuit artists to get involved in the business side of their art industry. As a result, these endeavours suffered when this connection to the southern system was gone. The desire on the part of the Inuit to continue being productive, however, remained strong but because their link to funding and human resources was severed, it was difficult for them to sustain a structured project. In Rankin Inlet, however, Inuit were involved with the administration of the program. Bernadette Kuki was Grenier's assistant and she was responsible for the smooth running of the office and the project while he was out of town on business. It is not clear from the monthly reports to what extent she participated in contacting the South for supplies or information but she was an important part of the arts and crafts program as Grenier was not noted for administrative skills as he preferred to work in the studio with the ceramists. Michael Kusugak's tenure with the ceramics project was significant as he was able to bridge cultural gaps and promote the work through his association with the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council. His failure, in the end, was not a reflection of his efforts but of the nature of the arts initiative itself as the clay objects were simply too difficult to market.

Throughout this period the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council continued to assist the ceramists wherever and whenever they could. In 1974, it sponsored Crafts from Arctic Canada a competition/exhibition that focused on crafts to expand awareness of this aspect of the Inuit art industry. As part of its efforts to better support the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project, a ceramics category was included in this event whose purpose was:

- To provide stimulation for northern craftsmen
- To provide incentive for the northern craftsmen
- To develop high standards in northern crafts
- To inform the consumer and...to create additional markets for northern crafts of excellence[108]

Entries were solicited from across the North and could include work created by Inuit, Indian, Métis and White craftspeople. In order to attract the widest variety of crafts, the guidelines for submissions were extremely flexible, with carvings and graphics being the only items not accepted.[109] This exhibition was designed to open during the Arctic Women's Workshop which was held in Toronto in 1974. Early in the planning stages, the exhibition aspect of the event was stressed more than the competition side because "among the Inuit and the Indian peoples a sense of competition is a very different thing from what we know. The effort to achieve excellence is reached in a different way."[110] Despite this understanding, organizers awarded fifty cash prizes, valued at $200.00 each, in eight categories: Clothing, Artifacts, Dolls and Toys, Wall Hangings, Embroidery, Jewellery, Ceramics, and Crafts for Personal Adornment. Six works by four artists from Rankin Inlet were entered in the ceramics category. Two prizes were awarded: Yvo Samgushak for craftsmanship and Laurent Aksadjuak for design.[111] The other artists included Donat Anawak and Robert Tatty.

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[108] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2161, CEAC Papers, file Crafts From Arctic Canada Exhibition, "Announcement: Competition/Exhibition Crafts from the Canadian Arctic," Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, 1974.

[109] Ibid.

[110] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2161, CEAC Papers, file Crafts from Arctic Canada Exhibition, Minutes of the organizing committee meeting, 4 August 1972, 1.

[111] Crafts from Arctic Canada (Ottawa Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, 1974), inside back cover.

Aksadjuak's entry (ill. 25) stands out for its bas-relief design and its simple finish. Of all the works submitted, it was the only one to have a matte glaze as opposed to a taupe or brown colour.[112] Had works like this been encouraged earlier in the project, it is quite possible that a market could have been developed.

Another attempt at gaining exposure for the work was its inclusion in Indian/Inuit Pottery '73, an exhibition sponsored by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Again, the links to ancestral pottery-making were used to introduce the work.[113] Several of Rankin Inlet's finest ceramists were represented including John Kavik, Pie Kukshout, and Robert Tatty. Their work was shown in the company of Objibway potters Valerie Whetung and William Parker, and other Indian potters from British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario.[114] Since little is known about this exhibition, it is difficult to draw any definite conclusions about its purpose, I would suggest, however, that it was one of the many marketing and promotional schemes that was taking place to generate the much needed interest in the project to make it viable.

Despite these and many other efforts, the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project came to a close in 1975. Curiously, the facilities remained open until at least 1977.[115] Yvo Samgushak

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[112] Ibid., 55-56. List of materials for each entry.

[113] Indian/Inuit Pottery '73, promotion brochure, (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1973). In the Rankin Inlet - Ceramics Subject File at the Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Unfortunately, information pertaining to the location of this exhibition was not available.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Verge, "Pottery shop in Rankin may close," 12.

and Eli Tikeayak were among those still working, "learning new slip casting techniques under a federal initiatives program grant."[116] The report of the closing cited the high operating costs (between $35,000 and $40,000 per year), as a major factor in the decision, as well as the over-abundance of large pots that were difficult to ship and sell.[117] The operating funds had come from the territorial Department of Economic Development which was also recommending the closure. In keeping with the Government of the Northwest Territories privatization plans, John McGrath, Superintendent of Economic Development for the Keewatin, believed "that the government pulling out would [not] lead to the death of the pottery business in Rankin [as] an alternative could be to put it in the hands of local people who are interested in it as a cottage industry."[118] This was not to be, and the project fell into obscurity.

After the closure of the ceramics workshop, support for Inuit arts and crafts in general seemed to be in decline across the Keewatin. The Government of the Northwest Territories did not pursue the Inuit art industry with as much effort and enthusiasm as the federal government had. This led to a lack of direction in the arts. After the demise of the ceramics project in 1975, the Rankin Inlet's arts and crafts shop remained operational, under territorial control, until it was shut down in 1987. During that time, it continued to function as it had in the past by being an important place where the community gathered to exchange ideas, sell work, and visit. According to Jim Shirley, a long-time resident of Rankin Inlet, the shop

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[116] Ibid., 12.

[117] Ibid., 13.

[118] Ibid., 14.

provided the artists with "a place that seemed to affirm the strengths of Inuit culture - creativity and resourcefulness."[119] The loss of this central location, the retirement and passing of the older carvers, the lack of stone, and a limited number of opportunities to sell work in the community hurt the artists greatly and "brought the Rankin arts scene to a virtual standstill."[120] This situation was not limited to Rankin Inlet, as activities across the Arctic suffered from the effects of the Government of the Northwest Territories's budget reduction schemes and its desire to privatize the art industry. Frustrated by the lack of support through the 1980s, Inuit artists have begun organizing their own associations as a means "for them to gain a measure of control over their destinies."[121] In the last ten years, seven associations have been formed in such communities as Lake Harbour, Cape Dorset, Pangnirtung, Rankin Inlet, and Nain in Labrador. This commitment to the arts and crafts by the artists is a clear indicator that Inuit art will remain a major component of life in the North.

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[119] Jim Shirley, "New Spotlight on Keewatin Art," Up Here, October-November 1993, 30.

[120] R. Allerston, "Art Revival at Rankin Inlet," Northwest Explorer, August- September 1991, 7.

[121] "A Grass Roots Movement Among Inuit Artists," Inuit Art Quarterly 7, no. 3 (Summer-Fall 1992): 53.

CONCLUSION

> I am forever grateful to [Claude Grenier] for coming up with the idea of Inuit producing fine art ceramics. It's a fantastic and creative idea which, I think, allows Inuit artists to show another facet of their creative imaginations. In my view, it is an art form which will redefine the creative possibilities of the Inuit imagination.[1]
>
> Jim Shirley, n. d.

"Redefining the creative possibilities" was an element each arts and crafts officer brought to the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project. By persisting with the use of clay, Claude Grenier and the ceramists exposed the southern art market to an unconventional way of perceiving Inuit art. Introduced at a time when Inuit art was defined by stereotypic expectations of media and subject matter, the ceramics failed to find a solid following. The project was redefined by the efforts of Bob Billyard who encouraged a more sophisticated approach to working with clay and glazes. This attention to technical detail enabled the artists to improve their craft and create stronger images; yet the lack of a successful marketing strategy resulted in the work being warehoused in Yellowknife. Michael Kusugak, presented with the unique opportunity of running the arts and crafts program while sitting on the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, tried to generate interest for the ceramic work, but he too was faced with defeat. Roughly thirty years after the original project began, the use of clay was reintroduced to the artists of Rankin Inlet. This conclusion will examine the new

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[1] Jim Shirley, "Making Art from Dreams - Dreams from Art," unpublished report, (Rankin Inlet, Northwest Territories: Matchbox Gallery Ceramics Workshop, c. 1995), [1].

work and discuss how it might help "redefine the creative possibilities" for Inuit art in general.

C.1 The Matchbox Gallery Ceramics Workshop

An American artist from New York, Jim Shirley arrived in Rankin Inlet in 1978. His first position was as an arts and crafts specialist "whose main purpose was to promote and to facilitate the work of the Keewatin artists."[2] This afforded him an opportunity to become acquainted with the community and gain a deeper appreciation of the role that arts and crafts played in the lives of the Inuit artists, especially the impact that the ceramics project had on the residents of Rankin Inlet.[3] In the late 1980s, Shirley began running the Matchbox Gallery in Rankin Inlet, and his understanding of the community's needs led to a desire to expand this enterprise into something "more than just a retail outlet for the arts...[and he]...hoped it would become a centre for innovative thinking and ideas."[4] This vision included the potential for reviving the ceramics program. After fifteen years, developing an interest in it was straightforward. Veterans of the old project, Laurent Aksadjuak and Yvo Samgushak, were approached and encouraged to work again. It was an offer they welcomed enthusiastically. By January 1993, experiments had begun into whether or not this new ceramics project could become a going concern.[5] The work produced showed promise and in August of the same

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[2] Jim Shirley, "New Spotlight on Keewatin Art," Up Here, November 1993, 30.

[3] Shirley, "Making Art from Dreams," [1].

[4] Shirley, "Spotlight on Keewatin," 31.

