

nals and letters, Brackman concluded that despite popular beliefs, most women did not work on quilts as they traveled the overland trails to Oregon and California between 1840 and 1870. Aspects of Performance were investigated by Jane E. Hindman, who investigated the talk among a group of African-American quilters, and Kristin M. Langellier, who looked at contemporary quilters' show-and-tell sessions.

As Horton commented in 1993, the researchers "address definitions of quilts and quilt making and our willingness to stretch these definitions to be inclusive and to acknowledge diversity and the legitimacy of marginalized peoples." Papers in the 1993 issue examined the struggle over women's history associated with the Smithsonian Quilt Controversy (as the debate about the importation of reproductions of American quilts in the Smithsonian's collection has come to be called); took a look at quilts and their makers from the Southwest; reviewed the development of the Women of Color Quilter's Network; and related Australian quilt making and the 1988 bicentennial of that country.

Uncoverings is indexed by *America: History and Life*, *ARTbibliographies*, *BHA (Bibliography of the History of Art)*, *Clothing and Textile Arts Index*, *Historical Abstracts*, *MLA International Bibliography*, and *Sociological Abstracts*. To obtain back issues of *Uncoverings*, send \$18.00 per issue plus \$2.00 postage and handling for the first issue and \$.75 per additional issue to the American Quilt Study Group, 660 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94105-4007

Harold Seidelman and James Turner. **The Inuit Imagination: Arctic Myth and Sculpture.** New York: Thames and Hudson, 1994. Pp. 224. \$45.00 Hardcover

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The new millennium will bring a new beginning to the Arctic Inuit. In 1999, if current plans continue to hold, the Canadian government will cede to the Inuit extensive autonomy over the northern arrowhead of the continent, an expanse representing one-fifth of the nation's acreage. The Inuit call the region *Nunavut*, which means "our land"; it stretches over vast reaches of mainland and an arrowhead of islands that extend toward the pole like jewels of soapstone and granite. Within this archipelago is Baffin, the fifth-largest island in the world.

When *Nunavut* officially breaks away from the Yellowknife-based government of the Northwest Territories, the Inuit will have an opportunity, rare in modern times, to create a new society without the devastation of

revolution. They will be called upon to establish a new order for themselves, and they will undoubtedly turn for guidance to their own traditions—traditions that governed the Inuit for several thousand years prior to annexation by Ottawa—as they tackle this historic task. The subject of this review is a book that illuminates that traditional culture.

The Inuit Imagination is the product of 15 years of effort by the owner of an art gallery in Toronto and a mathematics professor at McGill University, both of whom are acutely interested in and sensitive to the perceptions and expressions of the Inuit. The book demonstrates the links between Inuit folktales and Inuit sculpture, and in so doing, it gives the reader a refreshingly rich sense of the culture.

Several of the book's 173 photographs depict sculptures of *Sedna*, a woman who lives at the bottom of the sea. The book also relates her story. She once was human, but when she violated Inuit custom by refusing to marry, she encountered misfortune after calamity after disaster. *Sedna* now lives at the bottom of the sea, and she exercises powerful control over the sea mammals, without whom the Inuit would starve. Pleasing *Sedna* is central to the Inuits' complex system of rituals and taboos.

Another image frequently depicted in the sculptures shown in the book is the moment at which a shaman's *inua*, his soul, is leaving his body to venture into the spirit world. Shamans in many parts of the world base their healing on medicinal herbs, but the lack of herbs in the Arctic forces Inuit shamans to rely on more spiritual methods. When someone is sick—or when the community is plagued by brutal weather, poor hunting, or some other threat—the people involved often will ask a shaman to visit the spirit world in an effort to please the deities and correct the problem. The shaman, or *angakoq*, goes through an agonizing transformation in which his *inua* leaves his body; when frozen in sculpture, this transformation evokes powerful feelings of awe, fear, and hope. If the shaman succeeds in pleasing the spirits—by braiding *Sedna*'s hair, for example—the impending tragedy in the human realm dissolves into relief.

The spirits and the ability of humans to interact with them are potent forces in Inuit myth, and *The Inuit Imagination* presents stories and sculpture that make clear the role of religion in Inuit life. The folktales, bleak and fascinating, are meticulously documented, and the photos of the often brutal and alluring sculptures—carved from whalebone, walrus ivory, soapstone, and horn—illustrate the tales and remind the reader that “in its original context, Inuit storytelling was a highly visual performance art.” (198)

The world of the Inuit is changing at Ski-doo speeds, and their art expresses their relationship with their recent, distant past. Much of the Inuits' modern sculpture also reflects their current cultural transition. In 1992, David Ruben Piqtoukun, an inspired and professional sculptor, created a work called

"Death of the Old Spirits." The Sculpture shows a man's face, horizontal and expressionless, the face of an *angakoq*, a shaman, in a dangerous and altering trance. From his mouth soars a bear, arms outstretched in a familiar crucifix, muzzle pointed toward the heavens in anguish and haste. The bear is the shaman's *inua* leaving his body to journey for a while through the supernatural world.

Seidelman and Turner understand the significance of the sculpture and its title. In their caption, they note that the "angakoq's inua is leaving his body in the form of a bear spirit, perhaps for the last time."

Michael Owen Jones, ed. **Putting Folklore to Use**. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994. Pp. 264. \$15 paper.

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In the American Folklore Society's Centennial publication "Time and Temperature," Robert Byington asked "What Happened to Applied Folklore?" *Putting Folklore to Use*, a compilation of essays edited by Michael Owen Jones, provides answers that are relevant, practical, and even inspiring. These answers provide folklorists with excellent resources for using their specialized skills and knowledge to develop projects that are practical and personally fulfilling.

Jones opens the book with an introductory history of applied folklore. He sketches how folklore has been studied and applied both within and outside of academia, and he argues that applied folklore studies involve the ethical use of materials, methods, and theories of folklore to respond to human concerns within a variety of social environments and workplaces. Regarded within this broad perspective, applied folklore encompasses folklore projects designed to address social problems, as well as public and private sector folklore programming. The book demonstrates that applied folklore developed in somewhat different dimensions than were envisioned by Byington and participants in the early dialogue on applied folklore.

The book is organized into three sections. Articles in Part I examine folklore's application to educational programs and problem-solving skills. Essays in Part II demonstrate the relevance of a folklorist's concerns with enhancing the quality of life through practical examples in the areas of health care, art therapy, urban planning, and organizational development. The final section shows how folklore can be used to enhance individual and community identity through public programs, humanities projects for elderly people, public relations work within a professional organization, and community