

Soap Stone Sculpture

NAME: _____

Soapstone carving is an ancient practice dating back more than 3000 years ago. An art gallery has commissioned you to create a soapstone sculpture reflecting a specific animal or Inukshuk. The final work must show clear evidence of an influence from the Northern Canadian style/period.

You will gain appreciation of the art of Canada's aboriginal peoples, develop problem solving skills in designing your own work in the Northern Canadian style with subtractive sculpture techniques, and learn to follow steps for cutting, carving, and polishing soap stone.

You will first create **3 different conceptual sketches (different angles – front, side and back)**, which will be evaluated. You will also submit a statement outlining the chosen subject matter of the work and artistic style in your sculpture and the sculpture techniques you used in creating it.

What is Soapstone?

There are three different kinds of rocks found on the earth. They are igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic. Soapstone is formed by changes in the structure of an igneous rock such as peridotite. These changes occur at low temperature and moderate pressure in the presence of water. Soapstone is then a metamorphic rock that forms in layers with different degrees of thickness.

Soapstone, which is also known as steatite, is a soft rock which is made up mostly of the mineral talc. It feels soapy or oily and can be found in a variety of colours such as white, gray, or grayish-green.

History: Cape Dorset is probably the most famous art producing community in Canada's north. With so many talented sculptors, there is bound to be a wide range of styles; The Cape Dorset sculptural style is rooted in a love of naturalism and an interest in wildlife and the spirit world, but has incorporated a love of the flamboyant, the dramatic and the decorative.

Sculptures exhibit a strongly stylized or elegant naturalism, and are generally highly finished. One senses a certain self-consciousness on the part of the artists, as well as a desire to manipulate the material to a high degree.

STEP ONE: RESEARCH THE WORK OF OTHERS: Look at the examples on the following sheets and analysis the various interesting forms and shapes, what stylistic similarities can you note in the works?

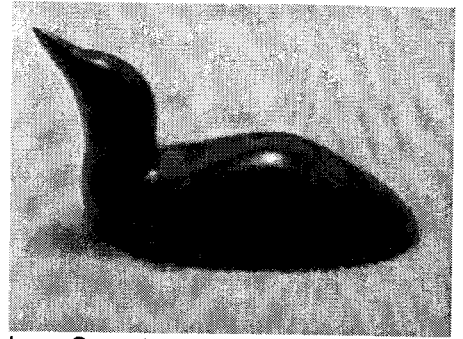
STEP TWO: DRAW: In your sketchbook **3** different conceptual sketches of your chosen subject matter from **3 angles – front, side and back**.

- Consider the elements and principles of design. (Shape, Form, Texture, Balance) How have other artists depicted the traditional soapstone carving form you are attempting to create?
- Consider the artist style: How will you reflect their traditional sculpture technique(s)?
- Your finished work **must** show clear evidence of influence from contemporary or past works of art.

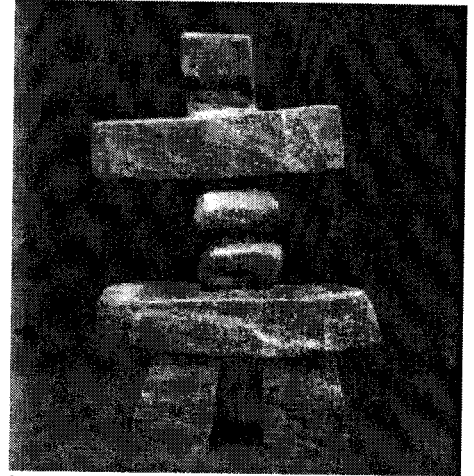
STEP THREE: CREATE: Follow your approved 3 conceptual sketches, begin creating your work using soapstone and tools provided in class. **WRITE** your **Artistic Statement Template** to document your artistic process. **REVIEW:** the sculpture techniques in this handout.

STEP FOUR: REFLECT: Answer the following questions using the elements and principles of design and complete your **Artistic Statement Template** for formal evaluation.

1. What part of your finished project did you find most successful and why?
2. What part of your finished project did you find least successful and why?
3. If you had to do this project, what part would you change or improve on and why?



