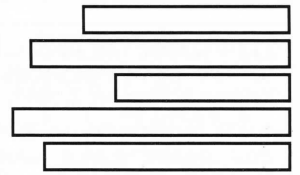


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Volume 1, Number 2, 1990

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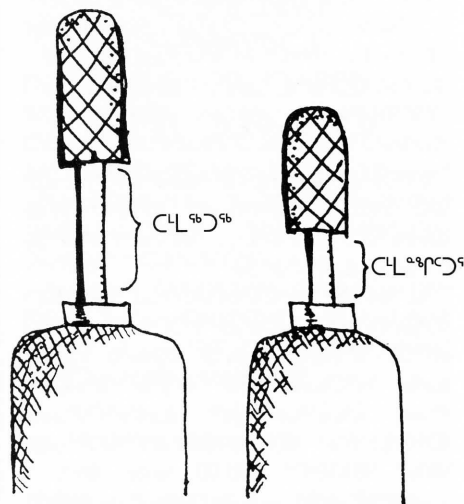
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Mark Webber: Arctic College

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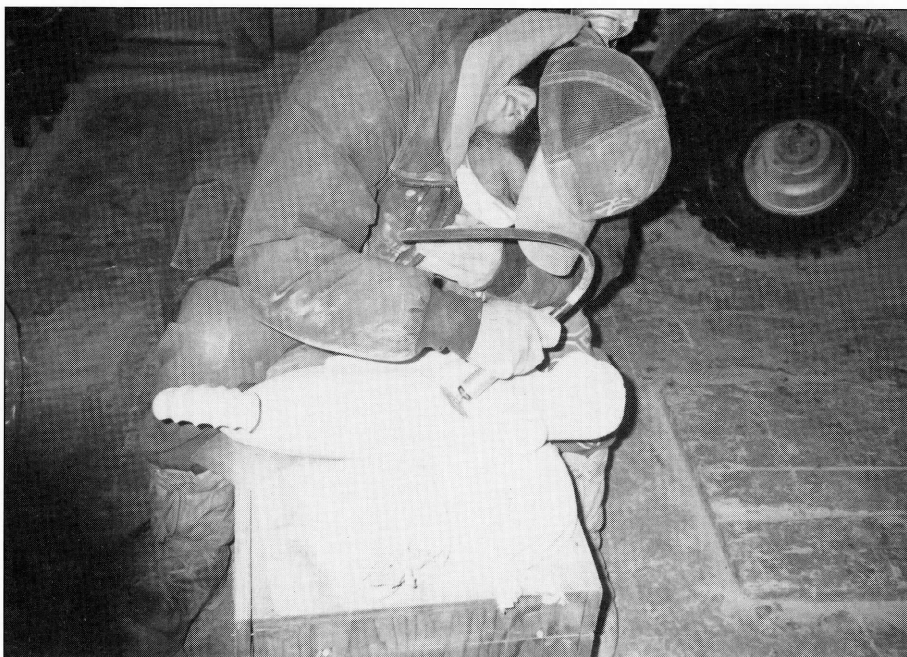
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Mark Webber, Arctic College

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Mark Webber, Arctic College

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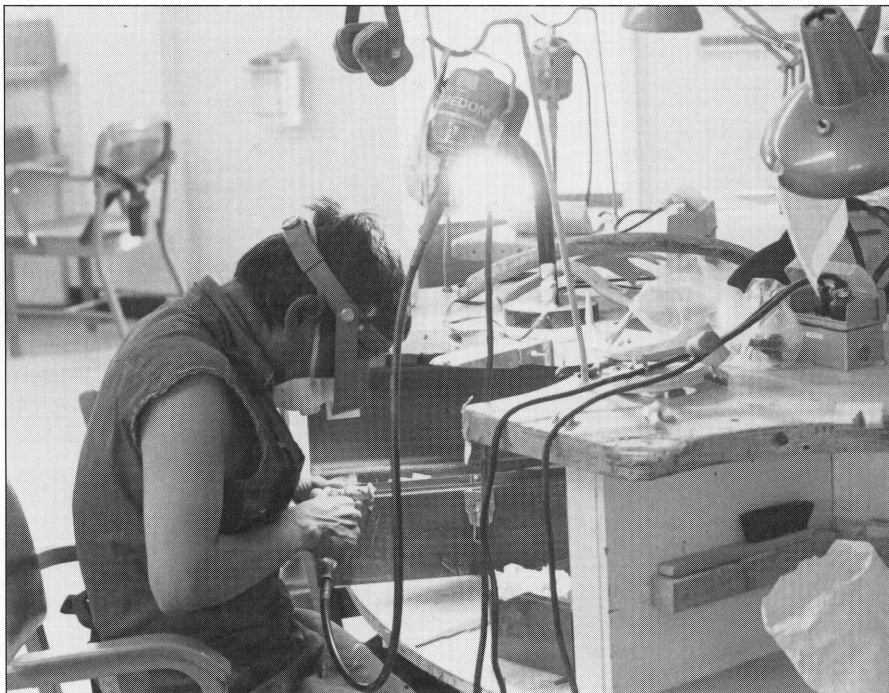
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A SURVEY OF CARVING FACILITIES

Only Two Communities have Public Carving Facilities

Inuit artists have been telling us they would like a building in their community where they can go to carve. The *Inuit Art Quarterly's Artists' Supplement* conducted a survey to determine how many carving studios exist in the Arctic and exactly where Inuit stand on this issue today. More than 50 individuals and businesses were contacted throughout the Northwest Territories, Nunavik and Labrador.

