

BELONG: WHO CALLS ALASKA HOME? TEACHER CONTENT PACKET

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INTRODUCTION

This resource examines artworks in the collection of the Anchorage Museum and on view in the Art of the North Gallery.

What does it mean to belong in Alaska?

When did Alaska become a place people lived?

Why have artists chosen Alaska as a place to belong?

Alaska has been called home for thousands of years. People first came to live in this northern place following resources. Here, they found brilliant, saturated summer skies, silent winters of deep valleys, and tall mountains. The unique environments and landscapes of this place have provided inspiration for artists and makers for as long as people have inhabited it. This resource explores what it means to belong in Alaska through the work of artists from the 1800s to the present day. Some of the highlighted artists were born and raised in Alaska. Some of the artists have come from elsewhere to make Alaska their home. Their paintings, drawings and sculptures examine the intimate feelings of belonging—or struggling to belong—while living and creating in the North.

Belong

verb be•long \bi-'loŋ, bē-\

to be in a proper place, to be suitable, appropriate, or advantageous

to be in the relation of a member, adherent, inhabitant, etc.

to have the proper qualifications, to be a member of a group

to be proper or due; be properly or appropriately placed, situated

While using this resource, keep in mind these existing definitions and create your own.

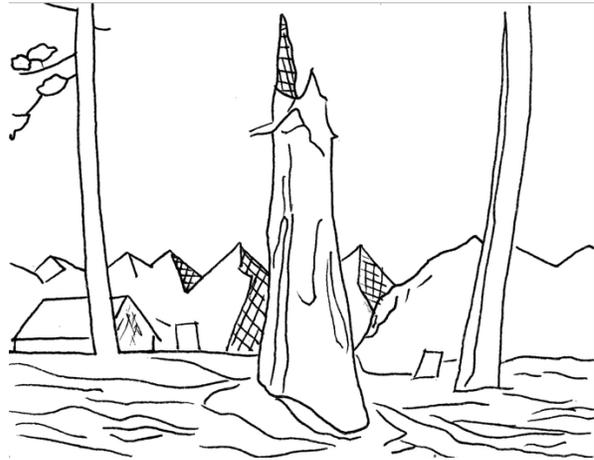


PART I: ROCKWELL KENT

Rockwell Kent (1882-1971)

Rockwell Kent was a painter, printmaker, engraver and illustrator. He explored many different careers, working as an artist, author, farmer, sailor, carpenter and fisherman. Born and raised in New York state, Kent found his calling as an artist at an early age and went on to pursue formal training. In 1918, Kent moved to Alaska for seven months. He lived in relative seclusion on Alaska's Fox Island with his nine-year-old son. Though his time living in Alaska was brief, it significantly impacted him personally and professionally. Kent wrote a book about this time in the North called, *Wilderness: A Journal of Quiet Adventure in Alaska*, which captures the sense of home and place Kent found in the North. Some of Kent's most well-known works depict images of his time in Alaska.

"I crave snow-topped mountains, dreary wastes, and the cruel Northern Sea with its far horizons at the edge of the world where infinite space begins. Here skies are clearer and deeper and, for the greater wonders they reveal, a thousand times more eloquent of the eternal mystery than those of softer lands." — Rockwell Kent



Sketch of "Alaska Winter, 1919 (Fox Island, Alaska)" by Rockwell Kent

Learn more about Rockwell Kent:

onlinecollections.anchagemuseum.org/#/artifacts/5644

ACTIVITY 1

Students are asked to reflect on what aspects of Alaska are important to them. Kent, known for his landscape paintings, writes about what draws him to Alaska.

PROMPT Using sketch paper, write or draw the people, places, objects, or experiences of Alaska that are meaningful to you, or your friends and family.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY Invite students to share in pairs what is important to them about Alaska and why.



PART II: FLORENCE NAPAAQ MALEWOTKUK

Florence Napaaq Malewotkuk (pronunciation: Ma lee wot kuk) (1906-1971)

Florence Malewotkuk was a Saint Lawrence Island Yup'ik painter and illustrator. Malewotkuk was born on Saint Lawrence Island, in the village of Gambell. She began drawing as a young child, using any supplies available, and later pursued an artistic career as an adult. As an Alaska Native artist, Malewotkuk gained recognition in a time



when most artists were male and of European descent. Using paint and ink on paper, canvas, or skin, she created depictions of everyday life in her village. Malewotkuk's work reflects her experience of the people, animals, landscapes and activities of Alaska, where she lived throughout her life.

