Finch & Co



RARE YUPIK BERING SEA ESKIMO CHILD'S ICE SKATE

A RARE YUPIK BERING SEA ESKIMO CHILD'S ICE SKATE CARVED OF WALRUS IVORY IN THE FORM OF A POLAR BEAR WITH SOCKETED IRON BLADE

EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 6.5CM HIGH, 13CM DEEP - 2½ HIGH, 5 INS DEEP

LITERATURE

THESE WERE USED BY BOYS TO HAVE FUN ON NEWLY FORMED ICE. TIED WITH SINEW TO THE SOLE OF A BOOT THEY GAVE THE SKATER SPEED, AND SOMETIMES AS YOUNG MEN THEY WOULD GO ON TO USE THEM FOR HUNTING. ESKIMO CHILDREN HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF FUN WHILST ACQUIRING THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE THEY WILL USE IN THEIR ADULT LIVES. BOYS STALK BIRDS WITH MINIATURE BOWS AND ARROWS, SET TRAPS FOR MICE AND MANOEUVRE MINIATURE SLEDS AND KAYAKS.

THE FIGURE OF THE POLAR BEAR ON THIS SKATE IS AMULETIC, HAVING A CLAIRVOYANT POWER WHICH IS SILENTLY COMMUNICATED TO THE WEARER, GIVING HIM THE COURAGE, SPEED AND POWER OF THE ANIMAL.