

# Pricked

extreme embroidery

MUSEUM OF  
ARTS & DESIGN

**Teacher Resource Packet**

November 8, 2007 – March 9, 2008



**Museum of Arts & Design**

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Dear Educator,

We are delighted that you have scheduled a visit to *Pricked: Extreme Embroidery*. When you and your students visit the Museum of Arts and Design, you will be given an informative tour of the exhibition with a museum educator, followed by an inspiring hands-on project, which students can then take home with them. To make your museum experience more enriching and meaningful, we strongly encourage you to use this packet as a resource, and work with your students in the classroom before and after your museum visit.

This packet includes topics for discussion and activities intended to introduce the key themes and concepts of the exhibition. Writing, storytelling and art projects have been suggested so that you can explore ideas about the exhibition in ways that relate directly to students' lives and experiences. Please feel free to adapt and build on these materials and to use this packet in any way that you wish.

We look forward to welcoming you and your students to the Museum of Arts and Design.

Sincerely,

Aliza Boyer  
Senior Manager of School,  
Youth & Family Programs

Lisa Litwin  
Education Department Intern

MAD Artist Educators: Hilary Baldwin, Dess Kelley, Rachel Miller, Bridget Parris

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## ***How Does a Museum Work?***

- **Administration:** The team led by the Director of the Museum determines the programs, plans and philosophy of the Museum. It also raises funds to realize the Museum's goals and works directly with the Board of Governors, which guides the Museum's functions.
- **Curatorial:** This is the team, led by the Chief Curator, that works together to decide which exhibits will be shown, how they will look, what artwork is to be included, and how they are to be interpreted.
- **Registration:** Led by the Registrar, this team arranges the safe handling of art to be placed in an exhibition and maintains the permanent collections acquired by a museum.
- **Education:** This team provides the interactive interpretation of the objects on view through the educational programs designed for children, adults and families who visit the Museum.
- **Facility Maintenance:** This is the team that allows the day-to-day operations of a museum to continue: from the lights being turned on, to the safety of all who enter the building.
- **Security Guards:** This is the team most often seen in a museum, because its main task is to protect the artwork from harm so that in the future people will be able to see the same objects as seen in a museum today. They also are helpful to visitors who have a variety of questions.

Museums are places where we can learn about the past, present, and future of the world around us. The diversity of knowledge is endless when the habit of museum exploration is formed at an early age. We look forward to welcoming your group into our galleries.

The **Museum of Arts and Design** has been functioning as an international resource center for craft, arts and design since 1956. Through its collections, exhibitions, programs and publications, the Museum serves as a forum for critical debate concerning the nature of craftsmanship and the engagement with the process that links materials, techniques, forms, patterns and concepts in all creative work.



## Helpful Hints for your Museum Visit

*“I try, when I go to museums, to do two things. One, to appreciate what I'm looking at, just to see it, but then to isolate a few pieces that I really look at in detail. I study and I draw not with any purpose in mind. I mean, I don't go looking for specific things. I just try to be open-minded and keep my eyes open. It's interesting that every time I go back to the same place, I see something different.” Arline M. Fisch (1931- ) Brooklyn, New York*

While visiting the exhibition, or any exhibition, try to use *all* your senses. Notice the way the pieces are displayed. *Are there any specific groupings of pieces you can distinguish? If you enjoy looking at one piece more than others can you explain why?*

Here are some questions and suggestions to think about as you move around the galleries:

- I. What can be [objectively] observed?**
  - a. What is the physical description? (Measurement, weight, materials used, articulation of materials...)*
  - b. What iconography, if any, is used? (Designs, words, diagrams...)*
  - c. What are the object's formal design characteristics? (Lines, shapes, forms, color, texture...)*
  
- II. What would it be like to interact with this piece of art? How would you handle, lift, display it?**
  - a. How would the piece of art feel, move, and sound?*
  - b. What does the piece do? Does the piece have a function? How would the figures move if they were alive?*
  - c. What is our emotional response to this beaded figure? (Fear, joy, indifference, curiosity, revulsion, excitement...)*
  