Philip Kamepakeytook of Gjoa Haven echoes comments from across the Arctic when he says, "Both young people and older people have been talking among themselves for years that a carving facility is necessary in our community, but it's always the same, there's no organization to help oversee the development and administration of it afterwards." He suggested that maybe it is because carvers in his community obtain their own stone and that creating art is such an independent activity that it is more difficult to establish a facility. He says the need is there, all the same.

"Both young people and older people have been talking among themselves for years that a carving facility is necessary in our community, but it's always the same, there's no organization to help oversee the development and administration of it afterwards."

Several artists who were interviewed noted other advantages to having a facility. First, carving facilities go hand in hand with the availability of carving material and proper tools. Second, a comfortable, insulated building with correct lighting, work stations and equipment would be much safer for the artists. Third, it would encourage activity, especially by younger people, and become a focal point for educating carvers in safety, production techniques, art history and theory, and culture.

Only Two Carving Facilities Exist

In spite of these universal observations, our survey reveals that only two carving facilities exist, one in Holman, owned by

the Co-op, and one in Iqaluit, owned by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Gordon Peters, the manager of the Holman Co-operative, equipped a small, empty building with power tools and ventilation to encourage carving production. He believed it was a matter of simple economics for both carvers and the co-operative. Carving generates a good return on investment and, with the proper equipment to encourage carving activity, he could stimulate sales. Peters' prediction turned out to be right. Rex Goose is a young artist who uses the facility, along with five to 10 others on a daily basis, depending on the season. He tells us: "It's so much easier to carve using the equipment in the carving space, rather than at home where you are interrupted constant-

cont'd on page 2



Annie Nowdluk and Jimmy Kilabuk working in the Arts and Crafts Centre, Iqaluit, NWT.

Matthew Spence, Nortext

Inuit Art Quarterly Artists' Supplement
Volume 1, Number 2, Summer 1990

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Staff of the Inuit Art Foundation: Marybelle Mitchell, Executive Director, Glenn Wadsworth, Program Co-ordinator, Sheila Sturk Green, Administrative Assistant.

Translation: Leah d'Argencourt

Editorial office: 2081 Merivale Rd., Nepean, Ontario, K2G 1G9. Phone: (613) 224-8189, Fax: (613) 224-2907.

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Inuit Art Quarterly
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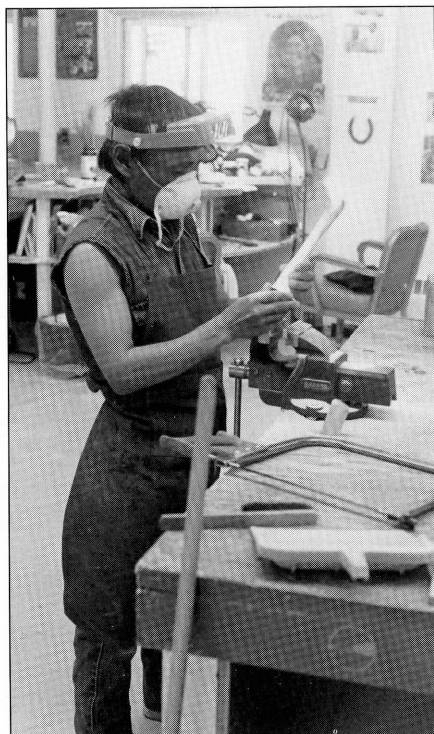
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ly, or you have to set up or clean up over and over."

Simon Taipana, an Inuit Art Foundation board member who has just moved to Coppermine from Holman, says, "A community facility is the most efficient and cost-effective way to help the most artists. It's very handy to have power tools available so artists can work on carvings faster



Matthew Spence, Norfext

Yassie Kakee at work bench. Don't forget to protect your eyes, even from fine dust.

and safer. Artists also learn a great deal from being exposed to other people." Taipana indicated, however, that Holman's facility does have some problems. For example, it is too small for the number of people using it. Because it is too expensive to hire a full-time manager, some theft and damage to equipment has occurred as well.

In Iqaluit, the old jewellery shop has been transformed into an Arts and Crafts Centre, which serves as a resource for the Baffin region. It contains a showroom, which displays Baffin arts and crafts and a work space—for jewellery and some small bone and antler carving—used daily by three to 12 people. The only restriction is that artists must follow "house rules" for responsible use of the facility, such as using tools safely and cleaning up their own work space.

Carvers who work in the Iqaluit Arts and Crafts Centre can sell their work to either retailers or individuals. Beth Beattie, the Baffin Arts and Crafts officer who is also responsible for the management of the Centre, told us that, starting in September, users will start paying fees. Beattie explains that some of the equipment is old, and the facility requires some upgrading, which might be approved soon by the GNWT. "It also has a resource centre with books, magazines and videos, slides on art and 'How To' books, which is becoming more popular," she says. According

to Beattie, Iqaluit's Arts and Crafts Centre is extremely popular, and it is possible that management can respond to producer requests for future improvements.

