

# "Survival: Life and Art of the Alaskan Eskimo" in Phoenix

WASHINGTON, D.C.--The Heard Museum will host the only Southwest opening of a thought-provoking exhibition called "Survival: Life and Art of the Alaskan Eskimo." Supported by a grant of up to \$88,035 from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the exhibition, which began its

tour at the Newark Museum in March, 1977, opened in Phoenix, Ariz., on December 11, and will continue through January 22, 1978.

The exhibition is designed to show the survival of the Eskimo people in a difficult and often hostile environment; survival of a culture and a continuing way

of life, lasting over thousands of years into the present day; and, the threat to survival of this ancient people and their traditions from the impact of modern society that is rapidly encroaching upon even the most remote regions of Alaska.

The intrusion of Western industrialized society with its mo-

ney economy has caused the Eskimo's subsistence patterns to diverge from those of his forefathers. The photographs and objects exhibited in "Survival" illustrate the continuity and conflict that are interwoven into the fabric of Eskimo existence.

The objects in the exhibition highlight the priorities in the life of Alaskan Eskimos from prehistoric times to the present. They are grouped, with accompanying informational panels, to illustrate hunting, whaling, fishing, the home, clothing and adornment, recreation, religion and ceremony, and art.

From the collections of the Newark Museum and on loan from other public and private collections, there are ivory carvings, ceremonial masks, sculptures, paintings, prints, household articles, dolls, tools, weapons and costumes. Carvings in ivory, wood and stone by contemporary Eskimo artists are also included. Some objects continue the art of carving in the styles of previous years, while others combine traditional subject matter with modern form and design.

Samples of natural materials are also included for museum visitors to handle. Among these specimens are all of the essential components of Eskimo daily life: bleached seal skin, caribou fur, walrus hide, baleen, ivory and seal gut.

Photographs of contemporary and primitive scenes, interspersed throughout the exhibit, depict the starkness and beauty of the Eskimo's environment, as well as the realities of his existence.

A twelve-minute audio-visual show also accompanies the exhibit. The show highlights contemporary Alaskan Eskimo life and problems through slides and taped interviews. It portrays Eskimo people who themselves have lived according to both the traditional and the evolving modern lifestyle.

A catalogue for the show about the life of the Alaskan Eskimo has been published by the Newark Museum in conjunction with the exhibit and will be available at the Heard Museum Shop throughout the exhibition.

Because of the National Endowment for the Humanities grant, the exhibition "Survival" has already been enjoyed by thousands of viewers in both its east coast opening at the Newark Museum in New Jersey and its west coast opening at the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, California. Attesting to its popularity, over 15,000 visitors were attracted to the Santa Ana Museum between September and November. This is almost double the normal expected attendance of the Bowers Museum for that period of time.