

## Études/Inuit/Studies

**MARCOUX KOMANGAPIK, Estelle, Geneviève  
LAROCQUE, Ruben Anton KOMANGAPIK and  
Dorothee KOMANGAPIK, 2011 *Isuma: The Art and  
Imagination of Ruben Anton Komangapik*, Iqaluit,  
Inhabit Media. 160 pages.**

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Au final, le livre de LeBlanc compte parmi les meilleures études réalisées sur le Dorsétien dans cette région. Qu'on soit d'accord ou non avec ses conclusions, c'est un ouvrage incontournable où les chercheurs pourront trouver de nombreuses données, en particulier sur les matières premières.

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MARCOUX KOMANGAPIK, Estelle, Geneviève LAROCQUE, Ruben Anton KOMANGAPIK and Dorothee KOMANGAPIK  
2011 *Isuma: The Art and Imagination of Ruben Anton Komangapik*, Iqaluit, Inhabit Media. 160 pages.

*Isuma*, which means “to think” in Inuktitut, showcases the work of Ruben Anton Komangapik, an Inuk sculptor from Pond Inlet who began his art studies at Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit, Nunavut, in 1993 and draws heavily on the traditional Inuit culture he learned from his paternal grandparents for his subject matter. Ruben’s wife, Estelle Marcoux Komangapik, provided high-quality photographs of the sculptures, the artist at work, and some of the important locations in his life. His mother, Dorothee Komangapik, wrote introductions to the subject-based chapters titled “Inuit Hunters,” “Inuit and Animals,” “The Legend of Nuliajuq The Great Sea Spirit,” “Tupilait,” “The Legend of the Blind Boy and How the Narwhal Came To Be,” and “Inuit Spiritualism.” The photographs, many of which are full page and include complete works and details, are titled in English and Inuktitut. An index, complete with colour thumbnails, identifies the dimensions and materials. Like the subject matter, the materials—Brazilian soapstone, baleen, walrus tusk, and so forth—will be familiar to collectors of Inuit art.

Possibly the most unusual works in this photo collection of sculptures are the *tupilait*. *Tupilait* (sing. *tupilak*) have a particular association with Greenland. The oldest extant examples and explanatory documents about them are from Ammassalik, East Greenland, where production of them increased during the 1890s in connection with changing climatic conditions that almost wiped out the people living there. A *tupilak* is a kind of amulet that shamans create from a variety of naturally occurring materials to conjure malevolent spirit forces against those whom they seek to overpower. Once considered dangerous because the activated forces might return and do harm to the *tupilak*’s creator and because the mere sight of a *tupilak* could be fatal, *tupilait* were transformed into marketable carvings in the early twentieth century and became popular items. As the opening biographical section in *Isuma* explains, Ruben is descended from Quumangaapik, one of those who followed a shaman to Thule in Greenland in the mid-19th century.

They followed a shaman on the treacherous journey which took many years. The shaman had had visions of Inuit living in this inhospitable region of Greenland, and when the group arrived, they indeed found the Inuit from his visions, though they were living in terrible conditions. This small group of Inuit was able to share technologies that helped the Greenlandic Inuit survive. Many members of the group did not survive the trip back to Baffin Island, though Quumangaapik did (p. 9).

Ruben's baleen and sperm whale tooth *tupilait* are shown in full-page colour views and in a two-page spread of 18 details. Such images not only recall the general aspects of traditional life that have long been the hallmark of Inuit art but also resonate with the associations and memories of specific individuals whose stories have been passed down from generation to generation. *Isuma* thus has a place in personal and public libraries devoted to Inuit folklore and history, as well as art.

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QUMAQ, Taamusi

2012 *Je veux que les Inuit soient libres à nouveau. Autobiographie (1914-1993)*, introduction, notes et chronologie de Louis-Jacques Dorais, traduit de l'inuktitut, Montréal, Imaginaire Nord et Presses de l'Université du Québec, Collection Jardin de givre, 156 pages.

Ce petit livre est un bijou. Bijou d'humanité. Bijou d'aménité. Recevoir ainsi, en toutes grâces et sans l'avoir recherché, un appel à la liberté dans un pays qui n'en fait guère une pratique avouée constitue une expérience émouvante empreinte d'une certaine fragilité. À parcourir et re-parcourir ce livre comme s'il s'agissait d'un voyage de chasse en traîneau à chien vers une destination mouvante sans cesse négociée par le destin et qu'on se demande intérieurement si le gibier escompté sera au rendez-vous ou pas, on se dit alors qu'on est privilégié d'avoir en main pareil témoignage. Non seulement la chasse a-t-elle été bonne, mais les lieux qui nous sont offerts à la lecture, les paysages de la mémoire qu'on traverse, les personnages qu'on rencontre et surtout, le regard porté sur les événements par le narrateur chasseur-penseur, chroniqueur et philosophe à la fois, constitue un apport unique. Et inespéré.

Dans le cadre de l'univers circumpolaire, et malgré son caractère péninsulaire, le Nord-Québec s'avère une aire géographique passablement inconnue, méconnue et prégnante de mystère tout autant que ses eaux océaniques. Né dans les entours d'Inoukdjouak<sup>1</sup> entre terre et mer, glaces et toundra, mosaïques subarctiques et oasis

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<sup>1</sup> NDLR: Nous avons laissé à l'auteur de cette recension sa façon d'écrire les mots en inuktitut avec l'orthographe française même si dans le livre, qui présente une traduction du manuscrit original, ces derniers et la plupart des noms propres d'Inuit sont écrits en orthographe romaine standard du Nunavik (p. 9, note 1).