It seems hard to justify the existence of just two carving shops in Canada's Arctic when carving is the least practical activity to engage in at home and provides the greatest income and employment to Inuit artists.

In the near future, the communities of Pangnirtung and Nain, Labrador, will have carving facilities as well. In Nain, the Labrador Inuit Development Corporation and the Torngasok Cultural Centre have joined forces to construct a dual purpose studio (which should be completed in September), for carving and jewellery made from labradorite. Pangnirtung will have a multipurpose facility, built by the Government of the Northwest Territories, for weaving, carving and print-making activities. Rosie Okpik, president of the local Uqurmiut Artists Association, which supports the facility, has estimated that it could cost \$2,000,000.

It seems hard to justify the existence of just two carving shops in Canada's Arctic when carving is the least practical activity to engage in at home and provides the greatest income and employment to Inuit artists.

The Possibility of Converting an Abandoned Building

Philip Kamepakeytook of Gjoa Haven, Omalluk Oshutsiaq, a carver from Cape Dorset (who is also on the Inuit Art Foundation board of directors), and Pauloosie Kooneeliusie of Broughton Island all talked of obtaining abandoned houses or government buildings to transform them into carving centres. But Oshutsiaq says these buildings are scarce and the demand for them so high, "it might only be feasible to build something from scratch if funding could be obtained." An effort by the co-operative manager in Gjoa Haven to have an old building transformed into a carving shop did not work out, according to Kamepakeytook.

In Broughton Island, Kooneeliusie, who is on the hamlet council, says, "I person-

ally initiated a community petition for a carving building, spurred on after the Arctic College course we had in Broughton, because I realized the building we used was inadequate. The hamlet has an old community centre that could be reserved for carvers if a proposal can be developed and funding provided, but so far the hamlet has not formally received the petition, and no proposal for developing a centre has been produced."

The Economics of a Carving Studio

This is exactly where most community carving centres have become bogged down in the past. Funding and administration are crucial to make a carving centre

a reality. Chuck Gilhuly, hamlet manager for Cape Dorset, says the situation is the same in Cape Dorset, and adds, "Any community would have to be certain a facility would be well used to justify it." He believes Cape Dorset could not handle any further expenditures.

To pay for the costs of establishing a carving studio and its daily operating expenses, some sort of user fees are required. Sometimes, carvings are also sold on the spot to help recover costs. Because most carvers complain they do not have much money, and to encourage usage, low user fees are usually suggested. Although selling carvings out of the facility tends to be a favoured option, existing arts and crafts retailers complain that government assistance to a studio that sells arts and crafts amounts to subsidiz-

ing their competition, which is unfair. In the NWT, it is government policy not to fund a new business if it will harm existing businesses.

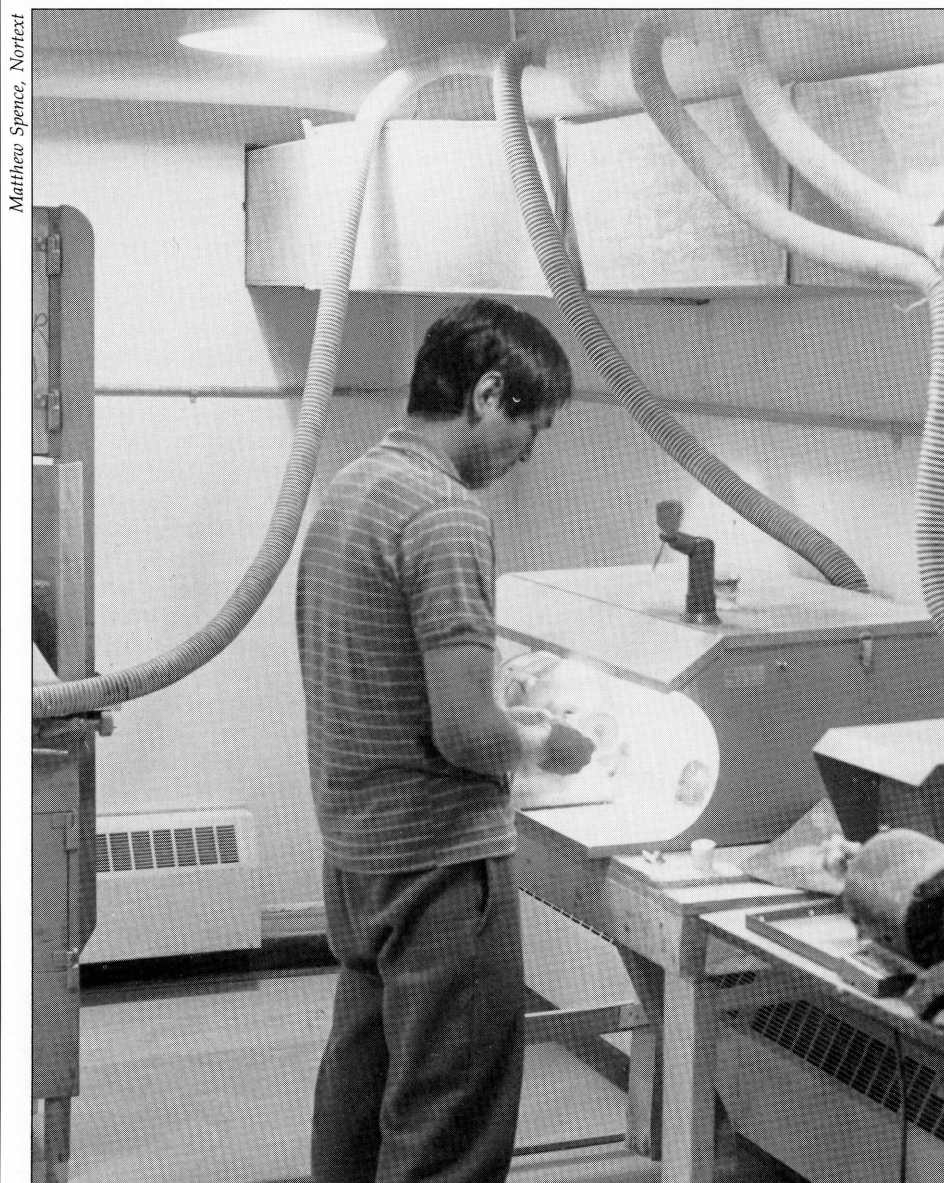
Many people think studios should be available to residents, just as roads, garbage, sewage disposal, hamlet offices and health services are.