[5] "Introducing Recent Ceramics by Keewatin Inuit Artists," promotion brochure (Rankin Inlet, Northwest Territories: The Matchbox Gallery Ceramics Workshop, n. d.).

year, a full-time program began. As the project developed, younger artists joined the project, among them Roger Aksadjuak, Laurent's son, and Philip Ugjuk, John Kavik's grandson.

The Matchbox Gallery Ceramics Workshop is run as an independent venture that is trying to attain self-sufficiency. Early support was received through the Department of Economic Development and Tourism of the Northwest Territories which enabled Shirley to install kilns, buy supplies, and reorganize the gallery for this new venture. Training and professional development grants were received through Canada Manpower and the Government of the Northwest Territories's Department of Advanced Education.[6] This funding brought ceramists to Rankin Inlet "to work closely with the Keewatin residents, helping to upgrade their skills and introducing them to innovative techniques."[7] Shirley indicated to me that the project is now looking at a critical year in its financial development.[8] Like the old one, creative success came quickly as "the Inuit are comfortable with the medium and there isn't anything they can't do with it."[9] While funding may always be a major concern, it is the initiative, desire, and talent of those involved that will make the project successful. It appears that at this stage all these elements are firmly in place.

While Shirley cautions about comparing the old and new projects, several similarities are worth examining. These include method, subject matter, and the reception the work is

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[6] Shirley, "Making Art from Dreams," [3].

[7] Shirley, "Spotlight on Keewatin Art," 32.

[8] Interview with Jim Shirley by the author; telephone September 1996 and in person 3 October 1996.

[9] Ibid.

receiving in the market place. The strongest similarities are method and subject matter as they are intricately linked. As with the old project, handbuilding is the technique of choice, which allows for "a narrative quality...that is ideally suited to the kinds of images that grow out of the Inuit tradition."[10] This narrative form is common in Inuit art because it is closely related to oral tradition. Sculpted images of seals, walruses, bears, and people engaged in traditional activities continue to be used as decorative features on the vases. This is not surprising, since the Inuit have gone to great lengths to protect their culture in the face of destructive change. The persistence of the same subject matter proves that the importance of the land and its traditions continue to be strong themes for Inuit.

The technique of sculpting figures and applying them to the support forms of vases and pots was developed during the original project and has remained a popular form of expression. In light of the commercial pressures surrounding the new project, it is essential that the work is more professional in appearance and that the best pieces are developed to meet the high standards set by the gallery system. A greater amount of attention has been given to creating balance in the support vessels and to treating the surfaces more smoothly. Glazing is more accomplished in the new pieces, yet its relationship to the images is sometimes awkward. A range of greens was used in the early stages of this project and, unfortunately, this did not enhance the appearance of the realistic images that surround the surface of the pots. Interesting enough, the psychological association of blue with the ocean and water mammals seemed to work successfully on those pots that were decorated with whales and fish. The newer work, however, is either unglazed or treated with Cream Terra-

[10] Shirley, "Spotlight on Keewatin," 32.

Sig Finish.[11] This lack of colour and, in some cases, the rough surface help link the work to the northern environment. This association with the North and Inuit imagery, either through subject matter or texture, will be a key factor in the acceptance of this new venture. Like the old project, it will be the southern market that will determine whether or not these works will gain a lasting place in the Inuit art industry.

Understandably, Aksadjuak and Samgushak create in a style similar to their old methods, however, "they are producing some of their best work ever."[12] Samgushak's vase, Dark Grey Pot (ill. 26), continues to demonstrate the strong integration of form and content he had developed while working during Bob Billyard's term as arts and crafts officer. Aksadjuak's work has become more refined as seen in Hunting Scene (ill. 27), yet it remains highly narrative in design. The vase supports of his work are more balanced, as are the decorative figures that cover the work. The younger artists who are participating in the new project are creating images that are quite diverse. Roger Aksadjuak's Three Sedna's (ill. 28) is an elegant vase which uses the image of the Inuit's most well known mythological creature, Sedna. Swimming with Seals by Philip Ugjuk (ill. 29) illustrates the artist's keen sense of observation in the depiction of the seals and their placement around the edge of the pot seems to bring them to life. Like Roger Aksadjuak, the emphasis of Lucy Sanertanut's Beluga

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[11] The unglazed work appeared in both the 1994 and 1996 exhibitions which were held at the Inuit Gallery of Vancouver. The use of Cream Terra-Sig Finish is a recent development in the new ceramics project and it began appearing with the release of work created in 1997.

[12] "Ceramics Revival," Inuit Art Quarterly 9, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 46.

Whales (ill. 30) is the shape of the supporting vessel. The bas relief of the whales reinforces a decorative quality which is further reinforced by the ulu shape of their tails.[13] All of these works "demonstrate the possibilities of ceramics as a new creative voice for the Inuit artists...[which] brings into three dimensional form the narrative qualities of the Inuit experience."[14]

C.2 Exhibiting the New Ceramics

The new ceramics work is slowly gaining attention as several exhibitions have been held in commercial galleries and promotion of the work has appeared in Inuit Art Quarterly.[15] In May 1994, an inaugural exhibition was held at the Inuit Gallery of Vancouver. It was reviewed in Inuit Art Quarterly by Peter Millard, a retired English professor from the University of Saskatchewan. A staunch supporter of Inuit art, his writings tend to focus on the aesthetic nature of art and the issue of quality.[16] His comments about the new project were linked to his personal experience with the original one and the problematic nature of a venture that involved such a foreign medium.[17] His previous concerns were never far from the surface of his review as he believes the new work poses the same problems as the old did.

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[13] The ulu is an Inuk woman's knife.

[14] Shirley, "Making Art From Dreams," [4].

[15] Exhibitions were held at the Inuit Gallery of Vancouver (April 30 - May 20, 1994 and May 25 - June 15, 1996) and at Arctic Artistry in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York (January 13 - February 7, 1996) and the latter gallery uses the work in its advertisements. A promotional article has also been published: "Ceramics Revival," Inuit Art Quarterly 9, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 46.

[16] See Millard's articles: "Challenging Long-cherished Beliefs," Inuit Art Quarterly 7, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 6-12 and "On Quality in Art: Who Decides," Inuit Art Quarterly 7, no. 3 (Summer-Fall 1992): 4-14.

[17] Peter Millard, "Rankin Inlet Ceramics," Inuit Art Quarterly 9, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 30.

His criticism revolved "around two elements essential to ceramics: form and finish."[18] The issue of form for Millard was essentially that the Arctic motifs were not easily reconciled with the amphora-shaped vases which are so strongly rooted in European traditions and this was "likely to create a cultural clash not easy to reconcile."[19] It is interesting to note that the amphora-shaped silhouette that he was critical of, also has connections to traditional Native American pottery. This was not lost on the government when in 1973, work from the original project was displayed with ceramic ware from First Nations potters across the country.[20] This cross-cultural connection has been explored further with the new project as Jim Shirley, Philip Ugjuk and Pierre Aupilardjuk attended a ceramics conference where the artists exchanged ideas and information about their work and culture with a group of potters from Nicaragua.[21] The silhouette of Seal Pot by Aupilardjuk (ill. 31) clearly demonstrates that in the area of ceramic art it is almost impossible to create an object, specifically a pot or a vase, without referencing the shapes of another culture; be it the European amphora or the indigenous peoples's vessels of utility. Millard continued by discussing the finish on many of the pieces, which he felt was problematic. The importance of glazing in ceramics has led to what he believed was "an unconscious comparison with great examples from elsewhere."[22] As a result, much of the glazing seemed to him to be crude and almost "like an

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[18] Ibid., 31.

[19] Ibid., 31.

[20] See Chapter Four more details about this exhibition.

[21] Shirley, "Making Art from Dreams," [3].

[22] Millard, "Rankin Inlet Ceramics," 31.

afterthought."[23] Since glazing was a point of great debate in the original project, it is not surprising that it would draw such criticism again.

Millard's criticism lies at the root of the larger issue, the need to accept a wider variety of expression in the field of Inuit art. Today, many Inuit artists are creating images that challenge the Western construct of Inuit art by using a variety of media in their work. Glass, silver, and wood are just a few of the media that artists are experimenting with as a result of exposure to new ideas and techniques. The ceramic work being produced in Rankin Inlet is also challenging long-held notions about Inuit art. As Shirley points out "[t]he acceptance and appreciation of Inuit ceramics is an ongoing educational process for all involved - from the artist, to the gallery owners and collectors."[24] This creative expansion can only improve the industry, which must depend on innovation to exist. The artists who are searching for new modes of expression often spend time in southern institutions learning Western art techniques and experimenting with other media. Unfortunately, the Inuit art market has not changed that much in regard to what is or is not considered an acceptable form of Inuit expression. This view is perpetuated because of a misplaced belief that the Inuit community is a fixed entity, living as it always has off the land and far from the pervasiveness of late twentieth-century society. The reality, however, is much harsher and the Inuit have had to adapt to this new environment. The failure of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project and the financial difficulties facing the new endeavour reinforce the notion that change in the field of Inuit art is hard-won. This situation, however, is not limited to

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[23] Ibid., 31.

