

BEN PUNGOWIYI

Ben, an enrolled member of the Native Village of Savoonga, is a skilled carver whose artistic career began at age 6 under the tutelage of his grandfather, Donald Pungowiyi. As he progressed through elementary school, his father Ivan Pungowiyi and Edwin Noongwook helped him further develop his skills. After attending high school in Fairbanks, Ben joined the Army, eventually returning to his home in Savoonga in 2006.

Pungowiyi's experience hunting sea mammals since childhood gradually inspired him to begin carving walrus. He excels in depicting them, and his incredibly lifelike and anatomically detailed walrus sculptures are highly prized by collectors today. Ben also works in fossilized whalebone, creating large and elegant works of contemporary art.



Ayveq (Walrus), New walrus ivory © 2019, Ben Pungowiyi

Prices for the artwork can be obtained by contacting
The Journey Museum Store at (605) 394-2201.

U.S. Department of the Interior
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SONG OF THE SEA:

CARVINGS OF ST. LAWRENCE ISLAND

featuring

Edwin Noongwook,
Ike Kulowiyi,
& Ben Pungowiyi

October 24, 2019
to January 7, 2020



Woman Dancer, New walrus ivory
© 2019, Edwin Noongwook



Momma's Boy,
New walrus ivory,
fossil walrus ivory
© 2019, Ike Kulowiyi



Drummers and Dancers,
New walrus ivory © 2019,
Edwin Noongwook



Iviisa (Halibut), New walrus ivory
© 2019, Ben Pungowiyi



SONG OF THE SEA: CARVINGS OF ST. LAWRENCE ISLAND

St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, has been home to Yupik people and their tradition of ivory and bone carving for thousands of years. Prehistoric carvings served both utilitarian and ceremonial purposes. With the arrival of Euro-American sailors and traders in the nineteenth century, Yupik carvers created decorative pieces for sale and trade. These traditions have continued and evolved to the present day. In addition to highlighting the outstanding work of these three contemporary Yupik carvers, the goal of this exhibition is to enlighten the public about the tremendous cultural and economic importance of Alaska Native walrus ivory and bone carving.

This issue is also addressed in the IACB's publication, *Alaska Native Ivory*, which clarifies the legal rights of Alaska Natives to harvest walrus and carve and sell walrus ivory and bone art and craftwork, and differentiates their source of economic livelihood from the African elephant ivory ban. A copy of the publication can be found on the IACB website, www.doi.gov/iacb or by contacting us.

EDWIN NOONGWOOK

Edwin, an enrolled member of the Native Village of Savoonga, first began carving in high school under the tutelage of master carvers such as Alexander Akeya. He further refined his craft with guidance from his friend and fellow carver Ronald Apangalook of Gambell.

Noongwook creates his carvings from baleen and new walrus ivory. He is one of the few Savoonga carvers who regularly creates dynamic human forms, including fishermen, dancers, and hunters. There is a fluid gracefulness to his pieces, capturing the motion of both people and animals in his work.

IKE KULOWIYI

Ike, an enrolled member of the Native Village of Savoonga, began carving at the age of 12, learning the art from his grandfather, Albert Kulowiyi.

He left St. Lawrence Island to attend school in Fairbanks, later moving to Oregon and Indiana. Eventually, he returned to Savoonga to help support his family.

As a boat crew captain, Kulowiyi hunts whales and walrus for family subsistence purposes. These activities provide him with great insight into the forms and motions of marine animals, and he conveys this intimate knowledge in his artwork. He is best known for his intricate carvings of whales, seals, underwater scenes, and shamanic transformations.

Dinner, New walrus ivory,
fossil walrus ivory
© 2019, Ike Kulowiyi

