

adopted a wider analytical lens to consider the cultural and intellectual milieu in which Innis circulated during the inter-war years. During this period, other Canadian artists and intellectuals (e.g., Arthur Lower and the Group of Seven) attempted to attach provisional notions of Canada's national identity to aspects of northernness, while at the same time federal and provincial governments began to articulate the first large-scale, if largely unrealistic, plans for northern development. Asking how these broader ideas of Canada's northern identity influenced Innis's theories about Pond might have helped the volume move beyond the constraints of its Pond-centric approach. I was also surprised not to see a discussion of Innis's broader ideas of the North, a theme taken up brilliantly by many scholars in Buxton's 2013 edited collection, *Harold Innis and the North*. Throughout his career, Innis was sometimes a naive booster of northern development; at other times he stressed the vulnerability of local people and environments to development based on a narrow range of raw natural resource incursions. How might Innis's admiration for Pond have contributed to his somewhat blinkered view of the North as a frontier for national development, and how much did his overt celebration of Pond's expansionism blind him to the imposition of colonialism on the Indigenous people of northern Canada?

In the absence of such broader discussions, this remains a volume pitched at specialists. By meticulously collecting and curating Innis's writings on Pond, Buxton has provided a valuable one-stop venue for graduate students and academic historians interested in the 18th century fur trade as seen through the eyes of one of its most prominent historical actors, and also one of its most important historical scholars.

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NORTH BY NUUK: GREENLAND AFTER ROCKWELL KENT. By DENIS DEFIBAUGH. Rochester, New York: RIT Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-939125-72-9. 165 p., map, b&w and colour illus. Hardbound. US\$49.95.

WHEN THE COLOUR CEASES TO BE JUST A COLOUR: ROCKWELL KENT'S GREENLAND PAINTINGS. By ERIK TORM. Uummannaq, Greenland: Uummannaq Polar Institute, 2019. ISBN 9788799676590. 112 p., maps, b&w and colour illus. Available in two editions: English/Russian and Danish/Greenlandic. Hardbound. Cdn\$105.00.

Two new books share a conviction that artworks American painter Rockwell Kent created in Greenland provide insights that will help contemporary Greenlanders better understand their world. As principal investigator for a project funded in 2016 by the National Science Foundation, Denis Defibaugh showed Kent's little-known photographs and lantern slides to Greenlanders residing in four of the communities Kent visited in 1929, 1931–32, and 1934–35: Illorsuit, Uummannaq, Sisimiut and Nuuk. These historical images, reproduced beautifully in Defibaugh's book along with dozens of his own photographs of Greenland, were used as visual catalysts for discussions about social, economic, and cultural challenges Greenlanders confronted nearly a century ago and those they face today. Erik Torm's book showcases Kent's Greenland paintings and watercolours and was motivated, in large part, by the preservation of local Greenlandic culture and the promotion of educational programs for Inuit youth. The publisher of his book, Uummannaq Polar Institute (founded in 2007), is a branch of the Uummannaq Children's Home. Reproductions of images in Torm's book were enlarged to poster size and put on display in an exhibition at the Sisimiut Museum that opened in January 2020.

Both books find inspiration in two exhibitions that rekindled interest in Kent's Greenland paintings, including those the artist gave to the Soviet peoples as a gesture of friendship in 1960. Those exhibitions—*Distant Shores: The Odyssey of Rockwell Kent* (organized by the Norman Rockwell Museum in 2000) and *Rockwell Kent: The Mythic and the Modern* (organized by the Portland Museum of Art, Maine in 2005)—informed viewers of Kent's initial shipwreck on the coast of Greenland, recounted in his best-selling adventure memoir, *N by E* [North by East] (1930), the title of which is echoed by *North by Nuuk*.

A professor of photography at Rochester Institute of Technology, Defibaugh was primarily interested in the visual contrast between the Greenland Kent captured with his Leica camera in the 1930s and the genealogical, environmental, social, and cultural life of twenty-first century Greenland. Climate change in Greenland, evidenced by retreating glaciers and a rapidly melting ice sheet, lent urgency to Defibaugh's project that culminated with immaculate timing. Three months after his third and final visit to Illorsuit in March 2017, a massive landslide generated a tsunami that swept through Karrat and

Uummanaq Fjord systems. The catastrophe prompted the government to mandate the evacuation of Illorsuit—the tiny Arctic settlement that was home to Kent during the winters of 1931–32 and 1934–35.

