

## ***Artwork 6 - Inuit Whale-bone Sculpture***

*Artworks at Science Learning Centre London*

**Artist unknown**



*Whalebone sculpture 110 cm x 128 cm*

*Note: All artworks are copyrighted*

Among the peoples of the Earth, few have had a deeper or more profound knowledge of animals than the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic. For centuries these semi-nomadic wanderers traversed the tundra in search of the game upon which they depended for food and clothing. If today's Inuit no longer rely on animals for their survival as their ancestors did, their knowledge of the region's wildlife remains strong, and contemporary Inuit sculpture abounds in images of seals, caribous and birds of all descriptions. The most common animal subject, however, is the polar bear, an animal traditionally regarded as a symbol of physical and spiritual power and only infrequently hunted for its meat. The unsigned example included here, carved in the 1970s from brownish-white organic whalebone by an artist from the northern half of Baffin Island, captures the animal's grace as well as its tremendous strength, and contains hints of an underlying spiritual meaning.