

Inuit Art as Cultural Diplomacy between Canada and India

Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic

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ABSTRACT

Inuit Art as Cultural Diplomacy between Canada and India
Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic

On the 27th of September, 2010 an exhibition of Inuit Art entitled *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic*, organized by the National Gallery of Canada, opened at the National Museum of India. Canada gained visibility with the Indian public as well as an international audience as the inauguration of *Sanaugavut* coincided with the opening of the Commonwealth Games in India.

An exploration of *Sanaugavut* contributes to the understanding of the way that Inuit art, as an artform and through the medium of exhibition, has been used by the Canadian government in furthering political and economic aspirations. The focus of this thesis then, is the study of the use of Inuit art in cultural diplomacy internationally and specifically in the case of *Sanaugavut*, between Canada and India.

Cultural diplomacy can be defined as an opportunity to foster mutual understanding by presenting cultural knowledge and furthering an understanding of a nation. The opportunity is the essence of the 'soft power' of an exhibition - its ability to present the mood of the country, providing an awareness of the characteristics of its societies and a landscape in which its politics operate. *Sanaugavut*, as an example of soft-power, was used as a tool in the promotion of Canada's nationhood.

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Dedication

In loving memory of my grandmother, Kundan Anand.
For living her life for others, sharing her wisdom and leaving behind
incredible memories....

“One of the deep secrets of life is that all that is really worth doing is what we do for
others.”

Lewis Carroll

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Inuit Art as Cultural Diplomacy between Canada and India

Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic

Introduction

On the 27th of September, 2010 an exhibition of Inuit Art entitled *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic*, organized by the National Gallery of Canada, opened at the National Museum of India, capping four years¹ of collaboration between the two institutions and marking the signing of a series of economic, political and cultural Memorandums of Understanding between India and Canada. This was not the first time that Inuit art had been used by Canada as a marker of national identity and pride. As Canadian art historian Ingo Hessel has suggested, “Canada, a young country with an ongoing identity crisis, has adopted Inuit art as its symbol of the north, which plays an important role in the nation’s mythology.”²

The Federal Government of Canada, through the Arctic Division of the Department of Mines and Resources, and the Northwest Territories Council sponsored the establishment of a handicraft industry in the Arctic in 1949. The government’s northern program of organizing the Inuit artists into co-operatives and engaging their art in a domestic and foreign relations campaign, helped evolve Inuit Art from small hand crafted carvings to positioning it as fine art. Supported by

¹ The lag time of four years was due to the changes in the senior administration, namely the director of the National Museum in Delhi. Since the museum director is a Ministerial appointment, Mr. Vijay Madan, who was the director with whom the initial agreement had been finalized, was replaced by two successive appointments, causing the delay of showcasing Sanaugavut.

² Ingo Hessel. “Art and Identity,” in *Inuit Art* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1998), 186

the Canadian public and a burgeoning international art market, Inuit art experienced an affirmation of its cultural practices. The success of the now familiar “soap-stone” carvings is attributed to art collecting enthusiasts, governments and institutions. Government institutions such as the National Gallery and later the National Film Board helped position art as a concept of national pride and expression of national identity; bringing Inuit Art into the Canadian consciousness as symbols of national heritage.

Questioning the prevailing appeal and use of Inuit Art, in his article “Inuit Art and Canadian Nationalism: Why Eskimos? Why Canada?”, Nelson Graburn, outlines some reasons for the successful reception of Inuit sculptures and prints: “the favourable image of the Inuit; the titillation of something new; lack of competition with mainstream art; and mostly because that these arts are the products of “natural” Canadians...they were ideally suited to succeed the Group of Seven.”³ The anthropological and ethnocentric idea of “natural” Canadians as described in Nelson Graburn’s description of the use of Inuit art to express Canadian nationalism is thought-provoking in the fact that Indigenous Art is serving a purpose that is not really that of its makers’. The long history of the Canadian state using Inuit art to sell itself abroad, while actively oppressing Inuit within its national borders, is problematic and hypocritical. Graburn’s underlying argument for the co-opting of Native imagery highlights the irony that this art which many see as indicative of a strong and vibrant Inuit culture, “was motivated at least in part by a need to remedy

³ Nelson Graburn. “Inuit Art and Canadian Nationalism: Why Eskimos? Why Canada?,” *Inuit Art Quarterly* (Summer 1986): 5-7.

the desperate conditions in which many Inuit were living as a result of contact with immigrant culture.”⁴ Art historian, Heather Igloliorte, whose research interest is the contemporary Inuit, derides the Canadian government’s use of Inuit art whilst the Inuit society is “debased, devalued, exploited and eroded in the North...”⁵ The Canadian government has with the greatest of ease abandoned Inuit people at the same time as they have latched onto their artistic production to promote national identity, voraciously celebrating the same arts and traditional culture they worked to dismantle.

Since the early 1950s, the Department of External Affairs and other departments of the federal government have used exhibitions of Inuit art internationally to introduce this art form as a commodity. Inuit art became an appealing form of art for the promotion of Canada and such exhibitions became examples (or instances) of cultural diplomacy. Joseph Nye, a political scientist, sees such cultural endeavours as inclusive, educational and dynamic, situating them as “soft power”⁶ within the larger context of power relations. I argue that cultural initiatives, like *Sanaugavut*, are examples of ‘soft power’.

⁴ Nelson Graburn. “Inukshuk: Icon of the Inuit of Nunavut,” *Inuit Studies*, (Winter 2004): 26.

⁵ Heather Igloliorte. “The Inuit of Our Imagination,” in *Inuit Modern*, ed. Gerald McMaster (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011), 45.

⁶ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Cambridge: Public Affairs, 2004), 74.2. “Power is the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes you want. There are several ways one can achieve this: you can coerce them with threats; you can induce them with payments; or you can attract and co-opt them to want what you want. This soft power- getting others to want the outcomes you want- co-opts people rather than coerces them. It can be contrasted with ‘hard power’, which is the use of coercion and payment.”

Cynthia P Schneider, a former U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands and a Professor at Georgetown University in the Practice of Diplomacy, believes that “Cultural diplomacy [is] the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their people to foster mutual understanding...all a nation does to present itself to the world.”⁷ Foreign policies are complicated, especially when contrasted with cultural exchanges which act as key elements in promoting an indispensable insight into other countries, breaking down barriers and destroying stereotypes. My exploration of *Sanaugavut* will contribute to the understanding of the way that Inuit art, as an artform and through the medium of exhibition, has been used by the Canadian government to further political and economic aspirations; in other words, I will examine how Inuit art has been used for the purposes of cultural diplomacy, internationally and specifically in the case of *Sanaugavut*, between Canada and India.

This thesis begins by providing a historical overview of the Canadian Government’s involvement and influence in the development of Inuit art and its dissemination as a construct of Canadian nationhood, locally and abroad. With the support of Canadian consular officers, exhibitions of Inuit art were specifically organised to further Canada’s agenda of immigration and economic alliances creating significant moments of cultural diplomacy. In 2010, *Sanaugavut* was the first exhibition of Inuit art from Canada⁸ to open in New Delhi, coinciding

⁷ Cynthia P. Schneider. “The Unrealized Potential of Cultural Diplomacy: “Best Practices” and What Could Be, If Only...,” *Journal of Arts Management, Law & Society* (Winter 2010): 261.

⁸ An Exhibition of Canadian Painting from the National Gallery of Canada travelled to India, Pakistan and Ceylon in 1954-1955. Shown at Karachi, Pakistan, Dec., 1954; Lahore, Pakistan, Dec., 1954; Peshawar,

with the Commonwealth Games in India, as well as another exhibition, *Power Cloths of the Commonwealth*, which exhibited Indigenous textiles from 22 Commonwealth countries. Finally, by juxtaposing *Sanaugavut* and *Power Cloths*, the problematic question of the use of Indigenous art as a marker of a national identity by ex-colonial nations is analyzed.

Section 1: The Inuit, their Art and the Canadian Government

The Inuit have lived in the Arctic regions of Canada for over four thousand years. The term 'Inuit', originating from their native language Inuktitut, was introduced into the English language in the 1970s and refers to the peoples of the Canadian Central and Eastern Arctic. There are about 55,000 Inuit living in Northern Canada today.⁹ These Indigenous populations of Canada, living in a harsh climate, developed over centuries a unique form of art. Beginning with the use of ivory to make small scale miniatures of everyday objects and animals, these carving practices led to stone sculptures, primarily soapstone, and depictions of humans, animals and imaginative creatures. These carvings remained small as the Inuit population was semi-nomadic, pursuing game on which they depended for survival. The transportation of large pieces was impractical and a burden for such a transient people. The arrival of European whalers in the 1700s gradually changed the Inuit way of life. The Qallunaat, the Inuktitut word for white man, ventured into the

Pakistan, Dec., 1954; New Delhi, India, Jan., 1955; Calcutta, India, Feb., 1955; Madras, India, Feb., 1955; Bombay, India, Mar., 1955; Colombo, Ceylon, May, 1955; Kandy, Ceylon, June, 1955. For further details see: The National Gallery of Canada. <http://bibcat.gallery.ca/search>

⁹ Mary Simon. "Story of the Changing People," in *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic* (Delhi: Creative Offset, 2010), 11.

remote Arctic region primarily for the trade of fur, an industry that peaked in the 1920s and early 1930s. Christian missionaries arrived in the Arctic in the late nineteenth century, and encouraged Inuit to settle around missions.¹⁰

In the era following the Second World War, political interest arose in the DEW (Distant Early Warning) Line.¹¹ The Canadian and United States governments signed a bilateral agreement to create this Arctic national radar controlled defense line. The creation of the DEW line resulted in the increased militarization of Canadian borders, promoting Canadian political autonomy. The DEW line, situated in the Canadian North, has played an important role geographically in diminishing the vulnerability of Canada to its neighbors, as well as highlighting the importance of this region. However, the inhabitants of the North, “took a back seat to what Canadian planners and politicians considered the real crisis: the Cold War and the perceived threat of the Soviet Union.”¹² Policies were clearly outlined for all governmental activities in the Canadian North to ensure two prime objectives: the “Re-Canadianization of Northern Canada and keeping the Canadian Arctic

¹⁰ For a detailed history of the development of Inuit art see texts by Darlene Wight, Susan Gustavison, Ingo Hessel, Christine Lalonde and Norman Vorano in: Darlene Coward Wight “Birth of an Art Form: 1949 to 1959,” in *Creation and Transformation: Defining Moments in Inuit Art* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2012)

¹¹ From the beginning of the development of the DEW Line (The Distant Early Warning Line) idea, Canadian concerns over political perception grew enormously. Canadian Arctic historian P. Whitney Lackenbauer argues that the Canadian Government saw little intrinsic value in the Arctic, but due to fear of Americanization and American penetration into the Canadian Arctic, brought significant changes and a more militaristic role to the north. This shift into a more military role began with a transition of authority, shifting responsibility of Arctic defense in Canada from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to the Canadian Forces. For further information refer to: Lynden T. Harris. “The DewLine Chronicles: A History”. <http://www.lswilson.ca/dewhist-a.htm#Z>. January 6, 2014.

