

**Sale Name:** Important Cape Dorset Inuit & First Nations Fine Art Auction March 23 2023

**LOT 41 - Kenojuak Ashevak - Cod Fish Encircle Bird 41/50**



**Artist Description** Kenojuak Ashevak (1927 – 2013 Inuit / CAD) C.C., Onu, R.C.A. Born in an igloo in an Inuit camp, Ikirasaq, at the southern coast of Baffin Island. Kenojuak Ashevak became one of the first Inuit women in Cape Dorset to begin drawing. She worked in graphite, coloured pencils and felt-tip pens, and occasionally used poster paints, watercolours or acrylics. She created many carvings from soapstone and thousands of drawings, etchings, stonecut prints and prints — all sought after by museums and collectors. She designed several drawings for Canadian stamps and coins, and in 2004 she created the first Inuit-designed stained-glass window for the John Bell Chapel in Oakville, Ontario. In 2017, the \$10 bill released in celebration of Canada's 150th birthday features Kenojuak's stone-cut and stencil printed work called "Owl's Bouquet" in silver holographic foil. During Ashevak's stay at Parc Savard hospital in Quebec City, 1952 to 1955, she learned to make dolls from Harold Pfeiffer and to do beadwork. These crafts later attracted the attention of civil administrator and pioneer Inuit art promoter James Archibald Houston and his wife Alma. Houston introduced print-making to Cape Dorset artists in the 1950s, and he and his wife began marketing Inuit arts and crafts, including an exhibit of Inuit art in 1959. She was hesitant at first, claiming that she could not draw and that drawing was a man's business. Yet the next time that she visited the Houstons, the sheets of paper that Alma had given her were filled with pencil sketches. In 1958 her first print, Rabbit Eating Seaweed, was produced from one of her designs on a sealskin bag, and by 1959 Kenojuak and other Cape Dorset Inuit had formed the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative as a senlavik (workshop) for aspiring Inuit artists, later known as Kinngait Studios. Fellow members included Pitaloosie Saila, Mayoreak Ashoona, and Napatchie Pootagook. Her reception in southern Canada was rapidly favourable. In 1963 she was the subject of a National Film Board documentary by producer John Feeney, Eskimo Artist: Kenojuak, about Kenojuak, then 35, and her family, as well as traditional Inuit

life on Baffin Island. The film showed a stonecutter carving her design into a relief block in stone, cutting away all the non-printing surfaces; she would then apply ink to the carved stone, usually in two or more colours, and carefully make 50 "shadow" prints for sale. With the money she earned from the film, Johnniebo was able to purchase his own canoe and become an independent hunter to help provide for the family, which now included a new daughter, Aggeo, and an adopted son, Ashevak. Ashevak created several pieces of work to commemorate the creation of Nunavut, the third Canadian Territory, including a piece commissioned by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Nunavut Qajanatuk (Our Beautiful Land) for the signing of the Inuit Land Claim Agreement in Principle in April 1990; Nunavut, a large hand-coloured lithograph to commemorate the signing of the Final Agreement early in 1994; a large diptych titled Siilavut, Nunavut (Our Environment, Our Land) in April 1999, when the Territory officially came into being. Kenojuak became the first Inuit artist inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame in 2001, and traveled to Toronto with her daughter, Silaqi, to attend the ceremony.

### Description

*Stonecut 41/50 - Dorset 1997*

Titled, Numbered, Dated & Signed Across Lower Border

Sheet - 24 ins x 32 ins (60.96 cm x 81.3 cm)

Unframed

Printer: Qiatsuq Niviaqsi

Paper: Kizuki kozo White

### Provenance:

Private Collection

**Quantity: 1**



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