

# ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

GRADE 9: ART IS EVERYDAY

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**RIE MUÑOZ**

**UNLOADING, 1970**

Casein paint, paper  
Anchorage Museum collection  
1971.218.001



## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

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Rie Muñoz (1921-2015) was born in Van Nuys, California. In 1951, Muñoz traveled to Juneau and decided to reside there permanently. Her art takes inspiration from her love of life in Alaska. Her many book illustrations reference locations such as King Island and Juneau.

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

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*Unloading* features several figures unloading an *umiaq*, an open-top skin boat. The open-top design allows for greater cargo and passenger limits compared to a *qayaq*, which seats one to two passengers. The *umiaq* typically is made from a driftwood frame covered in split walrus hide or bearded sealskin, but steam-bent hardwood and waxed or rubberized canvas may also be utilized. Some designs make use of sails in addition to paddles, and incorporate motors for long distance travel. The relative durability of an *umiaq* compared to an aluminum boat make the style a popular choice for open water travel and hunting in arctic environments.

The men in the artwork wear white parkas while the women and children in the foreground wear brightly colored ones. Parkas were first made from different types of animal furs, skins, or intestines, with beading and geometric patterns complementing its functionality. Post-contact, western trade and colonization led to increased accessibility to woven cloth. Today, cloth parkas in a range of styles and materials can be found across Alaska.

## ARTIST QUOTE

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"My artwork can best be described as expressionism. The term applies to work that rejects camera snapshot realism, and instead, expresses emotion by distortion and strong colors. My paintings reflect an interest in the day-to-day activities of Alaskans such as fishing, berry picking, children at play, crabbing, and whaling. I am also fascinated with the legends of Alaska's Native people. While I find much to paint around Juneau, most of my material comes from sketching trips taken to the far corners of Alaska. I've taught school on King Island in the Bering Sea, traveled and sketched almost every community in Alaska."

## KEY TERMS

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<i>Umiaq</i>	Iñupiaq term for an open skin boat; originally made by covering a driftwood frame with sea lion skins
<i>Symbol</i>	An image or marking indicating an idea, object or relationship
<i>Image</i>	A visual representation of something
<i>Sculpture</i>	An artwork that usually exists in three dimensions
<i>Illustration</i>	A printed or digital image, embellishment, interpretation or visual aid for a text
<i>Calligraphy</i>	An artform relating to writing, in which letterforms are accentuated and stylized
<i>Graphic design</i>	The practice of creating visual content to communicate messages

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



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Images have been part of storytelling traditions for thousands of years. Shadow puppets and cave paintings are thought to be some of the earliest images used to enhance the storytelling experience. Imagery and symbolism serve to store meaning and exist in a variety of ways. In Yup'ik culture, children use *yaaruin* (story knives) to draw pictures on the ground as visual aids for many types of stories. *Yaaruin* are typically carved from wood, bone, or ivory. Today, some children also use butter knives as *yaaruin* to tell stories.

The medium of the picture book began in western culture began sometime in the 1600s, with the widespread publication of *Orbis Pictus* in 1658 serving as a primer for learning how to read, as well as providing imagery to biblical text. By the 1800s, images in books began to be designed to interact with the text, in addition to being visual aids and text embellishment. Poems formatted to have the shape of their topic matter such as Lewis Carroll's *The Mouse's Tail* began to be published at this time. As western attitudes toward childhood changed, so did the imagery and content of picture books. These changes in the mid-20th century saw the works of Dr. Seuss and Stan and Jan Berenstain being incorporated into the school curriculum. These works differed from previous children's books with less fantastical elements such as those in the *Dick and Jane* series.

The interplay of text and imagery to communicate messages is the foundation of graphic design. Every aspect, from the positioning and make up of images and lettering, font, font size, shapes, and color choice may be considered. Graphic design can be found on movie posters, product logos, image and text formatting in books among many other sources.