Sketch of "*Untitled - Seal Hunters' Return*" by Florence Malewotkuk, 1970

Learn more about Florence Malewotkuk:

[onlinecollections.anchoragemuseum.org - /artifacts/6708](https://onlinecollections.anchoragemuseum.org/artifacts/6708)

ACTIVITY 2

Students are invited to consider what inspires them and where that might take them in the future.

- PROMPT** Malewotkuk followed her passion for making and charted her own path as an artist. What are you passionate about? What path do you hope to chart for yourself? Create a map that shows where you are now and the journey to where you hope to go.
- EXTENSION ACTIVITY** Create a large imaginative collaborative map, plotting everyone's future journeys on one large piece of paper.
- DISCUSS** *Are there intersections of parallel journey? What do students need to make these journeys possible?*



PART III: SYDNEY LAURENCE

Sydney Laurence (1865-1940)

Sydney Laurence was an American painter who lived a life of adventure. In 1903, Laurence moved to Alaska, leaving his wife and two sons behind. For the next 37 years, Laurence captured the mysterious and overwhelming majesty of Alaska scenery using oil paints. Laurence closely observed the landscape of Alaska, making many sketches in the field and returning to his studio to paint. His romantic paintings of the North gained attention and acclaim, and established him as a renowned Alaskan painter.

"I was attracted by the same thing that attracted all the other suckers, gold. I didn't find any appreciable quantity of the yellow metal and then, like a lot of other fellows, I was breaking and couldn't get away. So, I resumed my painting. I found enough material to keep myself busy the rest of my life and I have stayed in Alaska ever since." —Sydney Laurence



Sketch of "*Mount McKinley, Rose Wash*" by Sydney Laurence, 1929

Learn more about Sydney Laurence:
onlinecollections.anchoragemuseum.org/#/artifacts/6213

ACTIVITY 3

Students are encouraged to represent a place they associate with home.

PROMPT Using sketch paper, imagine and draw yourself in a place you call home.

EXTENSION Create a group definition of home.

ACTIVITY

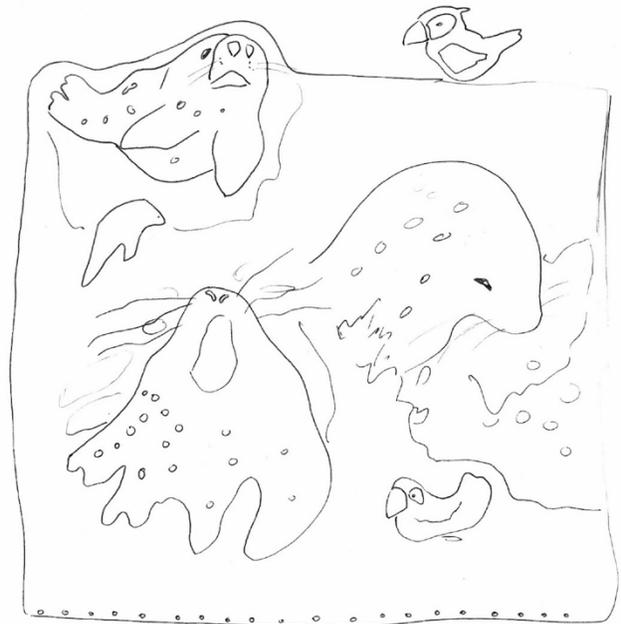
PART IV: ALVIN AMASON

Alvin Amason (1948-)

Alvin Amason is a Sugpiaq painter and sculptor living and working in Alaska. As a young person, he decided to pursue a career as an artist. Amason left Alaska for his artistic training, studying in Washington and Arizona. He then returned in the 1980s to his home state where he continues to live, teach, and create work. Amason combines painting and sculptural techniques, often attaching three dimensional elements to canvas. Amason's work draws upon his Sugpiaq culture and experiences as a child. Many pieces include representations of Alaska's wildlife, reflecting an understanding of animals that he gained while hunting with his grandfather on Kodiak Island.

"... I believe the ultimate high occurs when you feel you're walking in your own landscape."

