

Pendant

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Polar bear canine (nanuq) attached to a leather strap and used as a pendant.

Accession Number 2022.18.92

Period 20th century

Materials skin, leather, tooth, polar bear

Measurements 8,09 x 2,7 x 1,19 cm

Historical context

Polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) canine tooth pierced at the opposite end of its root and attached to a caribou hide strap. Used as a pendant.

This type of pendant is worn around the neck or close to the chest. In addition to the decorative value of its crescent-shaped motif, for some it symbolizes and confers the strength and determination of the polar bear (*nanuq*, in the Inuit language), a fearsome hunter. In Inuit culture, this large carnivorous mammal, an excellent swimmer, is seen as a powerful spirit helper. In contemporary Inuit sculpture, polar bears are often depicted more or less realistically. Other representations of the bear are distinguished by anthropomorphic features suggesting a source of inspiration attributable to shamanic transformations.

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Photo by Victor Diaz Lamich