

# ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

## GRADE 1: ART IN MY WORLD

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**ALVIN AMASON**

***EVERYTHING I LOVE IS HERE, 2017***

Mixed Media  
2017.9.1abc

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

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Alvin Amason (b. 1948) is an Alutiiq (Sugpiaq) painter and sculptor living in Anchorage, Alaska. As a young person, he decided to pursue a career as an artist. He studied in Washington and Arizona for his artistic training and 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 of his artworks include representations of Alaska's wildlife reflecting an understanding of animals, which he gained while hunting with his grandfather on Kodiak Island.

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

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Alvin Amason paints from his experiences growing up on Kodiak Island, where he was surrounded by the ocean and lived among the animals of Alaska. *Everything I Love is Here* is drawn from childhood memories and the stories told by his grandparents.

Amason's grandfather was one of the first Alaska Native master bear guides. Brown bears are part of the Kodiak landscape. His grandmother offered memories of food, particularly with her seafood chowder, in which she includes the eyes of the fish. When Amason would ask her why she included the eyes, she would say, "The eyes are good medicine." In the painting, Amason depicts a humpy (pink) salmon and a dog (chum) salmon, the favorite fish of older generations.

Amason recalls looking at the sea otters and seals in the ocean and thinking they just looked like dark spots in a dark ocean. When he asked his grandfather how one could tell a seal from an otter, his grandfather offered: "Seals are one bump, otters are two." Otters float on their backs with their feet above the water.

The airplane on the right panel is a nod to the bush planes of Alaska and their everyday presence, transporting people and supplies to camps and villages. Amason references pilot Steve Harvey, who has flown a Grumman Widgeon (a World War II era aircraft) for over 30 years—the sound of radial engines overhead became the sound of comfort to Amason, a hum that would indicate home.

## ARTIST QUOTES

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- "I paint Alaskan animals of today. I'm glad I have my heritage, but I don't want to rely on it. Culture just doesn't work if it is put on a shelf, in a jar, in a museum. It is a living thing. Time goes on and cultural elements change."
- On his family's islands east side of Kodiak: "The 'outside' is land was good for gardens and seal hunting as it had many reefs but was exposed to swift changes in weather. It was around these islands we learned so much. How to pick bird eggs, get octopus, dig clams, watch and predict the weather, and know the safe beaches in a storm."
- "I believe the ultimate high occurs when you feel you're walking in your own landscape."



## KEY TERMS

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<i>Landscape</i>	An area of land and collection of landforms; culturally this may include the resources found in that area and the interaction of those resources with human inhabitants; the term may also reference a visual representation of an area of land. As a term in the visual arts, landscape is a type or genre of subject depicting scenes of nature, such as mountains and seascapes, and urban sceneries that may feature people, animals, or architecture. Landscape is derived from the Dutch word of <i>landschap</i>
<i>Triptych</i>	A work of art divided into three parts or sections
<i>Painting (n)</i>	A work of art made by using brush or other tool to apply paint to a surface
<i>Sculpture (n)</i>	A three-dimensional work of art usually made by carving, modelling, casting or constructing

## INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE

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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 this artwork?*
- *Describe the sensory experience you imagine of this place. What you see, smell, taste, touch, hear?*
- *What colors does the artist use?*
- *What moods does the colors create?*
- *What symbols and objects do you see?*
- *How does the language (text) relate to symbols and objects you see?*
- *What does it remind you of?*
- *What more do we see?*
- *What more can we find?*

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

**LEARN MORE**

- Alvin Amason's Story [youtube.com/watch?v=YgpOrq5ekSw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgpOrq5ekSw)
- Video Biography [youtube.com/watch?v=mwpaMORc9s4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwpaMORc9s4)



