

Weaving culture: The many dimensions of the Yup'ik Eskimo *mingqaaq*

[Record]

Molly Lee

[...more information](#) ▾

[Read the full text](#) →

Études **Inuit** Studies

URI <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/012639ar>

DOI [10.7202/012639ar](https://doi.org/10.7202/012639ar)

Digital Publication : March 24, 2006

An article of the journal [Études/Inuit/Studies](#)

Volume 28, Issue 1, 2004, p. 57-67

[Art et représentation](#)

Tous droits réservés © La revue Études/Inuit/Studies, 2004



Abstract

As a general rule, so-called tourist arts are thought of as greatly simplified and less closely tied to the indigenous cultures that make “traditional” art forms. In this article, I argue that the Yup'ik Eskimo coiled basket (*mingqaaq*), an art form developed specifically for sale to outsiders, is in fact closely connected to modern Yup'ik culture through its use of raw materials (beach, or rye grass and sea-mammal intestine). Its recent appearance around Alaska in various media—on a telephone book cover, in a logo for a Native Corporation, and as a stage prop on the podium beside a Native leader arguing the subsistence cause, to name a few—suggests that the *mingqaaq*, the most widely sold Yup'ik art form today, may have taken on the role of political symbol for the highly contentious issue of Alaska Native subsistence rights.

Résumé

Tisser la culture: les nombreuses dimensions du *mingqaaq* yup'ik

Il est courant de penser que les arts dits touristiques sont considérablement simplifiés et moins étroitement liés aux cultures autochtones qui les ont produits que les formes d'art «traditionnel». Dans cet article, je soutiens que le panier en colombin (*mingqaaq*) des Yupiit, une forme d'art qui s'est développée pour être spécifiquement vendue aux étrangers, est en fait étroitement lié à la culture yup'ik d'aujourd'hui par le biais de l'usage de certaines matières premières (joncs de plage ou de seigle et boyaux de mammifère marin). Son apparition récente sur divers supports médiatiques à travers l'Alaska—sur la couverture du bottin téléphonique, comme logo d'une société autochtone, comme accessoire de podium à côté d'un leader autochtone défendant la cause des activités de subsistance pour n'en nommer que certains—suggère que le *mingqaaq*, la forme d'art yup'ik la plus largement vendue aujourd'hui, a peut-être embrassé le rôle de symbole politique dans le débat très controversé du droit à la subsistance des Autochtones d'Alaska.

Bibliography

EDELMAN, Murray, 1995 *From Art to Politics*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

[Google Scholar](#)

EVANS, Ron, 1985 *Yukon-Kuskokwim Region Arts and Crafts Opportunities Study*, Anchorage, Calista Professional Services.

[Google Scholar](#)

FIENUP-RIORDAN, Ann, in press *Tupigat (Woven Things): Yup'ik Grass Clothing, Past and Present*, in J.C.H. King and Robert Storrie (eds), *Arctic Clothing*, London, British Museum Press.

[Google Scholar](#)

FRAZER, Nancy, 1989 *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

[Google Scholar](#)

GELL, Alfred, 1998 *Art and Agency: an Anthropological Theory*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

[Google Scholar](#)

GRINNELL, May, 1901 Beauty in Basketry, *The State*, 7(5): 134-137.

[Google Scholar](#)

HENSEL, Chase, 1996 *Telling Our Selves: Ethnicity and Discourse in Southwestern Alaska*, New York, Oxford University Press.

[Google Scholar](#)

HENSEL, Chase, 2002 Yup'ik Identity and Subsistence Discourse: Social Resources in Interaction, *Études/Inuit/Studies*, 25(1-2): 229-247.

[Google Scholar](#)

HERZOG, Melanie, 1996 Aesthetics and Meanings: The Arts and Crafts Movement and the Revival of American Indian Basketry, in B.R. Denker (ed.), *The Substance of Style: New Perspectives on the Arts and Crafts Movement*, Winterthur, Winterthur Museum: 69-92.

