



The Inuksuk Book

Mary Wallace

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From a stark and barren landscape comes a rich and vibrant informational book about the Inuit people. The title refers to inuksuit (plural of inuksuk) which are stone statues that have been hand built by the Inuit for centuries. The word literally means “thing that can act in the place of a human being.” These impressive structures served many different purposes, such as showing direction, indicating where food was stored, honoring a special person or helping direct caribou to hunters. This last one was extremely important to the survival of the Inuit.

A lovely combination of paintings and photographs, both modern and archival, illustrate the role of the inuksuit to the Inuit. Wallace’s colorful paintings perfectly complement the black and white photos on these well-designed pages. The assistance of Nanavut Tourism and the National Archives of Canada have allowed Wallace to describe important cultural traditions, as well as future projects for the Inuit. While traditional stone inuksuit spoke without words, today there is an Inukshuk satellite that provides modern communication for the Inuit.

Each chapter is titled in the Inuktitut Language, shown in both its syllabic version and translated into English. A special section at the end includes a guide to Inuktitut, showing the symbols for common sounds and the translation of common words. In addition there is a detailed description of how to build an inuksuk.

This book is a valuable resource, which will inform and inspire children of all ages.

LEIGH FORREST (July / August 1999)

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