¹² Richard Diubaldo. “Whither the Inuit?,” *The Government of Canada and the Inuit: 1900-1967* (Ottawa: Research branch, Corporate Policy Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1985), 107.

Canadian.”¹³ The formulation of new policies was urgent and a priority to show the world that “Canada was indeed a great Northern power.”¹⁴ In these post war years when Canada was building a new identity as a social welfare state, the Inuit lost their source of income by the collapse of the fur trade and changing Caribou migration patterns leading to the Canadian government response to the famine in the North by moving many of the Inuit from their seasonal camps into settlements to receive social services in the 1950s.¹⁵

Finding a viable industry for the economic support of populations in the Canadian Arctic was necessary with the collapse of the fur trade in the 1930s and so began the industry and trade of Inuit art. The development of this art form from ivory to stone carvings can be traced through the efforts of Toronto artist James Houston¹⁶ in collaboration with the federal government, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild and the Hudson’s Bay Company. James Houston was a Canadian artist, but his biggest accomplishment was his work in the Eastern Arctic of Canada, developing Inuit art. In 1948, Houston traveled to a small Inuit community in Arctic Quebec, Inukjuak (then Port Harrison), to draw and paint images of the Inuit and the Arctic landscape. Houston recognized the aesthetic appeal of the objects produced by the

¹³ Diubaldo. p. 108

¹⁴ Nelson Graburn. “Inuit Art and Canadian Nationalism: Why Eskimo? Why Canada?,” *Inuit Art Quarterly* (Summer 1986): 5-7

¹⁵ For further details on the governments’ involvement in the relocation of the Inuit see: Richard Diubaldo. “Relocation,” *The Government of Canada and the Inuit: 1900-1967*. (Ottawa: Research branch, Corporate Policy Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1985), 118.

¹⁶ For further details on James Houston’s involvement in the development of Inuit Art see: Kristin K. Potter. “James Houston, Armchair Tourism, and the Marketing of Inuit Art,” *Native American Art in the Twentieth Century*, ed. W. Jackson Rushing (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 39-59.

Inuit and returned to the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, in Montreal, with roughly a dozen small carvings, done mostly in steatite. The Guild, which had tried as early as the 1920s to foster an Inuit-handicrafts market, was impressed with the carving; they were equally impressed by Houston. The Guild secured a federal government grant of \$1,100 and sent Houston back north in the summer of 1949 to make bulk purchases in various communities in the Eastern Arctic. When Houston returned to Montreal that fall, the Guild mounted their first exhibition of what was then known as "Eskimo"¹⁷ carvings. According to collector Ian Lindsay, the first exhibition was a complete sell-out. The government put more resources into developing an art and handicrafts market in the Arctic, hiring Houston to live in Cape Dorset as the first "roving crafts officer", and tapping him to write promotional material for sales in the south. The federal government encouraged and supported the development of Inuit Art after World War II with policies from Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent's government (1948-1957) that targeted effective administration of the North. Funding was subsequently sent to the North through The Canadian Handicrafts Guild as shipping and marketing of Inuit Art was undertaken by The Hudson's Bay Company.¹⁸

In November of 1951, The Department of Resources and Development (deputy minister H.A. Young) acknowledged the change in Inuit life from semi-nomadic

¹⁷ In Canada, the term "Inuit" is now preferred

¹⁸ Darlene Coward Wight. "Birth of an Art Form: 1949 to 1959," in *Creation and Transformation: Defining Moments in Inuit Art* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2012), 22. "The purchase system was quite simple. Houston deposited funds provided by the Canadian Handicrafts Guild with the manager of the local Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) post. Houston travelled into camps by dog team, encouraging production and providing handwritten chits that could be exchanged for goods at the HBC post".

hunting to sedentary settlements, and thought it was time to convene and address the issue of the Inuit obtaining a living and gainful employment for themselves. This resulted in the establishment of the Eskimo Affairs Committee in 1952 that focused on providing the Inuit with education and training for employment locally and outside of the Arctic. The Federal government responded to the necessity of providing social services for the Inuit population by establishing The Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources in 1953 (renamed in 1966 The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development). Support of the developing Inuit art market continued into the 1960s with the Federal government initiative of funding artist co-ops across the Arctic. The model of art producing co-operatives was vital in the creation of economic centres in Inuit settlements in the Arctic, beginning with the founding of the West Baffin (give full title) in Cape Dorset in (date).¹⁹ By early 1954 all carvings were being purchased by the Hudson's Bay Company; half the carvings were shipped to the Guild in Montreal and half went to the Hudson's Bay Company's warehouse depot in Winnipeg. The acquisition of Inuit sculpture by art institutions began as early as 1957 at The Winnipeg Art Gallery²⁰ and The Montreal

¹⁹ As an alternative economic form for the Inuit the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources made money, equipment and expertise available, but the idea from the beginning was that Inuit would assume management and ownership of the co-ops as soon as possible. The first Inuit co-operative was established in April 1959 at George River (now Kangiqsualujjuaq) in Northern Québec. Marybelle Mitchell provides a complete analysis of the Inuit co-ops as a development tool used by the state. Mitchell's argument is that Inuit nationalism, most evident in the negotiations leading to the formation of Nunavut, can be directly linked to the consolidating effect of the pan-Arctic co-operative movement. For complete details see: Marybelle Mitchell. "From Talking Chiefs to a native Corporate Elite," *The Birth of Class and Nationalism among Canadian Inuit* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996)

²⁰ The Winnipeg Art Gallery founded on December 16, 1912 became the first public art gallery in Canada. For further details on Inuit Art and the Winnipeg Art Gallery see: Darlene Coward Wight. "Inuit Art at the Winnipeg Art Gallery: An Introduction," *Creation and Transformation: Defining Moments in Inuit Art*. (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2012), 5.

Museum of Fine Arts. The Co-ops, established by the 1960s, provided an alternative outlet for the carvings when the Hudson's Bay Company became less involved in the Inuit art market. In February 1960, an inaugural gala was held at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, showcasing the first Cape Dorset annual print collection. Prints were purchased by major public art galleries, including the National Gallery of Canada.²¹ By 1988 the National Gallery of Canada opened its first permanent galleries devoted to Inuit Art publicly recognizing this art form.

The subject matter of the Inuit artwork promoted by the Canadian government was primarily based on common Inuit practices such as hunting as well as their spiritual connection to the nature around them. Instead of encouraging and supporting these practices, the government regulated much of this hunting and displaced semi nomadic communities into settlements where still to this day there is overcrowding and limited access to social services. Canada's interest in the North was based on activities such as whaling, mining, oil and gas exploration, fur trading, and the construction of the DEW Line. Inuit people were often moved to police posts, Hudson's Bay posts and missions to bolster sovereignty claims. The Canadian government depended on the Hudson's Bay Company and the missions to take responsibility for Inuit education until 1955 when the Department of Northern

²¹ For further details on the commercialization of Inuit Art see: Darlene Coward Wight. "Birth of an Art Form: 1949 to 1959," *Creation and Transformation: Defining Moments in Inuit Art* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2012), 19.

Affairs and National Resources took charge of the northern education system.²² By the 1930s, Christian day and boarding schools were scattered throughout the Northwest Territories around the principal trading posts. The mission schools received grants from the federal government based on enrolment. Between 1944 and 1956, government policy actively promoted Inuit participation in the wage economy and vocational schools were built for this purpose. After 1970, control of education was handed over to the new Northwest Territories government. The subject of Inuit spirituality, that all things - people, animals and forces of nature - had spirits, was particularly oppressed by a government forcing Christianity onto the population. At the same time, Inuit artwork, dominated by depictions of Shamans and spirits, was being used as a representation of nationhood by the government.

Section 2: Inuit Art as a marker of National Pride

With the establishment of Canada as an independent nation in the nineteenth century, the federal government acknowledged the need to preserve heritage through documents and cultural artifacts, searching to establish a unique Canadian identity from which to promote nationhood. The funding was largely given to archives, museums and art galleries. The National Museum of Canada (later known as the Museum of Civilization) began with a grant from Queen Victoria in 1841 and The National Archives of Canada was formed in 1903. It was however, not until after World War II, heeding an acceleration of general growth in state involvement in

²² For more details on the government's involvement in education for the Inuit see: Richard Diubaldo. "Whither the Inuit?," *The Government of Canada and the Inuit: 1900-1967* (Ottawa: Research branch, Corporate Policy Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1985), 110.

social life, that Canada's government began to seriously consider its involvement and policies in the arts.

