Finch & Co



BERING SEA ESKIMO INUIT CARVED WALRUS IVORY DOUBLE POLAR BEAR'S HEAD TALISMANIC ATTACHMENT OR TOGGLE

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19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 1.5CM HIGH, 2CM DEEP, 5CM WIDE - ½ INS HIGH, ¾ INS DEEP, 2 INS WIDE

LITERATURE

PREDATOR-PREY SYMBOLISM AND THE PARALLELS BETWEEN HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN HUNTERS WAS AN IMPORTANT PART OF INUIT LIFE WHICH WAS MANIFEST IN BOTH THEIR ART AND CULTURE. IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT THE HUMAN HUNTER PLACATE THE SPIRITS OR 'INUA' OF HIS PREY AND THAT HE UNDERSTAND THE CHARACTER AND NATURE OF HIS NON-HUMAN COMPETITORS. THIS FINELY CARVED ATTACHMENT MAY HAVE BEEN A TALISMAN TO PROTECT THE WEARER FROM ATTACK BY A POLAR BEAR THAT COULD MISTAKE THE HUNTER FOR ITS FAVOURITE FOOD, A SEAL. IT CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE BEEN BELIEVED TO HELP PROVIDE THE WEARER WITH THE CUNNINGNESS OF A POLAR BEAR WHEN HUNTING.