



Goggles

Date

c. A.D. 100-500

Primary Maker

Old Bering Sea Culture (Siberian Yup'ik)

Medium

Walrus ivory

Description

These exquisitely carved goggles have distinct eyebrows, eye slits, and a notch for the bridge of the nose. They may have protected the wearer’s eyes from the blinding glare of the sun reflecting off the Arctic snow. However, some scholars suggest that the slits are too large for effective sun protection. Instead, they may have been used in masked dance performances to represent the inua, the inner or soul spirit, which the Eskimo believe exists in all things. Both masks and goggles enable transformation into other identities.

Dimensions

Overall: 1 1/2 × 5 1/4 × 1/2 in. (3.8 × 13.3 × 1.3 cm)