Finch & Co



AN ESKIMO WALRUS IVORY HARPOON FORE SHAFT, CARVED TO RESEMBLE A RISING WHALE

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19TH CENTURY
SIZE : 30.5 CM LONG – 12 INS LONG

LITERATURE

KAJ BIRKET-SMITH SAID THAT THE ESKIMO EXISTED 'AT THE EDGE OF NOT ONLY THE INHABITED, BUT ALSO OF THE HABITABLE WORLD'. ('THE ESKIMO' METHUEUN, LONDON 1959)
THE ESKIMO'S DEXTERITY IN DAY TO DAY LIVING WAS CARRIED OVER INTO HIS CARVING. A SEAL HUNTERS EQUIPAGE WAS AS FINELY CALCULATED AS A DOCTORS SET OF MEDICAL INSTRUMENTS. A SINGLE MISJUDGEMENT COULD BE FATAL; A FALSE STEP ON THIN ICE OR A SEAL'S QUICK REACTION TO A HUNTERS SHADOW INVITED DISASTER.
AN ESKIMO COULD NOT LIVE LONG IF HE FAILED TO NOTICE SUBTLE CHANGES IN THE WEATHER OR SLIGHTEST ALTERATION IN THE ICE SO HE LEARNED TO CONCENTRATE AND PAY ATTENTION TO MINUTE DETAIL, QUALITIES WHICH WERE ALSO BROUGHT TO BEAR ON THE FRAGILE SURFACES OF THE IVORY HE CARVED.