



Wrist guard

Not on display

Title/Description: Wrist guard

Object Type: Implement

Materials: Walrus ivory

Measurements: l. 92 x w. 31 x d. 22 mm

Accession Number: 832

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, 1982

During the Punuk period special wrist guards, or bracers, began to be used (possibly an introduction from north-east Asia; see Wardwell, 1986: 22) to protect the archer's wrist and the base of the

thumb from the slap of the bow string when an arrow was released. This dark ivory example, deeply engraved with typical Punuk designs, has a concave inner surface which curves upwards to cover the base of the thumb. Rectangular holes on either side are for the wristband, now lost, and there are two tiny holes at each corner, possibly for an additional sinew wrist cord (see Collins et al., 1973 : 32, for related examples).

After the harpoon, the bow was the Inuit's most important hunting weapon, especially for caribou. Bows were of driftwood, sometimes combined with bone and ivory; arrows were of wood, with feather flights and stone, bone or antler points.

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 Piers Morris, London, on the advice of Robert Sainsbury in 1982 from the income of the Sainsbury Purchasing Fund.