As a Commonwealth country searching to establish itself as an independent and unique nation economically and culturally on the international market, Canada used the exhibition of Inuit art to convey a connection with the land and its oldest inhabitants. External Affairs and other governmental agencies developed an exhibitionary plan for touring Inuit Art in the promotion of Canada as a nation. Bruce Ferguson, an international art curator, explains the importance of exhibitions as a "main agency of communication,"²³ elaborating that "exhibitions act as the visible encounter with a public which receives and acknowledges their import and projected status as important signs of important signs."²⁴ The touring Inuit Art exhibitions became a vehicle for promoting nationhood to a greater audience abroad, paving the way to communicate the political agenda of the Canadian government.

The first concentrated effort to exhibit Inuit Art outside Canada was organized by The Department of Trade and Commerce at Rockefeller Plaza in New York City in February 1952. The lure of Inuit art is attributed to the public's fascination with primitive art, which is partly ascribed to the visual image of the makers of this art as living in far-away lands, in harsh conditions. This romanticized image of the primitive artist is explored by anthropologist Nelson Graburn:

²³ Bruce W. Ferguson. "Exhibition Rhetorics: Material speech and utter sense," in *Thinking about exhibitions*, eds. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce Ferguson and Sandy Nairne (London: Routledge, 1996), 176.

²⁴ Ferguson 175.

Even dealers and critics have tended to cling to the romantic mythology of the distant, untouched “primitive” Eskimos, and for good reason. The vast majority of the public to whom dealers cater, subscribe to the ethnocentric deception that it is we *Westerners* who are making progress and that nature and “natural” people are in some “frozen” state of purity, providing a reference by which to measure our “progress” or our “fall” – depending on our ideology. Eskimo objects continue to satisfy a contemporary spiritual quest for truth and authenticity.²⁵

This representation of the Indigenous artist as “natural” and close to the land dominated exhibitions of Inuit art throughout the twentieth century and was a key part of the art form’s appeal to viewers in Canada and abroad.

James Houston, capitalizing on southerners’ enthusiasm for Inuit art, published an article in the spring 1952 edition of *Canadian Art*, “In search of contemporary Eskimo Art.” This article was read by Charles Gimpel, the co-owner of the Gimpel Fils Gallery in London, who made inquiries with a Hudson’s Bay Company employee in London about the possibility of hosting an Inuit sculpture exhibition from May to July 1953 to coincide with the coronation of Queen Elizabeth the Second. He was directed to the Canadian High Commission in London, who relayed the information to the Department of Resources and Development in Ottawa. The exhibition was organised with the help of Canadian External Affairs, the Canadian High Commission in London, the Hudson’s Bay Company and the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, and built on the connection between Britain and Canada. The cost of the exhibition was shared by the Department of Resources and Development,

²⁵ Nelson Graburn. “Inuit Art and Canadian Nationalism: Why Eskimo? Why Canada?,” *Inuit Art Quarterly* (Summer 1986): 5-7.

which paid the cost of shipping; the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, which lent about 100 pieces from its collection; and the Gimpel Fils gallery, which arranged and publicized the exhibition in London and also paid the cost of printing the catalogue.²⁶ According to curator Norman Vorano, “The objects were singularized through several exhibitionary means: by overhead lighting focused squarely on each artwork; by perching each sculpture atop a neutral- gray, velvet podium; by avoiding the use of table- displays (which tended to display the sculptures as a flea market items) and by attributing an artist’s name, title and date to every carving...”²⁷ The display was an example of the way Inuit art was presented according to western conceptions of the aesthetic.

As Inuit Art began to travel, an interest developed among foreigners for this art form. In the summer of 1953, The Gemeentemuseum’s director Dr. Lewis Wijzenbeek, approached Canada’s Chargé d’Affaires at the Canadian embassy in The Netherlands, Paul Tremblay, to receive an exhibition of Inuit Art. Officials at External Affairs remained skeptical, raising concern that an exhibition of Inuit art might serve to strengthen European perceptions that Canada was an inhospitable country with a harsh, ice bound climate.²⁸ Reflecting the increasing emphasis being placed on Northern concerns, a program of Inuit Art exhibitions was linked to cultural and information activities of Canadian consulates abroad. The Department

²⁶ Norman Vorano. “The Globalization of Inuit Art in the 1950s and 1960s,” *Creation and Transformation: Defining Moments in Inuit Art* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2012), 52.

²⁷ Norman Vorano. *Inuit art in the Qallunaat world: Modernism, museums and the popular imaginary, 1949-1962*. (PhD Thesis. University of Rochester at Rochester, 2007), 346.

²⁸ Norman Vorano. “The Globalization of Inuit Art in the 1950s and 1960s,” *Creation and Transformation: Defining Moments in Inuit Art* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2012), 54.

of External Affairs reached out to its consular offices across Europe to gather information on the potential exhibition and promotion of Inuit Art. Ambassadors spoke to museums, galleries and scholars in their respective regions, and came back with enormously positive feedback. This resulted in *Canada Eskimo Art*, an exhibition that was sent on a Western European Tour from 1956 to 1959, when it was briefly brought home to be refreshed. At that time, prints were added as printmaking was a new development to Inuit art, and the exhibition was then re-sent on tour to Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union for another two years until mid-1962.²⁹ Over the following years, the federal government supported exhibitions of Inuit Art touring the United States and international venues. These exhibitions of Inuit Art enhanced Canada's international profile as the openings were prestigious, attended by high-ranking politicians who used these occasions to promote trade first with the United States and then with primarily Western markets. Inuit art thus became a tool for Canada in cultural diplomacy, a political strategy which intended to facilitate and improve relations and collaboration between different countries.

Facilitating the job of promoting art, the federal government implemented policies which assisted them in becoming cultural brokers³⁰ of Inuit art. The most

²⁹ Vorano 53.

³⁰ Norman Vorano discusses the work of the Eskimo Affairs Committee. Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent called upon Major General H.A. Young, the commissioner of the Northwest Territories and Deputy Minister of the Department of Resources and Development to convene 'General Committee meetings on Eskimo Affairs'. "The committee recommended the establishment of cultural brokers, or "Eskimo Field officers." The committee envisioned Government employees who could work in the North and the South to develop local industries and "stimulate and organizer handicrafts." For further details see: Norman Vorano. *Inuit art in the Qallunaat world: Modernism, museums and the popular imaginary, 1949-1962*. (PhD Thesis. University of Rochester at Rochester, 2007).

comprehensive development of Canadian cultural policy was the *Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*,³¹ with Vincent Massey as its chairman established in 1949 and published its report in 1951. The initial mandate of the commission was expanded by Prime Minister St. Laurent to include a focus on increasing the national as well as the international scope of Canadian culture and to find “methods for the purpose of making available to the people of foreign countries adequate information concerning Canada.”³²

One of the ways that the Canadian government sought to increase knowledge about Canada internationally was to present the new emerging art form of Inuit art. Over the next twenty years this attempt to reach an international audience took shape in the form of exhibitions shown in major public museums. *Sculpture Inuit: Masterworks of the Canadian Arctic* was organized in 1971 by The Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, itself a government sponsored body designed to control the production and circulation of Inuit prints. Funded by the government’s Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, supported by The National Museum of Man and

³¹ The Massey Commission, a name commonly applied to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, was appointed by the federal government by an Order in Council dated 8 April 1949. In the major cities of Canada between August 1949 and July 1950, the commission held public sessions at which most of the 450 submitted briefs were heard, and it invited experts in various fields to prepare special studies. In 1951 the commission issued a report which became known as the 'Massey report' and gained recognition as a document of utmost importance in the cultural history of Canada since it advocated the principle of federal government patronage of a wide range of cultural activities and proposed the establishment of Canada Council for the Encouragement of the Arts, Letters, Humanities and Social Sciences. For the complete report see: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/2/5/index-e.html>

³² Prime Minister St. Laurent asks Vincent Massey for this inclusion, to the terms of reference of the commission, in a letter dated April 25, 1950. For further details see: Library and Archives Canada. <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/massey/h5-404-e.html>. 21

External Affairs, *Sculpture Inuit* travelled internationally to venues such as The British Museum and the Musée de L' Homme in Paris.

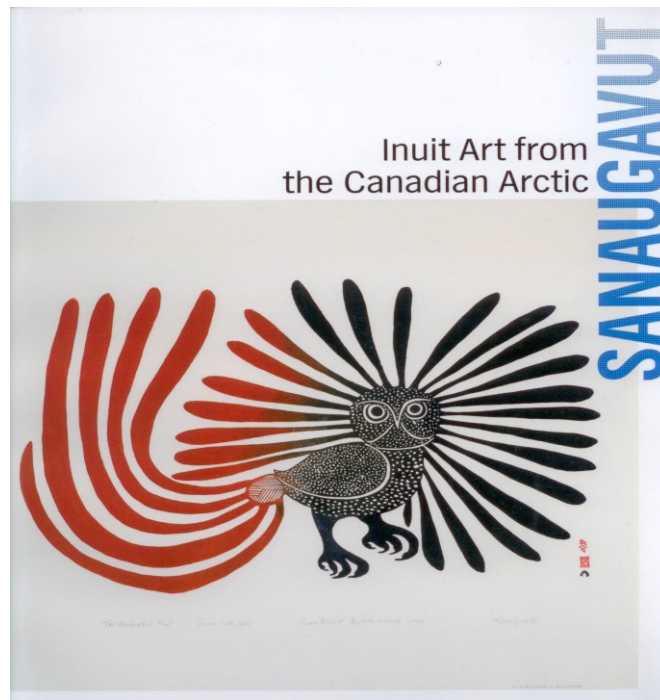
In 2010, the federal government continued using Inuit art to promote Canada internationally by including it in the Memorandum of Understanding between Canada and India. *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic* was a collaboration between two cultural institutions, the National Gallery of Canada and the National Museum of India. Describing *Sanaugavut*, as “an excellent introduction to Inuit art and a chance for the Indian public to see an exhibition that represents a remarkable chapter in Canadian art history,”³³ the Director of the National Gallery of Canada, Marc Mayer, situated Inuit art as an important and integral segment of Canadian art. *Sanaugavut* presented Inuit history, traditions and art to the Indian public in terms of historical as well as contemporary importance, highlighting changes in the production of Inuit visual culture from before contact to the present.