- III. What is in the mind of the artist? What are the viewers thinking and feeling? Use creative imagining and free association.**
  - a. Review all of the above information and consider what was going on in the world when the work was produced to develop possible interpretations of the piece. (Theories and hypotheses)*
  - b. Do the figures tell a story? Does the piece have underlying political or social meaning? (Understanding and visual thinking)*
  - c. Develop a way to further investigate the questions posed by the material evidence. (Program of research)*

Brainstorm about an event or situation that is happening in your life at the moment which you could animate into one scene which could be made into your very own beaded figure. (Design themes)

## **PRICKED: EXTREME EMBROIDERY**

### **November 8, 2007 – March 9, 2008**

Stone, digital prints, even human hair and skin are some of the unexpected materials used by 47 artists from 14 countries to create the startling embroidered works featured in the exhibition *Pricked: Extreme Embroidery*.

Showcasing the diversity of new approaches to this time-honored needleworking technique, *Pricked* is the Museum of Arts & Design's latest exploration into how centuries-old handcraft traditions are reinvented in the mainstream of contemporary art and design. The 60 featured works use embroidery to convey powerful, provocative, and often satirical commentary on contemporary society, politics and personal history.

David Revere McFadden, the Museum's chief curator and organizer of the exhibition, says, "When embroidery began to surface in the world of contemporary art in the last decades of the 20th century, it was often embraced by female artists because of its traditional identification with women's work. Today, male and female artists around the world are using stitching techniques to address personal and global issues in an astonishing range of pictorial, sculptural, and even architectural applications."

*Pricked: Extreme Embroidery* is organized thematically into six sections whose titles are taken from a choreographer, poet, filmmaker, children's book writer, politician and philosopher:

- **NEITHER MORE NOR LESS** (Humpty Dumpty in *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll)  
Words and images have been combined in traditional embroidered samplers for more than 500 years, and it is not surprising that many contemporary artists using embroidery reference this heritage in their work. Each of the 10 artists highlighted in this section give their own twist to the convention.
- **POLITICS IS NOT A SCIENCE** (Count Otto von Bismarck, 1815-1898)  
The intersection of politics and art is revealed in the work of several artists presented in *Pricked*.
- **WHATEVER IS WELL SAID BY ANOTHER IS MINE** (Seneca, 1st c. Roman writer)  
This section explores the work of artists who adopt, appropriate or quote images and ideas from other sources, including art history and popular culture, in their embroidered works.
- **MEMORY IS WHAT MAKES OUR LIVES** (Luis Buñuel, filmmaker)  
Accidents, mistakes, research and personal histories are made tangible in this section on Memory.
- **BODIES NEVER LIE** (Agnes de Mille, American choreographer, 1905-1993)  
The human figure is central to the work of many artists in the exhibition.
- **SHADOWS NUMBERLESS** (John Keats, English poet, 1795-1821 *Ode to a Nightingale*)  
Examination of the shadowy areas of consciousness is at the core of work by eight of the artists included in *Pricked*.

# **Exhibition Highlights**

**One chosen artist and artwork has been chosen to represent the six sections of the exhibition (outlined on the previous page):**

**NEITHER MORE NOR LESS**

**POLITICS IS NOT A SCIENCE**

**WHATEVER IS WELL SAID BY ANOTHER IS MINE**

**MEMORY IS WHAT MAKES OUR LIVES**

**BODIES NEVER LIE**

**SHADOWS NUMBERLESS**

PURI-TEA MIST  
TEA TOWEL  
DEEP SEE SCRUB  
TYPHOON  
CALM DOWN  
BESTSELLER

A KIND OF  
FOLLY OF  
GRANDOUR  
IS BEHIND THE  
EMBROIDERERS'  
GUILD AT THE  
MOMENT.