Loon Soapstone carving



Inukshuk (singular) carving, meaning "likeness of a person" in Inuktitut (the Inuit language)



Bear Soapstone carving

Artistic Statement Template

Name: _____

Artwork Title: _____

A) Subject Matter Chosen: _____

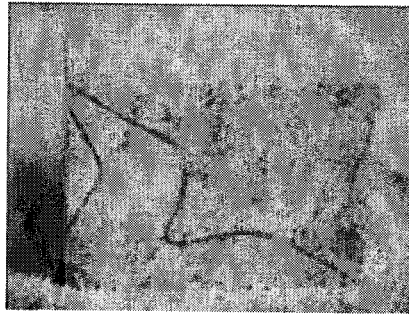
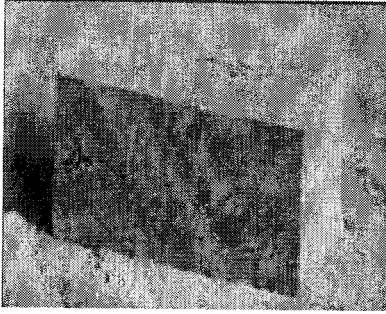
What stylistic similarities can you note between your work and works you have researched in the Northern Canadian style/period? (i.e shape, form and texture)

B) What did your chosen subject matter symbolize historically:

C) Sculpture techniques used in your work and how they reflect the chosen Northern Canadian style/period:

SCULPTURE TECHNIQUES: THE LOON

Subtractive sculpture techniques: Cutting, carving, and polishing soap stone



Mark the areas with pencil of where you will be carving.



Start by using the small hand-saw to remove the largest sections of stone



Continue carving out areas of detail with the smaller metal files or sandpaper. Remember that this stone can be brittle and fragile, so don't get too caught up in detail, keep the forms large and don't use too much negative space.



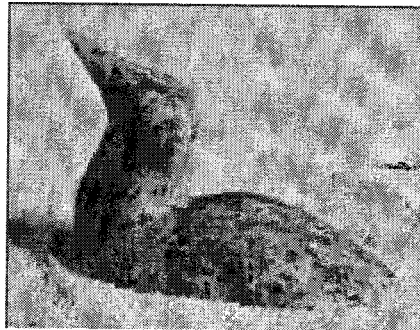
When you are happy with your carving, immerse it in water and start sanding it wet with the roughest (lowest number) of black special paper. Use sandpaper, (various grades) Make sure that all areas are very smooth, with no cut marks.



When it's smooth, go to the second roughest, and finally the smoothest (highest number) paper. Be sure to sand it wet, getting it as smooth and shiny as possible.



Be sure to sand it wet, getting it as smooth and shiny as possible.

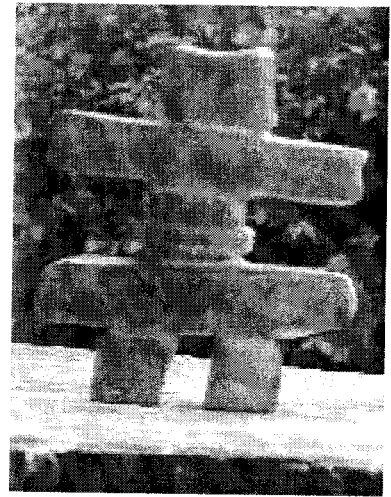


Let the sculpture dry for approximately 15 minutes in the sun, and then smooth it with some mineral oil.

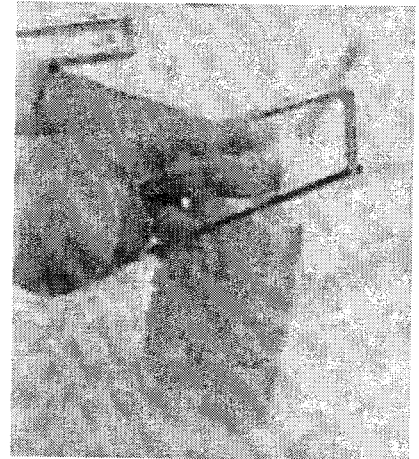
Inukshuk Symbolism pronounced IN-OOK-SHOOK

One of the purposes attributed to **inukshuit** is that they serve as markers or signposts to help guide the Inuit across the treeless tundra of the Canadian Arctic.