[24] Shirley, "Making Art from Dreams," [4].

ceramics, as artists can experiment in other media, but the work is not always accepted as genuine. As Mituisi Iyaityuk explains:

> In the future I would like to see freedom for the artists to use the materials that they feel comfortable with. For instance, I did a wood carving with stone inlay.... In the North, people don't see that as 'Inuit art,' but to me, it's just like anything else in the world. Everything is evolving, for the better or worse. Some people don't allow...'allow' is not the correct word - they don't give us the freedom to create what we want with what we want.[25]

C.3 Concluding Remarks

In the end, the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project was a very specific endeavour that was shaped by the policies and recommendations of the Qallunaat. The project, having been established by the government to fill the void left by the closure of the mine, was developed with great expectations and the hope that it would benefit from the success of other programs across the Arctic. Since the main impetus of this endeavour was economic, Claude Grenier and the ceramists were bombarded with suggestions aimed at improving the work in order to secure market acceptance. These imposed ideas were often at odds with what the artists were doing and the direction they wanted to pursue. In some cases, they did not understand the subtleties of the suggestions and the resulting images were often deemed unacceptable, as was seen with the attempts at glazing and creating architectural tiles.

After the critical reception of the inaugural exhibition, Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67, the work failed to develop a solid following and the southern advisors again searched for solutions to make the ceramics marketable. To help curtail the drop in morale that had spread through the project, a change in arts and crafts officer was suggested. Bob Billyard

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[25] "The Contemporary Living Art," Inuit Art Quarterly 11, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 4.

was successful in renewing enthusiasm and improving the ceramic products being produced. Unfortunately, he and his successors, Michael Kusugak and Ashok Shah, failed to make lasting changes. One has to consider then that some of the problems plaguing the project were emanating not from the workshop as the Qallunaat advisors believed but from the South. It is the belief of this author, that the restrictive attitudes towards what was or was not considered acceptable expressions for authentic Inuit art worked against the project more than the effects of the unreliable kiln, delays with supplies and the proliferation of repetitive images. Adaption and change are characteristics associated with Inuit survival and they have used these skills to exploit Inuit art industry to their advantage. Unfortunately, the conservative nature of the southern art market had resulted in a climate where exploring new ideas has met with resistance, not just with media but subject matter as well. Despite producing elegant images, the artists from the new ceramics venture may also experience discouraging results, not because they cannot manipulate the medium or express a wide range of ideas but because the same attitudes continue to dominate the art market that were in place thirty years ago.

One of the clearest failings in the management of this project, was the decision to accentuate ancestral ties when first promoting the work. By following this direction, the government was playing into the notion that only objects with ties to the past could be considered authentic Inuit art when authenticity actually comes from an artist's understanding of the medium and subject matter. Most of the artists, whose work was singled out in this thesis, understood these concepts. Whether they created decorated vases or sculptural images, the work they produced still inspires a reaction in the viewer. The

ceramics project is often discussed in positive terms and the phrase, "given more time to develop a following, it could have been commercially successful," is often repeated in discussions about the work. In 1979 and 1985, the Innuit Gallery of Eskimo Art in Toronto held exhibitions and sales of pieces from the original project. The first one, "Rankin Inlet Ceramics, 1964-1972: A Fleeting Phenomenon," was designed to showcase the ceramic work and casted the project in a nostalgic light. Interest in the work was steady through to the 1990s when the gallery's collection was nearly depleted.[26] It is interesting to note that the work on the invitation (ill. 32) was that of a grotesque head, an image deemed unacceptable by the project evaluators almost twenty years earlier. Of this image and others like it, Donat Anawak said:

> When you have an idea as to what you're going to be making,...you have to know what already happened in order to put it on a thing that everyone can see. It's more like telling a story event without saying. And lots of times in some of ceramics that I did there, some of them, you can see in the books or magazines, you might see that one of the faces may have lice on him and that's because long ago the Inuit did have lices (sic) on them and stuff like that. You would have to be able to tell a little thing on the work itself...[27]

Unfortunately, the evaluators, and by extension southern buyers, who were searching for romanticised images of traditional Inuit life, found the depiction of the horrors of having lice to be a bit too real for their liking. Ironically, in telling his little things, Anawak succeeded in creating an authentic image culled from his experiences.

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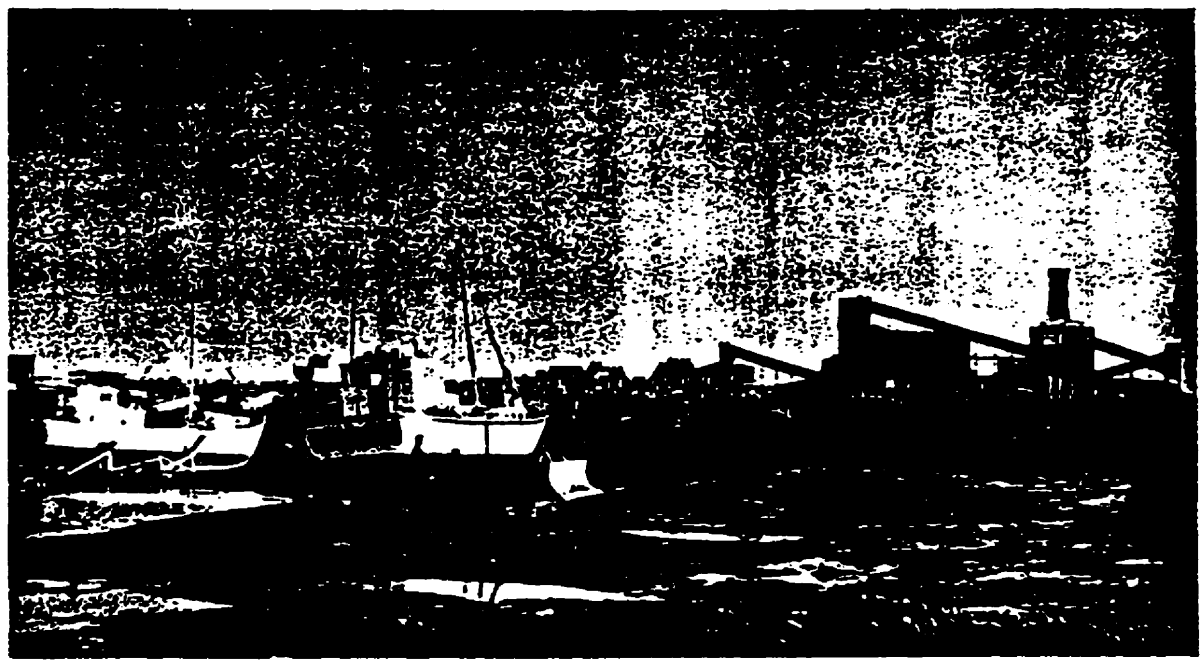
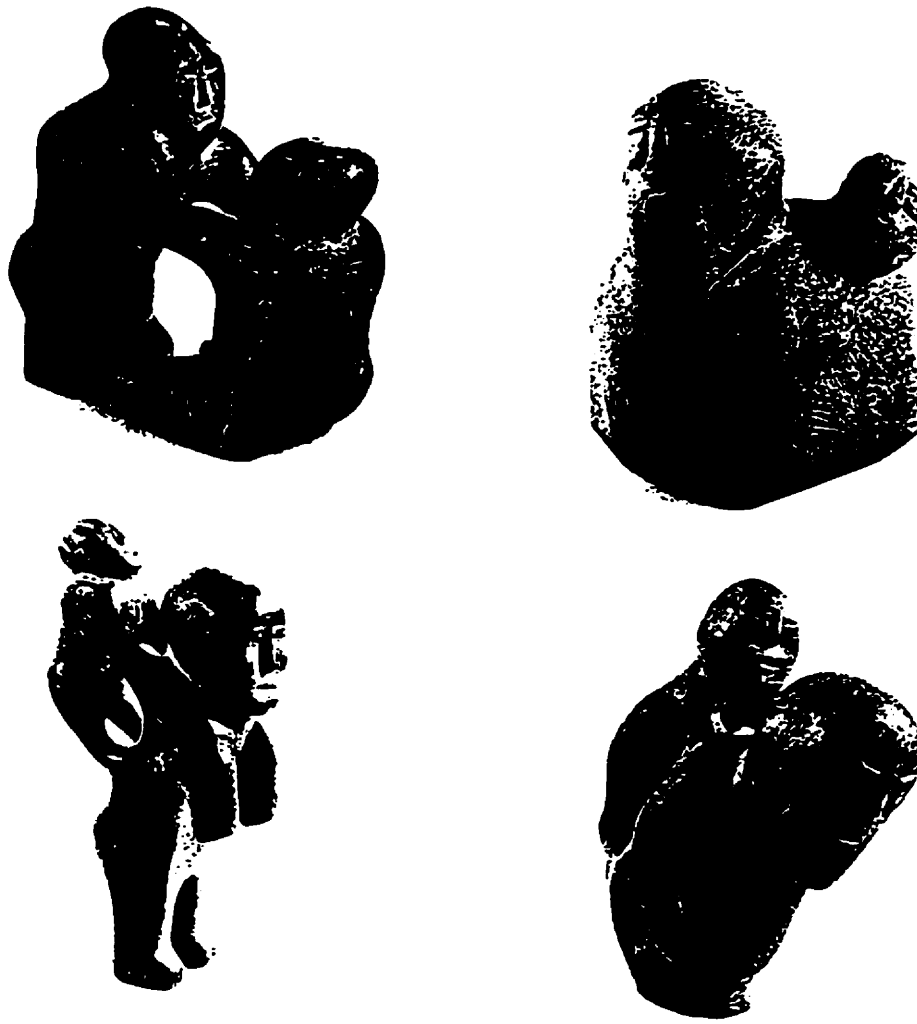
[26] Personal conversation with John Bell, Manager of the Innuit Gallery of Eskimo Art, Toronto October 1994

[27] Donat Anawak, interviewed by Michael Mitchell, March 1985, 2-3.