—Alvin Amason



Sketch of "Agripina Day, From Two Rainbows" by Alvin Amason, 1976

Learn more about Alvin Amason: [onlinecollections.anchagemuseum.org/
#/artifacts/255](https://onlinecollections.anchagemuseum.org/#/artifacts/255)

PART V: TED LAMBERT

Ted Lambert (1905 – unknown)

Theodore Lambert was born, raised and trained as an artist in Chicago. He moved to Alaska in 1925. After working as a miner, dog musher and mail carrier, Lambert began to study under Eustace Ziegler. The two traveled throughout Alaska—painting landscape and images of life in the North. In 1960, Lambert disappeared from his remote cabin in Bristol Bay. He left behind paintings and a 250,000-word memoir. His artwork and words reflect his sense of belonging in Alaska, his adopted home.



“There is nothing either sentimental or decadent about northern painting. It is as vibrant and free-flowing as life itself. Alaska has been proud of her artists. There is no place in the continent, possibly no place in the world, where people have shown such boundless enthusiasm for paintings and pride in ownership.”
—Ted Lambert, *The Man Behind the Paintings*

Sketch of “*Tranquility*” by Theodore Lambert, 1939

Learn more about Ted Lambert, onlinecollections.anchoragemuseum.org/-/artifacts/6120

ACTIVITY 4

Students are asked to create a personal definition of belonging.

PROMPT Write or draw what belonging means to you.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY Invite students to discuss how their definitions are similar or different to their peers.

FINAL NOTES AND DISCUSSION

Allow students time to reflect on what they have learned.

- What artworks did they find interesting?
- What drew them to those works?
- What surprised them or challenged them?
- What more would they like to learn?



KEY TERMS

North – as a location-- the Northern part of the world as defined or implied above other regions as a direction--one of the four cardinal points of the compass, and the direction to which the needle typically points; opposite to south.

Romanticism – when capitalized, an 18th to 19th century European movement in art, literature, and criticism characterized by an emphasis on imagination and emotion and depictions of the wild, uncontrolled nature.

Home – where one lives permanently; a place where something or someone originates or thrives.

Naturalistic – in fine and literary art, representation that attempts to reflect things as we seem; also, a movement in the 19th century characterized by this artistic approach.

Alaska Native – Indigenous peoples of Alaska, usually defined by their language groups.

Arctic – area of the world around the North Pole; the area is often defined as the region north of the Arctic Circle which is 61 degrees' latitude.



STUDENT READING LIST

Books below are available at the Anchorage Public Library.

Preschool to Kindergarten

<i>Charlie and the Blanket Toss by Tricia Brown</i>	E-N BROWN
<i>Whale Snow by Debby Edwardson</i>	E-N EDWARDS

Lower Elementary (1st to 3rd grade)

<i>Kumak's House: a Tale of the Far North by Michael Bania</i>	E-N BANIA
<i>Whale Snow by Debby Edwardson</i>	E-N EDWARDS

Upper Elementary (4th to 6th grade)

<i>Children of the Midnight Sun: Young Native Voices of Alaska by Tricia Brown</i>	J-N 979.8004971 BROWN
<i>An Eskimo Birthday by Tom Robinson</i>	J-N ROBINSO
<i>Alaska: the Last Frontier by Emily Oachs</i>	J-N 979.8 OACHS

Middle & High School

<i>A Distant Enemy by Deb Vanasse</i>	J-N VANASSE
<i>Living our Cultures, Sharing our Heritage : the First Peoples of Alaska edited by Aron L. Crowell</i>	N 979.801 LIVING
<i>Growing up Native in Alaska by Alexandra McClanahan</i>	N 305.897 MCCLANA

Adult/teacher resources

<i>I Am Alaskan by Brian Adams</i>	N 979.8 ADAMS
<i>Alaska's Native People by Lael Morgan</i>	N 970.00497 ALASKAS
<i>Native Cultures in Alaska</i>	N 306.089 NATIVE



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WEB RESOURCES

Anchorage Museum Resource Center
anchoragemuseum.org/collections/archives
Anchorage Museum Collections
onlinecollections.anchoragemuseum.org
Alaska's Visual Archives
vilda.alaska.edu

For more teaching resources, visit anchoragemuseum.org/teachingresources

Educational resources at the Anchorage Museum are made possible with the support of the Hearst Foundation, the Atwood Foundation and the Alaska Humanities Forum.

