



Tupilak

Date

1970s-1980s

Primary Maker

Katladlit Inuit

Medium

caribou antler and stone

Description

In Inuit mythology, Tupilek are creatures of misfortune that were originally created from various natural materials such as human hair, animal skins, and wood. People skilled in sorcery made these creatures in secrecy in order to kill their enemies. However, because they were all originally made from perishable materials, they have all disappeared. No one has ever found a real Tupilak.

Beginning in the twentieth century, figures representing Tupilek were created out of carved whalebone for sale to foreigners. Within Inuit society, animals and humans, as well as creatures that are part animal and part human, coexist. This coexistence relies mainly on the cooperation of spirits.

Dimensions

Overall: 8 1/2 x 3 1/2 x 1 3/8 in. (21.6 x 8.9 x 3.5 cm)