Finch & Co



ALASKAN YUP'IK ESKIMO CARVED WALRUS IVORY FIGURE 'IINRUT'

A VERY RARE ALASKAN YUP'IK ESKIMO CARVED WALRUS IVORY FIGURE 'IINRUT' WITH A HAIR KNOT WEARING A PARKER AND SNOW BOOTS

18TH CENTURY OR EARLIER

SIZE: 17.5CM HIGH – 7 INS HIGH

LITERATURE

'IINRUT' WERE MADE BY SHAMAN TO REPRESENT A PROTECTING SPIRIT. IT WAS SAID THAT THESE FIGURES CALLED 'UYA' MADE WHISTLING SOUNDS AND PROVIDED PROTECTION FOR THE HOUSE AND ITS OCCUPANTS. THE IMAGE WOULD BE HUNG OR PLACED AT THE HOUSE ENTRANCE, AS IT WAS BELIEVED THAT THE DECEASED ANCESTORS WOULD BE CALLED UPON TO HELP THEIR LIVING RELATIVES. THESE 'UYA' WERE ALSO USED TO PREDICT WHETHER THE HOUSEHOLD WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR HUNT FOR GAME THROUGHOUT THE COMING YEAR. FOOD AND WATER WOULD BE PUT INTO A BOWL AND DIPPER NEXT TO THE 'UYA' AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE FOOD AND WATER WOULD PREDICT THAT THE FAMILY WOULD CATCH A LOT OF CARIBOU IN THE FOLLOWING SEASON. THE 'UYA' WOULD ALWAYS BE PORTRAYED WEARING A PARKA.