ALL LIVES ARE SKILL ENGAGED

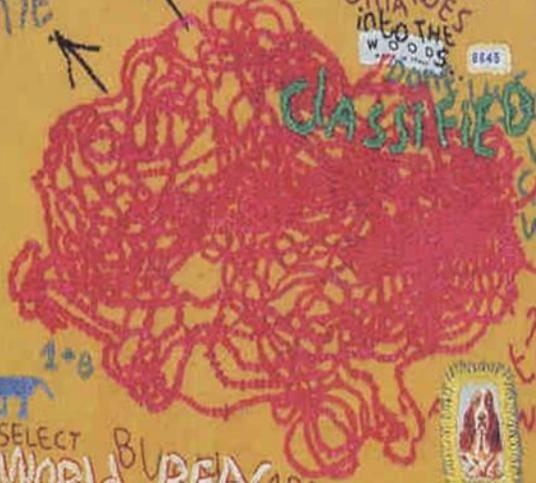
GENERAL HEALTH  
1 VERY GOOD  
2 GOOD  
3 FAIR  
4 BAD  
5 VERY BAD  
-1 MISSING  
-2 NOT  
tree  
GENDER



RE-HASHED  
CLAP-TRAP  
Sundried  
TOMATOES  
into THE  
WIRE



FOLLOW ME



CLASSIFIED THESE WIRE FOR  
WIRE \$6.20  
1945



PLEASE CONTINUE TO HOLD



SELECT WORLD BEACH  
SCRIBBLE OR DECORATE  
A FOUR-BY-FIFTEEN-  
INCH PIECE  
OF FABRIC.  
YOUR USE OF BEADS  
AND EMBROIDERY  
MAY VARY AN  
INDEN  
SEDL

SPRAW!

RIBBON PROJECTS



PLEASE REMOVE  
LEGERE, THE CAL.  
LOSE HIS NAME  
SURE

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES  
THE PER...AL...ERSPE...  
TIVE...ATU...EM...YOU...  
WOR...  
KE...H...YE...WE...AP...  
KNEW...E...DIFFE...CE...  
BRIGHTNESS OF FELIN  
...SADDER...



BERYL

## NEITHER MORE NOR LESS

**Tilleke Schwarz**

***Into the Woods, 2002***

Silk, cotton, and rayon yarn  
hand-embroidered on dyed  
linen cloth, fabric, lace, textile  
paint

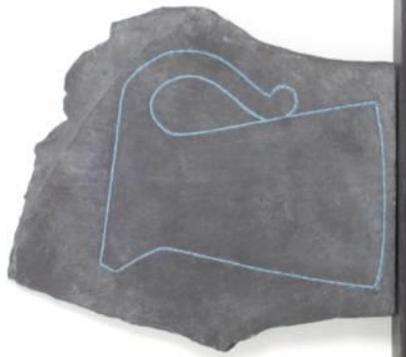
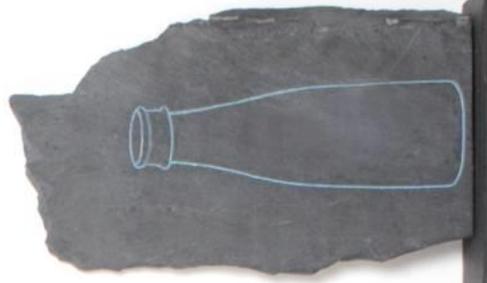
29 1/8 x 26 in. (74 x 66 cm)

Collection of the artist

- *From where do you think Tilleke Schwarz get her ideas or collects her words and images?*
- *What objects are recognizable to you in this work? Why would the artist incorporate these things into her artwork?*
- *How does the artist make this piece visually interesting? What kind of decisions did she make about her composition?*
- *Does it look like she planned everything out carefully? Why or why not?*
- *How do you think this work tells a story?*
- *Does this piece feel personal? Why or why not?*
- *Is this work relevant to your own life? How? Do you have any associations with these objects or words?*
- *Do you feel you have learned something about this artist from her work?*