Sanaugavut follows the Canadian government’s previous initiatives to use Inuit Art in the promotion of Canada abroad. However, while *Sanaugavut* fulfilled the goals in the promotion of Canada, funding for the exhibition was not forthcoming from the state. Prior to the exhibition, funding for the promotion of Canadian culture abroad was drastically slashed in the Conservative minority government’s 2008 budget, and the Department of Canadian Heritage’s budget was cut by approximately \$45 million dollars. The travel of *Sanaugavut* to India was funded entirely through private support (although expenses for the coordination,

³³ Marc Mayer.” Preface,” in *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic* (Delhi: Creative Offset, 2010) 7.

design and curatorial work of the exhibition were covered by the National Gallery of Canada, which is a Crown Corporation funded by the Federal government). The exhibition was conceived as a transcultural exchange, and displaying Inuit Art as a nation's art played a vital role in jumpstarting political and economic relations between the two countries, demonstrated through the official signing of an India-Canada Memorandum of Understanding in 2010, the year *Sanaugavut* opened in New Delhi.

Section 3: *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic*



Cover of the catalogue for the Sanaugavut exhibition

The exhibition *Sanaugavut* was organised along two axes of chronology and geography. *Sanaugavut*, meaning 'our art' in Inuktitut, focused on the most recent

stage of the art form that tells a story of cultural survival and identity. The cornerstone of this exhibition is the fact that Inuit art reflects Inuit identity, which collectively over six decades has been nurtured by artists, who have expressed themselves and their culture by contributing to a body of work that manifests Inuit spirituality. Material and stylistic approaches differ among the artists, and such diversity of practices is underpinned by themes that reflect the artists' shared heritage. The exhibition sought to present Inuit art practices from the late 1940s to the present, portraying the inhabitants of Arctic communities as thriving and productive. The presentation of sculptures from the 1950s through to prints, drawings and more recent video work, demonstrated not only the evolution of Inuit art but displayed the Canadian government's involvement in the North. Considering that the exhibition of objects in *Sanaugavut* were displayed in a historical sequence, it remains clear that despite the inclusion of contemporary Inuit artists and media forms, the history and politics which promoted this art form are present within its chronological display.

To arrive at the upper floor galleries where *Sanaugavut* was installed, the viewer had to pass through the permanent sculpture collection of the National Museum of India, which consists of stone relics from ancient India. Further along, viewers entered the exhibition through a passageway highlighted with not only the title and sponsors of the show, but also two large images of Inuit sculptures from 1980 and 2000. The first room was dark and sparsely lit. There were spotlights highlighting each piece, drawing the viewer particularly towards the pedestals upon which the sculptures were displayed. The walls as well as the exhibition text were a

dark colour, further enhancing the dramatic feeling created with this particular lighting scheme. The exhibition design of wall colouring, lighting, and placement of the text as well as the curatorial layout were all specified by the team from the National Gallery of Canada. The sculptures were ensconced behind plexi-glass cases, all brought over from Canada, specifically constructed for this purpose. The plexi-glass displays created an aura of fine art for the objects, facilitating the narrative of the sculptures as Canadian treasures and impressing their assessed value on the viewer. However, the glass cases also created a divide between the viewer and object, a contrast to the Indian stone sculptures on the floor below, which were completely accessible. The lighting and wall colouring in the rooms of the *Sanaugavut* exhibition were in solemn tones of grays, lending a sense of mystique, appropriate perhaps for the art work, but also lending a coolness to the display that was distinctly separate from the warm colours of saffron and green associated with India and used within the permanent galleries of the National Museum of India. These sombre colors were often used in the display of Inuit art, as first seen in the exhibition design by the National Gallery of Canada for the *Eskimo Art* exhibition at the Gimpel Fils gallery in 1953³⁴. Similar to that exhibition, there was a dramatic use of lighting, with each sculpture being perched atop a neutral-gray podium, this colour emphasizing the aesthetic aspects of the work and environment. These hues were drawn from the colours found in the natural environment of the northern tundra, in keeping with the links between Indigenous peoples and nature.

³⁴ For further reviews of the Eskimo Art exhibition see: Norman Vorano. "The Globalization of Inuit Art in the 1950s and 1960s," *Creation and Transformation: Defining Moments in Inuit Art* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2012), 52.

Materials used in the transmission of information to the viewer throughout the exhibition included: introductory panels describing the vital markers in Inuit history and culture, a map and panels for each geographic region, explanatory labels next to artworks, explanation of sculpture and printmaking materials and process – all information included in wall text and images, and available to the viewers in both English and Hindi. Interspersed through the exhibition were first-hand accounts of the artists' influences and techniques. For example, in one wall text, printmaker Pudlo Pudlat states, "Artists draw what they think...that's how they are. They draw what they think- and what they have seen also. But sometimes they draw something from their imagination, something that doesn't exist anywhere in the world."³⁵ Pudlat implies within this statement that the work of Inuit artists must be considered not only as part of a collective but individually as each artist has a unique and original point of view in their expression. With these words, Pudlat is also linking Inuit artists to the Western art historical practice of considering the individual artist's production over the collective. The rooms of the exhibition were divided primarily by the geographic regions of the Inuit Nunangat³⁶ made up of one third of Canada's landmass and half of its shorelines. Each room was designed to present traditional Inuit cultural knowledge, technical expertise and stylistic evolution, illustrated with examples of sculptures from the 1940s to the contemporary period, with a piece made as recently as 2010. Works in all the

³⁵ Exhibition Files of *Sanaugavut*: Wall Labels (Prints Drawings, Textile, Video)

³⁶ Inuit Nunangat- The 4 regions are: Nunavik ("place to live") stretches the farthest south, Nunavut ("our land") stretched the farthest north, Nunatsiavut ("our beautiful land") is on Canada's east coast, and Inuvialuit ("real people") is the settlement region of the Northwest Territories in the Western Arctic.

principal media used by Inuit artists were included: stone and ivory sculptures, textile arts, and prints and drawings from each of the communities that have a print studio.³⁷



Entrance of the exhibition (Source: Personal album of Christine Lalonde)

The first room served to demonstrate the role of art within Inuit culture and society prior to the imposition of Canadian policy and development of craft in the North; it was used by the people, including hunters, to depict their natural environment. The resulting small-scale pieces were used as objects of trade with explorers, whalers and other travellers to their land, primarily from the Nunavik

³⁷List of print studios whose works were included in the exhibition: Pangnirtung, Kivalliq and Clyde River in Baker Lake and Qikiqtaaluk region in Nunavut, Puvirnituq and Inukjuak in Nunavik, Ulukhaktok in the Inuvialuit settlement region and Kivalliq region in Nunavut. Each print studio adopted a pictograph symbol or “chop” to indicate the origin of the print. Pangnirtung has an inukshuk, Clyde River a bee, Cape Dorset is an igloo, Ulukhaktok chose an ulu, Baker Lake’s symbol is the bow and arrow. For further details see: *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic* (Delhi: Creative Offset, 2010), 98.

region, which included stone sculpture from the time of James Houston's first visit to the North. A wall case showed the small-scale sculptural work being made by the Inuit before his arrival in 1948. The wall text in this room specifies that 'the first generation of Inuit carvers effectively translated their knowledge of the habits and physical movement of Arctic wildlife into their art forms.'³⁸ Pieces included *Goose* (c. 1940-60), unknown Inuit artist, and *Seated Man Holding a Fox by the Leg* (1949) unknown Inuit artist, whose illustration of the technique of preparing a fox skin depicts the Inuit's active involvement in the Arctic fur trade. *Family Moving Camp* (c. 1966) by Ennutsiak, portrays the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Inuit travelling by foot during the Summer months to get to the inland fish lakes carrying "their personal effects in packs with tumplines around their heads."³⁹

The second room reflected Houston's influence on Inuit craft, specifically through the introduction of printmaking and textiles. It featured artists from Nunavut and showcased the geographically different style developed between the 1960's and 1980's. This room included *The Enchanted Owl* (1960) by Cape Dorset artist Kenojuak Ashevak, one of the first prints ever made by an Inuit artist. Printmaking was introduced by Houston in Cape Dorset in 1957 with the stone being used as a tool rather than as a resulting sculpture. *Big Woman* (1974) by Jessie Oonark illustrated an elaborately dressed woman wearing an embellished *amauti* (women's parka). Her work spoke of women's roles within the community, including their development of sewing, embroidery and other clothing designs.

