

In fine example of dramatizing through art, actual fishhooks are mounted on a mural which depicts their use by Indians of Channel Islands of southern California, in 1000-1800 A.D.

Among museum scientists, there are two distinct theories of display. The first is called the open-storage principle. Its basic idea is, simply, to show everything the museum has got. The second is called the principle of selectivity, and in recent years it has gained increasing favor in our museums. By this system, only a typical fraction of the museum's treasures, like the visible end of an iceberg, is on display. The greater part lies in vast storerooms where scientists carry on the unending work of study and research.

The American Indian exhibit in the Chicago Natural History Museum is a masterful example of selectivity at work. It has been ever since 1941, when the anthropology department, under the direction of Curator Paul S. Martin, began a memorable revision of its open-storage exhibits. The staff disassembled dozens of dreary, overcrowded cases and put them together again in tasteful displays which would capture the eye and the mind and, most important, tell a good story. They substituted bright case-fixtures for the funereal glow of ceiling lights, lavished warm color upon the displays and replaced the wordy labels with fine, creative art work to supplement the specimens.

Today each precious item is, like a jewel, dignified by its own setting. The crowded casefuls of 50 or 60 minutely differing specimens—spearheads or fishhooks or pottery—are gone; instead, a few typical specimens are mounted upon colorful, stylistic murals and cutouts which depict the actual use and construction of each item by the Indians. Even comic-strip techniques appear in some displays; for the museum believes that any familiar visual form is fair means for the communication of ideas.

The house cleaning goes on. Of the four new halls—one devoted to archaeology, three to ethnology—one hall is yet to be completed. By the time it is done, in 1956, work may have begun anew on the others. For display techniques continue to change as our knowledge continues to grow. And the modern philosophy of exhibition is well expressed by Colonel Clifford C. Gregg, director of the Chicago museum, when he says: "These Indian exhibits are permanent—by which we mean, permanent until we can do a better job."

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This diorama shows sacrifice of a girl to the Morning Star God to drive away evil. Sacrifices were made under the direction of Pawnee priests, and were solemn ceremonies to guarantee the well-being of the tribe. The paint on the girl's body was part of the ritual

