

## Eyebrows — Qaugluk

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### ILAIT QAUGLUTUTAARTUT. – SOME EYE BROWS ARE LONG.

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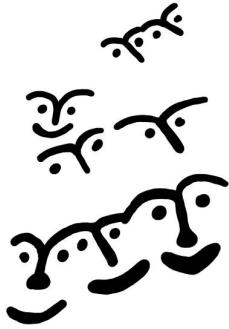


Image: Petroglyph faces from Cape Alitak, showing the Alutiiq brow motif. Courtesy of Sven Haakanson Jr.

Faces are a common subject in Alutiiq sculpture and graphic art. Petroglyphs, paintings, incised drawings, masks, dolls, and other carvings show both human and animal faces. In all these mediums, artists use a distinctive design—a connected nose and brow motif. A straight line symbolizes the nose. Two connected, arched lines form the brow. The design resembles a capital Y, but with curved lines. It typically represents the brow ridge, but it may also symbolize eyebrows or eyelashes. Ancestral drawings on slate show brow lines with short, hair-like lines along the top.

Sometimes the brow motif appears with other facial features—like eyes, a mouth, a pair of labrets, face paint, or tattoos. Other times, artists show the motif alone, perhaps as an abstract reference to a person or a group of people. For example, some ancestral drawings show only clusters of brow motifs with no other facial features. These unadorned faces suggest a group of people—perhaps even ancestors or spirits.

The shape of the Alutiiq brow motif also mimics animal forms and may be a visual reference to the close connections between people and important species. Some say the motif looks like a whale's tail. Others see a bird in flight. The combination of animal and human elements reflects traditional beliefs—the close connections between people and animals, and the ability of animals to show their inner human-like spirit.