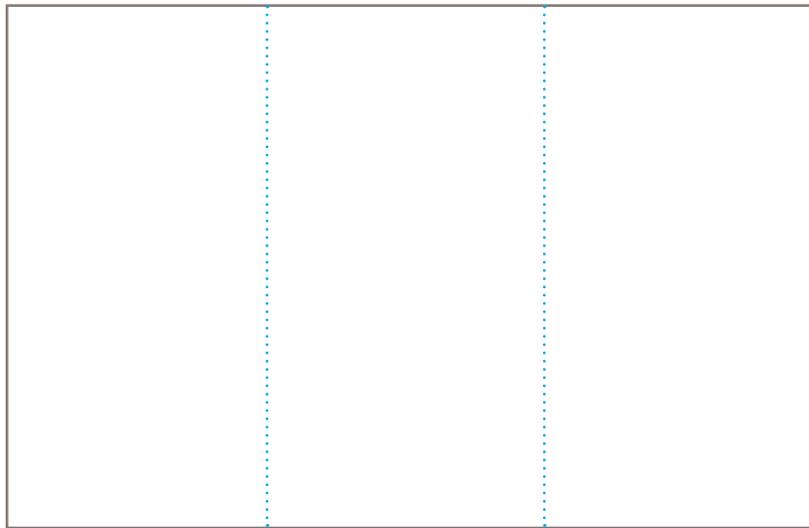
## PART 1: TRIPTYCH OF MY WORLD

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**TIME FRAME** 45-60 minutes

**MATERIALS** Colored pencils  
11x17" paper  
Index cards

- DIRECTIONS**
1. [2 mins] Share the quote below with students:  
"I believe the ultimate high occurs when you feel you're walking in your own landscape." – Alvin Amason
  2. [2 mins] Amason uses painting and sculpture to highlight elements of his personal landscape. Invite students to consider three important characters of people, animals, objects, or elements of the environment in their personal landscape. Encourage students to think about what they love here in Alaska.
  3. [6 mins] In pairs, encourage students to share the three elements they have chosen *Why are these people, animals, and things important in to you?*
  4. In *Everything I Love is Here*, Amason creates a unique interpretation of his personal landscape by representing important animals, objects, and elements of the environment in a triptych format. Invite students to create their own triptych.



*Fold the 11x17" paper in three equal parts.*

5. Demonstrate how to fold the 11x17" paper into a triptych of three equal panels.
6. [20-35 mins] Invite students to draw each of the three elements they have selected in their triptych, one element per panel.
7. [5 mins] Amason titled his triptych "Everything I Love is Here." *What would you title your triptych?* Teacher and/or TA helps students write down titles for their work on index cards.
8. [10 minutes] Group gallery walk: place triptychs around the classroom. Students walk around classroom and appreciate each other's work. *What do you notice about what your classmates have created? What similarities can be found across triptychs? What differences?*



## PART II: ME IN MY WORLD

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<b>TIME FRAME</b>	30-45 minutes
<b>MATERIALS</b>	Art wire or pipe-cleaners Beads (optional)
<b>DIRECTIONS</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Return to Amason's quote: "I believe the ultimate high occurs when you feel you're walking in your own landscape." – Alvin Amason</li><li>2. [5 mins] Look back at the triptych you created. Invite students to imagine themselves surrounded by these things that are important and loved elements of their personal landscape.</li><li>3. [20 mins] Amason uses sculptural elements to bring his paintings off the wall and into the world. Invite students to create a small sculpture of themselves in their environment. Using art wire or pipe-cleaners, encourage students to create a figure to stand in front of their triptych.  Explore inspiration:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="http://markewbie.weebly.com/make-a-stickman.html">markewbie.weebly.com/make-a-stickman.html</a></li><li>• <a href="http://parents.com/fun/arts-crafts/easy-pipe-cleaner-pals">parents.com/fun/arts-crafts/easy-pipe-cleaner-pals</a></li><li>• <a href="http://youtube.com/watch?v=puVmet5hnc0">youtube.com/watch?v=puVmet5hnc0</a></li><li>• <a href="http://kiwico.com/diy/Arts-and-Crafts-Ideas/1/project/Pipe-Cleaner-Action-Figures/1691">kiwico.com/diy/Arts-and-Crafts-Ideas/1/project/Pipe-Cleaner-Action-Figures/1691</a></li></ul></li><li>4. [5 mins] Invite students to present their triptychs and figures together to the class. Remind students to include the title of their piece.</li></ol>

## ASSESSMENT

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

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For more teaching resources, visit [anchoragemuseum.org/teachingresources](http://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.



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