Inukshuk (singular), meaning "likeness of a person" in **Inuktitut** (the Inuit language) is a stone figure made by the Inuit. The plural is **inuksuit**. The Inuit make **inuksuit** in different forms and for different purposes: to show directions to travellers, to warn of impending danger, to mark a place of respect, or to act as helpers in the hunting of caribou. Similar stone figures were made all over the world in ancient times, but the Arctic is one of the few places where they still stand. An **inukshuk** can be small or large, a single rock, several rocks balanced on each other, round boulders or flat.



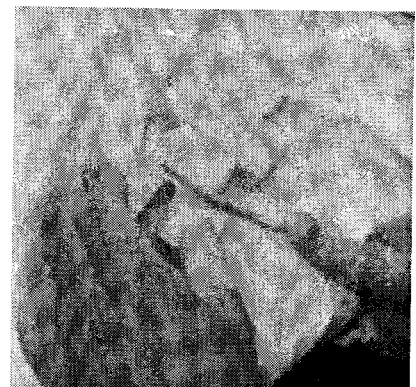
Inukshuk in the form of human beings, called **inunnguaq**, seem to have been a recent development, perhaps only appearing after the arrival of European whalers in the 19th century. One of the most important types of **inuksuit** are those that helped in the caribou hunt. These are usually built with 2 or 3 rocks piled up and placed in converging lines along the migration route of the herd. The Inuit placed arctic heather among the rocks to simulate human hair. The figures were intended to spook the caribou and stampede them towards the places where the hunters hid.



An open leg on an **inukshuk** found near water or a coastline may point to an open channel for navigation. If an **inukshuk** is on open land, a leg or arm might suggest a direction. **Inuksuit** placed near a lake might show that fish can be found in the lake at the roughly same distance the figure is placed from the shoreline. Two or more **inuksuit** with openings in them were sometimes lined up to act as sort of view port, directing the viewer to an important focal point or to the next **Inukshuk**.

Some **inuksuit** are built out of respect for a beloved person or are constructed as memorials to a cherished one. Primarily found in the Arctic landscape, the **Inukshuk** serves as a guide to travellers on land and sea, providing comfort, advice and spatial orientation. An **Inukshuk** also serves as a focus of veneration for the spiritual seeker. For centuries, the **Inukshuk** structure has acted as a guardian to keep vigil over the land and remains a powerful symbol of safe harbour in an uncertain world.

In the magical realm, **inukshuks** are places of power. They concentrate the energies of the stones used to create them. Inukshuks are rooted in the Earth but lift upward to the sky, symbolically representing the interconnectedness of the physical and spiritual realms. They also serve to act as reminders to us of our dependence on one another. Whatever the purpose for its construction, remember that Inuit tradition forbids the destruction of an **Inukshuk**.

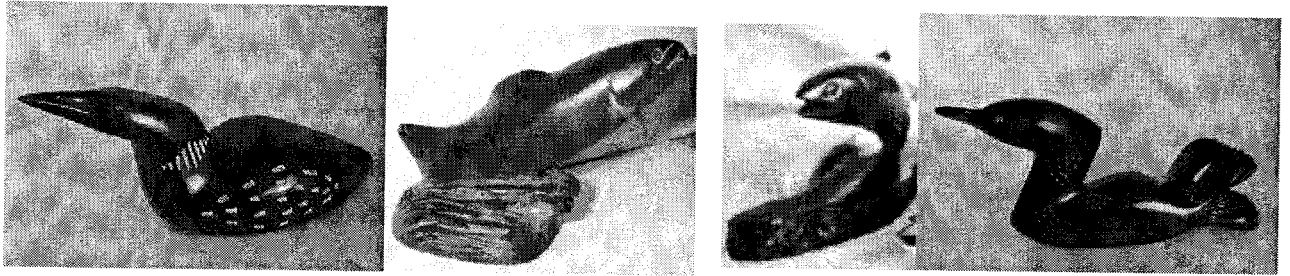


Loon and Fish Symbolism

Loon – The Loon has traditionally been seen as a symbol of communication and also serenity.