“My work is a mixture of contemporary influences, graffiti, icons, texts, and images from traditional samplers.” Tilleke Schwarz’s straightforward description of her work belies the appearance of stitched “stream-of-consciousness” panels and the artist’s quirky humor. All of the images and texts in the works are derived from experiences and events in the artist’s life—words and phrases casually overheard, instructions printed on coffee cup lids, cartoon images from television, menu notations from restaurant stops on her travels. As the artist says, “the viewer might step into the role of the ‘author.’ It can become a kind of play between the viewer and me. The work also relates to the history of humanity that is determined through stories.”

*Into the Woods* is another assembly of fragments from daily observation—an irate letter to the editor of *Embroidery* magazine; a rank order list of “general health” that offers choices of “very good; good, fair; bad; very bad;” and strangely ends with “missing” and “not.”



# MEMORY IS WHAT MAKES OUR LIVES

Clyde Olliver

*Welsh Quilt, 2006*

Welsh slate, linen thread  
37 x 45 11/16 x 2 3/4 in. (94 x 116  
x 7 cm)

Collection of artist

- *What everyday images do you notice? Where are they typically found?*
- *What material has the artist used to form these objects?*
- *What material has been pricked or perforated and embroidered through to make this work? How do you think the artist achieved this? What tools might he have used?*
- *How might these images and artist's materials relate to the title of the work? For instance, what do the slate pieces represent?*
- *How are the two materials Olliver used alike? How are they different?*

Clyde Olliver 's embroideries are carried out using the unorthodox material of stone. The artist leaves traces of his vision embedded in roughly hewn slabs of slate or marble. Olliver says, "much of my work lies between the disciplines of sculpture and embroidery, since typically it consists of stitched slate or other suitable stone. Sometimes the work is primarily sculptural—with stitch used as a means of markmaking or as an aid to construction.<sup>6</sup> At other times the work is primarily embroidery—with stitch the main element of the work."

*Welsh Quilt* references a quilting tradition in Wales, wherein quilters would use plates, cups, and saucers retrieved from the cupboard as aids in drawing the patterns to be cut and stitched. A vocabulary of pattern names grew out of this tradition: small quilted circles were dubbed the "wineglass pattern," while slightly larger ones became known as "teacup." This work plays with the memory of this tradition by suggesting an as yet unconstructed quilt "lurking as a half-formed idea among the crockery on the kitchen shelves." The slate is a geographical point of reference for the concept, but also a commentary on the permanence of nature and the ephemeral quality of our daily lives. "The material," Olliver says, "carries its own kind of connotations and associations."



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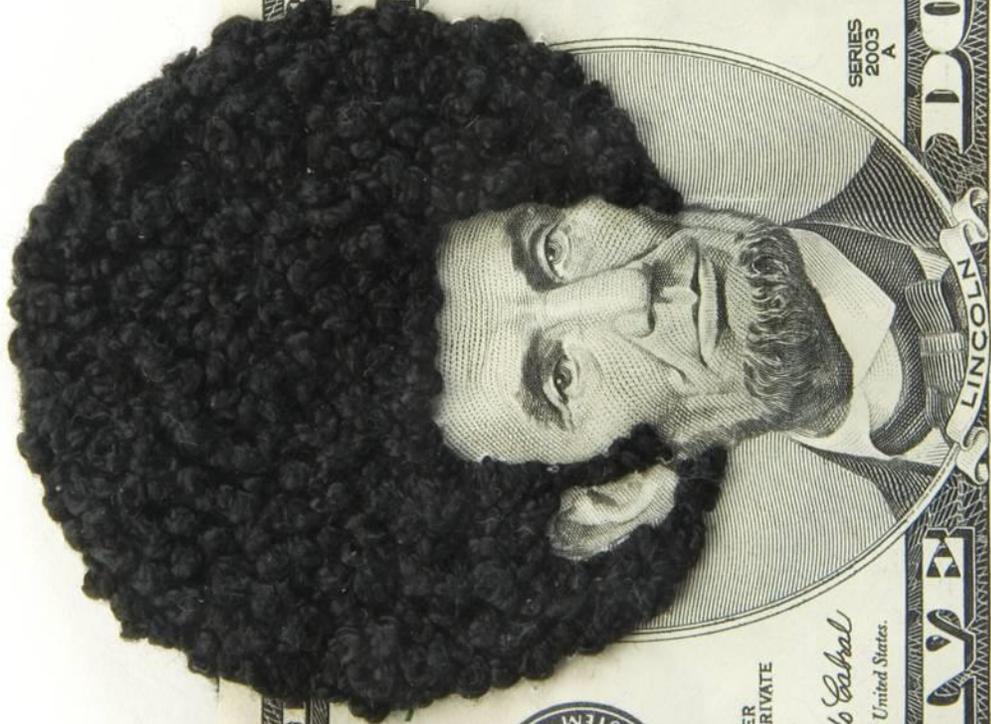