Ill. 1: R. G. Williamson, North Rankin Nickel Mine, 1969

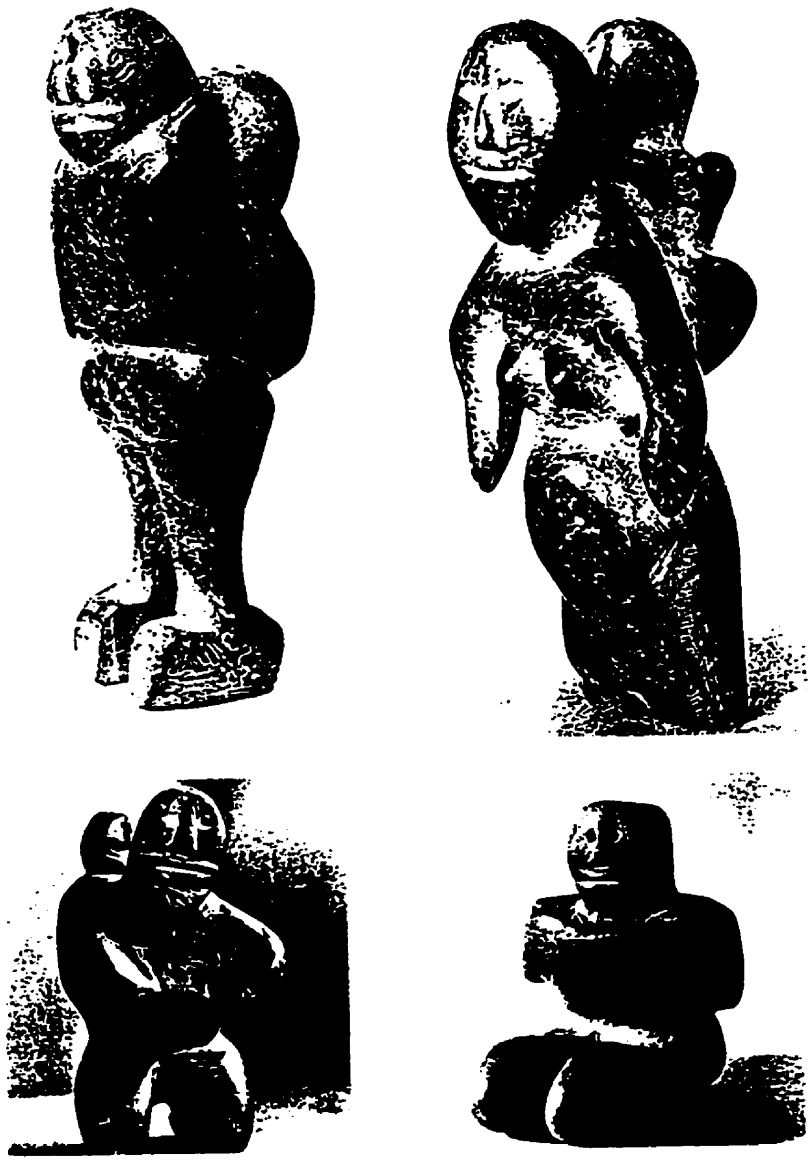
Source: Terrence W. Foster, "Rankin Inlet: a Lesson in Survival," The Musk-Ox 10 (1972): 34.



Ill. 2: Various Works by John Tiktak

All images are made in stone and range in height from 5" to 9"
No titles were provided and the works date from the mid-1960s

All images: George Swinton, Sculpture of the Inuit,
(Toronto: McCelland and Stewart, 1992), 218.



Ill. 3: Various Works by John Kavik

All images are made in stone and range in height from 5" to 9"
No titles were provided and the works date from the mid-1960s

All images: George Swinton, Sculpture of the Inuit,
(Toronto: McCelland and Stewart, 1992), 214.

Ill. 4: John Kavik, Seated Couple with Animals, prior 1965

Handbuilt, fired clay, with glaze and brown shoe polish
27.3 x 15.5 x 19 cm

Collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization
Gift of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1972
Artefact IV-C-4359 MCC/CMC No.: 81-10829

Image courtesy of the Canadian Museum of Civilization
photographer not listed

Ill. 5: Laurent Aksadjuak, Outside the Igloo, prior 1965

Handbuilt, fired clay, with glaze and brown shoe polish
11.4 x 14 x 14.6 cm

Collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization
Gift of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1972
Artefact IV-C-4369 MCC/CMC No.: 81-12586

Image courtesy of the Canadian Museum of Civilization
photographer not listed

Ill. 6: John Kavik, Composition of People, prior 1965

Handbuilt, fired clay, with glaze and brown shoe polish
18.2 x 22.1 x 19.9 cm

Collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization
Gift of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1972
Artefact IV-C-4373 MCC/CMC No.: 81-12590

Image courtesy of the Canadian Museum of Civilization
photographer not listed

Ill. 7: Joseph Patterk making a ceramic goose

Original caption: John Patterk making a ceramic
sculpture depicting the legend of the family
who travelled on a wild goose.
(Patterk is known as Joseph but in this reference he was listed as John)

Source: Claude Grenier, "Some Wonderful, Creative Years in
Rankin Inlet," About Arts and Crafts 5, no. 1 (1982): 31.
photographer not listed

Ill. 8: Yvo Samgushak, Urn with Four Faces, n. d.

Handbuilt, textured clay with coloured flecks, unglazed
12" x 13"

Collection of Canadian Museum of Civilization

Source: Helen Burgess, "Eskimo Ceramics,"
North/Nord, July-August 1967, 44.
photograph by Fred Bruemmer

Ill. 9: Donat Anawak, Pot, 1966

Handbuilt, white clay with black flecks, unglazed
dimensions not provided

Collection of Canadian Museum of Civilization

Source: Claude Grenier, "Some Wonderful, Creative Years
in Rankin Inlet," About Arts and Crafts 5, no. 1 (1982): 31.
photograph by Chris Lund

Ill. 10: Donat Anawak, Decorated Vase, 1966

Handbuilt, unglazed white clay
15" x 16"

Collection of Canadian Museum of Civilization

Source: William Larmour, Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67,
(Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and
Northern Development, 1967).
photograph by Chris Lund

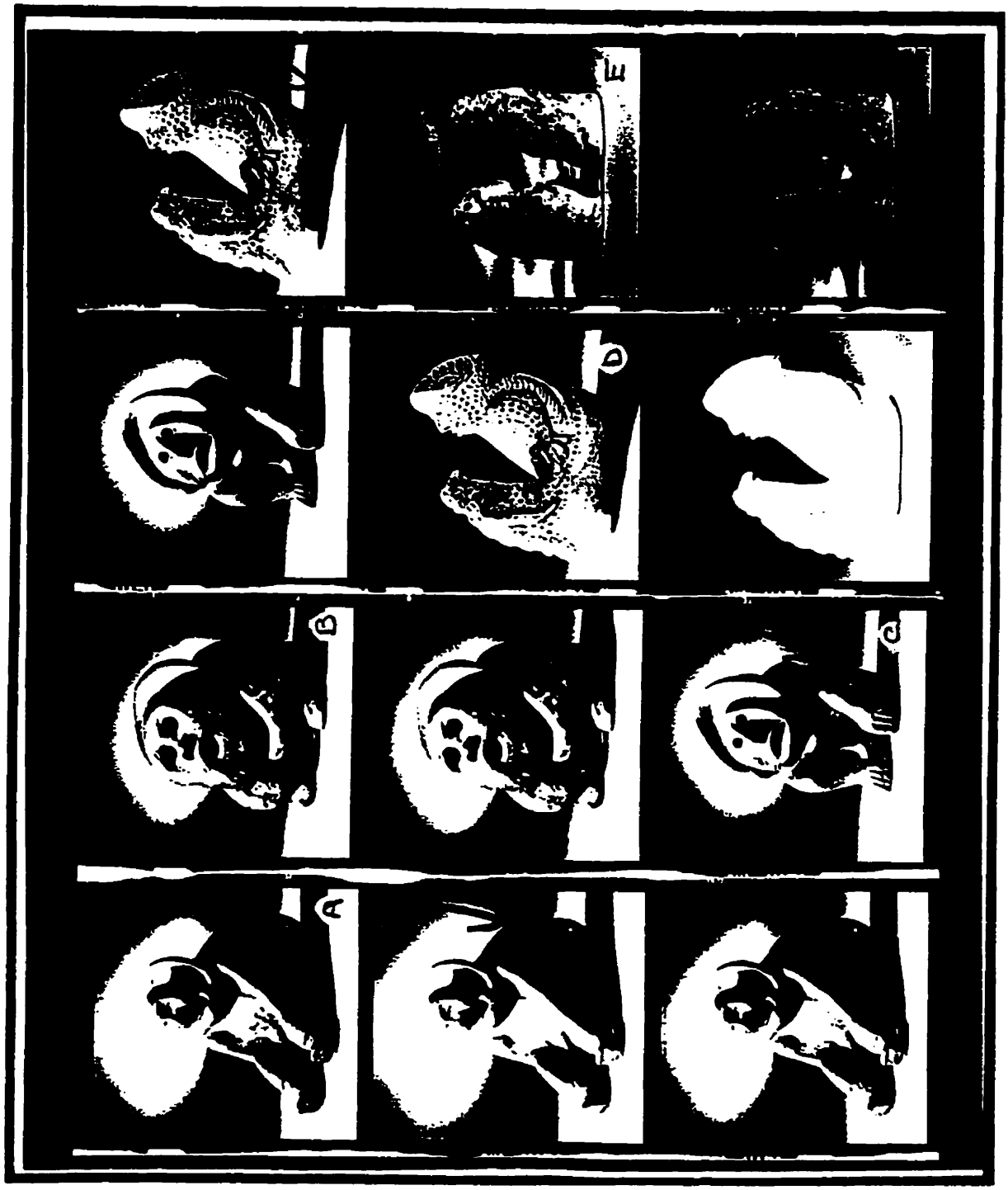
Ill. 11: Michel Angutituar, Group, 1966

Handbuilt, stoneware, unglazed
18.5 x 51 x 25.5 cm

Collection of the Inuit Cultural Institute

Source: Claude Grenier, "Some Wonderful, Creative Years in Rankin Inlet," About Arts and Crafts 5, no. 1 (1982): 31.
photograph by Chris Lund

note: In the catalogue, Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67, a detail of this piece was represented. It was of the two central figures.

