



Amason's Whimsical Animals

GRADE: 5 and up **TIME:** one or two sessions

Developed by Suzanne Black and Linda Pfisterer, Art Specialists

KIT INCLUDES:

- lesson plan and post card set
- vocabulary board
- overhead transparencies (7)
- Amason reproductions:
 - "You shot some smiles into my dog"
 - "Those walrus are awesome"
 - "My heart goes boom, boom,boom"
 - "Peep Peep Peep"
 - "Ooh I keep coming back to you"
- animal photographs – class set of 30
- grizzly bear photo board
- values board
- contrast board
- lesson procedure boards (3)

MATERIALS:

- white construction paper 12" x 18" or 18 x 24"
- pencils
- tempera cakes: red, yellow, blue and if possible orange, purple green, brown and black
- brushes: 1/2" flat and #7 or #8 rounds
- water and containers
- paper towels



LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students look at the whimsical animal paintings of Alvin Amason, an Alaskan Native artist. Students begin their own animal paintings using basic shapes and playful color choices, adding large brush strokes in his painting style.

VOCABULARY:

geometric shapes
proportion
placement
contrast
value
whimsical

ART ELEMENTS:

☒ Line
☒ Shape/Form
☒ Color
☒ Value
☐ Texture
☐ Space/Perspective

ART PRINCIPLES:

☐ Pattern
☐ Rhythm/movement
☒ Proportion/Scale
☒ Balance
☐ Unity
☐ Emphasis

CONTENT CONNECTIONS:

Alaska studies:
Alaskan Native artist
Alaskan animals

THEMES:

Alaskan animals
Humor in art

OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Students will study the paintings of Alaskan Native Artist, Alvin Amason, and his style of painting animals.
2. Students will look for basic geometric shapes in the animal photos and the paintings of Amason.
3. Students will study the shapes of the nose, head and ears of the animal they plan to draw.
4. Students will use placement and proportion to fill the paper with the head enlargement of the animal.
5. Students will paint with large brush strokes using whimsical colors and very little of the true animal colors.

PREPARE:

1. Teacher should read through the entire lesson and paint an animal to ensure student success.
2. Collect tempera paints and set them up in small trays for at least two students to share.
3. Set out water, paper towels and white construction paper, 12" x 18" or 18" x 24" if you have it. To allow students clean water when they want it, use "clean water" and "dirty water" buckets.
4. It is important that students try the 1/2" easel brushes to learn to work with large brush strokes. A smaller #7 or #8 brush can be used later for detail in the eyes and nose or beak.

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE:

Use the overhead transparencies to follow this dialog.

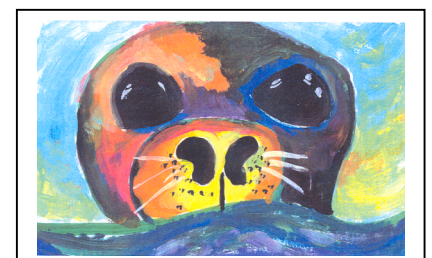
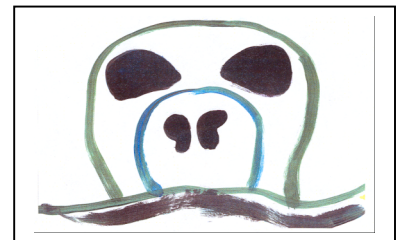
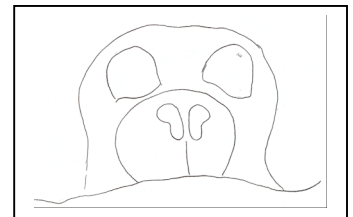
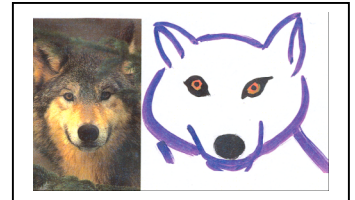
1. Alvin Amason is an Aleut artist from Kodiak, Alaska. He has become nationally known for his colorful works depicting what he calls “Alaskan animals of the 20th Century.”
2. Amason says he paints animals because his grandfather was a bear guide, trapper and fisherman so animal life was all around him as he was growing up. He became an artist because art was one thing that never got boring. He felt there was never a wrong way to do art! Amason also writes humorous titles right on his paintings because it is fun.
3. Amason says he uses bright, bold colors because they are pretty together. You can read his title just below the painting. What does the shape of the painting remind you of? (a porthole?)
4. Sometimes he adds a protruding nose or object to give it a 3-D appearance. Notice the simple shapes of the eye and nose in this otter’s head. Very often the animal portraits that Amason paints only include the head and neck.
5. Alvin likes to tell his students that in art you can try anything and be successful because it’s always your first time. We know this seal is gray or brown, but you can see that he used all the colors on the color wheel.
6. In this painting, Alvin made it appear that the bird beak is coming off the painting. His signature assures us that the beak is on a canvas. In this situation, his large signature is giving balance and unity to the painting. Usually artists don’t let their names be so obvious.
7. Today we will paint an animal in the style of Alvin Amason. We will use photographs of animals to create our own colorful painted animal interpretations.



