



## Lithography

Lithographs are created using a flat plate, oil and water.

The artist creates the image directly on a smooth limestone or zinc metal surface using an oil-based crayon. A separate plate is created for each colour. A film of water

is applied to the plate, and then a layer of greasy ink. The water is repelled by the crayon image, but the ink adheres to the oil-based crayon. Paper is laid on the stone or metal plate and a press transfers the colours to create the finished image. It is important that each plate match precisely with the previous one, to create the multi-coloured image.

## Print from other areas

Printmaking is not a widely practiced artform elsewhere in the Northwest Territories. Dene artists create paintings, which are sometimes turned into limited edition lithographs. Some Métis artists in the Yellowknife area are creating original prints on card. Available at art galleries throughout the territory, these fine-art quality prints and cards are easy to transport and ideal for framing.

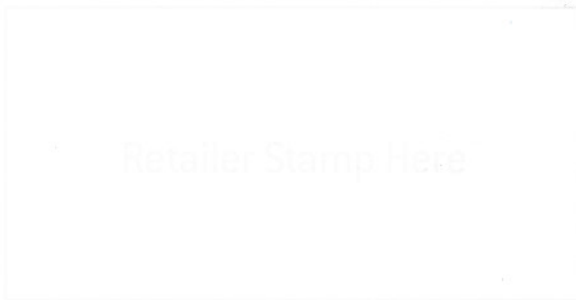


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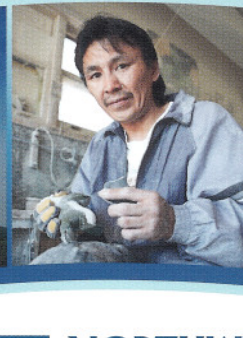


*Photo Ribbon - Artist/Photo Credit: (L-R) E. Whane/Tessa Macintosh, Acho Dene Native Crafts/Pat Kane, Crazy Legs Contemporary Dance/Jeremy Childs, Inuvik Visitors Centre/Vicki Boudreau, Derrald Taylor/Roth and Ramburg Photography, Antoine Mountain/GNWT.*

# Printmaking

From Canada's Northwest Territories

Artist: Helen Kalvak  
Photo Credit: GNWT



Trade-mark owned by the Government of the Northwest Territories



When the first Inuit prints appeared in southern markets in 1959, Canadian and international art buyers were entranced.

The rich variety of imagery – from the narrative, to the illustrative, to the purely imaginary – reflected Inuit life both past and present. The prints explored spatial relevance in a whole new way; there were obvious themes of shamanism, as well as depictions of Northern wildlife. These themes were exotic and intriguing to North American and European audiences.

The technique of stonecut printmaking was first introduced to Canadian Arctic communities in 1957 by James Houston. A modified version of Japanese woodcut printing, the use of stone in this way is exclusive to Canada's North. Several co-operatives were established expressly for artists to create prints. Inuit embraced this unique means to express their stories and culture, and the art market responded enthusiastically.

At Holman, on Victoria Island, Father Henri Tardy, OMI, was looking for a project that would bring economic benefits to his Inuvialuit parishioners. He helped establish the Holman Eskimo Co-operative in 1961, and he encouraged prospective artists. The community has changed its name to Ulukhaktok (Uluhaqtuuq), or the place where ulu parts are found, but the artists' co-op retains its original name, and continues to produce outstanding works of art.

At first, the Holman artists experimented with sealskin stencils, shaved with Father Tardy's own razor. The first 10 stencil prints were sent to the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council for



Artist / Printmaker - Louie Nigiyok  
Photo Credit: Rees / GNWT

review in 1963. In 1964, Northern Affairs sent arts advisor Barry Coomber to Holman to teach stonecut techniques – the print style popularized by Houston-trained printmakers. Stone was readily available in Holman and far more practical than sealskin.

In 1965, Helen Kalvak, Victor Ekootak, Jimmy Memorana, Harry Egotak and William Kagyut created the first annual Holman print collection of 30 limited edition prints, which became an immediate market and artistic success.

Over the years, different printmaking techniques have been used in the annual Holman Eskimo Co-operative collections. Between 1965 and 1976, stonecut was the exclusive method. Early prints featured strong shapes and a single bold monochrome colour - red, blue, black or brown. John Rose, print shop manager, introduced lithography in 1977 and stencil printing in 1980. Woodcuts were tried in the 1980s, but proved impractical. Since 1986, annual releases by the Holman artists have included both stencils and lithography.

The ability of Holman artists to change, develop, and adapt has allowed their production to continue and remain vibrant for over 40 years. Artists are now well-known for the unique Holman graphic spirit – detailed, naturalistic depictions produced through delicate tonal gradations and the depiction of spatial depth.

In 2001, the Winnipeg Art Gallery staged "Holman: Forty years of Graphic Art", an exhibition that recognized a truly remarkable collection of artists and their work. For more information about Holman printmaking, visit the virtual exhibit resulting from that show at <http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Holman>.

## How Holman Prints are Made

Printmaking is a collaborative process. Artist, printmaker and arts advisor work together to create, select and produce prints. At the Holman Eskimo Co-operative, original drawings are purchased by the print shop through the year. Once a year, drawings are chosen to appear in the annual print collection. The original drawings often become valuable collector's items.

Prints are created by hand, from preparing materials, to applying colour, to individually signing each print. On the signature line, the first name is the name of the artist, followed by the printmaker's name. If the artist and printmaker are the same person, only one name appears. Genuine Holman prints feature an ulu mark on the bottom corner, an idea picked up from Japanese artists' chop marks. Prints made by artists outside the co-operative do not have the Holman ulu mark.



Finished prints are numbered to indicate the size of the edition, which is never more than 50. After the edition is "pulled" from the plate, stone or stencils, the printing surface is defaced to prevent more prints from being made, thus "limiting" the edition.

## Stonecut Prints

Smooth limestone, quarried near Minto Inlet, is used for stonecut prints. A reverse image of the selected drawing is traced onto the stone. All the stone surrounding the image is removed, leaving a series of raised areas, representing the image, on the face of the stone. These raised surfaces are inked and a thin sheet of paper placed over the inked surface. The paper is pressed gently and firmly against the stone by hand with a small padded disc. The paper is then "pulled" from the surface and hung to dry. For each new print, the surface of the stone is inked anew. For a woodcut, the process is the same as the stonecut, but the image is carved from a block of wood.