



# CRAFT IN AMERICA

*TERESE AGNEW: DRAWING WITH THREAD EDUCATION GUIDE*

## Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will watch Terese Agnew's segment from Craft in America's THREADS episode and explore the embroidered quilts of artist Teresa Agnew. Students will consider how quilts can be a medium of artistic expression, the meanings and uses of perspective (composition, Agnew's perspective about issues, and visual perspective) in Agnew's work, and how Agnew's work might make a difference or help people.

Students will create a quilt that expresses an idea/stance about a social issue. Students will determine whether they will create a small or large quilt, select new or recycled fabrics, paint and/or embroider the fabric squares, and write an artist's statement which describes their work. Students may work individually or together in a group. Quilts and the artists' statements can be displayed for viewing.

## Key Concepts:

- Artworks can provide a means for communication and connection among many people.
- People find ways to express political ideas through the arts.
- Methods of crafting useful objects can be used to create objects that convey ideas.

## Critical Questions:

- Why might an artist choose to send a message by making a quilt rather than a drawing, a print, or a painting? How is a quilt different from and similar to a painting?
- How might an artwork express empathy?
- How might artists use the notion of "perspective?"

## Objectives

Students will:

- Become familiar with the work of Terese Agnew and her use of quilts as a medium for expressing political ideas.
- Consider the multiple uses of perspective in a work of art.
- Invent descriptive titles for artworks
- Create a stitched or painted textile piece to communicate a political idea or message.

## National Standards for Visual Arts Education

This lesson addresses the following standards. The performance standards listed here are directly related to the lesson's goals.



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## Content Standard:

1. Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
2. Using knowledge structures and functions
5. Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.

## Student Worksheets

- *What's Your Perspective*
- *Your Designer Label: Creating Titles*

## Interdisciplinary Connection

- History/Social Studies: The International Quilt Study Museum ([www.quiltstudy.org](http://www.quiltstudy.org)) has quilts that touch on many historic periods, suitable for an investigation in social studies, including Civil War era quilts, political message quilts, and World War I Red Cross quilts. The interactive timeline is an engaging feature for student research. Also, as stated in the program, quilts (and other needlework forms) were one of the limited forms of expression available to women in the 19th century. An historical investigation of women's political needlework would be an excellent extension of this lesson.

## Materials

- Drawing and scrap paper
- Assorted magazines for the title worksheet
- Glue, for titles on magazine pictures
- Fabrics, such as plain cotton muslin, prints, and solid color cottons (recycled clothes can be used).
- Natural fabrics such as cotton, and woven medium-weight fabrics work well for quilts, that is, fabrics about the weight of cotton shirts, and no heavier than jeans material, but students may experiment with any fabric. A 12 -inch square each of top fabric, batting, and bottom fabric is a good amount for each student, but as small as 6-inch squares will work. Note: batting is the soft, lofty layer of cotton or synthetic fabric that goes in between the top and bottom layer of the quilt. Before manufactured batting, people made quilts with a layer of wool or flannel for warmth, and these may still be used
- Sewing machine, (optional)
- Hand-sewing needles, including large-eyed embroidery needles
- Straight pins
- Safety pins
- Sewing thread
- Embroidery threads
- Paints, such as watercolor and acrylic
- Fine point brushes



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## About the Artist

Quilt artist Terese Agnew started her career wanting to be a writer and children's book illustrator and then created public art installations before moving on to quilt making. Agnew began quilting, "because her house in Wisconsin was very cold in the winter."

Agnew calls her process "drawing with thread" and focuses on environmental and social themes in her quilts.

"Everybody has a quilt story. It's about being loved and cared for, and I think that's one of the things I'm trying to say with my work." – Terese Agnew