Twenty-five of Kent's photographs are reproduced in Defibaugh's book. They feature Greenlanders in traditional attire, sledge dogs in snow or transported in boats across fjords, vessels navigating winter ice, and iceberg-studded settings of glacial grandeur. One photograph catches the artist's wife on her birthday surrounded by a festive group of Greenlanders. A few document Kent at work painting the frozen wilderness with canvases tied to the back of a sledge. Presumably, the artist's presence in those photographs belies his authorship. In their day, many of the photographs were converted into 2 × 3-inch hand-tinted lantern slides or "colorful adventure capsules" as Defibaugh aptly describes them (p. 4), which were precursors of 35 mm Kodachrome slides. Kent projected the lantern slides in auditoriums during his acclaimed lectures to depression-era audiences across America. Revealing an eye of considerable refinement, Kent's images make a major contribution to the ethnographic study of Greenland. *North by Nuuk: Greenland After Rockwell Kent*—a book of faultless production values and cross-cultural insights—is a landmark publishing event. By reproducing Kent's historical photographs, many for the first time, together with Defibaugh's absorbing photographs of contemporary Greenland, the book is a rare visual resource for historians of the Arctic as well as of modern American art.

Kent's historical photographs are central to Defibaugh's research project but it is his own photographs—larger and more colourful than Kent's—that bring the conversation about change and continuity in Greenland into the twenty-first century. Not constrained by any one sensibility or genre, Defibaugh's camera captures both the universal and the particular, the abstract and the concrete, and activates the five senses. In the opening pages, panoramic photographs from Illorsuit that stretch across facing pages acclimate the reader to an otherworldly landscape. The reader is further seduced by a gatefold of six folding pages where sequentially connecting skies, clouds, and distant mountains and glaciers glow with iridescent blues, purples, and oranges. Defibaugh stirs the imagination with aerial photography as well as with camera shots taken at sea. Tiny figures of Greenlanders are juxtaposed against vast expanses of snow and ice in compositions that are reminiscent of Kent's paintings from Greenland. Although Kent largely eschewed the still life as a subject for his paintings, Defibaugh demonstrates that the Arctic still life can be a potent, if macabre, source of visual interest. He finds intrigue in a monstrous wolffish; a raven carcass; an array of severed seal claws; skinned and gutted seals; harpoons and rope; drying racks of seal skins, ribs and heads; and freshly killed ducks. Portraits of nearly everyone in the settlement of Illorsuit were taken and many are reproduced in the book. Greenlanders are observed taking part in a funeral procession, having soccer practice on a

frozen fjord, worshipping at church, and relaxing at home.

A wise strategic choice was made not to juxtapose the photographic achievements of the two artists: Kent's photographs are isolated as a group toward the end of Defibaugh's book. A close reading of one subject that fascinates both artists—the cemetery studded with wooden crosses above Illorsuit—suggests that Kent's much longer exposure to Greenlandic culture may have made his vision all the more profound. Fully one-half of Kent's photograph of the cemetery is devoted to the spectacular view the deceased are enjoying for eternity (p. 152); in Defibaugh's photograph the vista is absent (p. 76). Captions beneath photographs are adequate but not fully informative. For example, in one lantern slide (p. 144), Kent sits quietly with two Greenlanders at a table in his one-room house in Illorsuit. In reality, the photograph was staged for reproduction in an advertisement for General Electric Radio that appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post* (1934). Superimposed on the bottom of the photograph in the advertisement is a radio broadcasting music, which explains why the three appear contemplative.

In a brief overview of Kent's photographs, Defibaugh makes no mention of Kent the aspiring movie-maker. On each of his three trips to Greenland he took a moving camera with him, and before departing in 1934, he pitched to Hollywood talent agent William Morris, Jr., a filmmaking expedition that would capture the Inuit way of life. During his first sojourn in Illorsuit, Kent observed part of the filming of *S.O.S. Iceberg* (1933), a German action feature film that starred Leni Riefenstahl (Wien, 2002). Kent was inspired by the filmmaking endeavors of two Danish explorers he befriended in Greenland—Knud Rasmussen and Peter Freuchen. In many ways, then, Kent was predisposed to working behind the camera, which made for his avid interest in still photography.

