



## Exhibition to display U.S. and Soviet cultural art

A major international exhibition of 500 objects representing the cultures of the North Pacific region, including many artifacts from the Soviet Union and North American collections never before displayed, will come to Anchorage in 1991.

The exhibition, organized by the Smithsonian Institution, the Soviet Union's Academy of Sciences and the International Research and Exchanges Board, will be coming to the Anchorage Museum of History and Art from April 7 to Aug. 11, 1991.

The exhibition, *Crossroads of Continents*, will present the cultures of Alaska and Siberia from the end of the Ice Age era to modern times, using archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, photographs, works of art and films.

Many of the artifacts have never before been displayed.

The exhibition will open in September 1988 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., and then will begin a four-year tour of museums in New York, Seattle, Anchorage, Los Angeles, Indianapolis and Ottawa, Canada.

In 1992-94, *Crossroads* will travel to museums in Moscow, Leningrad and other cities in the Soviet Union under the sponsorship of the Soviet Ministry of Culture.

The cooperative project offers scholars in the United States, the Soviet Union and Canada an unprecedented opportunity to exchange information, Smithsonian officials said.

The exhibition combines Soviet and North American museum collections in a single show that could not have been produced without the cooperation of the three nations because the earliest artifacts from Siberia and Alaska were collected by expeditions from the opposite continent.

Eskimo artifacts, for example, were gathered in the 18th and 19th centuries by Russian explorers. For centuries, these objects have been in museum collections in Leningrad.

Conversely, significant early Rus-

sian artifacts, collected by American explorers in eastern Siberia, have been part of the American Museum of Natural History's holdings in New York City. Until now, none of these collections has been re-examined by national experts from their lands of origin.

The 500 objects shown in *Crossroads* represent cultures of the North Pacific Rim from Siberia to southern British Columbia.

"Despite their Arctic and sub-Arctic locations, people of the North Pacific had remarkable technological and artistic sophistication," said Dr. William Fitzhugh, anthropologist at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

Prehistoric displays include ancient artworks and a reconstruction of a shaman's burial from the 2,000-year-old Ekven site in Siberia.

Specimens include hunting, fishing, domestic and ritual objects from Alaskan Tlingit, Athapascan, Aleut and Eskimo cultures and from Siberian tribes including Chukchi, Lamut, Koryak and Amur River peoples. Full-costumed figures, ceremonial reconstructions and whaling shrines will be among the exhibition's highlights.

Half of the artifacts come from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in Leningrad; the remainder are from the Smithsonian, the American Museum of Natural History in New York, the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago and the National Museum of Civilization in Ottawa.

A major point to be made by the exhibition, Fitzhugh added, is that the political barrier that now stands between East and West at the Bering Strait is an historical anomaly. As visitors to the exhibitions will see, a lively cultural and commercial interchange between Siberians and Alaskans had been the rule for centuries.

This commerce and movement of Native people was stopped with the introduction of modern political barriers of the 20th century.



Shown at the top right and going counter-clockwise, the American Museum of Natural History in New York is a pipe from the Siberian Koryak tribe, a Koryak dance costume and from the Museum Anthropology and Ethnography in Leningrad, Russia, is a Tlingit ceremonial crest headdress. From the Smithsonian Institution is a Bering Sea Eskimo Mask and also from Leningrad is a Tlingit canoe model.