



Kenojuak, *The Enchanted Owl*. Stone cut, 24 x 26, 1960

Kenojuak is a young wife, a mother of three children. She, more than any of the women artists, seems to possess a great talent that overflows in the form of hundreds of prints, stencils and drawings. Her art is of great consistency, only changing slowly in character year by year.

The essence of her art may be seen in The Enchanted Owl, for in this bird with its hidden spring of intensity and power, eyes staring and claws gripping, the rays of light and swirling tail reach out as Kenojuak says, "to drive away the darkness."

The art of making the seal is the understanding of the seal. Fortunately, the Eskimos have had no art education. They simply have a wonderful butcher's understanding of the mechanics of the seal and can recreate it with immense vigor. Picasso once said the cock has never been understood so well as by the American farmer who carved it from wood for his weather vane. I believe the Eskimos see the seal as those farmers saw the cock.

Traditionally, Eskimos carved in walrus ivory. One reason there aren't a great many old carvings is because there weren't all that many killings, though carving in ivory was still the main practice even when I went there. I took some of the carvings south, to the National Museum and other places, and there seemed to be a great demand for them, and the people in the north were delighted and amazed that they could trade their carvings for other things they needed. So it seemed obvious that this country was going to open up, and if pieces were to be sold commercially, it seemed best to encourage the use of stone rather than ivory. The carvers took to that idea well. Most carvings are now stone.

Another change that came about was in size. Most carvings used to be a few inches high. Now they're much bigger, partly through a bit of greed on everyone's part. You know, an 18-inch piece recently sold for \$5,800 at the Waddington Gallery in Montreal. It's highly unlikely a small piece could fetch that kind of price, though the quality is certainly no less, in my opinion.

[THE BEGINNING OF PRINTING]

Printing began among the Kingnimit — the people who live at Kingnit, what we call West Baffin Island — in the early winter of 1957. I was sitting in my office with a very great friend and famous carver named Oshaweetok. I had become the first Civil Administrator for that end of the Arctic — a job I could take or leave alone, but it was a good way to live there. At that time no non-Eskimo person lived there independently. I had a carton of Players cigarettes, which have a sailor's head on each package. Oshaweetok began studying them very carefully and finally said, "It must be very boring for someone to sit and paint each one like that."