

Sculpture

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Soapstone sculpture of a woman from the sea (Sedna).

Accession Number 2022.18.167

Artiste / Auteur Unarluk, Josie?

Period 20th century

Materials stone, soapstone

Measurements 6,5 x 6,79 x 8,09 cm

Historical context

Soapstone sculpture of the “Woman of the Sea”. Here, her bust is extended by marine mammal flippers, like those of a seal. In Nunavik, the lower part of her body is often completed by a fish tail, rather than

marine mammal attributes. In this case, she's called Iqalunappa or Iqaluullamiluuq (half-human, half-fish). In this sculpture, her long-haired head is stretched forward, while her wide-open pectoral fins frame prominent breasts. This feminine, nurturing figure is drawn from Inuit mythology. She reigns over the animals at the bottom of the sea. When her hair is loose and matted, it expresses her fury that a taboo has been broken. The "Woman of the Sea" then holds back the animals, and the hunters return empty-handed. The shaman must find out whose fault it is to have broken the rules. Then he will intercede with the "Sea Woman" and detangle her hair to appease her. This sculpture signed ᐃᓯᓯ (Jusie) may be the work of Josie Unaluk of Puvirnituk, Nunavik.

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Photo by Victor Diaz Lamich