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Where Has All
the Power Gone?

The Male
Menopause
by Paul Grescoe



statement is primarily the work of two women. Judy McGrath, a craftswoman, and the wife of an economic development officer, was the catalyst. She went to Spence Bay from Newfoundland in 1971 and soon saw the possibilities of producing natural dyes from the summer plants of the Arctic tundra. Aided by

Canada Manpower and a grant from the government of the Northwest Territories, McGrath and some 30 local women spent the summer of 1973 gathering all manner of plant life, learning to find and identify the different types of lichen, experimenting with some plants and finding that a single one could produce three

or four distinct colors of dye.

Ultimately they refined their dye-making processes to an art. The result was a wide variety of brilliantly clear natural colors — lime green, sunny yellow and orange, gold, a variety of browns, scarlet, a beautiful purple from “popcorn” lichen.

As the women became familiar

Of white wool duffle cloth, both parkas are trimmed in fox fur and come with windproof over-parkas. The outer covering on the left is purple velveteen; the cover on the right is windproof cotton. Both are trimmed with Delta-motif handwoven braid. And both, says their designer, will keep you warm at -40° C. Each retails for about \$350.



with the plants that produced these new shades they gave them names: Dirty Cheeks, Licorice Glow, Eskimo Tea, Elephant Bottoms, Velvet Teacup and Seal's Nose were just a few.

At the same time, Judy McGrath encouraged a local woman, Anaoyok Alookey, to put her ability as a designer to

work combining the newly achieved northern spectrum of colors with traditional Inuit clothing patterns. Soon Alookey had designed the first pieces in a long and impressive collection of exotic and beautiful native Canadian clothing.

Together Judy McGrath and Anaoyok Alookey planned the

Spence Bay Craft Project, which in addition to selling parkas, jackets, capes and vests designed by Alookey and made by other members of the project (who earn slightly less than the Montreal garment workers' minimum), produces wall hangings, dolls, bags and embroideries.

Traditional Inuit parkas, trimmed in fur, hand-embroidered and hand-appliquéd. Dye for the braided trim was brewed from summer plants of the tundra by the women of Spence Bay. "You have to think of two things," says Anaoyok Alookey, "one Inuit and one Down South, and somehow put them together. . . . I think about the northern things first and the Down South things afterwards, and then make them work together." About \$350 each.



Traditional Inuit clothes were made of fur sewn together in dark and light patterns, but most of these new garments are made of wool duffle cloth and embroidered to depict family life, work, real and spirit creatures, and the plants and flowers themselves. Seams are triple-stitched for longer wear and all the detail

is embroidered or appliquéd by hand, which, along with the fact that the fabric costs are expensive and freight charges to and from Spence Bay extremely high, explains why the finished garments cost what they do.

Carved antler buttons, hand-woven braid and furs may be used as well. Finally, the name of

the maker, in syllabics, is worked into the design. — *Patricia Holtz*

A collection of Spence Bay Inuit clothing is available at Creed's, Toronto, The Snow Goose, Ottawa, and at Cara stores throughout Canada, and directly from the Spence Bay Craft Shop, Spence Bay, N.W.T. X0E 1B0.

Embroidered Inuit faces, done in the natural colors of the North, trim this vest of duffle cloth (price about \$45). "I could pick flowers for dyes all summer," the designer says. "Even the kids are already asking when we are going out picking flowers because they like to play near the water and making fires for tea Sometimes it's not like work. We're just having fun around here."