³⁸ Exhibition Files of *Sanaugavut*: Didactic information of Wall Casing A

³⁹ Exhibition Files of *Sanaugavut*: Didactic Wall Casing A

These were skills passed down through generations, carrying Inuit tradition and style through time. As a recipient of the Order of Canada, “Jessie Oonark was an artistic matriarch and became one of Canada’s most important artists.”⁴⁰ By identifying this artist as crucial in the Canadian cultural scene, the wall text informs the viewer of the current importance and influence given to practicing Inuit artists in Canada. *Untitled*, (1979), Duffel, felt and embroidery floss by Naomi Ityi is an example of textile work emerging out of the craft programs occurring at the same time as the beginning of print making and drawings. For centuries women have been the gender responsible for the making of clothing, and so with the introduction of a market for Inuit art, they began to use their skills in embroidery and applique for the making of large-scale narrative scenes or abstract patterned wall hangings. Ityi was one such artist from the Baker Lake region, where the creation of pictorial works on cloth is most closely associated. As exhibition curator Christine Lalonde states in the catalogue for *Sanaugavut*: “Through the creative efforts of artists *neevingatah*, or wall hangings, have become a vital facet of Inuit Art.”⁴¹

The third room was devoted to the Nunatsiavut and Inuvialuit regions, and featured contemporary influence and the introduction of new materials like silver and ebony as seen in the work of Michael Massie’s *uni-tea* (2000). This teapot sculpture evokes the form of the *ulu*, a knife traditionally used by a woman, but through the material and composition displays a highly contemporary design, taking

⁴⁰ Exhibition Files of *Sanaugavut*: Didactic Wall labels (Prints, Drawings, Textiles, Videos)

⁴¹ Christine Lalonde. “True North,” in *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic* (Delhi: Creative Offset, 2010), 112.

a traditional utilitarian object and transforming it into a colonial article. *Shaman Beckoning Spirits* (2004) by Abraham Anghik Ruben, in *Brazilian Soapstone*, interprets how “Christianity changed the status of the Shaman, reducing once-powerful leaders to beggars.”⁴² The introduction of ceramic as a sculptural medium is seen in the work of John Kurok and Leo Napayok’s *Coat of Dreams* (2006).

The last room focused on the practice of the artist through the display of their tools, including axes, saws, chisels, electric power drills, files and sandpaper. The visitor’s experience ended with a multi-media installation featuring a projection of *Qaggiq* (Gathering place), a video (film?) from Zacharius Kunuk’s 1989 *Unikaatuatiit* (Story Tellers) series. This marked a departure from the now recognizable sculpture and printmaking techniques of past generations and aligned with the oldest form of Inuit culture expression, the oral tradition. As Lalonde remarks: “The materials, imagery and meanings of these forms have undergone numerous transformations in response to changing societal and physical environments...the media of video and film, initially perceived as unconventional for Inuit artists, have re-established ties to the oral traditions, songs, and performances, giving the oldest modes of expression a contemporary relevance.”⁴³ Although the sequence of the rooms remained tied to a chronological history of the evolution of Inuit Art, the objects themselves carried individual narratives on the relevant issues in past as well as contemporary Inuit culture. Evolving from objects of trade to

⁴² Exhibition Files of *Sanaugavut*: Didactic Sculpture Case labels

⁴³ Christine Lalonde. “True North,” in *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic* (Delhi: Creative Offset, 2010), 17.

mythological depictions, Inuit artists established an art movement that, in the words of the Inuit artist David Ruben Piqtoukun: “We have to ‘recycle’ all this knowledge in order to deal with all the changes that have been brought to our doorsteps.”⁴⁴

Throughout the first, second and third rooms, exhibition curator Christine Lalonde presented a consistent aesthetic display of the artworks: the pedestals for the sculptures were evenly dispersed throughout the rooms, the viewer did not have a forced path of observation and sequence of objects, but rather an understanding of the objects in each room as a part of a whole, although still maintaining a chronological and geographic narrative. The prints and wall hangings in the second and third rooms, introduced in the 1960s, showed the addition of new techniques and media to the sculptural practices presented in the first room and continuing throughout the exhibition. The last room was lighter in appearance, as its walls were painted white instead of the dark grey that ran throughout the other rooms. This room was used as a space to explain and elaborate on Inuit art production and the tools which they use in production from past to present. The white colour on the walls connoted both the ‘scientific’ in the sense of presenting techniques and the ‘fine arts’ to showcase the contemporaneity of the more recent practices. The white walls also provided a contrast with the dark grey used in the previous rooms, which reinforced a sense of the primitive. This room was used as a space to explain and elaborate on Inuit art production. Part of the aim of establishing this cultural dialogue between Canada and India was educating the Indian public on not only the aesthetic value of Inuit Art but on the context of its production. Therefore the

⁴⁴ Exhibition Files of *Sanaugavut*: Wall Text – Direct quotes from Inuit artists

display of tools was necessary in order to inform the viewers about the techniques used by the artists.

The catalogue for *Sanaugavut* elaborates on the history and artistic practice of Inuit Art as introduced in the exhibition, recounting the developments of Inuit society. The catalogue included an essay from Mary Simon, President of the Inuit Tapirlit Kanatami,⁴⁵ which provides a national voice of the Inuit in Canada. Writing for an exhibition catalogue for the first time, Simon promotes *Sanaugavut* as “one of the highlights of 2010 Year of the Inuit in Canada, a campaign to raise awareness of Inuit traditions and achievements.”⁴⁶ Her essay traces the history of Inuit society and culture from a broader perspective, going back to archaeological time while giving the history of the Sivullirmiut (First peoples) and bringing it up to date to the present time. Other writers include Christine Lalonde, Associate curator of Indigenous Art at the National Gallery who chronicles the role of the government in the evolution and influence on Inuit art. Dr. Anupa Pande, Professor and Dean of the National Museum Institute, takes on the issue of Indigenous Art and Contemporary

⁴⁵ In 1971, a group of young Inuit leaders formed a national political body called Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) - “Inuit will be united in Canada”. The organization played a vital role in securing Aboriginal rights and recognition in the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982, based on the concept that Inuit are a founding people of the country, having settled in Canada thousands of years before confederation. In 2001, the organization changed its name to Inuit Tapirlit Kanatami – “Inuit are united in Canada” – to better reflect the relationship with today’s government and in celebration of the Inuit political achievement during the organization’s first thirty years. For further details see the official website of Inuit Tapirlit Kanatami: <https://www.itk.ca/about-itk>

⁴⁶ Mary Simon. “Story of the Changing People,” in *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic* (Delhi: Creative Offset, 2010), 11.

Significations. She examines Indigenous art form as being “enfolded in remarkable diversity and rich variations.”⁴⁷

The catalogue describes Inuit legends in the words of the artists, stressing the oral traditions of the Inuit storytelling. Personal experiences are related in the first person in the catalogue by the artists, providing their individual voices. As the exhibition focused on presenting the culture through the narrative of objects, the catalogue further elaborates on the influences through time, that have led to the growth of the Inuit art production. The objects chosen for the exhibition represented a conscious decision to introduce to a new audience the history of Inuit art, with a critical lens of looking back sixty years. The exhibition and catalogue both emphasize the significant changes in Inuit history, habitat and world view, presenting its rich artistic heritage which is not frozen in time. However, excluded from the visual display of wall texts and the catalogue essay were the social and economic issues plaguing the Inuit population in Canada and how their artistic production has contributed to these concerns.

The inaugural program for the opening of *Sanaugavut* included speeches by Minister of Culture of India, Shri Jawhar Sircar, and the Canadian High Commissioner, Jim Nickel, as well as museum directors and curators from Canada and India. Attended by dignitaries from other consulates, scholars, artists and members of public, the auditorium was filled to capacity. The commencement of the proceedings received the appropriate spiritual blessing by the way of an Indian

⁴⁷ Dr. Anupa Pande. “Indigenous Art and Contemporary Signification,” in *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic* (Delhi: Creative Offset, 2010), 125.

traditional Lighting of the Lamp ceremony,⁴⁸ very much in keeping with the spiritual blessing traditions of Aboriginal communities in Canada.⁴⁹ Concluding the ceremony was a message from Inuit artist David Ruben, read by Christine Lalonde, “...it seems to me that we share interesting things in common, such as in how important mythology and spirituality are in our lives and how this is revealed in our art.”⁵⁰ The inaugural and official opening ceremony of the exhibition was followed by a reception at Canada House, the official residence of the Canadian High Commissioner to India. Amongst other guests at the reception, the most notable were the Canadian athletes, who had just arrived in India to participate in the Commonwealth Games. Heading the delegation of Canadian athletes was the Minister of Sport, The Honorable Gary Lunn, who chose to give his first media conference in Delhi at the National Museum, with *Sanaugavut* as his backdrop.

As part of the exhibition platform of presenting Canadian content at the National Museum, an educational component by way of seminars, lecture series and a course specifically designed by the National Gallery for the National Museum Institute disseminated information to the public. Educational opportunities were achieved by an agreement between the National Gallery, the National Museum

⁴⁸ Lighting of a lamp in Hinduism - Light represents knowledge and darkness represents ignorance. The Lord himself is the source, the enlivener and enlightener of all knowledge. So the light in the lamp is worshipped as the Lord himself. For further details see: <http://www.mamandram.org/hindu-practices/why-do-we-light-a-lamp.html>

⁴⁹ “Qulliq”: Inuit Lamp-Lighting Ceremony - A traditional lamp-lighting ceremony is important to the Inuit culture in offering a space for reflection and communication. It is a ceremony passed from mother to daughter and emphasizes important messages, such as the following three guiding principles: Always respect elders and listen to them; Always share when people need it; Always make sure you love people as you care for yourself. For further details see: Philippe Morin. “Ancestors Light the Way,” *Northern News Services Online*. June 4, 2007. http://www.nnsi.com/frames/newspapers/2007-06/jun4_07grd.html

⁵⁰ Exhibition Files of *Sanaugavut*: Letter from David Ruben

Institute and the university arm of the National Museum. Conveniently located in an adjoining building to the museum, the institute's mandate includes teaching the History of Art, covering ancient and modern, Eastern and Western. An education officer from the National Gallery provided the Institute with assistance in creating a course on Inuit art to coincide with the opening of *Sanaugavut*.⁵¹ Prior to the opening of the exhibition and the lecture series, an Indo-Canadian Symposium was organised, titled *Indigenous Art Contemporary Signification*. The two-day sessions at the symposium included topics exploring the relationship between Inuit and Indian tribal art. The symposium's participants consisted of professors of visual and performing arts, anthropologists and museologists from a variety of Indian Universities, curators (Indian and Canadian), the head of advocacy programming from the Canadian High Commission, Indian artists and research scholars. A hundred and twenty participants signed up for the seminars. As part of the course the National Museum Institute organised a special lecture series on the Indigenous Art of Canada. The lectures were given by Dr. Stephen Inglis, a Canadian anthropologist and art historian who is familiar with the artistic traditions of the Indigenous peoples of North America. Amongst other topics explored during Inglis' lecture series, which focused on the culture and heritage of the Indigenous in the Canadian Sub- Arctic, the topic "Inuit art: Crafting an Economy", presented Inuit Art as a symbol of Canadian nationhood to an international and specifically to the Indian audience.

