



- 86 THOMASSIE KUDLUK** (1910-1989), KANGIRSUK (PAYNE BAY / BELLIN), *Pamioq, Ekilou, and Paoluk Hunting Polar Bears*, stone, 7.5 x 6.5 x 2.75 in (19.1 x 16.5 x 7 cm), signed: "ᑭᑭᑭᑭ"; inscribed: "ᑭᑭᑭᑭ / ᑭᑭᑭᑭ / ᑭᑭᑭᑭ / ᑭᑭᑭᑭ / ᑭᑭᑭᑭ"; further inscribed: "ᑭᑭᑭᑭ" and "<ᑭᑭ / ᑭᑭᑭᑭ / ᑭᑭᑭᑭ" (Pamioq, Ekilou, and Paoluk); printed in black ink in an unknown hand on an accompanying sheet is a translation of the syllabic inscriptions: "Pamioq, Ekilou, And Paoluk Hunting a polar bear[s]. They see the den of the bear and the fresh tracks."

ESTIMATE: \$3,500 / \$5,000

Provenance: Private Collection, Toronto.

What sets the works of Thomassie Kudluk apart from his contemporaries is his dedication to making the average seem heroic, but not serious. His quirky carvings are characterized by an almost single-minded dedication to commemorating - and frequently spoofing - the more banal experiences of Inuit life. On the advent of his solo show at the Inuit Gallery in Toronto the artist, through his interpreter, explained, "I carve only what I know," and described his own works as remembrances "from the past that I have seen" (*Globe and Mail*, 22 June 1981). Kudluk, tongue firmly in cheek, was a folk artist of the highest order, but partly out of necessity. He carved his small, mostly flat works using a vise because he only had one good arm; he often inscribed texts on the sides, rather than on the bottoms of carvings; he sometimes finished works with white paint! Some works are serious but many are slapstick or ribald. The present work is not a traditional hunting scene, but rather an unbowdlerized and highly eccentric depiction of the slog and excitement of the pursuit, complete with bear tracks.

- 87 SYOLLIE (SAROLLIE) WEETALUKTUK** (1906-1962) m., INUKJUAK (PORT HARRISON), *Bust of a Young Woman with Plaited Hair*, c. 1960, stone, 10 x 7.5 x 7 in (25.4 x 19.1 x 17.8 cm), inscribed with disc number and signed: "E91745 / SAROLLI / WEETALUKTUK".

ESTIMATE: \$1,000 / \$1,500

Syollie Weetaluktuk succeeded his father as the leader of the Kangirqsukallaq camp, about forty kilometers south of Inukjuak. When one encounters his work it is easy to understand why Syollie was scouted by James Houston as a talent already in 1949; he went on to become one of the most important Inukjuak artists of the 1950s.

With both technical and artistic virtuosity, the artist has sensitively rendered a striking and powerful work. It is the exceptional attention given to individual details — the way in which the young woman's centre parted hair falls behind her rather large ears and is styled into two tightly wound braids; her gentle laugh lines exquisitely rendered to spread broadly crossing her cheeks; her slender nose, turned slightly upward — which brings this simple, elegant composition to life. Although true portraiture was uncommon in Inuit art at this period, we are fairly certain that the distinct physiognomy of this young woman is that of the artist's wife or a daughter.

