

REFERENCE CODE: AkAMH

REPOSITORY NAME:

Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center
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Guide prepared by: Amy Valentine, Archivist

TITLE: Warden Collection

COLLECTION NUMBER: B2023.007

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: 1994, 2008-2023

Extent: 1 box, 1 Oversize folder

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): Brian Adams, Aisa Warden, AKU-MATU, Alaska Airlines, Alaska Airlines Magazine, Alaska Dispatch News, Alaska Native Heritage Center, Anchorage Cultural Council, Anchorage Daily News, Anchorage Museum, Anchorage Press, The Arctic Sounder, Oscar Avellaneda, Victoria Barber, Tamar Ben-Yosef, Inua Blevins, Nick Bradford, Riza Brown, Susy Buchanan, Suzanna Caldwell, Canadianart, Roy Corral, Julie Decker, Alex Demarban, Mike Dunham, Alida Dunning, F Magazine, Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, First Alaskans, First Alaskans Institute, Nicholas Galanin, Josh Geniuno, Sarah Henning, Loren Holmes, Hensley Holthouse, Homer Tribune, Ilasigvik College, Inuit Art Quarterly, Hilkka Liikkanen, Eric Lucas, Museum magazine, Native Voices at the Nautry, Priscilla Naungagialaq, The Performance Post, Richard Perry, James Przeczewski, Melissa Shaginoff, Steve Quinn, Rasmuson Foundation, Beth Skabar, Dawnell Smith

Administrative/Biographical History:

Aisa Warden (formerly known as Allison Akootchook Warden) is an Iñupiaq interdisciplinary hip-hop and performance artist, and a tribal member of the Native Village of Kaktovik.

Warden engages her audience with stories and themes of the Iñupiaq people, paying homage to tradition while bringing a fresh perspective to contemporary issues.

Warden's rap name – AKU-MATU – honors the memory of her great-Uncle Matumeak and her great-grandfather Akootchook. In looking for her inspiration, she asks "What would a polar bear say if he could rap? Or a caribou, or a whale? What about if an Ancestor came back so far from the past that it actually circles around and becomes the future?" Warden uses performance and irreverence to engage her audiences, conscious of the power of hip-hop to broach unorthodox themes – and appreciation for its aural resonance with traditional Iñupiaq sounds and drumbeats.

She is an engaged community member, particularly passionate about awakening Indigenous youth to their potential and voice. Every aspect of her performances – from her lyrics to her costumes and integration of Iñupiaq dance – honors her Ancestors and asserts the continuity of Iñupiaq tribal sovereignty over their land. "I create music as a way to convey the psychological impacts of rapid colonization on our traditional territories and share possible strategies for navigating forward through the impacts of climate change and the push to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which encompasses our village."

The breadth and impact of Warden's work has been recognized through many residencies and awards, including the Alaska Governor's Award for the Arts and Humanities for work with youth and a grant from the [Art Matters Foundation](#), which honors artists whose work breaks ground aesthetically and socially.

My story as an artist is interwoven with theatre, performance art, music, installation, visual arts and literary arts. All year long, I work quietly in different mediums, preparing projects for later debut. Akin to serving on a whaling crew, all of the different activities serve a similar goal: to bring the perspectives of my Ancestors forward into today, igniting fires within others to work for their people in an omni-directional way.

~ Warden¹

Scope and Content Description:

This collection of artist papers includes photographic prints, resumes, awards and certificates, articles and reviews, and student letters of appreciation. Also included are flyers, mailouts, and programs that document Warden's performances, workshops, and involvement throughout Alaskan communities. The collection also includes two "Melting Fears" audio cassette tapes and one DVD of Warden's "Calling All Polar Bears" performance.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged by format and subject.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE

Restrictions on Access: The collection is open for research use.

¹ <https://www.nativeartsandcultures.org/allison-warden>. Accessed 31 March 2025.

Physical Access: Original items in good condition.

Technical Access: DVD player may be used to view materials. Audio cassettes may not be accessible due to fragile format.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:

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Preferred Citation:

Warden Collection, Anchorage Museum, B2023.7

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information

Collection donated by Warden on June 23, 2023.

Processing Note

Newspaper and magazine materials photocopied; originals and duplicative materials to be added to Alaskan Artist research files or discarded. A/V materials to be rehoused.

This collection was originally designated “Allison Akootchook Warden Collection” but was changed to “Warden Collection” in October 2025 to reflect the artist’s legal name change.

Separated Materials

Oversize items stored with Oversize Collections.

RELATED MATERIALS

AA – Warden, Aisa

Climate Change & Conservation Subject Guide

Environmental Injustices Subject Guide

Indigenous Subsistence Activities Guide

2018.007.008 Photograph, *Allison Akootchook Warden*, Artist/Maker: Brian Adams

SUBJECTS

Anchorage / Dgheytnu – Alaska

Awards

Climate change

Decolonization

Environmental issues

Hip-hop

Iñupiaq (Indigenous people) – Alaska

Performance artists
Performing arts festivals
Playbills

Detailed Description of the Collection

Box 1

F1 - Photographs

- "Wait, Let Me Finish Putting on my Armor" – A Performance Art Piece - May 2, 2008 (.1-.28)
- .8 – [Over the shoulder view of a person (presumably Warden) wearing a silver parka made from a thermal blanket (?); show attendees milling in the background]
 - .16 – [Person taking a photograph of Warden posed between two people]
 - .23 – [Group photo with Warden (in silver performance outfit) and three cardboard cutouts of people dancing]
 - .26 – [["Wait, Let Me Finish Putting on my Armor" – A Performance Art Piece - May 2, 2008. Show attendees watching Warden perform]
 - "Wait, Let Me Finish Putting on my Armor" event flyers

F2 – Administrative Documents

- .29 – [Allison Warden, Performance Arts resume, 2009]
 - "Ode to the Polar Bear" budget and timeline
 - Boarding passes
 - Contacts

F3 – Awards

- .30 – Certificate of Recognition - Allison Warden, Employee of the Month - May 2008
- .31 – Governor's Awards - Allison Warden, Distinguished Service to the Humanities Award - January 29, 2015
 - Rasmuson Foundation, Individual Artist Awards, 2012
 - Governor's Awards program, 2015
 - Rasmuson Foundation, Individual Artist Awards, 2015
 - Governor's Arts & Humanities Awards program, 2023

F4 – Articles and Reviews

- Newspaper clippings, magazine articles, and arts reviews

F5 – Performance Arts and Festivals

- "Time Immemorial" A Play by Jack Dalton and Allison Warden, the Official Script of the World Premier 2009 Production
- Playbills
- Festival programs and schedules

F6 – Flyers, Pamphlets, and Programs

F7 – Youth Workshops

- Programs, student poetry, and student letters of appreciation

F8 – Conference Materials

F9 – Audio-Visual Materials

- .32 – Calling All Polar Bears featuring Inupiaq Inter-Disciplinary Artist Allizon Warden
[Recorded performance and post-show discussion, DVD]
- .33 – Allison Warden *Melting Fears* [Audio-cassette tape, 1994]
- .34 – Allison Warden *Melting Fears* [Audio-cassette tape, 1994]

Oversize Materials

- Posters, student work, newsletters

Guide written: March 31, 2025

Guide updated: November 25, 2025