⁵¹ A complete list of books provided to the National Museum Institute in consultations with "Ingo Hessel Inuit Art Consulting". Source: Exhibition files of *Sanaugavut*.

103, 506 visitors attended *Sanaugavut* during its four-month residency at the National Museum. This was the greatest amount of people⁵² to visit a foreign show in the Museum's history, indicating its successful reception by the Indian public. *Sanaugavut* featured three components that differentiated it from the previous Inuit art touring exhibitions: the symposium promoting a discussion on Indigenous art; the inclusion of seminars and a course given on Inuit art at the National Museum of India; the exhibition catalogue contributing to the scholarship on Inuit art and providing a vital reference point for all readers. Curator Christine Lalonde highlights the new developments in contemporary Inuit Art exhibitions and states: "Many of the high profile exhibitions of Inuit Art in recent years that have focused on individual contemporary artists...have been crucial to keeping the [Inuit] arts vital."⁵³ *Sanaugavut* combined the chronological evolution of the art form demonstrating the continuity of medium and subject matter over the first decades of Inuit Art's exhibition, with contemporary artworks that are expressions of their own time. The content of the exhibition: maps, didactic panels, and artworks were a deliberate and conscious choice to provide a new audience with a history of a people whose development of art has been continuous and thriving.

The educational component of *Sanaugavut* was critical, and engaged the Indian audience, further contextualizing the role of cultural exchanges to raise an interest and broaden the Indian public's narrow image of Canada as being: "when

⁵² The comment is from Mr. Vijay Madan, the director of the National Museum of India in an email exchange with the National Gallery. Source: Exhibition Files of *Sanaugavut*..

⁵³ Christine Lalonde. "New Directions in Inuit Art Since 2000," in *Creation and Transformation: Defining Moments in Inuit Art* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2012), 180.

one thinks of Canada the image of the cosmopolitan Toronto usually springs to mind.”⁵⁴ The exhibition and its collateral activities all contributed to the diplomatic aims of the Canadian government, as such acknowledging the success of *Sanaugavut* as a triumphant moment for Canada. However, upon reflection and given a thorough analysis of the exhibition, there remain some observable exclusions and unresolved issues that could be viewed as missed opportunities. For example, there was no Inuit artist present at the exhibition. Time limitations, budget constraints and logistical problems were some of the reasons cited by the exhibitions organizers. But, in view of the Canadian government’s attitude of ignoring the producers of Inuit art, this omission was palpable. This was a definite missed opportunity, as the presence of an Inuit artist would have heightened the sense of the Inuit artistic achievement continuing into the present, and would have furthered the connection with the Indian Indigenous artists present at the exhibition. Furthermore, as informative as the educational component of *Sanaugavut* was, the forum could have taken a lead on an investigation and a much-needed meaningful discussion into the plight of the Indigenous peoples in Canada and India. Whereas the role of the artist in the production of art is visible in *Sanaugavut*, the treatment and conditions of the Inuit as a people is not addressed. Through the contemporary work displayed in *Sanaugavut*, the Inuit appear to be thriving and expanding their parameters of

⁵⁴ Ila Sankrityayan. “Vivacity: art and culture”. *Tribal art in common Pool* (Lucknow: The Pioneer, October 7, 2010)

expression through various mediums, although they are still amongst the most economically disadvantaged people in the nation.

Section 4: Cultural Exchange and Diplomatic relationship - Canada and India



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Prime Minister Stephen Harper witness the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in Toronto⁵⁵

Although both Canada and India are a part of the Commonwealth, historically, the two countries have never had strong economic ties. This was largely due to the deterioration of Indo-Canadian relations caused by India's first nuclear test in May 1974.⁵⁶ Canada chose to limit trade and sever bi-lateral nuclear co-

⁵⁵ India Canada sign Memorandum of Understanding.
<http://samrao.com/samraoblogarchivesJulytoDec2010.html>. August 20, 2012

⁵⁶ In April 1956 as part of the Colombo Plan, Canada and India formally sign the Canada-India Reactor (CIR) Agreement. Canada agrees to provide India with a nuclear reactor (CIRUS) which is to be employed exclusively for 'peaceful uses.' However, over subsequent years, ample evidence is uncovered that India is using the reactor to enrich plutonium for its nuclear weapons program. In May 1974 the plutonium fuel

operation with India, following allegations that the materials used to construct India's first nuclear device had a Canadian supplied nuclear research reactor. The cooling off period between the two countries lasted into the 1990s. A brief hiatus of trade co-operation occurred due to economic reforms in India and diplomatic missions led by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, yet this was again halted by a second nuclear test in 1998.⁵⁷ However, the shift in markets and the emergence of India as well as China as economic power-houses made it once again vital to re-establish Indo-Canadian relations.⁵⁸

Sanaugavut's inception, in 2006, was the result of an organisational venture between two national art establishments with a mandate to preserve their countries' heritage. Getting approval for holding foreign shows at the National Museum of India is explicitly under the control of the Ministry of Culture of India, as dictated by the cultural policy of India. Achieving the initial goal of gaining an audience with the Secretary of the Ministry of Culture of India, it was deemed imperative that in order to further the project, two representatives from the National Gallery of Canada would have to travel to India⁵⁹ to do a site inspection⁶⁰

used in the nuclear device detonated as part India's nuclear test came from that nuclear reactor, putting into jeopardy the terms of the Colombo plan. For further details see: Canada-India Bilateral Relationship. http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/india-inde/bilateral_relations_bilaterales/canada_india-inde.aspx?view=d.

⁵⁷ There were no official Federal Governmental visits between Canada and India between 1998 and 2009.

⁵⁸ Film and TV Stars blast Conservative arts Cuts. <http://www.ctvnews.ca/film-and-tv-stars-blast-conservative-arts-cuts-1.327920>, August 20, 2012

⁵⁹ Karen Stothart (Director of Exhibitions) and Roshi Chadha (Member of the National Gallery of Canada's Board of Trustees) travelled to India in September 2006 to conduct a site study, to initiate the dialogue between the National Gallery and the National Museum and seek approval from the Indian Government.

and present the case for the exhibition. The lack of a Memorandum Of Understanding between India and Canada proved to be a stumbling block and a challenge in trying to convince the Secretary, The Honorable Jawhar Sircar, to change his initial emphatic 'no' to the project. Detailed presentations ensued, showcasing the importance of Inuit art in Canada. Seizing on the opportunity and capitalizing on the preparations for *Sanaugavut*, and the upcoming meeting of the Prime Minister of India and Canada at the G-20 Summit in June 2010, the Indian High Commission in Canada initiated a plan to optimize and cement the Indo-Canadian relationship by commencing the dialogue to secure a Memorandum Of Understanding for Culture between the two countries.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper made his first official visit to India in November 2009,⁶¹ saying, "This South Asian tiger has awoken and the world is standing in awe. Facing the greatest global recession in half a century, our two countries need to work together for our common prosperity."⁶² Soon after Harper's visit the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh came to Canada in June 2010 for the G20 Summit in Toronto. This was the early stage of engagement between two countries trying to establish new partnerships. As a result of these

⁶⁰ Following the site inspection of the National Museum, the content of the exhibition was adjusted due to climate control capabilities of The National Museum. The Museum's climate control system did not conform to the North American museological standards. In order to meet the compliance requirements to insure the exhibition, sculptural content was increased and prints and textiles were limited.

⁶¹ As per Prime Minister Harper's itinerary officially released by the Canadian government, the visit to India from November 4 to 9 was his longest official foreign visit since he took office in 2006. <http://pm.gc.ca/eng>

⁶² Canada-India Press Release <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?category=5&featureId=6&pageId=48&id=3452>. October 20, 2012

growing relations a first cultural venture was supported in the exhibition of *Sanaugavut* at the National Museum in India.

During their speeches at the G-20 summit, both Prime Ministers welcomed the signing of the Memorandums of Understanding. *The Hindu*, an Indian national news media, gave details of the Memorandums that were signed under the report titled "Diplomacy and International Relations."⁶³ The Memorandums included: Cooperation in Peaceful Uses of Nuclear-Energy; Cooperation in Mining; Cooperation in Culture;⁶⁴ Cooperation in Higher Education. In view of the past breakdown of alliances due to nuclear energy, the signing of the Nuclear Memorandum of Understanding between Canada and India was a historic development for both countries, establishing a new era of collaboration.

