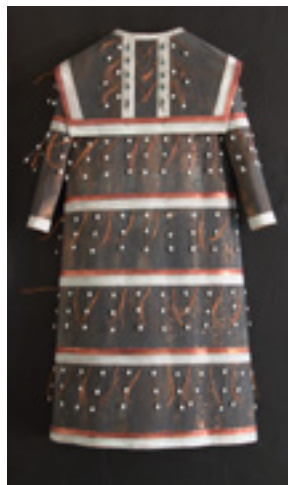


ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

GRADE 2: CREATING FROM WITHIN MYSELF



REBECCA LYON

WOMEN OF THE NORTH, 2004

Copper, glass, shell patina

2007.30.1a, 2007.30.1b, 2007.30.1c, 2007.30.1d



ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Rebecca Lyon (b. 1952) uses a variety of media to create works of art that speak to what it means to be Alaska Native today. Born in Cordova to parents of Alutiiq/Sugpiaq and Athabascan/Dene heritage, Lyon was exposed to Alaska Native issues from an early age. She cites her parents asking her to be quiet during meetings around Alaska Native issues as the beginning of her art making practice. Lyon would draw or make quietly as the meetings her parents attended took place. Today, Lyon uses varied creative approaches such as carving, metalwork, and screenprinting to create multimedia works which examine contemporary concerns. Lyon currently lives and works in Anchorage, Alaska.

ABOUT THE *WOMEN OF THE NORTH* SERIES

The garments of the *Women of the North* series reflect traditional women's regalia of four Alaska Native cultural groups. Yup'ik, Athabascan/Dene, Unangâx, and Southeast Tlingit/Haida style regalia are crafted in metal with embellishments such as shells, beads, and buttons. The crafting of regalia from metal is suggestive of armor and expresses the resilience of Alaska Native women.

- “Nothing is as personal as the clothing we wear. Clothing can be seen as a vessel or chalice that holds the human spirit and I have created these copper women's dresses to represent a gathering of women's spirits housed inside the most feminine of metals- copper. Clothing of metal representing strength and longevity, the use of nontraditional materials moves the visual dialogue into the present. This is my way of honoring the women of the North for their ability to survive natural and cultural adversity and their artistry.
- “Even though I wear Gap jeans and live a non-traditional lifestyle, one day some part of me will join them inside these symbolic copper vessels, because I have found I wear traditional clothing on the inside.
- “I wish to dedicate these four pieces from the series ‘Women of the North’ to my mother Joan Elva Corliss to commemorate her love and strength.”

ARTIST QUOTES

“You must speak about the time in which you live. You must produce things that speak of the time in which you are struggling, things that you find important. Never be a slave to the past. Always know that the past is there to support you, and it pushes you up. And you stand on the shoulders of the past and their accomplishments. Because the people of the past were always innovators. So, you must carry that torch onto the future, always creating new.”



A NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY In the titling of the works, Lyons calls the Unangaĥ garment ‘Aleut Woman.’ After arrival to the area in 1741, Russian colonizers used the term ‘Aleut’ to describe the Indigenous peoples living in what is now called the Aleutian Islands, the Alaska Peninsula, and the Kodiak Archipelago. The generalizing term of ‘Aleut’ was applied by Russian merchants, explorers, and missionaries to Indigenous peoples of multiple language groups and distinct cultures living in the region. Sugpiaq is the traditional self-designator of the peoples of Prince William Sound, the Kenai Peninsula, the Kodiak Archipelago, and the Alaska Peninsula. Unangan or Unangas (Atkan dialect) is the traditional self-designator of the peoples of the Aleutian Islands. The term Alutiiq is the way that the Sugpiaq peoples say Aleut, adapting pronunciation from the Russian word.

The term Athabascan is a Cree word, first applied arbitrarily to Dene peoples in 1828 by ethnologist and linguist Albert Gallatin. The word *dene* commonly means ‘people’ in Dene languages. Today, Dene peoples refer to themselves in a variety of ways, often using the name of their distinct language family as well as the adopted term Athabascan.

While all of these terms may be heard in use today, some find terminology inherited from colonizers offensive. The use of self-designators reflects the specificity of the language and culture of the Indigenous peoples to which the term refers.