The title of the book written by Erik Torm is informed by a lyrical passage from Kent's late-in-life autobiography, *It's Me O Lord*: "Art is not art until it has effaced itself. Only when the blue paint of a sky ceases to be just a color—becoming as it were the depths of space—is that blue right, and truly beautiful" (1955:137). Chapters provide a cursory overview of Kent's three painting expeditions to Greenland and include a sampling of the artworks he produced. An understanding of the artist's imagination is enhanced by the pairing, on facing pages, of ten of Kent's Greenland paintings with Torm's colour photographs of the remote settings that inspired them. The inclusion of vintage photographs and two hand-coloured lantern slides enhances the book's historical merit.

A volunteer and research fellow at the Uummanaq Polar Institute, Torm has written a book that challenges the reader's patience because neither he nor his editor is in command of the English language. There are countless grammatical errors, ill-chosen words, clichés, and such cringe worthy phrases as "the Greenlandic nature" or "the primitive force" emitted by Greenlandic women. The related concepts "spiritual" and "immaterial" are used as

antonyms, “sled” is wrongly used for “sledge”, and “sail” is mistakenly used for the “shooting-screen” behind which hunters hide. Even more unfortunate are misidentifications of key individuals in photographs, including Rockwell Kent who is not the man so identified standing next to Frances Kent and Knud Rasmussen in a large photograph (p. 15). Similarly misidentified are Anna Zeeb and Helena Fleischer (p. 92), and Marghreta Quist (p. 51). In what was evidently a last-minute correction, Torm properly identifies Zeeb and Fleischer in the Danish/Greenlandic edition.

Many published articles and books on Kent were not consulted by the author whose narrative is consequently misguided and filled with substantive errors. Three of the many egregious fictions propagated are: (1) Kent’s having graduated from Columbia University in 1898 (p. 16). In fact, Kent matriculated at Columbia in 1900 and quit before graduation. (2) Many of Kent’s paintings were completed in Greenland (p. 72). In fact, Kent completed all but one of his Greenland paintings after returning to his Adirondack studio. (3) The woman walking in *Icebergs, Greenland* is described as “Salamina on her way to a new life” (p.44). In fact, the figure is a generic Greenlander not identified in the title or in any writing by Kent. Many of the colour reproductions of Kent’s paintings are wanting because they are derived from decades-old photography, most notably the flawed image of *Post Arrival* supplied by the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow (p. 99).

The author confuses *Artist in Greenland* (1960) with *Iceberg* (c. 1935), a much earlier painting (p. 95). Kent copied the former after the latter and added a self-portrait and dogs resting in the foreground. [Rockwell Kent to Dan and Jacquie Jones, letter dated September 10, 1960, Rockwell Kent Papers, Archives of American Art.] Most of the Greenland paintings now in museum collections in Russia, Ukraine, and Armenia were reworked by Kent in the 1950s, some quite extensively. He often added figures to the landscapes, so that there is a visual disconnect between the early and later passages in the same painting. Dating such paintings is fraught with uncertainty so that reference to later reworking or retouching should be made.

In 1929, Kent met Knud Rasmussen (mentioned above) and Torm speculates about the vicissitudes of their friendship. Revisiting arguments from an article he wrote (cited on p. 74), Torm entirely misses the point. Their mutual respect and admiration was considerable, so much so that Rasmussen’s wife Dagmar and daughter Hanne crossed the Atlantic to stay with Frances and Rockwell Kent as invited guests at their Adirondack farmstead during the summer of 1930. Hanne remained through the following winter. Dagmar emotionally bonded with Kent and their affair of uncertain duration oddly improved the relationship she had with her husband, whose own dalliances were serial. A piece of Dagmar’s hand-written correspondence with Kent that evidences the intensity of her passion is archived in the Rockwell Kent Papers. These eccentric domestic arrangements of which Torm is unaware are recounted in Stephen R. Bown’s biography of Rasmussen, *White Eskimo* (2015:289). Finally, when he alludes to Kent’s political sentiments, Torm anachronistically brands the artist a communist sympathizer.

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