CREATE:

Teacher should demonstrate and review steps before students begin.

1. Display the grizzly bear photo board along with the Amason paintings. Point out how an animal looks in a photo compared to how an artist might interpret it with paints. Display the photos and shape drawings of the wolf and the puffin. Discuss looking at outlines of the head and features of the animal.
2. Begin by making a quick pencil sketch of the animal's head by using simple shapes. The lines should be light and very sketchy. No erasing is necessary since paint will cover lines you don't want. Remember, we want only the outline of the animal head to fill the picture from top to bottom. Placement of the animal head in the center and making it large helps to pull in the viewer. Add the eyes and nose and keep them in proportion to the head.
3. After sketching, pick up the paints and water. Discuss the painting materials and rules for use:
 - a. Keep brush clean by changing water frequently to keep the colors bright.
 - b. "Load the brush" with paint in order to make a longer brush stroke.
 - c. Move the brush slowly to control the paint.
4. First paint the eyes and nose with the smaller brush to give them a more detailed look. Animal and bird eyes are all very different. Paint them carefully with the smaller brush to make them look real. White accent marks can be added later when the paint is very dry.
5. Using the larger flat brush, pick a dark color to make a quick outline of the body. Next paint in the body. Use a variety of bright, whimsical colors as Amason does rather than the natural animal colors. You might use every color!
6. This last step is very important. Use the animal photo to find the light values **on** and **behind** the animal. Paint those areas lighter by painting white on top of the color that needs to be lighter. OR, you can mix a light color by adding a tiny bit of color to the paint cake and mix right there. Light against dark creates contrast which livens a painting.
7. Finally add detail to the eyes, whiskers and other places that help define the animal.
8. Use the follow-up assessment for writing and creating a title. This part is optional, but enriches students' art and thought process.



CLOSE:

ASSESSMENT: Students could write a paragraph describing their painting using words from the art elements and vocabulary list. A good exercise for them would be to think of five different titles for their painting after reviewing the Amason painting titles. Present these titles to the class and let the class brain-storm more titles. Then the student chooses the title he/she likes best.

Teacher administered assessment tool

DN	OK	UP	Lesson_____ Teacher_____
			Grade_____Date_____Number of Students_____
			Using the thumbs up, ok, and down technique, ask your students the following questions and record their answers. (K=knowledge, S=skills, C= creativity, A=attitude, E=engagement)
			1. Can you describe Alvin Amason's paintings of animals? (K)
			2. What was the main large shape that you drew for your animal head? (K,S)
			3. Did you use placement and proportion to make the animal head large? (K,S,E)
			4. Did you paint with whimsical colors instead of the true animal colors? (K,S,C,E)
			5. Does your painting look different from everyone else's? (C)
			6. Did you listen carefully and follow directions? (A)
			7. Did you work hard during this art lesson? (E)

Teacher self-critique

8. My teaching of this lesson:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
needed improvement							was highly successful		

9. What would I do differently next time?

ALIGNMENT:

Alignment of Standards:

Art: A1,2,3,4; B1; C4; D6

Science: SA3,SF2,SF3

English: C,E

Alignment of GLE's:

Reading: R2.6,

Writing: W2.3

CREDITS:

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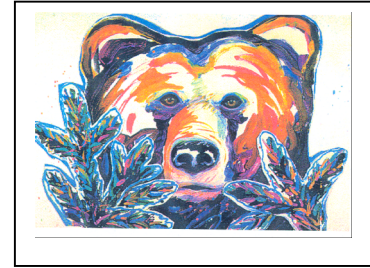


Alvin Amason –

Born 1948 -
Aleut Alaskan Artist



Photograph by Kiyoshi Yagi



Amason's Whimsical Animals

Students studied the paintings of Alvin Amason, an Aleut artist born in Kodiak, Alaska. His playful use of color and humorous titles give a whimsical touch to his animal portraits.

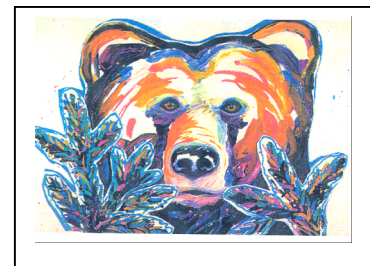
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