

Finch & C^o



COLLECTION OF THREE BERING STRAIT IPIUTAK ESKIMO WALRUS IVORY AMULETIC HUMAN FIGURINES
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19TH CENTURY

SIZE: A: 5.2CM HIGH – 2 INS HIGH / B: 5CM HIGH – 2 INS HIGH / C: 4.6CM HIGH – 1¾ INS HIGH

LITERATURE

PERSONAL CHARMS AND AMULETS IN HUMAN FORM WERE MADE OF WALRUS IVORY AND DRIFTWOOD AND WERE USUALLY RECEIVED AS A CHILD FROM A MUCH OLDER ADULT FAMILY MEMBER. CHARMS SUCH AS THESE THREE WERE NEARLY ALWAYS INHERITED OR GIFTED RATHER THAN NEWLY MADE. HANDED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS THEY WERE BELIEVED TO HAVE GREAT POWER. SOMETIMES A SONG WAS GIVEN ALONG WITH AN AMULET, AND THE SHAMAN WOULD IMPOSE A FOOD TABOO FOR A SEASON'S LENGTH.

IVORY HUMAN FIGURINES WERE OFTEN USED IN MAGICAL PRACTICES TO HELP WITH FERTILITY OR TO AFFECT THE BIRTH OF A SON. THE SHAMAN WOULD DIRECT THE WOMAN TO SLEEP WITH THE FIGURE UNDER HER PILLOW.