Richard Murdoch of La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau Québec, the distribution agency for arts and crafts produced by Arctic Quebec co-operatives, adds another perspective to the problem. As he says, "Carving facilities are not economic in business terms because their operating costs cannot be recovered, especially under northern conditions. Most carvers work as independent artists or craftspersons either at home or outdoors ...so it would be difficult to know if user fees would be sufficient to justify a bank loan to create facilities."

Murdoch thought it would make more sense to build a carving studio as a social service rather than trying to make it pay for itself. Many people think studios should be available to residents, just as roads, garbage, sewage disposal, hamlet offices and health services are. Communities could probably find the funds from other levels of government to build carving facilities if they were considered worthwhile for the community. One major justification is that more people would be able to earn income from arts and crafts activity. There are, of course, other important factors to consider when we think about art, which is much more than a way to make money.

Social and Cultural Importance of Arts and Crafts

Omalluk Oshutsiaq from Cape Dorset, Pauloosie Kooneelusiie from Broughton Island, and Rosie Okpiik, president of the Uqqurmiut Inuit Artists Association in Pangnirtung, are all working hard to establish carving facilities in their communities. They are all concerned with the economic importance of arts and crafts but, like other Inuit, they are quick to emphasize that this is not the only thing that concerns them.



Levi Nowdluk working with power polisher. Note dust collection system in the Arts and Crafts Centre, Iqaluit, NWT.

Oshutsiaq is proud that some of her children have started to carve, but knows practising art is not as attractive to many younger people. "Still," she says, "arts and crafts is among the best ways for younger people to earn a living, especially if they do not have much education. Jobs are scarce in Cape Dorset, particularly in the winter, and many people end up on social assistance. You don't learn skills just from getting welfare. It's fine if there is no other way to have food or shelter, but I know there are many people who have talent with their hands."

Unemployment contributes to the drug, alcohol and suicide problems, which are all too common with young people in the North. "Having a carving facility would entice people to work in a safe environment and give them more pride in their own culture," says Oshutsiaq.

"Jobs are scarce in Cape Dorset, particularly in the winter, and many people end up on social assistance. You don't learn skills just from getting welfare."

Rosie Okpik believes a carving facility would easily justify itself, just as the famous Pangnirtung Weave Centre has in her community. It would become a tourist attraction and, more important, "become a teaching and learning centre where elders can impart their knowledge of Inuit history and culture both to tourists and to the many younger Inuit who are losing their traditional culture and language. It would become a 'life learning' centre as well as an economic development centre."

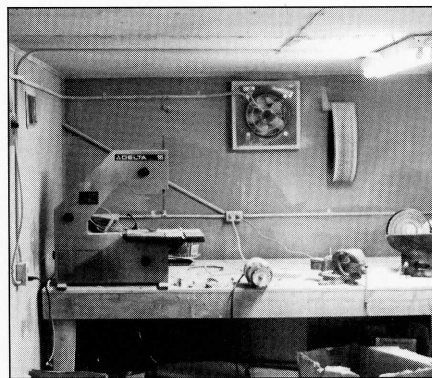
Terry Ryan, general manager of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative in Cape Dorset, has often pointed out that in the South, it is not expected that facilities, like open print studios where printmakers can go to work when they want, will recover all their costs from charges to the users. But these facilities bring other benefits to society. In the North, the economic justification seems far more real. Nowhere else in Canada does such a great percentage of the population earn all or part of its living through its art.

For Okpik in Pangnirtung, most of the battle for a facility is over, because the Government of the Northwest Territories has approved a multipurpose modular building to produce tapestries, prints

and carvings. Some material for two new buildings will be delivered by sea-lift this fall. The manager of the existing weave shop will also oversee the use of these buildings.

In the North, the economic justification seems far more real. Nowhere else in Canada does such a great percentage of the population earn all or part of its living through its art.

