



# INUIT ART

Like all civilizations, Inuit ancestors created works of art that reflected their beliefs and their environment. Few of these works of art still exist today: they are sometimes found during archaeological excavations.

Many Inuit artists are now world-renowned.

## Materials

- > **Steatite:** very soft stone, mainly composed of talc. It can easily be carved or engraved.
- > **Ivory:** the bones and teeth of hunted animals, as well as whalebone.
- > **Other materials:** recently, some artists have been combining traditional materials with other materials such as driftwood, antlers or serpentine to create contemporary works.

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## Techniques

- > **Sculpture:** three-dimensional or in the form of miniature masks (2 dimensional).
- > **Engraving:** the image is traced in stone with a sharp tool; then ink is applied and the image is transferred to paper.

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## The Inuit art market

After the Second World War, more and more non-Aboriginal people were visiting or settling in the North. Many wanted to bring back souvenirs, or buy and sell Inuit works. The government set up cooperatives to provide services to the North (to manage fisheries and health services, for example). The Inuit adopted this system to sell their art around the world: the artist members of the cooperative work together to make themselves known and distribute their works. Many can live from their art, and Inuit art is very valuable.