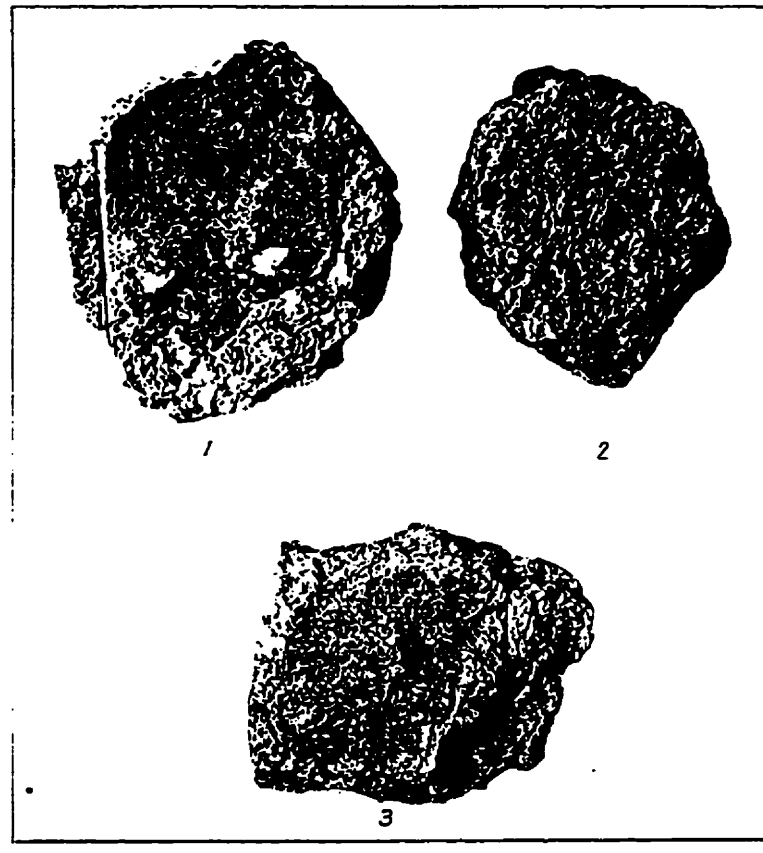


Ill. 12: Chris Lund, Contact sheet of images for the catalogue Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67, 1966
(details about this image can be found on the following page)

Ill. 12: Chris Lund, Contact sheet of images for the catalogue Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67, 1966

a) John Kavik, Man, 1966; handbuilt, unglazed clay; 5.25" x 4.25"; Collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization
b) John Kavik, Figure, 1966; handbuilt, unglazed clay; 13 x 13 x 17.5 cm; Collection of the Inuit Cultural Institute
c) Unidentified work
d) Pie Kukshout, Man with Bird, 1966; handbuilt, unglazed white clay with black flecks; 10" x 9"; Collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization
e) Pie Kukshout, Birds, 1966; handbuilt, unglazed white clay with black flecks; 5" x 9.58"; Collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization

Photographer: Chris Lund
National Archives of Canada
neg. no. PA194987



Ill. 13: Examples of Pottery Shards from the Naujan Find

Source: Therkel Mathiassen, "Archaeology of the Central Eskimo," Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition 4, no. 1-2, (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1927): Pl. 27 (between pages 66-67).

Ill. 14: Robert Tatty, Three Faces with Animal Noses, c. 1967

Handbuilt, unglazed
25.4 x 21.6 x 23.5 cm

Collection of Winnipeg Art Gallery
Gift of the Women's Committee; G-67-34

Source: Bernadette Driscoll, ed. Rankin Inlet/Kangirllinig
(Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1980), 51.
photograph by Ernest Mayer (asst. photographer Sheila Spence)

Ill. 15: Pie Kukshout, Many Faces with Three Seals, c. 1967

Handbuilt, brown fired clay, unglazed
26.7 x 20.3 x 20.3 cm

Collection of Winnipeg Art Galley
Gift of the Women's Committee; G-68-95

Source: Bernadette Driscoll, ed. Rankin Inlet/Kangirllinig,
(Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1980), 8.
photograph by Ernest Mayer (asst. photographer Sheila Spence)

Ill. 16: Donat Anawak, Vessel with Animals as Legs and Heads on Bowl, c. 1967

Handbuilt, textured, brown fired clay, unglazed
33.0 x 45.7 x 45.7 cm

Collection of Winnipeg Art Gallery
Gift of the Women's Committee; G-67-30

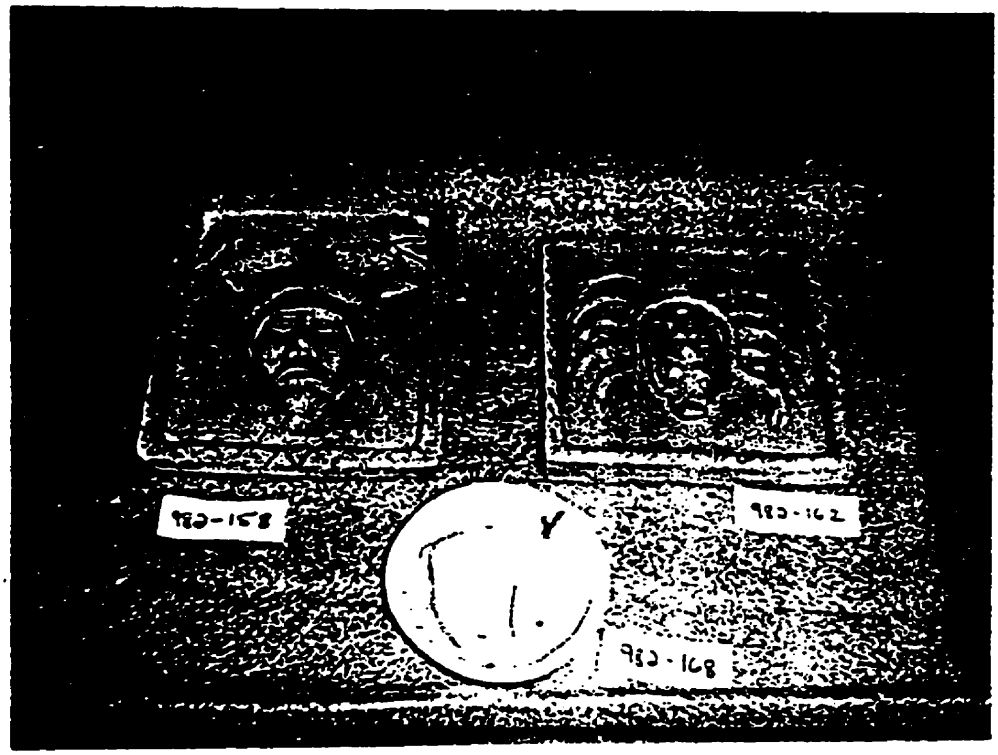
Source: Bernadette Driscoll, ed. Rankin Inlet/Kangirllinig, (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1980), 96.
photograph by Ernest Mayer (asst. photographer Sheila Spence)

Ill. 17: Interior of Habitat; House no. 1027, 1967

Image stamped: National Film Board
67-12214

Ceramic sculpture: Phillip Hakuluk, Head, prior 1967; handbuilt, unglazed; 8" x 8.25";
Collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization

Image courtesy of Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre
photographer not listed



Ill. 18: Architectural Tiles

Collection of Nunatta Sunagutentig Museum
photograph by author

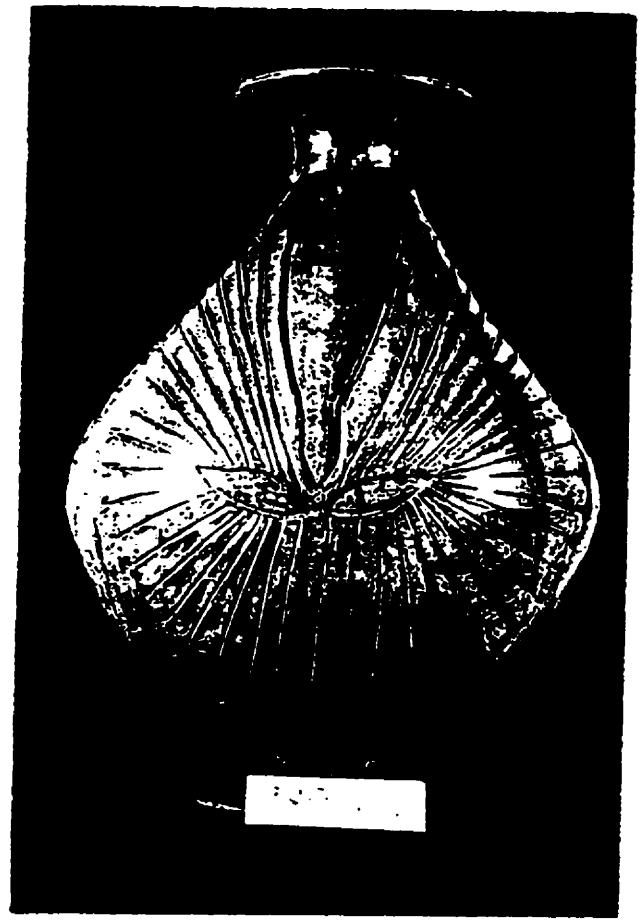
a) Artist unknown, Bear, n.d.; handbuilt, white clay, unglazed; 4 3/4" diameter
b) Robert Tatty, Face with Two Dogs, n. d.; handbuilt, white clay, unglazed; 6 1/2" x 8 1/4"
c) Artist unknown, Strange Insect, n. d.; handbuilt red clay, unglazed; 7" square

Ill. 19: Robert Williamson, Studio View with Artist Creating Grotesque Head, n. d.