Following the successful meetings of the Prime Ministers Singh and Harper in 2009 and at the G-20 in June 2010, the first Annual Trade Ministerial Dialogue was held in Ottawa on 24 September 2010. The Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry Anand Sharma and the Canadian Minister of International Trade Peter Van

⁶³ The Hindu media Note: Agreement between Indian and Canada for Co-operation <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/media-note-agreement-between-india-and-canada-for-cooperation-in-peaceful-uses-of-nuclear-energy/article490238.ece>. August 12, 2013

⁶⁴ The India-Canada Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation:

1. Will strengthen and promote better mutual understanding in art, literature, history, sports and other cultural disciplines, and enhance protection and promotion of cultural diversity;
2. Encourage arts and cultural festivals, holding of exhibitions and special events and exchange programmes, particularly during major international events in both countries;
3. Encourage and facilitate exchanges of professionals/experts, knowledge, technical support and expertise in Archaeology, Museums, Cinematography, Arts, Libraries, Archives, Mass media, Tourism and exchanges of exhibitions of artistic, informative, historic and archaeological nature including fine arts, crafts, photography, new media arts, human and social history and heritage;
4. Share expertise on issues related to creation, production, distribution and dissemination of Indian and Canadian cultural goods and services, and facilitate participation in cultural and trade events to promote various cultural goods and services from both countries.
5. Canada will organise an exhibition on 'Inuit Art' in the National Museum, New Delhi in 2010. India will organise a Festival of India in Canada in 2011.

Loon welcomed the establishment of a formal discourse and committed to maintaining open and productive discussions. While reviewing Canada-India bilateral trade and investment relations, the minister encouraged the continued strengthening of economic ties between the two countries and reiterated Prime Minister Harper's commitment to increase trade from \$4.5 billion to \$15 billion in the next five years.⁶⁵ During the meeting, the Ministers released the Canada-India Joint Study Group Report that examined the feasibility of a comprehensive economic partnership.

Reviewing the state of bi-lateral relations, The Ministry of Culture of India and the Department of Canadian Heritage "welcomed the enhanced interaction in a broad range of areas, and expressed their desire to broaden and deepen economic, diplomatic, educational, and cultural ties."⁶⁶ With the Memorandum of Understanding now officially signed on June 27, 2010, Canadian politicians were happy to announce that as the first positive step, Canadian treasures of Inuit art were going in an exhibition from Canada to India. Following the G-8 summit, official media reports referred to *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic* and the Memorandum of Understanding on cultural cooperation between Canada and India as favourable "initiatives undertaken by the Canadian and Indian governments to strengthen established cultural ties."⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Canada-India Bilateral Relationship
http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/india-inde/bilateral_relations_bilaterales/canada_india-inde.aspx?view=d. August 20, 2012

⁶⁶ Canada-India Press Release
<http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?category=5&featureId=6&pageId=48&id=3452>. October 20, 2012

⁶⁷ Exhibition Files of *Sanaugavut*: Draft 2 of Question and Answers to the press

Canada gained visibility through *Sanaugavut* at a time when international attention was directed at India. This visibility underpins Cynthia Schneider's definition of cultural diplomacy: an opportunity to foster mutual understanding by presenting cultural knowledge and furthering an understanding of a nation. Cultural diplomacy operates through the use of 'soft power' - its ability to present the mood of the country, providing an awareness of the characteristics of its societies and a landscape in which its politics operate. One means of achieving cultural diplomacy is through exhibitions like *Sanaugavut*. Additionally, Schneider defines the difference between public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy: "Cultural diplomacy differs from its larger relative public diplomacy in that it is less closely aligned with policy (or promoting the acceptance of policies), and operates best as a two way street."⁶⁸ Public diplomacy is often regarded as the domain of a country's foreign policy. Cultural diplomacy becomes an instrument of foreign policy, broadening the concept of diplomacy as a two way communication between countries. The potential of cultural diplomacy is its power to create a kinder, gentler environment within which the harder political activities or actions of diplomatic relations can be built. Cultural engagements can do the heavy lifting and provide leverage for inter-governmental negotiations, facilitating public diplomacy. Although the impact of cultural programs remains abstract, such activities remain a coherent political strategy in building connections and breaking down barriers between nations. Jawhar Sircar, Secretary, Ministry of

⁶⁸ Cynthia P. Schneider. "The Unrealized Potential of Cultural Diplomacy: "Best Practices" and What Could Be, If Only....," *Journal of Arts Management, Law & Society* (Winter 2010): 261.

Culture of India, discusses the approach of cultural programs as prongs of diplomacy in his introductory remarks for *Sanaugavut's* exhibition catalogue.

Indigenous art is a natural outpouring of human experience and such art forms are worthy of preservation, development and encouragement...This exhibition is the first such, after signing the Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural co-operation between India and Canada... I am confident that the exhibition will not only bring the Indigenous artists and the people of both our countries closer but also initiate a wider interaction between these rich and diverse cultures.⁶⁹

Sircar's confidence in *Sanaugavut* as a positive step in cultural diplomacy is twofold – first as a two way exchange between Canada and India as well as creating a connection between the Indigenous peoples of both countries. A key indicator of effective cultural diplomacy in a cultural exchange is the activity's capacity to develop connections with the host country. Acknowledging the presence of Indigenous peoples in Canada and India, with hopes of bringing them together, Sircar successfully creates a connection between the two countries and by extension acknowledges the power of the exhibition that brought about this possibility. Equally important is his integration of the Indigenous artists in his remarks, lending credibility and an acknowledgement of their distinctive and personal expression of art.

Sircar's remarks place Inuit civilization as a crucial part of Canada's history, a statement echoed by The Honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and official Languages, in his introductory remarks in *Sanaugavut's* exhibition catalogue:

⁶⁹ Jawhar Sircar. "Introductory Remarks," in *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic* (Delhi: Creative Offset, 2010), 6.

The exhibition *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic* presents a wonderful opportunity for Canada to share the diversity of Inuit culture with the peoples of India and the world as nations gather in Delhi for the XIX Commonwealth Games. Over the past fifty years, Inuit art has become one of Canada's symbols at home and abroad. It is fitting that the National Gallery of Canada presents, during this international gathering, an exhibition showcasing the diverse talents of Inuit artists.⁷⁰

It is noteworthy that Moore supports the use of Inuit Art as a marker of Canada and acknowledges the long history of the Canadian state using Inuit art to sell itself internationally. The power of Inuit Art as a marker of Canada's nationhood is undiminished in Moore's comments, despite the gap of fifty years between the exhibitions *Canada Eskimo Art* sent in 1956 on a European Tour and *Sanaugavut* in 2010. In 1956, External Affairs and foreign consular officers, adjuncts in the promotion of Canada's public diplomacy, collaborated to send Inuit art exhibitions from Canada to an international audience. The tour boosted Canada's cultural profile on the world stage, achieving the diplomatic agenda of sketching an impression of Canada as a developed, habitable and prosperous sovereign nation. Upon receiving positive acclaim for the international exhibitions, the Canadian government quickly realized the soft power of Inuit Art as a means to promote Canadian interests abroad, be they economic or political.⁷¹ In 2010, James Moore, a

⁷⁰ The Honourable James Moore. "Introductory Remarks," in *Sanaugavut: Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic* (Delhi: Creative Offset, 2010), 6.

⁷¹ Reviews of the exhibition ranged from "How modern," to "in their liveliness...these sculpture show a close relationship with modern European sculpture". For further reviews of the exhibition see: Norman Vorano. "The Globalization of Inuit Art in the 1950s and 1960s," in *Creation and Transformation: Defining Moments in Inuit Art* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2012), 56.

senior political Minister of the Canadian government lauded the continued use of Inuit Art from the National Gallery, a crown corporation of Canada. Moore's comments pointed to Inuit culture as an integral part of Canada and thus fitting to be the first cultural exchange between Canada and India.

Sanaugavut is the most recent in a long line of exhibitions that use Indigenous art to showcase Canada and other post-colonial nations' identity. This idea can also be seen in another exhibition that overlapped with *Sanaugavut*, *Power Cloths of the Commonwealth*. The theme of *Power Cloths* is textiles, used to convey or symbolize power. *Power Cloths of the Commonwealth*, celebrating key moments in Commonwealth history, was Australia's contribution to the official Cultural Program of the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, and provides an important comparison with *Sanaugavut* of the way that exhibitions have been used as tools of cultural diplomacy

.Section 5: *Sanaugavut* and *Power Cloths* – Cultural Diplomacy in action



Cover of the catalogue for the Power Cloths exhibition

Canada is one of 54 member states that form the Commonwealth. All members, except Mozambique and Rwanda, were part of the British Empire, out of which the Commonwealth developed. The Commonwealth Games, initially known as the British Empire Games, is a quadrennial sports competition for athletes from the countries of the British Commonwealth. The first inaugural meeting of the games was held in 1930 in Hamilton, Ontario.

The exhibition *Power Cloths of the Commonwealth* was held at the National Arts and Crafts Museum, New Delhi from September 28, 2010 to October 20, 2010, Commenting on *Sanaugavut* and *Power Cloths*, Ila Sankrityayan, cultural journalist for the daily newspaper *The Pioneer* wrote “With the Commonwealth Games having officially kick-started, the focus is also on the art and culture from the Indigenous

artists from a wealth of Commonwealth countries, some of whom are displaying their works here.”⁷²

Power Cloths' particular focus was to exhibit ceremonial cloths used by Indigenous communities from the Commonwealth countries. The production of Indigenous textiles in *Power Cloths* can be seen as charged with a discourse of ex-colonial nations. Suzanne Davies, co-curator of the *Power Cloths* exhibition, offered an explanation of 'power' and what it means in the context of the exhibition:

'Power' may...arise from the spiritual, mystical or symbolic cultural status of the garment or cloth, like the clothing of a shaman...'Power' may also arise as a consequence of the significance of the wearer,...or political positions of resistance and independence...⁷³

Jasleen Dhamija, the co-curator of the *Power Cloths* exhibition and a specialist in the history of textiles and costumes states: "Fabrics... became a repository of speculative thought, embodying history in a non-verbal language."⁷⁴ . Traditionally, textiles or clothing is considered as utilitarian object, "functional and therefore outside Western concepts of artistic expressions."⁷⁵ It is thus significant and noteworthy that the curators of this exhibition used the power of cloths as symbols of their nation - using textiles as a resource to show the dominance of the colonials over the Indigenous population. The distinctive notion of power in *Power Cloths* may also

⁷² Ila Sankrityayan. "Vivacity: art and culture". *Tribal art in common Pool* (Lucknow: The Pioneer, October 7, 2010)

⁷³ Australian High Commission. <http://www.india.embassy.gov.au/ndli/pa5710.html>. October 12, 2012

⁷⁴ Jasleen Dhamija. "The Warp and Weft of the Universe: Threads which unite the world," in *Power Cloths of the Commonwealth* (Melbourne: RMIT Gallery, 2010), 49.

