

Rasmuson Foundation Individual Artist Awards

2018 Individual Artist Award recipients

Distinguished Artist, \$40,000 award

Alvin Amason of Anchorage and Kodiak Island is well-known for his distinctive portraits of Alaska wildlife. Amason's animals are rendered in bright colors in paint and sculptural relief, and are so alive that they appear only momentarily at rest. "Besides being one of the most recognizable, iconic and beloved artists in Alaska, Alvin is uncommonly generous. He is an inspiration and mentor to many other artists, young and old, and gives of himself constantly," says Diane Kaplan, Rasmuson Foundation president and chief executive officer. "He is a true Alaska original."

Fellowships, \$18,000 awards

Classical guitarist **Armin Abdihodzic** of Anchorage will purchase a hand-made concert-level instrument from renowned California luthier Gregory Byers that is customized to his technical and interpretational requirements. He will travel to California, Texas and Virginia to study with contemporary composers for guitar who are masters in solo works.

Photographer **Brian Adams** of Anchorage will travel to Canada, Greenland and Russia to document the lives of Inuit people through portraiture and photo essays for his second book, "I am Inuit." He intends to push himself and add depth to his work as he learns about Inuit cultures across the Arctic.

Composer **Dolores Catherino** of Anchorage plans to create and document a major musical work in what she has termed a "polychromatic musical language," a system she developed for an expanded palette of sound. She plans to upgrade her equipment, pursue training and attend an international conference. She will integrate sophisticated technology with the flexibility and expressive strength of traditional acoustical instruments.

Filmmaker **Susan Stark Christianson** of Juneau will interview indigenous elders in Alaska, the Lower 48 and Canada for a new documentary film on preservation of tribal knowledge and the relevance of traditional prophesy stories to today's world. She is passionate about capturing and sharing the knowledge of tribal elders before it is lost.

Multimedia artist **Nicholas Galanin** of Sitka will purchase and fabricate the equipment and custom tools needed to create a large body of sculptural copper work using traditional Tlingit chasing and repoussé metalworking techniques. This sculptural copper practice is rare today. His work will involve study of historical form and process and training of several apprentices. He has received two prior Fellowships, in 2008 and 2014, as well as a Project Award in 2011.

Painter **Mary Ida Henrikson** of Ward Cove will use the Tongass National Forest for inspiration in creating at least 20 new oil paintings, experimenting with textures and techniques that she has developed over her long career.

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Filmmaker and photographer **Mary Roseanne Katzke** of Anchorage will engage in a multimedia storytelling project, using environmental portrait photography, videos, social media and live presentations to document and share the grassroots youth movement for system change on critical issues across the United States. She hopes to encourage youth in their efforts to make a difference. She also received a Fellowship in 2004.

Visual artist **Susan Joy Share** of Anchorage plans a year of exploration in book arts, including creation of a new body of work that explores the intersection of built and natural environments in Alaska, using custom paper, photographic pop-up structures, and dynamic book properties such as hinges and layers. She plans to purchase a camera and gather images in Denali National Park, Kachemak Bay and Anchorage. She also received a Fellowship in 2005.

Experimental artist **Allison Akootchook Warden** of Anchorage will travel for research to create a multimedia exhibition with photographer Brian Adams. The work will center on historical images from the era of Alaska's early oil. Modern Iñupiat will be photographed wearing clothing from Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. People from those countries will wear traditional Iñupiaq regalia and historic dress from the 1970s. She hopes to elevate the Iñupiaq worldview. She also received a Project Award in 2012 and a Fellowship in 2015.

Composer and musician **Rick Zelinsky** of Anchorage will compose and perform on a new album consisting of jazz, electronic music, and Alaska nature sounds for solo saxophones and rhythm. He will attend a conference in Berlin and collaborate with colleagues in Alaska and abroad. He especially is excited to incorporate new technology and techniques that will appeal to a broader audience.

Project Awards, \$7,500 awards

Author **Christiane Joy Allison** of Wasilla will complete, self-publish and distribute "Timmy and Kate Go to Visit," the second in a series of picture books for children who are trying to understand what is happening to family members who are incarcerated or involved in the justice system.

Master weaver **Delores Churchill** of Ketchikan will hire a videographer to film her demonstrating techniques for more than 22 basketry endings, the method of finishing the top. Most are known only by Churchill. The visual instruction will be included on a DVD to accompany Churchill's book on traditional baskets of Southeast Alaska and stories about their historic uses. Churchill received the Foundation's singular honor, the Distinguished Artist award, in 2006.

Performance artist **Roblin Gray Davis** of Juneau will create and perform a new solo show in the style of the contemporary theatrical clown, exploring themes around being a lifelong Alaskan. The project will include participation in a professional clown workshop and travel to work with collaborators. He also received a Project Award in 2012.

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Composer and musician **Jacob Dee** of Anchorage will produce and distribute a full-length studio album and go on tour in Washington and Oregon to promote the project. He embraces music as a community and communal exercise to connect otherwise disaffected and disenfranchised people. His approach relies on experimentation and collaboration.

Playwright **Merry C. Ellefson** of Douglas will work with collaborators to develop a performance piece inspired by the story of a man lost on an ice floe for 18 days in 1949. She will explore basic questions including themes of friendship, faith and search for home. She also received a Project Award in 2013.

Instrument artisan **David Gerard** of Homer will purchase new tools and travel to study with a master luthier. He will build a new instrument, either an Irish bouzouki or an octave mandolin, sophisticated instruments with multiple pairs of strings. He also hopes to master the inlaying process. He also received a Project Award in 2012.