Source: Robert Williamson, Eskimo Underground: Socio-Cultural Change in the Canadian Central Arctic, (Sweden: Uppsala, 1972), n. p. (between pages 112-113).

Ill. 20: Claude Grenier, Image of the Workshop, 1969

Source: Claude Grenier, "Some Wonderful, Creative Years in Rankin Inlet," About Arts and Crafts 5, no. 1 (1982): 28.

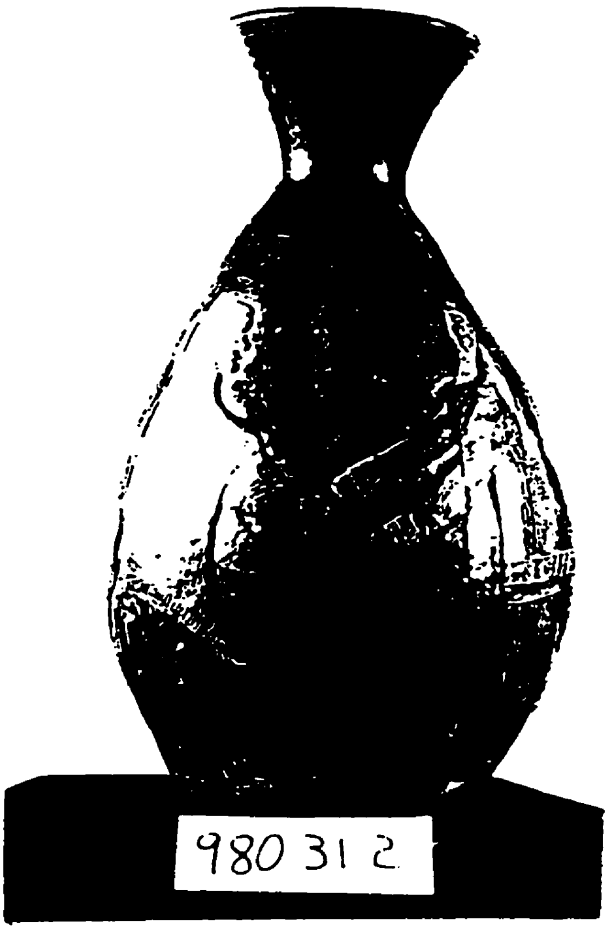


Ill. 21: Yvo Samgushak, Vase with Owl Face, after 1970

Handbuilt, olive green, brown glaze
dimensions not provided

Collection of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre; 980.31.1

Image provided courtesy of the Prince of Wales Northern
Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NWT
photographer not listed

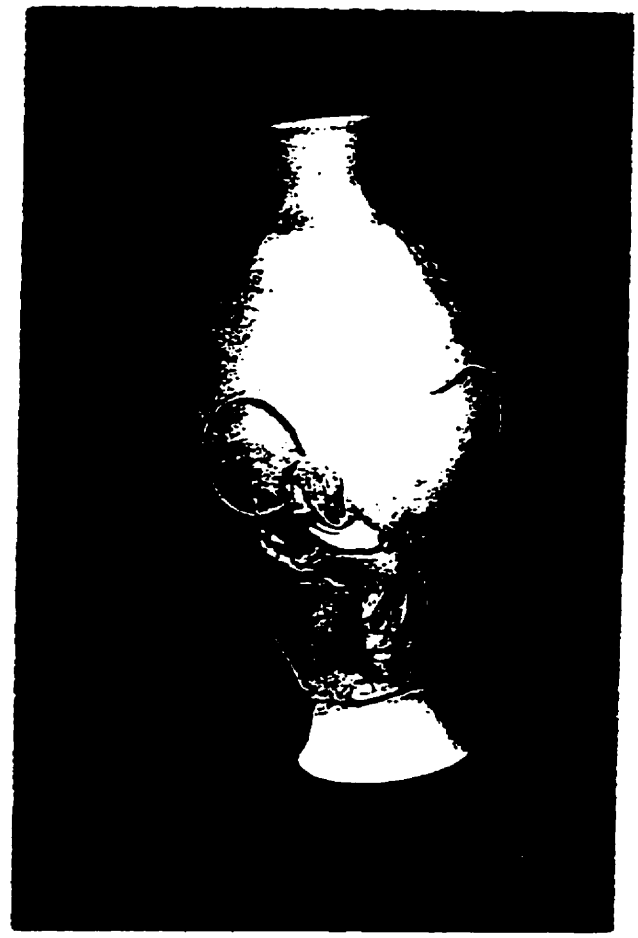


Ill. 22: Eli Tikeayak, Vase with Two Figures, after 1970

Handbuilt body, neck thrown,
dark green, brown, and metallic brown glaze
dimensions not provided

Collection of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre; 980.31.2

Image courtesy of the Prince of Wales Northern
Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NWT
photographer not listed



Ill. 23: Laurent Aksadjuak, Drummer Vase, after 1970

Handbuilt body, neck and foot thrown, glazed
dimensions not provided

Collection of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre; 980.31.16

Image courtesy of the Prince of Wales Northern
Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NWT
photographer not listed

Ill. 24: Robert Tatty, Bird with Wings Spread, 1974

Handbuilt body, wheel shaped base, fired earthenware,
light green salt glaze
50.6 x 36.1 x 14.9 cm

Collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization
Artefact IV-C-4957 MCC/CMC No.: 82-9506

Image Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of Civilization
photographer not listed

Ill. 25: Laurent Aksadjuak, Vase with Bas Relief, 1970-1974

Handbuilt body, wheel thrown neck and foot, matte glaze
34 x 12 cm

Source: Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, Crafts from Arctic Canada, (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1974), 56.
photograph by Chris Lund

Ill. 26: Yvo Samgushak, Dark Grey Pot, 1995
Handbuilt, glazed
16" x 13"

Ill. 27: Laurent Aksadjuak, Hunting Scene, 1995
Handbuilt, white clay, unglazed
16" x 12"

Both images: photo by Melanie Zavediuk and Jeff Weddell
Source: promotional poster, Inuit Gallery of Vancouver, 1996

Ill. 28: Roger Aksadjuak, Three Sedna's, 1995
Handbuilt, clear glazed
18" x 12"

Ill. 29: Philip Ugjuk, Swimming Seals, 1995
Handbuilt, unglazed
7.25" x 12"

All images: photograph by Melanie Zavediuk and Jeff Weddell
Source: promotional poster, Inuit Gallery of Vancouver, 1996

Ill. 30: Lucy Sanertanut, Beluga Whales, 1995
Handbuilt, white clay, unglazed
8.25" x 7.5"

Ill. 31: Pierre Aupilardjuk, Seal Pot, 1995
Handbuilt, unglazed
5.25" x 7.25"

All images: photograph by Melanie Zavediuk and Jeff Weddell
Source: promotional poster, Inuit Gallery of Vancouver, 1996

Rankin Inlet Ceramics
1964 to 1972
A Fleeting Phenomenon

April 7 to 21, 1979
Opening Friday, April 6, 4:00-6:00pm

The **Innuit** Gallery of Eskimo Art
30 Avenue Road, Toronto 921-9985

Rankin Inlet is peopled with Innuit from many different Keewatin groups who came to work in the nickel mine which existed briefly from 1957 to 1962. When the mine closed, the people refused to leave their settlement and return to the land. Living as they did in a poor hunting area, and desperate for wage employment, government help was requested. As a result the ceramic program was begun in 1964. By 1967 a stunning collection of Rankin Inlet pottery was assembled to tour Canada in its centennial year and to inform the South of this new art form.

A series of workshop problems slowed down production. By the early seventies, the main thrust of the program was over. This exhibition then, represents a brief period of a fleeting but vital phenomenon: Rankin Inlet ceramics, 1964 to 1972.

