

Basic Detail Report



Harpoon-Dart

Date

1700-1900

Medium

Bone, ivory, flint, hide, sinew

Description

Oonak spear head for killing small seals. Composite object of two pointed barbs of bone attached to a thong of hide. The thong is doubled back on itself and threaded through a hole drilled width wise halfway through the first barb. This barb is decorated with small concentric circular designs, the back splits into three pointed sections. The second of the two bone components is lashed to the thong through a hole 1/5th from its broad end by a loop of wrapped and knotted cord. This second barb is long and pointed and the pointed end reaches just to the back of the first barb. There is also a small piece of twisted cord that runs the length of the long barb with a tiny piece of sharp flint suspended from just below where the thong passes through the first barb. Inuit. Arctic. Originally this would have had a long line attached to it and would have been placed at the end of a harpoon. Harpoons and spears used in hunting sea mammals such as whales and seals were designed to pierce the body of the animal and included dart or spring hook components with long ropes that would stay attached to the underside of the animal's hide as it pulled away. The rope or cord line would unwind from the harpoon and the hunter would keep hold of the end. As the animal swam to escape the hunter it would tow the kayak behind it. The objective was to tire the animal so that it was easier to kill. This arrangement of bone components on the dart head is designed to spread out and flatten under the skin so that the skin doesn't tear through, thereby releasing the seal.

Dimensions

Object/Work: 320 x 30 x 30 mm