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*John W. Snow*  
Secretary of the Treasury

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*Anna Escobedo Cabral*  
Treasurer of the United States

# POLITICS IS NOT A SCIENCE

Sonya Clark

***Afro Abe II, 2007***

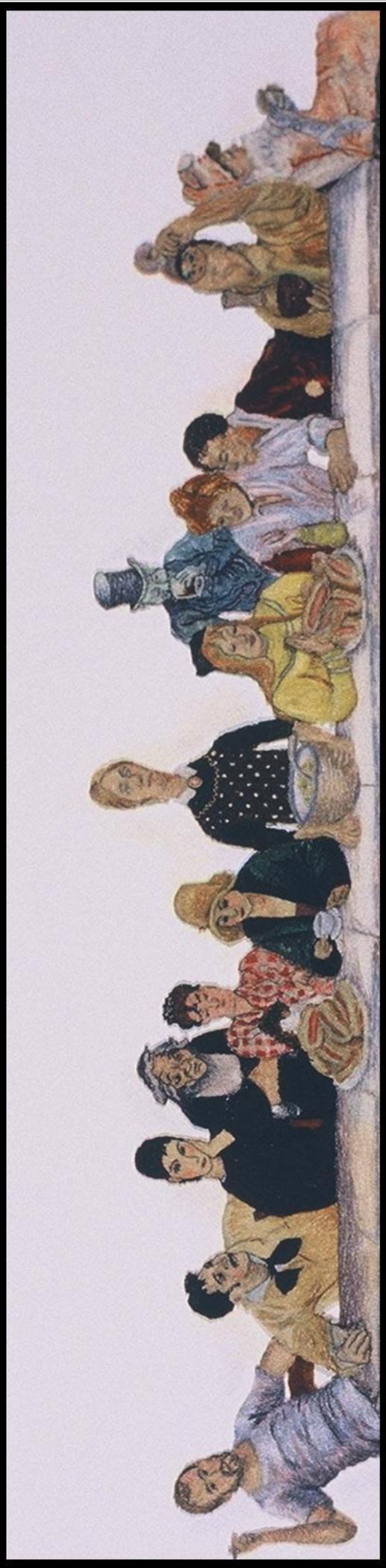
Hand-embroidered, French-knotted thread on five dollar bill

3 ¼ x 6 ¼ in. (8.3 x 15.9 cm)

Collection of the artist

- *Who is depicted on the \$5 bill? What do we know about this president?*
- *Why did Clark choose Lincoln as one of the subjects of her artwork?*
- *Why would the artist depict the President with an Afro?*
- *Why does the artist focus on hair? What does hair represent—in general and in different cultures? What has it represented for the African American community?*
- *How is this work of art political?*
- *Is this work of art personal?*