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## INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE

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Begin this art lesson by looking and discussing about the artwork together for 10 to 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 happening in the artwork?*
- *What would you title this artwork?*
- *What objects do you see?*
- *What might it sound like if you were in the artwork?*
- *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**

- A history of children's books:  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/02/a-brief-history-of-childrens-picture-books-and-the-art-of-visual-storytelling/253570/>  
  
<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/05/10/476490413/through-the-looking-glass-how-childrens-books-have-grown-up>
- *Orbis Pictus*, the first widely published children's picture book:  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/28299/28299-h/28299-h.htm>
- Smithsonian information on *yaaruin*:  
<https://learninglab.si.edu/collections/fun-with-a-purpose-alaska-native-games/Rg8DoG-sPo3PjtyKy#r/743114>
- On decolonizing design and challenging design norms  
<https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/what-does-it-mean-to-decolonize-design/>



- On graphic design of movie posters  
<https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/the-art-of-the-movie-poster-in-the-age-of-netflix/>
- On the use of color in marketing and advertising  
<https://digitalsynopsis.com/advertising/psychology-of-colors-in-marketing/>
- Typeface of famous logos  
<https://digitalsynopsis.com/design/fonts-of-famous-logos/>

## ILLUSTRATING

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**TIME FRAME** 45-60 minutes

**MATERIALS** Water-based paint and brushes

Watercolor paper

Pencil

Short literary or film quotes written onto strips of paper/ blank strips of paper

Fine tip markers of various colors

**DIRECTIONS**

**1.** Images have long been used as an aid in the storytelling process. Calligraphic embellishments and illustrations are among the most widespread methods of adding onto text. Today, students will illustrate a line from a famous work of literature or film.

**2.** [10 mins] Return to Muñoz's statement:

"My artwork can best be described as expressionism. The term applies to work that rejects camera snapshot realism, and instead, expresses emotion by distortion and strong colors. My paintings reflect an interest in the day-to-day activities of Alaskans such as fishing, berry picking, children at play, crabbing, and whaling. I am also fascinated with the legends of Alaska's Native people. While I find much to paint around Juneau, most of my material comes from sketching trips taken to the far corners of Alaska. I've taught school on King Island in the Bering Sea, traveled and sketched almost every community in Alaska."

Discuss how our preferences and life experiences influence our style. Invite students to share memorable quotes from their favorite books or movies with a partner. Encourage additional discussion on books they have encountered in other classes throughout their education. Ask students to consider what noticeable visual elements such as colors, shapes, text and image layout, or camera angle, resonated with them and how these influence their interpretation of these quotes.

**3.** [5 mins] Hand out strips of paper and a sheet of paper to students and invite them to write a short quote from a famous movie or literary work with its title written on the back. Collect when finished and redistribute. Alternatively, pass out strips of paper with literary and film quotes to students.



**4.** [20-35 mins] Invite students to write their quote and name on the back side of their paper. Afterwards, invite students to illustrate their text using whatever method with which they feel most comfortable.

**5.** [10 mins] Invite them to share their quote, the style they chose to use, and feature of that style they enjoyed using in illustrating their quote.

**6.** Collect all works and quotes if continuing the second activity.

## A SECOND LOOK

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**TIME FRAME** 45-60 minutes

**MATERIALS** Water-based paint and brushes

Watercolor paper

Pencil

Short literary or film quotes written onto strips of paper/ blank strips of paper from previous activity

Fine tip markers of various colors

**DIRECTIONS**

**1.** [2-3 mins] Return to the quotes from the previous activity to the student who had them. Hand out a new sheet of paper.

**2.** [10-15 mins] Discuss how different art styles can convey different emotions and reactions (you may choose to show movie posters of different genres for example). Invite students to share various styles they have encountered in different media. Prompt students with examples from logos of brands they use and invite them to discuss how these brands use typeface and color to send messages. See “On the use of color in marketing and advertising” and “Typeface of famous logos” in the “Learn more” section for reference.

**3.** [20-35 mins] Invite students to rewrite their quote and name on the back side of their new sheet of paper. Afterwards, invite students to design their text using a method different from their previous version of the quote with which they feel most comfortable.

**4.** [10 mins] Invite students to share their quote, the styles they chose to use, and how the differences between styles can affect how someone views and understands the meaning of their quote.

## 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 <https://www.anchoragemuseum.org/programs/for-educators/teaching-resources/>

Educational resources at the Anchorage Museum are made possible with the support of the Hearst Foundation.

