



Comb with human head

On display

Title/Description: Comb with human head

Object Type: Comb

Materials: Antler

Measurements: h. 67 x w. 29 x d. 12 mm

Accession Number: 734

Historic Period: 18th century or earlier

Production Place: Alaska, North America, The Americas

Credit Line: Purchased with support from Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1980

The expressive head on the handle of this comb has engraved hair, cheek tattoos and a notched line round the face which may represent the edge of a parka hood. The eyes, nostrils and mouth are

deeply drilled and the squared spaces between the tines suggest that a metal saw blade was used to cut them. The engraving on the handle appears on one side only. Metal tools were obtained by the Inuit from Asian sources long before the arrival of Europeans in the Arctic, though use of a saw blade in the manufacture of this comb suggests that it was made later in the prehistoric period.

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. 235.

Provenance

Purchased by the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia from Arbutus Limited on the advice of Robert Sainsbury in 1980 out of income from the Sainsbury Purchasing Fund.
