

Notes

1 These are: (1) Patricia BOVEY, *Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald and Bertram Brooker: Their Drawings* (Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1975); (2) Helen COY, L. *LeMoine FitzGerald Exhibition* (Gallery I.L.L., University of Manitoba, 1977); (3) Patricia BOVEY and Ann DAVIS, *Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: The Development of an Artist* (Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978); (4) Maggie CALLAHAN, *Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: His Drawings and Watercolours* (Edmonton Art Gallery, 1982); and (5) Helen COY, *FitzGerald as Printmaker. A Catalogue Raisonné of the First Complete Exhibition of the Printed Works* (University of Manitoba, 1982).

2 Ann DAVIS, "Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: A North American Artist," in BOVEY and DAVIS, *Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: The Development*, 27.

3 FitzGerald to Hemsworth, 23 May 1942 (given as 1952 by Parke-Taylor). (Heywood Hemsworth typescript; quoted on p. 17 of the catalogue.)

4 Patricia BOVEY, "Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: Some European influences on His Work," in BOVEY and DAVIS, *Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: The Development*, 94.

5 FitzGerald to Robert Ayre, 25 July 1949. (Robert Ayre Papers, Queen's University Archive, Kingston; quoted on p. 29 of the catalogue.)

6 See, for example, FitzGerald to H.O. McCurry, 24 August 1938 (National Gallery of Canada Archives). A relevant excerpt from this letter is quoted in Ann DAVIS, "Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: A North American Artist," in BOVEY and DAVIS, *Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: The Development*, 44.

7 Elizabeth Wylie's thesis is substantially more extensive, but is not available in published format.

CONTEMPORARY INUIT DRAWINGS

Marion E. JACKSON and Judith M. NASBY
(with introduction by Judith M. Nasby;
essays by Marion E. Jackson
and Nelson H.H. Graburn)
Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, 1987
118 pp., 14 col., 96 b/w illus., \$15.00



Despite their importance as the source of Inuit printmaking, drawings have been a long-neglected medium in the exhibition and collection of Inuit art. Sensitive to this "under-representation" in public institutions,¹ the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre has acquired over 300 contemporary Inuit drawings. Their recent touring exhibition based largely on this collection included eighty-five drawings by forty-three artists from communities across the Canadian Arctic. The accompanying catalogue documents this wide-ranging survey of graphic images created by artists whose reputations (until recently) have rested on stonecut, stencil, and lithograph prints of their drawings.

The exhibition catalogue outlines the historical development of Inuit graphic art with illustrations of pictographs on archaeological and ethnographic artifacts as well as engravings on ivory tusks, a technique adapted from the scrimshaw art of New England whalers. Pencil drawings collected in the early 20th century by filmmaker, Robert Flaherty, and anthropologist, Knud Rasmussen, chronicle early attempts by Inuit draughtsmen to use the drawing materials introduced by the explorers. A lively work by Nungusuituq (Enooesweetuk), Flaherty's guide, describes four hunt-

ers in kayaks accompanying a large umiak bursting with women, children, and household cargo. A lone kayaker on the far right, with his paddle steadily balanced above the water, conveys the isolation of a kayaker adrift on the vast expanse of sea, lost in his own personal reverie. The ability of Inuit draughtsmen (and women) to create such poignantly expressive images inspired broad support to establish graphic arts programmes (primarily printmaking) in several Canadian Arctic communities during the late 1950's and early 1960's.²

In the wake of retrospective exhibitions celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversaries of these first printmaking cooperatives, art historians are adopting a more critical and historically-oriented approach to the study of Inuit art. The current exhibition catalogue pairs the contributions of an art historian (Dr. Marion Jackson) and anthropologist (Dr. Nelson Graburn), in an effort "to establish a dialogue through these two provocative essays, [and] to encourage a greater appreciation and understanding of drawings within the total sphere of contemporary Inuit art" (p. 6).

The catalogue's main essay by Marion Jackson constitutes the organizing principle of the exhibition. Here, Jackson proposes a two-generation theory attributing certain stylistic elements in Inuit drawing to the artists' increased exposure to Western contact. 'First generation' artists are defined as those whose visual imagination was formed prior to sustained contact with Western influences while the 'second generation' experienced more intensive contact earlier in their lives. "With few exceptions, drawings in this exhibition are arranged in an order coinciding roughly with the approximate age at which an individual artist came under significant and sustained contact with influences external to the Inuit culture. ...thus giving the viewer an opportunity to observe generalized changes in content

and drawing style as a result of external influence and acculturation" (p. 11). Jackson states that drawings by 'first generation' artists describe the following stylistic characteristics: presentation of isolated images with little or no context; repetition of motif; mixing of spatial perspectives; and blending of physical and spiritual realities. In contrast, 'second generation' artists tend to show either a greater concern with matters of aesthetic expression or a more didactic approach to subject matter. Their drawings give "priority to presenting clear and accurate information" (p. 16).

Jackson is tackling a complex issue in the historical development of Inuit art. Her theoretical approach is both innovative and perceptive, but certain fundamental problems shade the analysis. One is the lack of clear definitions. The terms 'first' and 'second-generation' are a primary case in point. With the radical changes which have overtaken Inuit culture in the past seventy-five years (roughly the time period covered by the drawings in the exhibition, as well as the life-span of several of the artists), it seems important to establish more precise and relevant time increments as tools of analysis. For example, the drawings of Jessie Oonark (born c. 1906) are described as 'transitional,' bridging the gap between the two generations. Yet drawings by fellow Baker Lake artists, Myra Kukiiyaut (born c. 1929) and Irene Avaalaaqiaq (born 1941) are identified as 'first generation' — even though both have experienced a more consistent level of Western contact at a younger (and presumably more impressionable) age than Oonark. In addition, the absence of drawings by young artists whose lives have been bombarded by Western ideas and experiences, ranging from residential schools to television, is particularly disconcerting. An examination of the works of such artists as Mary Okheena, Stanley Klengenberg, David Ruben, and Aodla Pudlat

seems essential to testing the proposed hypothesis.