⁷⁵ Christine Lalonde. "Colonialism Changes Everything," *Inuit Modern*, ed. Gerald McMaster (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011), 28.

arise from the spiritual or mystical status of the garment or cloth such as the images of the “Shaman’s wrapper” from Malaysia or the ceremonial cloths used by Indigenous communities from Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

The exhibition included examples of distinctive dress choices of major political figures such as Mahatma Gandhi’s *khadi* (cloth made from hemp, an Indigenous plant in India), Nelson Mandela’s shirt with African prints and a *Kente* cloth, made by Akam, the Indigenous people of Ghana and worn by Kwame Nkrumah, the first Head of State of Ghana, as a proud statement of his Ghanaian identity. Included in the collection was a rare possum skin cloak worn by South-Eastern Australian Aboriginal elders. William White, a Canadian artist belonging to the Raven Clan Tsimshian community from northern British Columbia, was present at the Crafts Museum and participated by bringing two tapestries woven by him and showed off his skills by demonstrating the specialised weaving techniques of his ancestors.

Bruce Ferguson defines exhibitions as being “narratives with purposes, fictions of persuasion, docudramas of influence... (or) infotainment.”⁷⁶ *Sanaugavut* and *Power Cloths* recount a story of strength and affirmation of peoples, capable of surviving decades of colonial oppression, while managing to preserve their cultural knowledge. The artworks of both exhibitions are examples of resiliency in the Indigenous art practices - the objects confronting the colonial influence while maintaining their producers’ cultural expression. According to Heather Igloliorte,

⁷⁶ Bruce W. Ferguson. "Exhibition Rhetorics: Material speech and utter sense," in *Thinking about exhibitions*, eds. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce Ferguson and Sandy Nairne (London: Routledge, 1996), 178.

art that expresses cultural resiliency can be seen as a “consolidation and rejuvenation of Indigenous culture and the assertion of autonomy while providing a valuable and a nuanced critique of the complex interactions...of colonialism.”⁷⁷ The distinctiveness of the artists’ individual style in *Sanaugavut* augments the belief in the flourishing Inuit art practice, particularly significant in the face of the oppression of the Inuit population. The textiles in *Power Cloths*, although identified as an agency of autonomy and sovereignty for the ex-colonial nations are in fact dynamic sites of resistance, for example Mahatma Gandhi’s Khadi cloth, Mandela’s shirt and the Kente cloth from Ghana.

Because of the strong emphasis on Indigenous cultures in *Sanaugavut* and *Power Cloths*, one can read the exhibitions as reiterating certain assumptions about the relationship between Indigenous peoples and ex-colonial national identities. *Sanaugavut* and *Power Cloths* are fostering on the world stage a better understanding of Indigenous art, as well as using the significant arts to build an iconic distinctiveness for their nation; Canada and the other Commonwealth countries. Indigenous art is a continuous expression of culture and the people’s relationship with the land; giving rise to similarities in *Sanaugavut* and *Power Cloths* in that most of the objects provide a commentary on the entangled history of Indigenous cultures and their colonizers. The question that *Sanaugavut* and *Power Cloths* raise is: what is it about Indigenous art that has made it the carrier of cultural diplomacy across so many former colonial countries? What makes it so manipulable

⁷⁷ Heather Igloliorte. “The Inuit of Our Imagination,” in *Inuit Modern*, ed. Gerald McMaster (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011), 45.

to nationalist desires when its makers are ignored? Canadian novelist, Margaret Atwood's book *Survival* describes a country's enticement to use Indigenous emblems as stemming from its pressing need to create an allegiance with the land. The Indigenous people, Atwood says are "true ancestors...real inhabitants"⁷⁸ of a land, who lend authenticity to the construct of a new state. Canadian art historian Leanne Stewart Pupchek in her essay, "True North: Inuit Art and the Canadian Imagination," further extrapolates this alliance as an international search for "the authentic 'Folk' ... which is a popular search for a link with a living idealized past, a search for the authenticity that Europeans believed they had lost..."⁷⁹ Atwood and Pupchek's proposal closes the circle with Graburn's suggestion of Canada's need to embrace the "natural" Canadians, seeing in Inuit art their symbols, providing the nation a firm foothold in the north.

Conclusion: The North and Beyond

Canada's nationalistic aspirations have made Inuit art as a particularly effective expression of a national identity. Accepted as fine art, recognized as an important cultural art form, lent an authenticity by the concept of the "natural" – firmly places Inuit art in the Canadian and international consciousness as uniquely Canadian. Pupchek adeptly condenses the past while providing the present-day

⁷⁸ Leanne Stewart Pupchek cites from Margaret Atwood's book "Survival: A thematic Guide to Canadian Literature," (Toronto: Anansi, 1972). For further details see: Leanne Stewart Pupchek. "True North: Inuit Art and the Canadian Imagination," *American Review of Canadian Studies* (Spring/Summer 2001), 193.

⁷⁹ For further details see: Leanne Stewart Pupchek. "True North: Inuit Art and the Canadian Imagination," *American Review of Canadian Studies* (Spring/Summer 2001), 197. The discussion is drawn from I. McKay's essay from *The Quest of the Folk: Anti-modernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth century Nova Scotia* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994)

pervasive, yet troublesome, use of Inuit art: “Inuit imagery has become a synecdoche of Canadian identity, [and] may seem problematic in the twenty-first century, not to mention inauthentic, the acceptance of Inuit art as a marker of Canadian identity remains popular and unquestioned.”⁸⁰ It is important to note that while Inuit art was being used by the Canadian government to improve relations abroad, the Inuit themselves had limited rights to the control of their land within Canada. The territory of Nunavut was established after 13 years of intense negotiation which led to the 1992 Land Claims Agreement, where the Inuit gained title to some land, monies in compensation, a share of mineral, oil, and gas development, the right to participate in decisions regarding the land and water resources and rights to harvest wildlife on their lands.

The reception of Inuit art by the Indian public is documented in the eighty-eight pages of handwritten reviews⁸¹ from the visitors to *Sanaugavut*. Informed by Schneider’s definition of cultural diplomacy as a means to foster mutual understanding and build bridges, the reviews are an insight into how *Sanaugavut* provided an expansive image of Canada to the Indian public.⁸² *Sanaugavut*’s success as an instance of cultural diplomacy can also be measured by highlighting some of the events that have furthered Indo-Canadian relationship. Remarking on the enhanced ties between the two countries peaking in Seoul at the G20 Summit in

⁸⁰ Leanne Stewart Pupchek. “True North: Inuit Art and the Canadian Imagination,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* (Spring/Summer 2001), 191.

⁸¹ Exhibition Files of *Sanaugavut*.

⁸² For a complete list of reviews of the exhibitions see: Exhibition Files of *Sanaugavut*.

November 2010, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that the India-Canada relationship has undergone a “sea-change.”⁸³ Following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding of Culture, the Government of India announced 2011 as the Year of India in Canada. Prime Minister Harper stated, “Our country is home to a vibrant, nearly one-million strong, Indo-Canadian community that plays a vital role in Canada’s economic and cultural landscape. The Year of India in Canada represents a unique opportunity to explore Canada’s rich cultural diversity and I encourage all Canadians to participate in festivities, which will be taking place across the country.”⁸⁴ He was joined by Deepak Obhrai, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and host Shashishekar M. Gavai, High Commissioner of India to Canada. The inaugural event was followed by a variety of cultural events in Ottawa and other 14 cities in Canada, garnering visibility for India in Canada and showcasing economic alliances and potential business opportunities for Canadians in India.

In 2012, Prime Minister Harper went to India for the second time, following several key ministers on official visits, which was his longest foreign visit. Prime Minister Harper announced a cultural Year of Canada in India. Among other Prime Ministerial objectives, a key aim was to seal a nuclear co-operation agreement, meant to turn a diplomatic page and triple the annual bilateral trade with India to \$15 billion by 2015. On the cultural side, the National Gallery of Canada has

⁸³ Canada-India Press Release
<http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?category=5&featureId=6&pageId=48&id=3452>. October 20, 2012

⁸⁴ High Commission of India in Ottawa. “Brief on India-Canada Economic & Trade Relations”.
<http://www.hciottawa.ca/pdf/Brief%20on%20Trade%20and%20Economic%20Relations.pdf>. August 14, 2013

included, as part of its exhibition strategy, a commitment to hold an international survey of Indigenous artists every 5 years. *Sakahān: International Indigenous Art* (May 17, 2013 – September 2, 2013), the first show in the series, included tribal Gond artists from Northern India. Continuing in the promotion of culture, in 2014 the Governor General of Canada, David Johnston, is to visit India, bringing with him a gift: a monumental Indigenous sculpture, which is to be installed in front of the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi. This sculpture will be in keeping with other Inukshuks, given by Canada as a symbol of its nation, as gifts to other Commonwealth countries; another example of the use of Indigenous culture to further diplomatic relationships, continuing the tradition of exporting Inuit culture for political gain.

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