

The Virtual Coe *Being together while being apart...*

August 6, 2021

*What we have learned,
we do with the dolls.*





This doll, created by Neva Rivers (Paniyagaq) around 1975, is a beautiful example of Yup'ik **play dolls**. These dolls, typically made for young girls by close family members, are part of the instructional play of Yup'ik childhood. The dolls wear realistic, handcrafted clothing that can be taken off and put back on. When girls are younger, the clothing would be made for them, but as they get older, the girls learn how to make parkas, mukluks, and more on a small scale. Rivers's *Doll* has a face carved from whalebone with incredible detail, including eyes and teeth made from small seed beads. Her clothing is made from seal skin, gut, fur, and reindeer fur and decorated with delicate beading.



The Smithsonian Institution's "Alaska Native Collections—Sharing Knowledge" **site** features comments on work from elders, including Neva Rivers. In **discussing dolls** like the one in the Coe collection, Rivers explains,

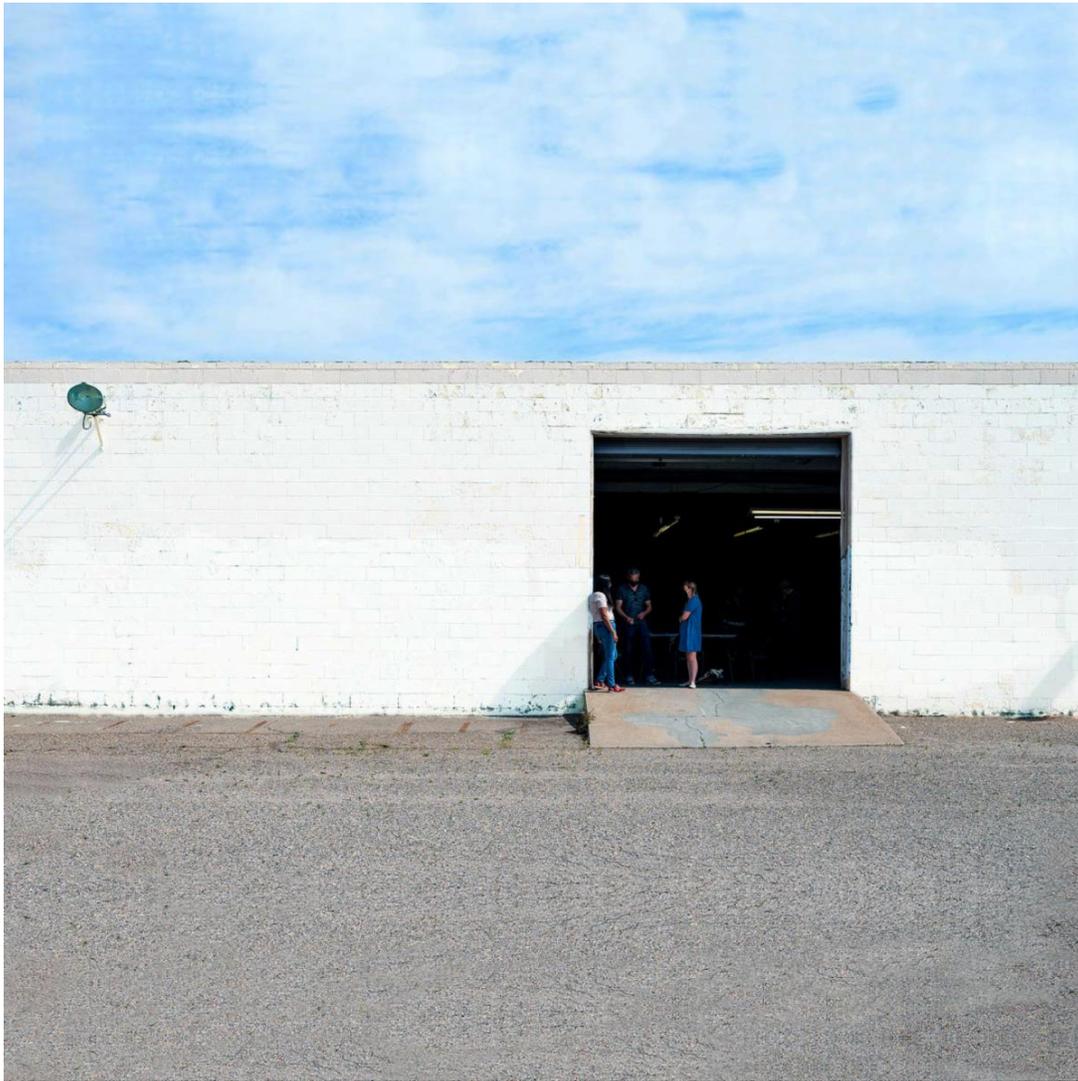
"What we have learned, we do with the dolls. We let them sit down and let them pretend their sewing, pretend them she's cooking. Irniangqerrlutek-llu [they would also have children]. Irniara-llu tunumigcitaqluku [she would let her doll have a pretend baby on its back]. That's how we learned how to create a family. And the daddy would go out seal hunting, and she will share with the others. We make a clothes for them, practice. We learn a lot of things from the dolls."

Learn more [here](#).

Neva Rivers (Yup'ik) *Doll*, c. 1975.

Sealskin, seal gut, seal fur, reindeer fur, beads, wool, and whalebone, 12.5 x 12 in. NA0990

Mark your calendars!



August 19th, 6-8 pm!

Get Hands-on with the Coe, co-presented with **First American Art Magazine**, is an interactive celebration of reimagining of the Coe activating our new projects building. Experience **Nani Chacon's** (Diné and Chicana) on-going mural project, **Will Wilson's** (Diné) CIPX: Critical Indigenous Photographic Exchange, performances by the **Lightning Boy Foundation Youth Group hoop dancers**, music by **DJ Celeste Worl** (Tlingit), **Axle Contemporary's** art truck, and food from **YouthWorks!** Santa Fe. Relax, enjoy, and celebrate the arts and community!



The Virtual Coe

is taking a little summer break...

We look forward to seeing you in September!

To view past The Virtual Coe issues, please click [here](#).

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