



Tudlik, *Division of Meat*. Stone cut, 12 x 9, 1959

Eskimos everywhere have several unique and special characteristics. They do not always view scenes and objects in the traditional western way. Their point of view may be from above, as in looking down at fish in the water, or from below, as in looking up at birds in the air. They sometimes hang bird prints on the ceiling. They are not constricted by a need for background or any of the troublesome rules of perspective. Eskimos have a way of isolating images in space, giving each its own individual importance.

They often choose to make a single statement, and these statements are usually about things of flesh and bones. They are master anatomists possessing the keen observations of the hunter. They show us powerful animal and human forms moving in a rhythm that is perfectly understood by them. They show us how to drive the caribou and how to hold a child. They understand the patterns of fur and feathers, the bone structure, the sheaths of muscle, the rolling gait of the polar

Well I was astounded. I just assumed he knew, but I don't know why. I said "I'll show you how they do it."

He had made a carving on a piece of ivory, and I had some old ink that had been frozen and thawed many times. I smeared it over his carving and carefully laid a piece of toilet paper on the surface. To my surprise, we got a clear image.

"Pisitipalook!" he said. "Hey, that's great. We could do that!" So right away, in the middle of the night, we went and got a flat carving somebody else had made, got some office onion skin



Niviaksiak, *Seal Hunter*. Stencil, 21 x 15, 1959

bear, the great weight of walrus, the sleekness of seals, the rhythm in a flight of geese, the nervous movements of fish caught in a stone trap, for these things are life's blood to them.

Through their prints they often speak to us of legends and ancient mystical happenings, of great inland journeys. They reveal themselves to us. They show us a very old system of viewing and creating things. Powerful thoughts have existed in their arts and crafts and songs and legends for thousands of years. These thoughts and ideas were the only things these nomads could carry with them on the long trek from Asia into the wilderness of Arctic America, the lasting gifts they could give to their children.

The prints, like the stone carvings, are important to Eskimos at this time. Apart from providing a necessary buying power for them in their swiftly changing world, the prints speak out in a language understood by all. The prints speak of the whole Eskimo approach to life and death.

stationery — there was only one mail a year and government correspondence wasn't a large feature of our lives — and we began printing.

"Pisitipalook," I said. "I think people will love these." We got a half dozen of the most important art people in southern Canada to look at them. They had an exhibition and were sold out instantly.

At that point I felt very inadequate because I didn't know a lot about hand block printing, so I suggested to the government that I use my annual leave to study with a printmaker in Japan.