

Inua exhibit to remain until November 6

One of the most important exhibitions of the year at the Anchorage Historical and Fine Arts Museum opened on September 24, and will continue through November 6.

More than 250 of the most striking and significant objects

in the Edward W. Nelson collection of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History illustrate the rich cultural life of the 19th century Eskimo of the Bering Sea.

The exhibition was organized

by Drs. William Fitzhugh and Susan Kaplan of the National Museum of Natural History and the National Museum of Man, and it opened there some months ago.

Edward W. Nelson was a remarkable young man of 22 hired a little more than a century ago by the U.S. Signal Corps, at the request of Spencer Baird, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, as a weather observer stationed at St. Michael on Norton Sound.

Within three years he had traveled hundreds of miles and gathered thousands of objects, including natural history specimens as well as ethnographic

artifacts, which he shipped back to Washington.

The ethnographic material alone constitutes the largest and finest single body of 19th century Eskimo material culture in existence.

All of the works crafted by the Bering Sea Eskimos had a useful purpose; at the same time, everything was made to be beautiful, to please the *inuas* or spirits that inhabited everything in the natural world. The exhibition stresses the artistic beauty of the pieces but also places them in their cultural context, with the use of photographs taken by Nelson and extensive explanatory

labels.

To bring the evolution of Bering Sea art up to the present, contemporary works by well-known Eskimo artists have been added to the exhibition from three Alaskan museum collections.

Tours of the exhibit will be given Saturdays at 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. and on Sundays at 1:00 p.m. Films will be shown daily, Tuesday through Saturday at 12:00 noon and on Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

Lectures on subjects related to Inua will take place every Thursday evening during the month of October at 8:00 p.m.