But other problems remain. As Okpik says about the Pangnirtung shop, "I want it to be run in a businesslike and professional way with southern arts advisors for print-making, weaving and carving. Also, I want Inuit to learn administrative capabilities." A real effort will have to be made to train Inuit for a variety of positions in the new facility even before it opens. This has never been done before and it will be interesting to see if Okpik's objectives are realized.



Holman carving shop owned and operated by the Holman Island Eskimo Co-operative Ltd.

Conclusion

On the one hand, Inuit artists want relatively basic carving studios in their communities, which can grow organically along with local needs and skills. They want to be active participants in the development, structure and administration of them. They do not want to be only passive users of the facilities. Comments by artists interviewed for this article clearly show that a carving facility is not just a work space; it is a community resource where new and experienced artists gather to learn techniques for art production. It is equally important that the studio be a cultural centre, where Inuit culture can be passed on to the younger generation.

On the other hand, because of the high costs involved, no studios can be built without government funding. Government, in turn, is obliged to follow strict rules and regulations when it constructs new facilities. It is not easy for government to work at a "grass roots" level to facilitate a project that will grow with the people. As with the project at Pangnirtung, when government decides to build an art facility, it is done on a grand scale, costs a lot and is more than people feel they need or can manage. It is likely to end up requiring full-time, professional managers and, usually, these are imported from the South.

Our survey also revealed that at least seven communities in the NWT had government arts and crafts centres close down in the last five to 10 years. There was no Inuit "ownership" of these facilities, and this was partly the reason for their closure. Changing government priorities was the other reason.

It is not easy for government to work at a "grass roots" level to facilitate a project that will grow with the people.

The survey has shown, we think, that when a carving facility is connected to an existing business structure, complete with management, accounting and lines of bank credit, it survives. Even the precarious print shops prove this point. As Simon Taipana observed: "It is important to integrate with what the co-ops [for example] are doing, because then we will have access to manpower, funding and facilities. We should work with them to complement what the artists are doing." It is also important for artists to insist on being involved.

As Taipana adds, "Most often, artists in a community don't have a voice." Maybe as a first step, Inuit artists need to talk with other Inuit. It is important for Inuit to find out how Holman, Cape Dorset, Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Nain obtained their carving facilities and how well they are working.

Do you, as an Inuk artist, have thoughts you would like to share about carving studios? You may write or call us at the *Inuit Artists' Supplement* any time. We would be interested in hearing your ideas.

Inuit Art Quarterly
2081 Merivale Road
Nepean, Ontario K2G 1G9
Phone: (613) 224-8189
Fax: (613) 224-2907

Practising Safe Art

by Mark Webber

Creating art or craft should be enjoyable and safe. Some types of art production, such as carving, require materials and equipment that, if not used properly, might harm your health. For instance, accidents may occur from using tools improperly, and the effects of inhaling carving dust could lead to long-term, serious health problems.

The following notes cover some things I have learned from delivering arts and crafts courses for Arctic College concerning safety in carving, jewellery or print-making. The first thing to remember is that practising safe art must be a daily routine.

Use Equipment Properly

There are two areas of safety to be considered in carving or in any other art form:

- 1) The proper use of equipment and supplies; and
- 2) The protection of your sense organs: sight, hearing, touch (skin and organs), smell and taste (nose and mouth), and brain.

The first step in practising safe art is learning how to use tools properly, either hand or power tools. You can hurt yourself even with simple hand tools if you are tired or distracted.

I am sure thousands of carvers have hurt their thumbs severely with a hammer when they lose their concentration on their work. Alert minds make good carvings.

The first step in practising safe art is learning how to use tools properly.

In the case of power tools (such as angle grinders with diamond blades or grinders with steel burrs), being distracted can inflict serious injury to you or someone nearby. There are some very important rules of safety when using these tools. For example, steel or carbide burrs in grinders are *very* dangerous if the shaft is exposed too far. The shaft can bend or the point can fly off.

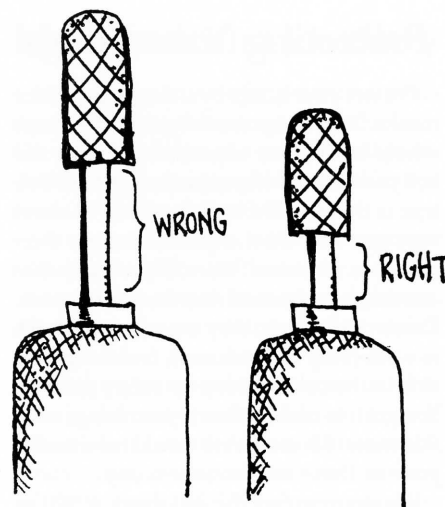


George Pratt instructing students in safe mini-grinder usage during an Arctic College course.

When working with any tool that creates flying particles, use safety glasses.

Damaging an eye is not worth a \$200 carving.

With any rotating equipment, such as grinders or saws, make sure the blade is covered with a guard the right way; the stone dust should fly away from your face and hands.



Protect Your Sense Organs

Your Ears: When necessary, wear ear plugs such as E.A.R. disposable 417T140 or, even better, wear high quality earmuffs such as the SORDIN 20-001 or the E.A.R. 1000. Both are foam filled and comfortable in cold weather. Check with your local co-op or Northern store to see if they are available or can be ordered.

