

Dec-1996

Inside Front Cover: Inukshuks: Symbols of Survival

Ken Kirkby

Recommended Citation

Kirkby, Ken (1996). Inside Front Cover: Inukshuks: Symbols of Survival. *Bridgewater Review*, 15(2), inside front cover.
Available at: http://vc.bridgew.edu/br_rev/vol15/iss2/3

This item is available as part of Virtual Commons, the open-access institutional repository of Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.



Inukshuks: Symbols of Survival

Inukshuk is an Inuit word meaning “in the shape of a man.” These exclusively Canadian stone structures have been used by nomadic Inuit as landmarks for over ten thousand years. Also used to direct caribou to waiting hunters, these sentinels of the north have played a vital role in the Inuit’s very existence and survival.

During his years of exploring and living off the land with Inuit families in the Canadian arctic, Kirkby became obsessed with sketching and painting these unique Canadian structures which have survived the ravages of time and weather.

In a poetic and realistic style, Kirkby has translated to canvas the impressive strength and majesty of the Inshuks amid the immensity and splendor of the Canadian north.

At this juncture in Canadian history the Inukshuks portrayed in Kirkby’s paintings offer an enduring symbol of survival in which we can find renewed hope and a fresh perspective of Canada.

Ken Kirkby

Ken Kirkby was born on September 1, 1940 in London, England. His family moved to Spain in 1945 and then one year later to Portugal where Kirkby spent his formative years.

Kirkby moved to Canada in 1958 and almost immediately made his way north. During a five-year period he lived with various groups of Inuit and travelled Canada’s far north extensively, recording the landscape, the people and the conditions in a vast collection of drawings. During this time Kirkby discovered the awe inspiring stone structures known as “Inukshuks.”

On returning from the Arctic, Kirkby took up residence in Vancouver and began translating his many sketches into magnificent oil paintings. His crowning achievement is a massive work titled “Isumataq.” Measuring 152 feet long by 12 feet high “Isumataq” is the largest portrait on canvas ever painted. This strikingly beautiful creation was unveiled in the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, on March 30, 1992.

Today Kirkby’s paintings are recognized internationally and are displayed in public and private collections around the globe.