



Figure

On display

Title/Description: Figure

Born: 0100 c. - 0500 c.

Object Type: Figure

Materials: Walrus ivory

Measurements: h. 165 x w. 58 x d. 40 mm

Accession Number: 105

Historic Period: Old Bering Sea II-III (AD100-500), 1st century AD

Production Place: Bering Sea, North America, The Americas

Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

The chronological and stylistic attribution of this ancient ivory sculpture is uncertain, though the schematic face and positioning of the arms across the body are characteristic of ivory images ascribed by Wardwell (1986: nos. 58-61,115) to the second or third Old Bering Sea phases. In these periods the full sculpting of the legs was more common than in the preceding Okvik phase.

The figure, of indeterminate sex, is weathered and pitted, probably as a result of frost-thaw action, and has acquired a rich mottled brown patina. The left leg is broken below the knee; the back is flat. Despite the weathering, or perhaps because of it, the face is particularly expressive. The number 1636 is painted in white on the back of the surviving leg.

Steven Hooper, 1997

Entry taken from *Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection, Vol. 2: Pacific, African and Native North American Art*, edited by Steven Hooper (Yale University Press, 1997) p. 228.

Provenance

Possible origin in the Heye Collection, New York.

Formerly in the Charles Ratton Collection, Paris.

Purchased by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury from K. J. Hewett in 1952.

Donated to the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia in 1973 as part of the original gift.