Your Eyes: When working with any tool that creates flying particles, use safety glasses. Damaging an eye is not worth a \$200 carving. Arctic College uses Safety Supply, Eye Guard 2000 clear polycarbonate lenses. When using tools such as hand chisels or big grinders, use an acetate face shield such as American Optical # H3-82570. The only problem with plastic glasses is that they attract dust and can fog up when you are wearing a mask. Fogging is caused by the shape of the glasses, the shape of your face and the type of mask worn. Many sculptors prefer using impact-resistant glass (safety glass). The only solution is to experiment until you find the right combination.

Your Hands: Protect your hands with gloves when using tools that might cut the surface. For example, angle grinders throw off material, sometimes in large pieces. These can injure your hand when the guard is facing across the stone.

Don't overwork your power tools. Often in our courses, we see carvers pushing power tools beyond their limits.

Do not overwork your power tools. Often in our courses, we see carvers pushing power tools beyond their limits. This unsafe practice is both very costly and unnecessary. Let diamond blades cut at their natural rate. If you force them, the metal can become brittle or cracked. Let the carbide or steel burrs grind at their natural rate. Less pressure means more control, fewer accidents and less motor burnout. Let the little, sharp particles in the abrasive do the cutting, not the pressure from strong muscles.

Your Brain: Protect your brain! This sense organ is your nervous system. It can be damaged by constant loud noise and dangerous chemicals (even solid ones). Especially, *do not* mix drugs or alcohol with art. Intoxication can easily lead to an injury to yourself or to others. Long-term brain damage is possible. In Arctic College

courses, we do not permit students to carve or do any other kind of work if they show any signs of intoxication.

Concerning Dusts and Mists

This planet contains natural and man-made materials that are safe to use under all conditions, for instance: ice, marble and limestone. There are also materials that are potentially harmful, such as soapstone, granite, many paints or inks, and polishing compounds (for example, fabuluster). Not all harmful materials are man-made. Many materials have proven to be dangerous, such as paints that are lead based, acids, organic solvents and stone that contains certain metals.

Carving

Carving any material usually means the object is being reduced in size. To do this means dust or particles are produced. Inhaling a large amount of dust for long periods of time—from, perhaps, 30 minutes to many hours—will produce congestion in the nose and lungs. And for some carvers, this leads to sinus attacks and headaches.

As a general principle, calcium-based stones such as marble and limestone are very safe to carve.

As was explained in the last issue of the *Inuit Art Quarterly Artists' Supplement* (Spring 1990), the lungs have cilia to wash away harmful particles of dust, but lungs cannot clean some kinds of dust away. Some dust has chemicals that may enter the bloodstream and really make you sick. Malachite, which contains copper carbonate, is just one example of a dangerous metal compound.

Some stones and materials are much safer to carve than others. Stones for carving are roughly divided into two types, calcium-based and silica-based. As a general principle, calcium-based stones such as marble and limestone are very safe to carve. You can even eat the dust! But wear a respirator in case the marble or limestone you are using contains a small amount of silica or metal. I myself always wear a full respirator while grinding marble or limestone. If I don't, I get dust in my lungs and headaches from sinus attacks that can last days after carving. As uncomfortable as this is, however, you will not get lung disease from working this type of stone.



This carver is well protected and is directing dust particles away from his face.

Protect your lungs by using proper face masks. Your lungs are the gateway to your whole body.

Most Inuit carvers use a variety of carvingstone that is a serpentinite rock, commonly called soapstone. True soapstone is made of soft talc. Serpentinite is made up of the mineral serpentine, a little talc and other minerals. Stones such as sandstone, granite, labradorite and many semi-precious stones (i.e., quartz, lapis, sodalite) also contain silica-based minerals.

As discussed in the last *Artists' Supplement* (Spring 1990), prolonged exposure to silica dust may lead to lung disease (silicosis) or even cancer. Some minerals are nastier than others, but the bottom line is that the silica particles cannot be processed in the lungs. Even prolonged exposure to talc, which makes up soapstone and is found in some serpentines, may be harmful to the skin.

Protecting Your Lungs

Protect your lungs by using proper face masks. Your lungs are the gateway to your whole body. Our experience during the last year of teaching courses at Arctic College is that the 3M half mask #8710 is not very good for dust exposure longer than a couple of hours. We will probably discontinue its general use in our courses. These masks leak, they are uncomfortable to wear (very hot indoors), freeze up outside in the cold and fog up safety glasses. You get lots of dust down your lungs with this mask. Most carvers would have to dispose of these masks once a day.

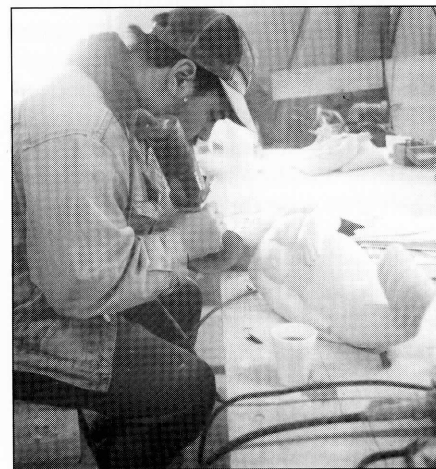
We recommend the 3M mask #9920 as a light duty mask (for low concentrations

of dust). It is slightly more expensive than the 3M #8710, but lasts longer and is safer and more comfortable to wear. Occasionally blowing out the mask with compressed air (try your hamlet garage), will help prolong its life.

