



Irene Avaalaaqiaq: Myth and Reality

Judith Nasby

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Irene Avaalaaqiaq, one of Canada's most prominent Inuit artists and a leading member of the prolific artistic community of Baker Lake in the new Arctic territory of Nunavut, has enjoyed a distinguished thirty-year career. A distinctive creator of drawings, prints, and sculpture, she is best known for her remarkable wall hangings, which reveal a rich tradition of spirit and shamanistic imagery.

Avaalaaqiaq brings a highly individualistic vision to her tapestries. Her world view, derived from an oral tradition, is expressed by manipulating bold shapes in bright contrasting colors against a solid background. In this first critical retrospective of Avaalaaqiaq's work, Judith Nasby discusses her life and art as well as her commitment to preserving her heritage and making it accessible to an international audience.

"The story of Avaalaaqiaq's life and her capacity to draw creative inspiration from it not only makes compelling reading, it makes an important contribution to the documentation of the history of the indigenous peoples of the Canadian arctic. Through a mix of art historical analysis, social/cultural background, and the artist's own voice, this book convincingly demonstrates how personal biography and Inuit oral traditions have been used by Avaalaaqiaq to create a powerful and distinctive new art, where indeed myth and reality intersect." -- Marie Routledge, National Gallery of Canada

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