Anawak
11"

Il. 32: Invitation to Ceramics Exhibition, 1979
The Innuit Gallery of Eskimo Art

Donat Anawak, Person with Lice, n. d.; handbuilt, unglazed; 11"

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  - Phillip Hakuluk interviewed by David Zimmerly, March 1985
  - Michael Kusugak interviewed by David Zimmerly, March 1985
  - Jean Williamson interviewed by David Zimmerly, March 1985
- Subject Files:
  - Canadian Arctic Producers
  - Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee/Council
  - Rankin Inlet; General Ceramics
  - Rankin Inlet; Ceramics
  - Artist Files
- Images:
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  - Rankin Inlet Binders I and II (These binders contained slides and photographs related to the project; have been dismantled and integrated into the Centre's Slide and Photographic Collection)

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APPENDIX I
INUIT ARTISTS'S BIOGRAPHIES[1]

Michel Angutituar (1912-): Angutetuar;

He was born at "Ukusesak", an Inuit camp, near Gjoa Haven and eventually settled in Baker Lake. As a result of the inland starvation, his family settled in Itvia near Rankin Inlet in 1957. He spent time in a Winnipeg hospital, only to rejoin his family in 1960. Working in ivory and stone, he became famous for his depictions of Inuit legends. As an accomplished ceramist, he travelled with Phillip Hakuluk to Toronto for the opening of Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67.

Laurent Aksadjuak (1935-): Aksakyuak; Aksakjuak; Atchuk;

Born in Padlei, he came to Rankin Inlet to work in the mine and did so for three years. After its closure, he joined the Arts and Crafts Program; working first as a sculptor and later as a ceramist. Grenier characterized him as "an imaginative potter and excellent carver [of] ivory and soapstone." His work is narrative in nature themes and depicts scenes from traditional activities. Since 1993, he has been involved with the Matchbox Gallery Ceramics Workshop.

Roger Aksadjuak (no date provided);

Like his father, Laurent, he is presently involved with the Matchbox Gallery Ceramics Workshop. He has developed a distinctive and imaginative style that incorporates "elements of humour...and [demonstrates] an excellent technical command of the clay."

Donat Anawak (1920-1990): Anaroar; Anaruak;

Described by Grenier "as an excellent potter, with great imagination," he became one of the leading members of his community by serving on the Settlement Council of Rankin Inlet. In 1959, he moved his family to Rankin Inlet so he and his two eldest sons could work in the mine. After its closure, he worked in the Arts and Crafts Program and eventually became the Managerial Assistant.

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[1] This list is not exhaustive and includes only those artists whose work was profiled in this thesis. Unfortunately, several artists are not profiled because information was not available.

Information for this appendix comes from the Inuit Artist Biography Listing and Artist Files on file at the Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre.

Additional information was culled from the following secondary sources: Grenier, "Some Wonderful Creative Years in Rankin Inlet"; Driscoll, Rankin Inlet/Kangirlliniq; and "Introducing Recent Ceramics by Keewatin Inuit Artists," promotional brochure (Rankin Inlet: Matchbox Gallery Ceramics Workshop, c. 1995).

George Arluk (1945-): Arloo; Arlook;

He began carving as a teenager while he was living in Rankin Inlet. His formative years were spent learning his trade by watching John Kavik and John Tiktak. Throughout his career, this connection has remained strong since his style is indebted to their work. Arluk currently lives in Arviat.

Pierre Aupilardjuk (1965 -):

He presently works at the Matchbox Gallery Ceramics Workshop. He "developed his interest in art," while working with his father Mariano Aupilardjuk.

Phillip Hakaluk (1916-date unknown);

He was born in Coral Harbour and after moving about, settled in Chesterfield Inlet. In 1959, he moved to Rankin Inlet to work in the mine. After its closure, he took to pottery-making and became "well known for his terra-cotta heads and faces with various expressions." He joined Michel Angutituar in Toronto for the opening of Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67.

Pierre Karlik (1931-);

Unlike his colleagues in the Arts and Crafts Program, he moved to Rankin Inlet in 1961 to sell his work to the miners. He learnt English and began carving while hospitalized in Chesterfield Inlet in the mid-1950s. Known as an accomplished sculptor, "Grenier praised [his] use of the form and texture of the stone," which resulted in powerful sculptural works. There is no evidence that he participated in the ceramics project.

John Kavik (1897-1993): Qavik;

He was born in Gjoa Haven and was moved to Rankin Inlet by the government due to the inland starvation. Kavik excelled in the arts and became an accomplished sculptor, ceramist, and graphic artist. He is considered one of the grand masters of Inuit art and "gifted with fertile imagination and a kind of primitive inventiveness."

Pie Kukshout (1911-1980): Kooshoo;

He was born near Garry Lake and came to Rankin Inlet because of the inland starvation. Possibly one of the most underrated artists to emerge from the project, he became an excellent potter and was noted for his imaginative images.

Michael Kusugak (1948-);

He is probably best known for his work as a children's author, penning such stories as A Promise is a Promise and Northern Lights: The Soccer Trials. He joined the project in the early 1970s and his contribution was significant. He worked first as a ceramist and later as the Program Administrator. He also sat on the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council from 1974-1977.

Joseph Patterk (1912-): John; Joe;

He came from Chesterfield Inlet to work in the mine but was injured. He joined the project early in its development and became an excellent potter.

Yvo Samgushak Mangelik (1942-): Samgusak; Yvon; Evoo; Meekingwaknak;

He was born, near Baker Lake, deaf and without speech. He continued working in the Arts and Crafts Program after its closure in 1975 until it was completely shut down in 1977. He developed a very distinct style by creating pottery with an integrated design of form and content. He continues to work at the Matchbox Gallery Ceramics Workshop.

Lucy Sanertanut (no date provided);

She currently works at the Matchbox Gallery Ceramics Workshop.

Robert Tatty (1927-): Tatti;

He was born in a small Eskimo camp near Repulse Bay and came to Rankin Inlet in 1958 to work in the mine. Of his ceramic work, he said "I very much enjoy making clay models such as Eskimo figures with their typical expressions and character of today and the past." He was considered an excellent potter with great imagination.

Eli Tikeayak (1933-): Meekingwaknak; Mangelik;

He is Samgushak's brother and is also deaf and mute. He joined the project early in its development and continued working until 1977. Unable to hunt because of their deafness, pursuing art has enabled the brothers to develop a new awareness and a sense of worth in their work.

John Tiktak (1916-1981): Tittak; Tictac;

Born in Kareak, located between Arviat and Whale Cove, he moved to Rankin Inlet in 1958 "with the hope of getting work at the newly-opened nickel mine." After its closure, he, like many of his colleagues, found employment in the Arts and Crafts Program. An accomplished sculptor he developed an international reputation. It is often cited that he worked as a ceramist yet samples of his work have not been seen by this author.

Philip Ugjuk (no date provided);

Born in Rankin Inlet, he is the son of Thomas Ugjuk and the grandson of John Kavik both accomplished artists. Through his involvement with the Matchbox Gallery Ceramics Workshop, he has become "an accomplished ceramist...[and his] work is characterized by his strong concern for ceramic form, rhythm and design."

APPENDIX II
CERAMICS IN RANKIN INLET: ITS PROPERTIES, TECHNIQUES, AND IDIOSYNCRASIES[1]

Working with clay is at once an easy medium to manipulate and a difficult one to master. Its ease is found in the plasticity of clay and its inherent tactile quality invites the potter to mold, pull, tear, fuse, reshape, and sculpt the clay until the desired form is achieved. The difficulty lies in the property of clay as "[it] is the only art material that changes, that never stays the same until after the final firing, that evokes different emotions at different stages, that does not reveal itself until the final cooking."[2] Therefore it is not uncommon for those in the field to state that it takes years to master this medium. Knowledge of the clay body and how it reacts to the glazes, the kiln, and firing temperatures is essential in being able to anticipate the final appearance of the ceramic object. Despite these complexities, several of the artists in Rankin Inlet took to ceramics with great ease, imagination, and enthusiasm. This prompted many of the evaluators, including Alistair MacDuff and Virginia Watt, to comment on how the Inuit potters mastered the medium in such a short time. The experimentations with clay bodies, glazes, and firing temperature were, however, carried out by Claude Grenier, Bob Billyard, Charles Scott and other visiting specialists. Information amassed on the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project indicated that only a few of the artists were

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[1] Information on ceramic technique is widely available and in most sources the explanations of the various methods and terminology are the same.

Sources for this section are: Glenn C. Nelson, Ceramics: A Potter's Handbook, fifth edition. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984) and Susan Peterson, "To Beginning Potter," The Studio Potter, December 1984, 56-70.

[2] Peterson, "To Beginning Potter," 56.

involved with these technical aspects, most notably Donat Anawak and Michael Kusugak who later ran the project. Nevertheless the artists created work that was in some cases of exceptional quality and the many reports on the project reinforced this sentiment.

The methods used by the artists in this project were limited to handbuilding, both coil and slab methods, sculpting decorative relief elements, and in the final years of the project throwing was used occasionally. Ultimately, handbuilding was the method of choice in Rankin Inlet. While potter's wheels were available, the only reference to their use was in the discussions of creating a mass-produced line of objects such as cups, saucers, and bowls. This idea was not pursued to any great extent and the wheels often stayed idle. In later years, however, the wheel was used occasionally to create the lips and bases for handbuilt vases like Eli Tikeayak's Vase with Two Figures (ill. 22) which is an example of this method. The wheel was also used more frequently by the women artists who were quite skilled at making utilitarian objects.

METHODS USED IN RANKIN INLET

HANDBUILDING: Working the clay with your hands without the use of a potter's wheel to create such forms as vases, pots, sculptures, or boxes. There are several techniques in handbuilding, including coiling, slab construction, pinch pot, and creating sculptures. The most frequently used method in Rankin Inlet was coiling.

