



Inuit sculpture

At midcentury, approximately 20,000 Inuit were semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers, struggling to survive on the rim of the Arctic Ocean. A chance encounter led to an artistic explosion, which has produced stunningly sophisticated sculptures and graphics. Over the next fifteen years, the Inuit moved to permanent settlements, and art emerged as an important element in Inuit

society. Differences in local stone contributed to the development of a variety of regional carving styles. After stone carving was firmly established, other media were adopted by the Inuit, who produced powerful graphics in the form of prints and textile works.

Subject matter preferences varied from community to community. Realistic depictions of scenes from daily living co-exist with sculptures inspired by an animistic and shamanistic tradition, as well as with sculptures that draw on Christian spirituality. The whole body of work represents the triumph of imagination, creativity and determination over a fierce environment.

Many collectors are baffled by the syllabic signatures on the bottom of pieces that are sometimes described as “anonymous” or “signed in syllabics.” As a service to our clients, we have an **INUIT ARTIST SEARCH TOOL** that identifies potential matches for syllabic signatures, E-numbers, and Roman signatures. For a quick link to the tool, go to the **GALLERY** page. For a more complete explanation of deciphering Inuit signatures, go to the **NEWS** page.