In the second essay, 'Reflections of an Anthropologist,' Nelson Graburn challenges Jackson's exclusive focus on Western contact and advises a closer look at the roles of gender, geographical locale, marketplace, and ethnoaesthetics as competing influences on the works of individual artists. Rather than contradicting Jackson's argument of generational change, Graburn's recommendations emphasize its complexity. Regional histories, for example, have played a decisive role in the extent and depth of Western contact across the Canadian Arctic. The presence of whalers in coastal camps on the southeastern and northern shores of Baffin Island provided fairly consistent contact for Inuit throughout most of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries — a marked contrast to the relative isolation and limited contact with explorers and traders in the central Keewatin (Baker Lake region) until the 1930's and 1940's. The drawings of Peter Pitseolak, Etidlooie Etidlooie, and Pudlo Pudlat of Cape Dorset suggest such historical exposure, recording both thematically and stylistically the radical transformation of Inuit life in this region.

Graburn examines the drawings in the exhibition from an anthropological perspective: "to illuminate the impact of such variables as the gender and age of the artist, and the print-community of origin, on style, content and Inuit canons of aesthetics" (pp. 23-24). His discussion of the concepts of *sulijuk* (a preference for naturalistic expression) and *quak* (meaning 'frozen' or motionless as opposed to lively and flowing) is an important step in developing an alternative, inherently Inuit, canon of aesthetics and language. In much of his essay, however, Graburn seems somewhat insensitive to art issues, in particular the creative process of art-making and the

interests and preoccupations of artists as individuals. Commenting on the richly colourful drawing entitled *This is the Wind* (1980), by Josie Papialook, Graburn writes, "In his whimsical images, Josie Papialuk uses unrealistic, imaginative colours (Nos. 42, 43) like most women artists, but especially those of Baker Lake." Papialook, however, explains his use of colour in a more poetic manner: "There are all different kinds of wind. Yes, all different kinds. ...It is also all different colours... I see it almost every day. I feel it strongly. That's how I see it. Not with my eyes but with my hands and face. The wind is different all the time. It never stays the same."

There are several elements of Graburn's analysis to which one might take exception. For example, he examines drawings on the basis of categories which are implicitly subjective, such as "confident delineation of the image," "privileging design and composition," and "dynamism and liveliness." As well, Graburn places particular emphasis on the marketplace, stating: "Both commissioned drawings and those made for print cooperatives are commercial in intent in that all are done for money" (p. 22). It is true that when asked "why do you draw?," Inuit artists often respond, "to put food on the table" or "to clothe my children." In a series of interviews with graphic artists in Baker Lake (1982), it became evident to me that a growing number of Inuit artists attribute a value to their drawing which has little to do with financial reward. In seeing the slide of a drawing done many years before, Janet Kigusiuq stated, "I am amazed at myself. I did not believe I could have made something so beautiful." Reviewing a number of her drawings of Inuit legends, Victoria Mamnguqsualuk voiced satisfaction in having illustrated so many traditional narratives as a record for future generations of Inuit. In addition, grants from the Explorations Pro-

gram of the Canada Council have enabled two artists, Ruth Annaqtuusi of Baker Lake and Agnes Nanogak of Holman, to complete large-scale drawing projects thus freeing both from the financial necessity of selling each drawing as it was finished. Such an opportunity to develop and complete major bodies of work, unprecedented in the experience of Inuit artists, must surely enrich one's sense of identity as an artist. The ramifications of such a change in the artists' perceptions toward a culturally aesthetic rather than simply economic evaluation of their art may become more evident in years to come.

Despite the concerns cited above, the catalogue, *Contemporary Inuit Drawings*, is an important addition to the literature on Inuit art. The essays challenge the often descriptive writing on Inuit art. They elucidate some of the basic issues underlying its historical development and emphasize the need to combine in a careful and judicious manner the theoretical and methodological approaches of both art history and anthropology. Furthermore, the detailed documentation of individual drawings sets a standard for future exhibition catalogues. The extensive captions which accompany each drawing incorporate biographical details as well as descriptive information and analytical content. The catalogue is amply illustrated, although it includes a disappointingly small number of colour illustrations. Collaboration with a commercial publisher, a trend gaining increasing popularity in the publication of exhibition catalogues, might have allowed for a greater number of colour reproductions resulting in more faithful and effective representation of individual works.

The exhibition has travelled extensively both in Canada and the United States with venues at the National Gallery of Canada and the Winnipeg Art Gallery as well as a network of university art galleries. Even so, one must

take umbrage with the catalogue's claim to present the drawing counterpart to landmark exhibitions of Inuit sculpture (*Sculpture Inuit*, 1972) and printmaking (*The Inuit Print*, 1977). The comparatively small number of works included in the exhibition and their being drawn primarily from the collection of a single institution, suggest that such a comprehensive exhibition of Inuit drawings is yet to be organized.

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Notes

1 Significant collections of Inuit drawings are also to be found in the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the McMichael Collection, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the National Gallery of Canada, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

2 The first portfolios of Inuit prints were released by Cape Dorset in 1959, closely followed by Povungnituk (1962), Holman Island (1965), Baker Lake (1970), Pangnirtung (1973), and, most recently, Clyde River. Drawing supplies were initially distributed in an effort to encourage and identify the graphic talent needed to sustain these fledgling programs.