Fish - Water, Current, Flow of Life From the Earth.

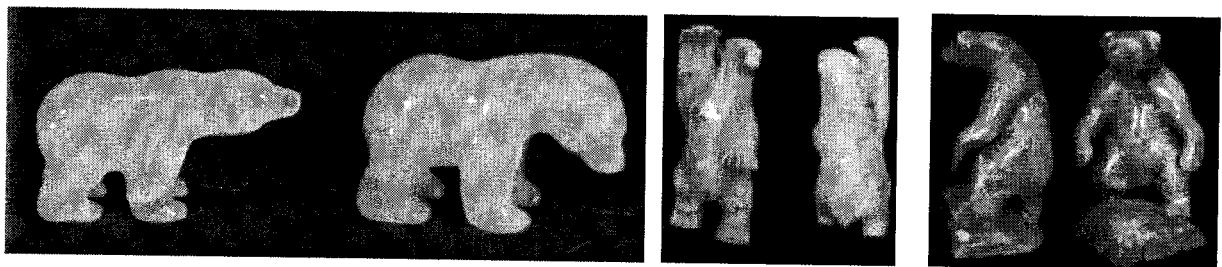
Soap Stone Sculptures Loons & Fish Examples



Bear Symbolism

Bear symbolizes introspection and intuition blended with instinct. Bears hibernate in the winter, which may explain their association with "dreaming the Great Spirit" or retrospection. The symbolism of the Bear's cave reflects returning to the womb of Mother Earth. [A cave is an archetype for the mind - sleep - returning/flying/spiraling to higher consciousness.] This also suggests a strong feminine aspect, one of nurturing and protection. Bear cubs, born in the early spring, can spend as many as seven years with their mother before reaching maturity. People with Bear Medicine are considered by many as self-sufficient, and would rather stand on their own two feet than rely on others. They are sometimes considered dreamers. Many have developed the skill of visualizing new things, but as a result can get caught up in the dreaming, making little progress in waking reality. Bear's medicine includes introspection, healing, solitude, wisdom, change, communication with Spirit, death and rebirth, transformation, astral travel, creature of dreams, shamans and mystics.

The Lakota Sioux call Bear "Tob Tob." To this tribe, Bear is a symbol of wisdom. This animal reveals the interrelationship between the person within the environment of creation, personal truth within the clan and the universe. Bear helps people recognize personal truth and when to stand up for rights and when to walk away. According to Chippewa tradition, the grizzly, Mudjekeewis, is the Spirit Keeper of the West. This totem symbolizes introspection and strength and imparts inner knowledge that makes it possible for people to seek alternative paths to their goals.



Polar Bear - To the Inuit, the Polar Bear also called the Dawn Bear is the ancient ancestor of all bears. There are many Inuit myths in which polar bears have sexual relations with women. Many images by Inuit artists show humans and animals inhabiting the same social space in a harmonious and amicable manner. Animals are often seen engaging in human activities such as speaking and dancing.

Animals have a 'soul' and must be hunted with due respect and ritual. Animals, for the Inuit, have 'personhood' though are not human. Offense against an animal soul can lead to all manner of misfortune including bad hunting and inclement weather. Bad hunting can bring starvation for there are few wild plants to be gathered for food in the arctic.

