



Fish or whale ornament

Not on display

Title/Description: Fish or whale ornament

Object Type: Ornament

Materials: Walrus ivory

Measurements: l. 111 mm

Accession Number: 735

Historic Period: Punuk (c. AD 500-1200)

Production Place: Bering Sea, North America, The Americas

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

The underside of the body of this fish or whale image is plain and slightly concave, with two pairs of holes forming attachment points for thongs. They do not seem sufficiently robust to withstand heavy

pressure, so the piece probably served an ornamental rather than a directly practical function. The tail, more fish-like than whale-like, is carved in the round and may have projected from the object to which the fish was originally attached. 'Punuk' has been written in pencil beneath the head by a previous owner.

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. 233.

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.