COILING lends itself to the creation of vases, pots, and sculptures. Long thin ropes of clay are used to build up the walls of the object and then they are fused together to give the object stability. By manipulating the diameter of the coil ring, the width of the object increases and decreases according to its requirements.

SCULPTURAL DETAILS: The artists of Rankin Inlet were noted for their high relief decorations that adorned their work. Three-dimensional images of animals and people were sculpted and then fused to the surface to make it appear as though they were emerging from the sides of the pot. It was through this decorative detail that the ceramists demonstrated their northern origins.

THROWING: With the use of a potter's wheel, the clay is manipulated to make a variety of round objects such as cups, bowls, and vases. This technique is dependent on the potter's ability to apply equal pressure to the sides of the object as he or she pulls upward to establish its height. It was used infrequently in the ceramics project.

CLAY BODIES

CLAY: It is a substance decomposed rock that is made of fine particles and has a malleable, plastic quality. It contains a large amount of water and must be dried and fired before it is of true value. The result of this firing process is a hard substance impermeable to water.

IMPORTED CLAY: Most of the clay that was used in the ceramics project was shipped in from the south. Both white and red clays were used. Stoneware was used during the early part of the project while earthenware was introduced by Bob Billyard.

LOCAL CLAY: All the information gathered on this project indicates that experimentation with local clay took place. It was found near Chesterfield Inlet by the hunter Pissuk.

TEXTURED CLAY: It became an identifying feature of the work produced under Claude Grenier's term as arts and crafts advisor. A variety of white, red, or black particles were mixed with the clay which resulted in a speckled effect that helped to create an identifying feature for the work. Examples using this clay can be seen in Urn with Four Faces by Yvo Samgushak (ill. 8) and Pot by Donat Anawak (ill. 9).

GLAZING AND FINISHING

The finish of the work produced in Rankin Inlet was the source of great debate among the southern advisors. The use of glaze was an inconsistent activity. Some artists, however, used it effectively but quite often the results were unsatisfactory and most of the work remained unglazed.

GLAZE: It is the substance that contains the minerals which, when heated, combine to create the glassy, often colourful surface which cover the ceramic work. It is often made by the potter who follows a recipe in order to create a given effect.

SHOE POLISH: Discussed at length in Chapter Two, it was used briefly and was discontinued before the work reached the market. The artists used a reddish-brown shoe polish that was rubbed into the surface and highly polished.

COMMERCIAL GLAZE: It is a manufactured glaze that the ceramist can use instead of creating one himself. Early in the project this kind of glaze was used with limited success. Colours ranged from garish oranges and greens to calmer blues and browns. Often this did not suit the work and was in conflict with the naturalistic qualities of the images. Some examples show that it was applied like paint to "colour in" an object instead of highlighting its features.

SALT GLAZING: As discussed in Chapter Two, this glaze was advocated by Charles Scott. It is a method that involves throwing salt into the kiln when the temperature has reached a certain level. The chemical reaction that follows causes the salt particles to combine with the silica in the clay which results in a high gloss finish. Robert Tatty's Bird With its Wings Extended (ill. 24) is an example of this method.

RAKU: Introduced by Bob Billyard, this Japanese technique involves placing the object in an already hot kiln, letting it cure for a given period of time, removing it while it is still hot, and cooling it rapidly in a combustible material such as sawdust. The effect produced by this process is of a crackled finish that appears haphazard but is often the result of careful and controlled planning. To what extent this process was used in Rankin Inlet is not known as I have yet to see any pieces using this method.

FIRING

The most important process in the creation of ceramic objects is firing. It hardens the clay and cures the glaze. Knowledge of the clay properties and how they react with the glaze is essential for establishing proper firing times and temperatures. The work is fired in a kiln that either operates on electricity or fuels such gas or wood. In Rankin Inlet, problems with the electric kiln affected this process often and a backlog of unfired work often cluttered the shop.

OTHER TERMS

BISQUE: The state of the ceramic object after the first firing.

BISQUE FIRING: This is the first firing of the ceramic object.

GREENWARE: The state of the clay object after it has been left to dry and all the moisture has evaporated from it. Once it has reached this state, it can be bisque fired.

APPENDIX III
THE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD OF THE RANKIN INLET CERAMICS PROJECT

One of the most important research tools on the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project is the photographic record that was created during the course of this endeavour. This record, while small, it sheds some light on the working environment that existed and the pieces created under Claude Grenier's term as arts and crafts officer. It is comprised of slides and photographs that are on file at the Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre at the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in Hull, Quebec. This resource exists because of the efforts of Grenier, the National Film Board of Canada (hereafter referred to as the NFB), and other pragmatic individuals.

Grenier had requisitioned and received a polaroid camera, "having in mind to keep a photographic recording of the works of each artist, for our own reference and also for the general documentation on our art centre."[1] He also wanted to start a biography and work reference file so the artists would have a chronicle of their work. At the time, this new idea was considered a worthwhile venture and "autobiographical" information on nine artists and their photographs were sent South to the officials in Ottawa.[2] Unfortunately, this project was never kept current and it was not until the Inuit Art Section began collecting biographical information in the 1970s that it became an important facet of the Department's activities.

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[1] NAC, RG 85, vol. 1650, file 255-5/184 pt. 3, Monthly Report, C. Grenier, 8 November 1965.

[2] Canadian Inuit Art Information Centre, Artist Files: Pierre Karlik, "Biographical Sketches of Eskimo Artists," A. Stevenson to Director, 22 November 1968. This memo appears in each of the following artists's file: Pierre Karlik, Denis Kalaserk, Joseph Patterk, John Kavik, Toona Erkoolik, Laurent Aksadjuak, Vital Okoktok, John Tiktak, and Donat Anawak.

Grenier's snapshots form an important part of this collection and have appeared in a variety of publications about the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project, most notably his 1982 article, "Some Wonderful Creative Years in Rankin Inlet," in About Arts and Crafts. Grenier's images are augmented by those taken by George Swinton, a frequent traveller to the North.

The NFB also took the initiative to document the project. Until the late 1960s, the NFB was mandated through its Still Photography Division to document the labour activities of Canadians across the country. This collection, now housed in the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa, includes images from occupations as varied as the fisheries and auto industries to Inuit art projects in various communities in the North. The majority of the images from Rankin Inlet are slides taken in 1967 by Kryn Taconis who was working for the NFB as a field photographer. His image of the group of seven artists was recently reproduced in 1984 in Dave Sutherland's article "The Sad Tale of the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Experiment 1963-1975," in Inuit Art Quarterly.[3] John Reeves, another NFB photographer, accompanied representatives of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council on their 1968 field trip to the Keewatin. Some of the photographs from that trip were included in the 1987 exhibition Inuit Art World that showcased his images from the North. What is frustrating about the NFB photographs is that while the majority of them were stamped with the NFB code, the citations for the photographer and date are often missing. Solving this puzzle, however, has been left to another time.

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[3] The artists were Robert Tatty, John Tiktak, Pierre Karlik, John Kavik, Octave Kappi, Pie Kukshout and Donat Anawak.

In Western art historical practice, the emphasis placed on dating work is important as it establishes a time frame in which a particular part of an artist's oeuvre is produced. For the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project dating the work was an inconsistent activity. With the buildup of pieces in the shop hampering the situation, the work often reached the museum system with incomplete or inaccurate information about the dating. For instance, the 173 examples from the Rankin Inlet Ceramics Project in the Inuit art collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization were catalogued using a wide variety of dates, including accession dates (1968 and 1972) and the inclusive period of 1967-1976.[4] This form of identification dates the work between 1964 when the project began and 1972 when the work was acquired by the Museum. Unfortunately, this photographic record only documents the early part of the project and only a few images pertaining to the era after 1970 have surfaced.

The contact sheets of images for the Keewatin Eskimo Ceramics '67 exhibition are a significant element in establishing more precise dates for these works. Taken by Chris Lund, an NFB photographer, these images show the variety of work presented in the exhibition and prove that these pieces were completed prior to December 1966, the time of the photo sessions. Prior to this time, a large percentage of the work at the Canadian Museum of Civilization was dated ca. 1968 with a few pieces dated 1967-1976, not very precise considering the variety of changes and recommendations that occurred between 1964 and 1970.

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[4] Information culled from the Canadian Museum of Civilization's catalogue cards. The computer catalogue system did not list the date the work was created.

Through the archival search, it has also become possible to establish more precise dates to the work glazed in shoe polish. These early pieces are also part of the Canadian Museum of Civilization's collection. In the minutes of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee's meeting where the ceramic work was reviewed for the first time, the issue of shoe polish was discussed at length and the committee recommended that its use be discontinued.[5] As a result, approximately thirty pieces can be assigned a date, prior to 1965. For easier access to the Canadian Museum of Civilization's collection many pieces have been photographed and appear on a video disc which is a good research tool.

Finding images from the later era of the project is another matter entirely. There are several reasons for this. Any documentation of this project is either still in the possession of Bob Billyard or Michael Kusugak or is in the archives of the Northwest Territories. This has resulted in an imbalance of images and information being available on this part of the project. In 1971 a few images appeared with the article "Raku in Rankin" in North/Nord.[6] While the Canadian Museum of Civilization has three pieces from this era, the Prince of Wales Heritage Centre provided me with several images that show the diversity of work at that time. Hopefully if more research is done on this later era, more images will surface and a more complete view of the project will emerge.

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[5] NAC, RG 85, vol. 2172, CEAC Papers, Minutes of meeting, 8 December 1965, 5.

[6] G. I. Kenny, "Raku in Rankin," North/Nord, September-October 1971, 44-47.

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