Dancer **Ana Gutierrez-Scholl** of Anchorage will produce a digital chronicle of the Anchorage-based Mexican folkloric dance troupe Xochiquetzal-Tiqun, of which she is a co-founder. The project will include a printed instruction guide featuring ten of the regional dance forms performed by the troupe that explores the historical and geographical influences on these dances.

Carver **Glenn "Stormy" Hamar** of Kasaan, who grew up on a floathouse in Southeast Alaska, will purchase tools and materials and build a large canoe in the historic Haida style. The project will begin with the purchase of a red cedar log. He hopes to take the finished canoe on paddling journeys.

Fiber artist **Abigail Kokai** of Homer plans to document the unique instant community of travelers on the Alaska Marine Highway System through illustrated quilts about individual experiences. She hopes to use photographs of finished quilts to create something new, perhaps a deck of cards or other element of popular culture that reflects current trends of how passengers spend their time.

Sound artist **Paul Andrew Lawrence** of Anchorage intends to master the technical challenges of mixing in Dolby 5.1 surround sound. He will purchase equipment and prepare the final sound mix for the feature documentary "The Boneyard." The film explores a gold miner's discovery of an extensive cache of bones dating back more than 10,000 years.

Media artist **Noah Lincoln** of Toksook Bay will purchase editing equipment and produce a compilation of short videos exploring emotional situations from his own experience. He expects to examine teen issues, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide in genres ranging from drama to comedy. He wants to show how traditional culture mixes with technology.

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Carver **Alison Marks** of Juneau plans to develop her skill in two-dimensional or relief carving, like that traditionally seen on Tlingit house posts, bentwood boxes, carved regalia and household objects. She will carve a bentwood box that would be the first of its kind in Yakutat in more than 100 years to give to Yakutat Tlingit people at a traditional potlatch.

Visual artist **Kim McNett** of Homer will engage in study and practice to refine her use of color by working in watercolor, colored pencil and other mixed media. She will attend workshops, illustrate a nature journal and produce final works using the themes of wild botanicals, marine life, birds, and coastal landscapes.

Carver **Robert Mills** of Juneau will travel to study Northwest transformation masks in museum collections in the U.S. and British Columbia. He will create a new transformation mask that builds on the historic form, and make it available for performance with a new song.

Choreographer **Katie O'Loughlin** of Anchorage will travel to Havana, Cuba, to study with DanzAbierta, a professional modern dance company. She will create original choreography based on her training in Cuba to premiere in Anchorage. She will explore how another culture practices dance in a community context.

Theater sound designer **Lucy Peckham** of Anchorage will study state-of-the-art sound design and mixing technology through travel to professional conferences in New York, Las Vegas and Louisville, and by bringing professional trainers to Anchorage. She will learn to use equipment not currently available in Alaska, and will bring new skills to theaters in the state.

Photographer **Charlotte Peterson** of Fairbanks will purchase a new camera lens and computer and will travel to Santa Fe, New Mexico, for a professional photography workshop. She is looking forward to enhancing her post-processing techniques, and will be adding to her portfolio with the goal of launching a solo exhibition.

Weaver **Ricky Tagaban** of Juneau will establish a studio outside his home and process mountain goat wool he has been collecting since 2013. He will begin weaving a Chilkat robe to replicate an artifact from his father's clan. His late teacher Clarissa Rizal underscored the value of returning to local materials. He also received a Project Award in 2013.

Multimedia artist **Colleen Firmin Thomas** of Fairbanks works with modern sewing techniques and traditional Gwich'in Athabaskan materials and methods in her paintings. She will prepare 20 new paintings for an upcoming solo show in Homer, which will be the first major exhibition of her work outside Fairbanks.

Vocalist **Sydnee Waggoner** of Anchorage fell in love with opera at the age of 11. She will continue her operatic training and take advantage of performance opportunities in Europe, with a base in Prague. She will focus on learning European style, working on

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nuance, detail, and perfecting pronunciation in applied settings as she understudies and performs leading roles.

Poet **Emily Wall** of Douglas will research and write a chapbook of persona poems based on Georgia O'Keefe. The artist describes herself as a storyteller, building poems around her research on the lives, experiences and images of powerful and influential women in our history and culture.

Composer and musician **Zak Dylan Wass** of Sitka will purchase new computer equipment that will allow him to produce his first album of original music. He is working toward a compilation inspired by music from around the world, with contributions from an international group of artists. He describes the computer as “the brain and database of my musical life.”

Multimedia artist **Amber R. Webb** of Anchorage will complete a large *qaspeq*, a traditional Yup'ik garment, covered with ink portraits of nearly 400 missing or murdered indigenous women, with supplementary Yup'ik designs. The project will explore issues of vulnerability, injustice, permanence, violence and healing in a layered way. The finished piece will be exhibited in Anchorage, Bethel, Dillingham, Fairbanks and Nome.

Traditional artist **Sarah Whalen-Lunn** of Anchorage will travel to Unalakleet, Nome, Kotzebue, Point Hope and Utqiagvik to conduct research on traditional tattoo designs, teach community workshops on cultural tattooing and provide tattoos in traditional styles. Her goal is to bring back an indigenous art form that was almost lost, and to encourage cultural reconnection and pride.

Clothing designer **Peter Williams** of Sitka, will construct a shed and purchase equipment and supplies that will allow him to process and tan hides from seals and sea otters that he hunts and uses to produce wearable art. The capacity to tan his own hides has cultural and spiritual significance for Williams, and it will improve material quality and production.