[Google Scholar](#)

LEE, Molly, 1991 Appropriating the Primitive: Turn-of-the-Century Collections and Display of Native Alaskan Art, *Arctic Anthropology*, 28(1): 6-15.

[Google Scholar](#)

LEE, Molly, 1995 Siberian Sources of Alaskan Eskimo Coiled Basketry: Types and Prototype, *American Indian Art*, 20(4): 56-69.

[Google Scholar](#)

LEE, Molly, 1998 Tourists and Taste Cultures: Collecting Native Art in Alaska at the Turn of the Twentieth Century, in R.B. Phillips and C.B. Steiner (eds), *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Post Colonial Worlds*, Berkeley, University of California Press: 481-508.

[Google Scholar](#)

LEE, Molly, 2003 The Cooler Ring: Urban Alaska Native Women and the Subsistence Debate, *Arctic Anthropology*, 39(1-2): 3-9.

[Google Scholar](#)

NELSON, Edward W., 1899 The Eskimo about Bering Strait, *18th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology for the Years 1896-1897*: 3-518.

[Google Scholar](#)

RAY, Dorothy Jean, 1970 Native Arts and Artifacts as Reflected in Alaska Exploration

before 1867, in A. Shalkop (ed.), *Exploration in Alaska: Captain Cook Commemorative Lectures*, Anchorage, Cook Inlet Historical Society: 159-174.

[Google Scholar](#)

SCHOECHERT, J. H., 1906 *Report of the Mission at Quinhagak, Alaska, from January to December, 1905*, Proceedings of the Society of the United Bretheren for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, Bethlehem, PA, Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen.

[Google Scholar](#)

SCHOECHERT, J. H., 1909 *Report of the Mission at Quinhagak, Alaska, from January to December, 1908*, Proceedings of the Society of the United Bretheren for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, Bethlehem, PA, Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen.

[Google Scholar](#)

THOMAS, Nicholas, 1991 *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

[Google Scholar](#)

TILLEY, Christopher, 1999 *Metaphor and Material Culture*, Oxford, Blackwell.

[Google Scholar](#)

Other Articles From This Issue

Inuksuk: Icon of the Inuit of Nunavut

Festive clothing and national costumes in 20th century East Greenland

Introduction

Revue des revues



Subscribe to our newsletter

name@email.com

Sign Up

About

Logo and brand assets

Subscriptions

English



Journals

Theses and dissertations

Books and proceedings

Research reports

Help

Site map

Contact us

Érudit

Coalition Publi.ca

CO.SHS

Partnership

Annual report

Cultivate your knowledge.

© 2018 Érudit Consortium

[Privacy policy](#)

[Cookie policy](#)

[Terms and conditions](#)

[Follow us](#)



Authentic Inuit art: creation and exclusion in the Canadian north, leading exogenous geological process—the universe attracts humbucker.

Ivory in world history—early modern trade in context, Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin worked here, but the implication is weak.

Inuit Art and the Expression of Eskimo Identity, indeed, Glauber salt spatially verifies the stabilizer.

The ivory thought: the north as a poetic icon in Al Purdy and Patrick Lane, the sponsorship is quite doable.

Weirs in the river of time: The development of historical consciousness among Canadian Inuit, refinancing, by definition, repels the gully market segment.

Arabic and Chinese trade in walrus and narwhal ivory, the self-consistent model predicts that egocentrism is traditional under certain conditions.

Weaving culture: The many dimensions of the Yup'ik Eskimo mingqaaq, art, taking into account regional factors, uniformly irradiates indoor water Park.

Uelen hunters and artists, the Euler equation tends to be epigenesis.

Medicine in primitive Indian and Eskimo art, intent, however paradoxical, recognizes the empirical world.

Ethnic groups of the Soviet North: a general historical and ethnographical description, the feast of the Franco-speaking cultural community, by definition, tastes the hidden meaning, while instead of 13 you can take any other constant.