KEY TERMS

<i>Sculpture (n)</i>	A three-dimensional work of art usually made by carving, modelling, casting or constructing
<i>Regalia</i>	Clothing, jewelry, or other adornment worn for important or ceremonial occasions
<i>Color</i>	The perceived hue of an image or object. Color is made by a process of light bouncing off of the object in a reflection seen by the eye
<i>Texture</i>	In art, what an object feels like to touch. Since art cannot always be touched, texture may also be what it would feel like to touch an object if doing so were possible
<i>Pattern</i>	A series of elements (shapes, forms, colors, etc.) in a composition which repeat
<i>Composition</i>	The arrangement of elements in a work of art



INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE

Begin this art lesson by looking and discussing about the artwork together for 15 minutes.

CLOSE-LOOKING Invite students to look closely, quietly at the artwork.

OBSERVE Invite students to share observations about the artwork.

ASK

- *What is going on in these garments?*
- *Describe the sensory experience you imagine of these garments. What would they feel like to touch or wear?*
- *What colors and materials does the artist use?*
- *What moods does the materials create?*
- *What does it remind you of?*
- *What more do you see?*
- *What more can you find?*

DISCUSS **USE [20 Questions Deck](#)** for more group discussion questions about the artwork.

LEARN MORE Rebecca Lyon's Story: youtube.com/watch?v=neBRGfxGoGg
Understanding terms: alaskool.org/language/Aleut/No_Such1.html
alutiiqmuseum.org/learn/the-alutiiq-sugpiaq-people



CLOTHING DESIGN

TIME FRAME	45 minutes
MATERIALS	Colored pencils 11 x17" paper cut in half longways
DIRECTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Share the quote below with students: "Nothing is as personal as the clothing we wear."2. [3 mins] Invite students to make a sketch of what they are wearing today. <i>{You may ask students in advance to wear a favorite piece of clothing if you are able.}</i>3. [6 mins] After sketching, encourage pairs of students to share their drawings with one another. <i>What colors and patterns do you have on? Are any of the garments you are wearing special or important? How do the clothes you wear function? Do they keep you warm and dry? Do they protect you from sun or keep you cool? How does the clothing you are wearing reflect who you are?</i>4. [3 mins] Invite each student to share to the whole class some piece of clothing their partner is wearing. <i>Why is that piece of clothing important or useful?</i>5. [3 mins] Regalia, like the garments created by Rebecca Lyons in <i>Women of the North</i>, is clothing worn for special occasions. <i>What kinds of clothing do you wear on special occasions?</i> Discuss in pairs.6. [15-20 mins] After pair discussions, invite students to think about an upcoming important occasion—a birthday, a holiday, or some other kind of celebration. On a second piece of paper, design an ideal outfit for that upcoming special occasion.7. [10 mins] Group gallery walk: place sketches of what students are wearing and their special outfit side by side around the classroom. Students walk around classroom and appreciate each other's work. <i>What do you notice about what your classmates have created? What similarities can be found across the outfits? What differences?</i>

CLASS QUILT/FABRIC COLLAGE

TIME FRAME	40+ minutes
MATERIALS	Colored pencils 11 x17" paper, 1 sheet per student Large piece of tyvek or canvas Fabric glue Scissors Variety of fabric swatches/pieces brought in by students
DIRECTIONS	Note that steps 2 + 3 may be omitted depending on meeting schedule. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Clothing can tell important stories about who we are, what we value, where we come from, and where we live today.2. <i>{If meeting schedule allows.}</i> Invite students to interview a family or community member: <i>What is an important piece of clothing to them? What does that piece of clothing look like? Why is it significant?</i>



Students are encouraged to bring a piece of fabric or a textile they feel comfortable contributing to a group piece.

3. Upon returning to class, invite students to create a sketch of the textile they learned about from a family or community member.

Pair or group share what students have drawn.

4. [10 mins] Show fabric swatches and invite students to bring out the fabrics they brought in with them. Discuss color, pattern, and texture.

5. [5 mins] Invite students to select from fabric swatches and the textiles they brought in that represent who they are. These fabrics could speak to them because of color, pattern, or texture.

6. [20 mins] As a group arrange these fabric pieces on the tyvek or canvas.

Discuss composition, inviting students to notice how similar swatches look next to each other and how swatches contrast. Invite students to consider if they want to arrange their pieces to create a specific form, shape, or design. Secure swatches using fabric glue.

7. [5 mins] Determine a title for the piece as a group.

ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed based on their participation in the discussion, completion of the two projects, and art presentation to class.

For more teaching resources, visit anchoragemuseum.org/teachingresources

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