Social, political, and personal concerns merge in Sonya Clark's work. The artist works in a variety of mediums that include beading, needlework, and assemblage of mass-produced objects. Recently the artist produced a series of black-and white-portraits of Madame C. J. Walker (1867–1919), founder of a hair product and cosmetics firm that specialized in products for women of African heritage. By 1919, she was reputed to be the wealthiest African-American woman living in the United States. Clark's tribute to this entrepreneur and philanthropist is made of hundreds of commercial hair combs. Here Clark is represented by *Afro Abe II*, embroidered on a \$5 bill. The artist says, "Hair is power. For many years I have made pieces that highlight hairdressing as the primordial fiber art. This work celebrates the connection between this famous president and his connection to the African-American community by giving him a crowning glory of hair."



# WHATEVER IS WELL SAID BY ANOTHER IS MINE

Cindy Hickok  
*The Fast Supper, 2006*

Silk embroidery on cotton  
13 x 36 in. (33 x 91.4 cm)  
Collection of Dr. and Cathy Wice

- *Do you recognize any of the characters in the work? Where are they from?*
- *Can you match each figure to its original artist? (Amedeo Modigliani, Mary Cassatt, Edgar Degas, Grant Wood, Pierre August Renoir, Vincent Van Gogh, Edouard Manet, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Honore Daumier, Edward Hopper,*
- *Look at the composition of Hickok's work. To what iconic work of art is she making reference?*
- *If you were to remake this piece, what images would you use—for both the figures and the objects?*
- *Do you associate with any of the above characters? How does this work relate to your own life?*

Borrowing images from icons in the history of art is ubiquitous in appropriative art in any media, and it is not surprising that several artists who embroider have found a way to introduce an element of humor through such borrowings. Cindy Hickok is a master at rifling through Janson's History of Art, extracting familiar characters from masterworks and reassembling them in new situations. The Fast Supper is populated by thirteen incongruous sitters from works by Grant Wood, Edgar Degas, and Pierre-August Renoir, among others. The characters are brought together like Leonardo's Last Supper, in this case replacing the bread and wine of the original with hot dogs and potato salad.

The artist says, "My embroideries are intended to provide the viewer with a look at everyday situations with a tinge of humor. My aim is not to make a political statement; rather, it is to produce work that will inspire a smile, a memory, an appreciation of the world we share."



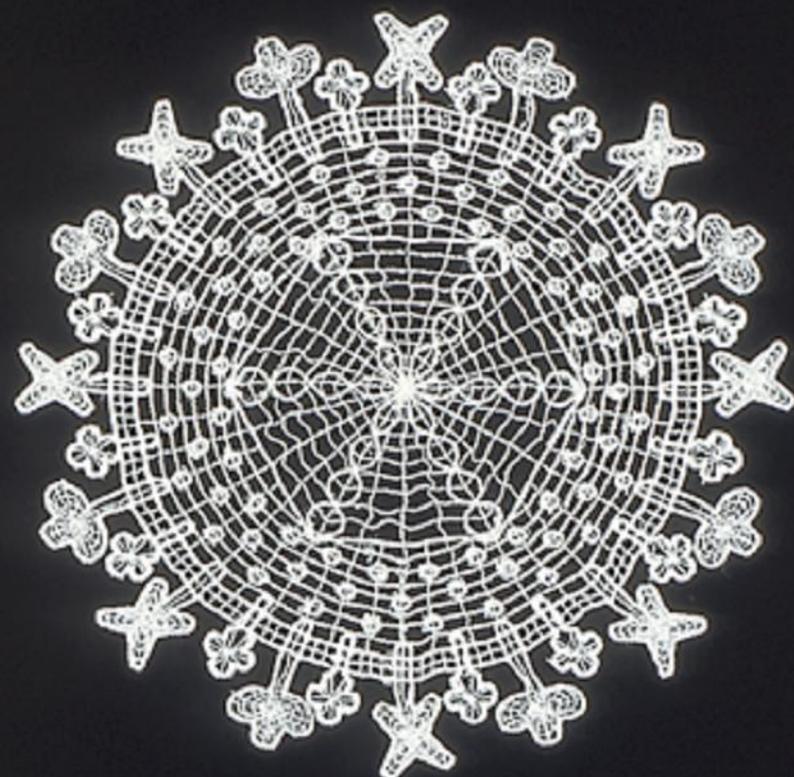
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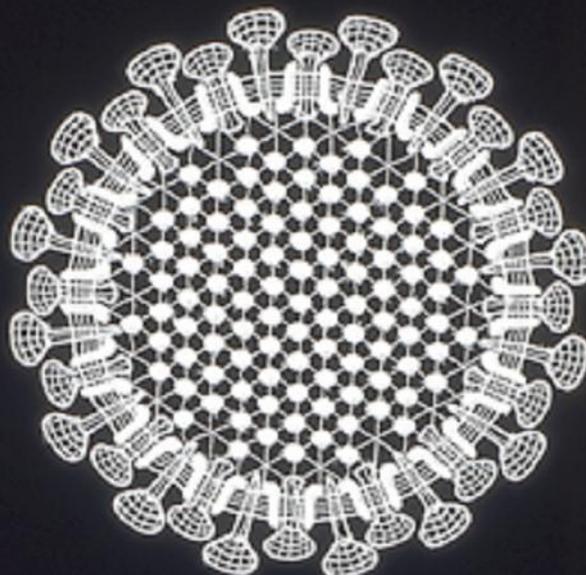
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4



