



Male figure

Not on display

Title/Description: Male figure

Object Type: Figure

Materials: Walrus/whale ivory

Measurements: h. 145 x w. 45 x d. 30 mm

Accession Number: 658

Historic Period: 19th century

Production Place: North America, Northwest Coast, The Americas

Cultural Group: Attributed to, iv-IV, Tlingit

Credit Line: Purchased with support from Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1976

This figure is not easily classifiable, though certain features suggest a northern Northwest Coast origin. Genitals were sometimes carved on male figures (Duff et al., 1967: no. 186; Wardwell, 1978: 90; Holm and Reid, 1975: no. 63), and the pointed head-dress could correspond to a shaman's goat-horn crown, indicating that this was perhaps a shaman's charm pendant. The two holes in the face may be nostrils, or even a representation of Inuit labrets. The armpits are cut square and the back is plain. The material resembles whale ivory rather than walrus tusk.

Steven Hooper, 1997

Entry taken from *Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection, Vol. 2: Pacific, African and Native North American Art*, edited by Steven Hooper (Yale University Press, 1997) p. 268.

Exhibitions

'Empowering Art: Indigenous Creativity and Activism from North America's Northwest Coast',
Sainsbury Centre, Norwich, 12/3/23 - 30/7/23

Provenance

Previously in the collection of H. Beasley and/or the Haye Foundation.

Note in the Sainsbury Centre archives suggesting the object may have been acquired by Jonathan Holstein from the Haye Foundation and sold to James Economus and then acquired by K. J. Hewett.

Purchased by the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia from K. J. Hewett in 1976 out of funds provided by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury.