When carving in high concentrations of dust (for example when you are using an angle grinder or di-grinder, which produces billows of dust), you must wear a *filter respirator*, not a dust mask. The best types have a soft silicone material to fit the face. Change the filters when they become coated with dust on the inside. The most comfortable and best-fitting respirator we have used is the American Optical #95130. It costs about \$30.

For cold weather and indoor carving with power tools, we recommend a 1.5 to 2.0 hp wood dust collector with an expandable bag connected to a vertical standing hood. The hood is surrounded by an enclosure. The dust bag is covered with a cotton sheet supported by wire mesh. This system is relatively inexpensive (\$1,000 to \$1,500) and *does* work. Carvers need to direct the dust from power tools into the duct opening. The ideal distance from the source of dust to the hood is 6 inches to 1.5 feet.

The ideal system, which few people will be able to organize for themselves, would be a general wall dust collector for very fine dust (with vents to the outside) and a local dust bag collector that can be moved around the shop.



This is unhealthy carving practice. Protect yourself always.

Suggestions For Keeping Dust Levels Down

Use water whenever possible. If you are using flexible shafts on your grinders, dripping water on the burr or point will

Mark Webber, Arctic College

Mark Webber, Arctic College

greatly reduce the dust. Using water when sanding—with power or by hand—has the same effect. Water also greatly increases the life of any abrasives used, thus saving money. However, these methods are only possible indoors or outdoors in above-freezing temperatures. In the six month certificate course in sculpting planned for the fall, students will be taught many safe ways to carve with water. Only in a few cases is the use of electric tools and water permitted *since electric power tools and water can be very dangerous*. Please get the proper instructions before you try it!

Chemicals and Print-making

Yes, even in the quiet art of print-making lurks possible danger from the materials used. Organic solvents, inks, dyes and paints can be toxic and harmful to eyes, nose, skin, lungs and brain. Not everything in the print shop is harmful, but learn which chemicals require the use of rubber gloves, safety glasses and an organic mist respirator. A dust mask or respirator with a dust filter is not good

Ultimately, artists must be responsible for their own health and safety. Learn all you can about the materials and tools you use. Even the most serious health hazards, such as lung disease, can be prevented. You can enjoy any arts and crafts activity safely, providing you practise safety habits daily.

If you have any questions about chemicals and their safe use, contact your local government offices or the territorial or provincial department of Health and Safety or Public Services.

Recommended Reading:

Health Hazards Manual for Artists, by Michael McCann. Nick Lyons Books, New York. 3rd Ed. (\$10.95)

Mark Webber is Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator for Arctic College. He is also a practising artist.



Matthew Spence, Nortext

Using safety equipment at a well-lit and organized workspace helps you practise safe art.

Artists must be responsible for their own health and safety. Learn all you can about the materials and tools you use.

The best method of stone carving, besides hand methods, which produces less dust than electric power tools, is air tools. Air tools are very safe to use with water. Air hammers kick up less dust and are more productive and accurate than almost any other method of carving. Eventually, indoor facilities in the North will be equipped with air tools. They are safer, last longer than electric power tools and save money. The only problem with air tools is that very cold outdoor temperatures freeze air lines.

enough! Work with your fellow artists and print advisors to learn which chemicals and inks are harmful and what types of special respirator filters are required.

Metalwork and Jewellery

Most types of jewellery-making practised in the North by Inuit are quite safe. The same guidelines for carving and print-making apply for jewellery, whether it is made of antler, ivory or silver.

As a general caution, when using power tools to grind for more than a few minutes, use a good quality dust mask and glasses. Also wear glasses when grinding with a power tool.

Polishing compounds that are used to put a high lustre on ivory, bone or metal are potentially harmful. Almost all these compounds contain unsafe metals that can lead to long-term illness. Use a dust mask when polishing with a buffing wheel.

ART NOTES

Canada's Largest Inuit Sculpture

Royal Trust has commissioned Canada's largest Inuit sculpture. The marble sculpture will weigh 18,000 lbs, may measure over eight ft. tall and will take at least three months for a team of Inuit carvers to complete. The Royal Trust Sedna Project, as it is called, is being directed by Vancouver artist George Pratt, who has organized a team that includes Philip Pitseolak from Pond Inlet and Sam Pitsiulak from Lake Harbour to produce the gigantic carving that will be installed in the Hong Kong Bank of Canada Building in Toronto early in 1991.

A Proposal for Inuit Art Illustrators

Tronk and Associates of Toronto, a company that does design work for publishers, is looking for Inuit artists to illustrate a series of educational material designed for young native children. If you are an artist with experience in book illustrating, please let the Inuit Art Foundation know. We are assisting Tronk to find Inuit artists who would be interested to participate in this or future projects.

