

TEACHER GUIDE

VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP: CLOSE - LOOKING AT ART

OVERVIEW

Students watch the [Close Looking at Everything I Love is Here video](#), pausing it when prompted to discuss the questions presented. In this 10-minute video, a museum educator guides students through how to look closely and think critically about a work of art from the museum's collection: *Everything I Love is Here* by Alvin Amason. Students then sketch their own artwork showing what they love about Alaska.

ALVIN AMASON
EVERYTHING I LOVE IS HERE, 2017
Acrylic, metal, canvas, wood
2017.009.001af



CONTENT AREAS

Arts, English language arts, Visual literacy, Alaska Native cultures

RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVELS

PreK-6, adapt for older learners, suggestions provided below

STUDENTS WILL

- Learn and practice art close-looking strategies
- Engage in discussion and/or writing about a contemporary artwork
- Think critically and support answers with evidence
- Learn about Sugpiaq-American artist Alvin Amason and his relationship to his home in Kodiak
- Sketch their own artwork showing what they love about Alaska

MATERIALS

Blank paper and pencil
Other writing and drawing supplies optional

TIME

20-30 minutes, longer if you want students to spend more time on their artwork
Video is 10 minutes



HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO

SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

The video can be shown to students at the same time. During the suggested pauses in the video, teachers can facilitate student discussion around the provided questions.

ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

Students can watch the video and respond to its prompts independently. Teachers can have students share or turn in their answers and/or artwork.

HOW TO ADAPT FOR OLDER STUDENTS

This video focuses on the basic strategies for close-looking at art. Activities and content can be expanded to challenge, and better connect with, older students. Art may offer a starting point for interdisciplinary exploration.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION OR WRITING TOPICS

- What materials and art techniques did Amason use? What elements or principles of art do you notice?
- Describe the habitats where the animals in this art live. How did Amason indicate these habitats?
- What do the words across the bottom of each piece suggest about how Amason and his family interacted with salmon, seals, and sea otters?
- Amason captured things he loved about Kodiak and memories of family in this piece. What are memories you have that connect you to the place you grew up?
- Can you think of any expressions or advice - like Amason's phrase across the salmon piece "Grandma Lena said the eyes are good medicine" - you have heard repeatedly from your friends or family?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Research another artist whose work is influenced by his/her home
- Create your own *Everything I Love is Here* artwork that includes both 2D and 3D elements
- Draw a diagram that shows the relationships between the animals and environments shown in this art

RELATED RESOURCES & ACTIVITIES

[Close Looking at Everything I Love is Here video](#)

*Full-screen viewing recommended

[Transcript](#) for Close Looking at *Everything I Love is Here* video

[Audio/visual description](#) for *Everything I Love is Here* for learners who are blind or partially sighted

[Artist Profile: Alvin Amason video](#) by Michael Conti

[Art lesson plan](#) for *Everything I Love is Here* designed for 1st grade students

[Introduction to the Anchorage Museum video](#)



ARTIST INFORMATION

BIOGRAPHY

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

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

"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"

INQUIRY BASED METHODS AT THE ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

The Anchorage Museum uses an expanded inquiry-based approach based in constructivism (constructivist learning theory). Through facilitated conversations which may begin much like Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), students are encouraged to bring their knowledge to look closely at an object or image. In addition to the VTS methodology, educators at the Anchorage Museum provide context and content. This may include information about an object's artist or maker, examination of materials, processes, or uses of an object as well as relevant cultural or historical information. Examinations of objects create an open-ended dialogue. In dialogue, learner-driven questions and observations, and facilitator provided content drive the process of meaning making between all participants.



CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is a learning theory referring to the idea that knowledge is individually and socially constructed by the learners themselves. The learner actively constructs meaning using sensory input rather than passively accept knowledge.

VISUAL THINKING STRATEGIES

Visual Thinking Strategies, or VTS, is an approach to teaching from visual materials, typically paintings, drawings and photographs. Developed by museum educators Philip Yenawine and Abigail Housen, this approach to teaching and learning is a learner-centered methodology that seeks to support close looking and communication skills.

The VTS teaching methodology centers around three questions (you will see variations of these used in the video):

- What's going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can we find?

Educators use these open-ended questions to engage students in examination of images. Content or 'answers' are not provided, rather learners construct meaning individually and together. Educators reflect back what students respond and help facilitate the conversation moving forward.

VTS has been applied across disciplines. Extensive research on the strategy has demonstrated that students participating in multi-visit programs to museums using VTS techniques generated significantly more instances of critical thinking skills, said more, and were more likely to provide evidence for their thinking.

LEARN MORE at vtshome.org

WHAT IS VISUAL LITERACY

We live in an increasingly visual world and fostering skills to decode today's visual world is more critical than ever. By looking closely at visual sources and works of art, students develop visual literacy, critical thinking, and communication skills.

Visual literacy is a set of abilities that enables an individual to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use, and create images and visual media. Visual literacy skills equip a learner to understand and analyze the contextual, cultural, ethical, aesthetic, intellectual, and technical components involved in the production and use of visual materials. A visually literate individual is both a critical consumer of visual media and a competent contributor to a body of shared knowledge and culture.

- Association of College and Research Libraries

RELATED ALASKA STATE STANDARDS

ALASKA ENGLISH / LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

Supports Anchor Standards

- R.IK.7 - Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- SL.CC.1 - Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- SL.CC.2 - Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- SL.CC.3 - Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric
- SL.PK.4 - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and that the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- L.CS.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- L.CS.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.



RELATED ALASKA STATE STANDARDS CONTINUED

ALASKA ARTS STANDARDS

Supports Visual Arts Anchor Standards

- #7 - Recognize and analyze artistic work, including those from diverse cultural traditions.
- #8 - Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- #10 - Relate, synthesize, and express both knowledge and personal experiences as a way to participate in the arts.
- #11 - Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

ALASKA CULTURAL STANDARDS

Supports Cultural Standards for Students

- C - Culturally-knowledgeable students are able to actively participate in various cultural environments.
- E - Culturally-knowledgeable students demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them.

