



Forked attachment

On display

Title/Description: Forked attachment

Object Type: Ornament

Materials: Walrus ivory

Measurements: h. 108 x w. 40 x d. 5 mm

Accession Number: 846

Historic Period: Punuk period (c. AD 500-1200)

Production Place: Bering Sea, North America, The Americas

Credit Line: Purchased with support from the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Art Trust, 1982

An enigmatic object with linear engraving on one side, this flat ivory plaque may have been part of some ritual object, since it is not suitable as the handle for a tool, nor does it show any signs of use around the points or in the central crevice. The shape calls to mind a stylised walrus head, so it may have been used in ritual connected with walrus hunting. Traces of red pigmentation remain in the engraving. The 'walrus tusk' motif also occurs on Punuk wrist guards (see Wardwell, 1986:105).

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. 231.

Provenance

Purchased by the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia from Jonathan Holstein, New York, on the advice of Robert Sainsbury in 1982 out of funds provided by the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Art Trust.