Pudlo Retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada

A retrospective of works on paper celebrates the art of Cape Dorset artist Pudlo Pudlat. Pudlo, who is

also a carver, is internationally recognized for his limited edition prints that have appeared in the annual Cape Dorset graphics collection for more than 20 years. The Pudlo show was curated by Marie Routledge, the National Gallery's assistant curator for Inuit art, and it was well received. Pudlo, in his address to the opening night guests, was very modest. People were amused when he said, "I am happy about the exhibition...But when I look at these works, it seems that they are laughing at me, they are so ugly. I've been saying all my life, I draw what will sell. The time I feel really happy is when someone buys them."

The exhibition is a milestone in Canadian art. It is the first one-person retrospective for an Inuk artist at the National Gallery. We congratulate Pudlo on his accomplishment.

Indigenous Artists Meeting

Lance Belanger, director of the Omniaak Native Arts Group in Ottawa, organized a group of 25 indigenous artists from all over the world to participate in a symposium on the United Nations' World Decade for Cultural Development. The object of the meeting was to express how important cultural values are, especially to peoples whose way of life is often threatened by the majority in their own countries.

Artists from as far away as New Zealand, Sweden, Brazil, Mexico, Ecuador and Bolivia joined Canadian artists to discuss their lifestyles and the conditions in which they practise their art. The Inuit Art Foundation funded the participation of two of its board members, Gilbert Hay of Nain, Labrador, and Manasie Akpaliapik, who now lives in Toronto, to share the Inuit point of view. Hay made the observation that he had the opportunity to travel around North America, and then return home to practise his art. He is free to produce what he wants artistically, with the demands of the marketplace being his only restriction. This was not the case with many Latin American artists.

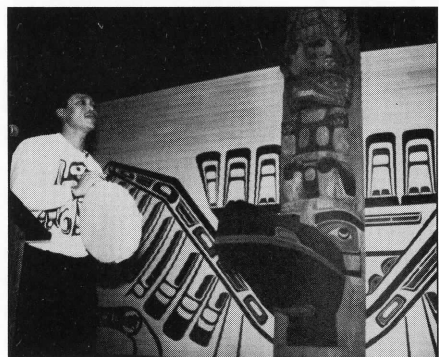
It was also a revelation to Akpaliapik that some artists were afraid even to mention being unable to create works that contained reference to their native religion or culture. Their governments dictated what they could produce. A South American artist revealed it was even forbidden to speak in their native tongue.

Akpaliapik explains how traumatic this information was and that much is taken

for granted here. "For Inuit artists, expressing their culture through works which show their everyday life and legends is what their art is all about. Even though indigenous peoples in Canada have their problems, in comparison with the conditions in other countries, we are very lucky." The role of Inuit artists in passing on Inuit culture to the next generation is taken for granted in Canada, but many other indigenous artists are denied this freedom in their society.

Both artists found the sessions stimulating and particularly appreciated the opportunity to have an exchange with Canadian Indian artists. While Gilbert Hay said he was not involved in politics in any way, he could see that the Indian artists' aspirations are very political. Manasie agrees that political themes are evident in Indian contemporary art. This is a major difference between Indian and Inuit art.

According to Belanger, one of the highlights of the meeting was a "Collaborative Canvas," which all the artists helped to paint. It was a creative way to share experiences.



Manasie Akpaliapik performing for international indigenous artists, Museum of Civilization, Ottawa-Hull.

The First Inuit School of Art is Being Organized

The Inuit Art Foundation is planning to establish a school of art for Inuit. A primary concern of the Inuit Art Foundation is, as President Virginia Watt, says, "to address the long-term needs of artists."

Everything the Foundation does is related in one way or another to education, whether it is keeping the public informed about Inuit art through the *Inuit Art Quarterly*, providing information of specific concern to artists through the *Artists' Supplement* or providing art training.

There are well over 4,000 Inuit artists in Canada, and arts and crafts activity pro-

vides a major source of income for many. Inuit art is probably the most famous international export from the Canadian Arctic.

The Inuit co-operatives and government departments have sponsored short workshops or funded print-making advisors for longer production periods and, last year, a \$400,000 grant from the Northwest Territories Economic Development Agreement to Arctic College paid for 17 community-based workshops. The success of this program, which attracted younger people especially, pointed out the need for a new approach to arts education in the North. As Manasie Akpaliapik, an Inuk artist who was a carving instructor for the Arctic College program last year, says: "It is time to think about having a real art school for Inuit."

The Inuit Art Foundation has formed an organizing committee to work out a structure for the Inuit School of Art. Eventually, campuses could be established across the Arctic, including Labrador, which has just begun to develop a program of assistance for Labrador Inuit.

Questions and Answers About Art

Question:

Is there a mask for carvers that doesn't freeze up easily?

Uriash Puguinak
Gjoa Haven

Answer:

As Mark Webber explains in his article in this issue, the most comfortable and best-fitting respirator Arctic College has found is the American Optical #95130, but he doesn't say if it works well under extreme cold. Can you try it and let us know? If you want a ventilation system for cold weather and indoor carving with power tools, Arctic College recommends a 1.5 to 2.0 hp wood dust collector.

Editor's note: In the future, this column will be used to answer questions from artists. Send us your questions about art, safety, equipment, programs available to assist artists with further training, education—or anything else you are wondering about. We will try to find the answers for you.