Soapstone Sculpture Rubric

Name: _____

	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
Knowledge/ Understanding Demonstrates understanding of connections between artistic style and sculpture techniques and art period. Demonstrates understanding of the elements & principles of design in the sculpture (e.g. form, shape, balance, texture)	Work does not meet assignments expectations for this category. Incomplete. 0	Student demonstrates limited connections between artistic style & techniques and art period in work. 0.25	Student demonstrates some connections between artistic style & techniques and art period in work. 0.50	Student demonstrates considerable connections between artistic style & techniques and art period in work. 0.75	Student demonstrates Superior connections between artistic style & techniques and art period in work. 1	/1
	Work does not meet assignments expectations for this category. Incomplete. 0	Student demonstrates limited understanding of the elements & principles of design in the sculpture. 0.25	Student demonstrates some understanding of the elements & principles of design in the sculpture. 0.50	Student demonstrates considerable understanding of the elements & principles of design in the sculpture. 0.75	Student demonstrates a high degree of understanding of the elements & principles of design in the sculpture. 1	/1
Thinking/ Inquiry Concept: Soapstone sculpture animal/inuksuk	Work does not meet assignments expectations for this category. Incomplete. 0	Concept and context is unclear and/or weak. Meaning or ideas conveyed are not on par with student grade level. 0.25	Concept and context is slightly unclear and/or weak. Meaning or ideas conveyed are below expectations for student's grade level. 0.50	Concept and context is clear and valid. Meaning or ideas conveyed are on par with student's grade level. 0.75	Concept and context is clear and strong. Meaning or ideas conveyed are above expectations for grade level. 1	/1
Communication Clarity: Discusses artistic style, symbolism of chosen work, period & techniques in the artistic statement Explains use of sculpture techniques in the artistic statement Reflective Questions	Work does not meet assignments expectations for this category. Incomplete. 0	Student discusses artistic style, symbolism of chosen work, period & techniques in the artistic statement with limited clarity. 0.25	Student discusses artistic style, symbolism of chosen work, period & techniques in the artistic statement with some clarity. 0.50	Student discusses artistic style, symbolism of chosen work, period & techniques in the artistic statement with considerable clarity. 0.75	Student discusses artistic style, symbolism of chosen work, period & techniques in the artistic statement with a high degree of clarity. 1	/1
	Incomplete. 0	Student explains use of painting & sculpture techniques in the artistic statement with limited clarity. 0.25	Student explains use of painting & sculpture techniques in the artistic statement with some clarity. 0.50	Student explains use of painting & sculpture techniques in the artistic statement with considerable clarity. 0.75	Student explains use of painting & sculpture techniques in the artistic statement with a high degree of clarity. 1	/1
	Incomplete. 0	Poor, yes/no answers/limited incomplete. 0.25	Somewhat coherent and somewhat complete. 0.50	Clear and substantial answers. 0.75	Superior and insightful answers. 1	/1
Application Creative Process: Ability to solve a series of artistic problems, showing an awareness of formal qualities, visual conventions, and relevant ideas and concepts. Preliminary Sketches (3) Creative Process: Demonstration of Skill Development & following procedures including Clean Up Uses elements & principles of design & painting sculpture techniques to produce an effective artwork (shape, form, texture, balance etc.)	Work does not meet assignments expectations for this category. Incomplete. 0	Preliminary sketches are poor/incomplete. Concepts are poor/incomplete. Planning is tentative or non-existent. (0.5) 0.5	Preliminary sketches are somewhat clear and complete. Concepts are somewhat complete. Planning is somewhat substantial & shows some alternative ideas. (1-2 angles) 1	Preliminary sketches are mostly complete. Concepts are complete. Planning is evident & shows some divergent thinking is evident. (2-3 angles) 1-1.75	Preliminary sketches are thorough and complete. Concepts are fully developed. Planning is exceptional & shows considerable flexibility in thinking. (3+ angles) 2	/2
	Incomplete. 0	Student demonstrates limited effectiveness in demonstrating the creative process and following procedures. 5	Student demonstrates some effectiveness in demonstrating the creative process and following procedures. 5-6	Student demonstrates considerable effectiveness in demonstrating the creative process and following procedures. 7-8	Student demonstrates superior effectiveness in demonstrating the creative process and following procedures. 8- 10	/10
	Incomplete. 0	Student demonstrates limited use of the e & ps of design and sculpture techniques to produce an art work of limited effectiveness. 1	Student demonstrates some use of the e & ps of design and sculpture techniques to produce an art work of some effectiveness. 2-3	Student demonstrates considerable use of the e & ps of sculpture and painting techniques to produce an art work of considerable effectiveness. 3-4	Student demonstrates a high degree of using the e & ps of design and sculpture techniques to produce a highly effective art work. 5	/5
						/23

A1. The Creative Process: apply the creative process to create a variety of artworks, individually and/or collaboratively;