2



5

# BODIES NEVER LIE

Laura Splan

1—*Doily (Hepadna)*, 2004

2—*Doily (Herpes)*, 2004

3—*Doily (HIV)*, 2004

4—*Doily (Flu)*, 2004

5—*Doily (SARS)*, 2004

Computerized machine-embroidered rayon lace mounted on  
cotton velvet

16 ¾ x 16 ¾ x 2 ¼ in. (42.5 x 42.5 x 5.7 cm)

Collection of the artist

- *Without looking at the titles of these artworks, what do you see here? What are these domestic objects? What ideas or memories do they conjure up for you, if any? Where would you typically find these objects?*
- *Discuss the lines and shapes in these works? How would you describe them?*
- *Do you find this work beautiful and comforting? Why?*
- *Now look at the titles of each of these works. Does knowing that these objects represents different viruses change your view of the piece? If yes, how?*
- *Why has the artist chosen to represent these microscopic virus structure as doilies? What is the irony?*
- *How do you think the artist created these pieces—from start to finish?*

The body, in all of its manifestations as surface, structure, and content, is zealously explored by Laura Splan. Splan's approach to depictions of the body is to fragment it into manageable portions, thus allowing for a much deeper investigation into the ways in which corporeal, spiritual, and emotional imperatives intersect and inform each other. The artist uses the elements of the body—skin, blood, bones, organs, and even human viruses—to “explore perceptions of beauty and horror, comfort and discomfort.” The imagery that she chooses can be abstract, like patchwork assemblages using cosmetic skin peels, to more literal references, such as vein patterns. Within this framework, Splan is highly focused on the materiality of her subject and her medium, and on the processes that they may inspire; she speaks of her pleasure, for example, in discovering that “the consistency of blood facilitates its use as ink.”

Splan's work is comprised of five machine-embroidered doilies, each based on the structure of a different virus that lives in a human host. Turning these dangerous invaders into harmless and pretty doilies generates “a response that fluctuates between seduction and repulsion, comfort and alienation.” Ironically, it is the idea of doilies being passed down (transmitted) from one generation to the next in which image and content collide. “Bio-terrorism, SARS, and antibacterial soaps alike have heightened our awareness of the microbial world. Doilies serve as a metaphor for the way we have adapted our everyday lives to these now everyday concerns. Here domestic artifacts and heirlooms manifest the psychological heredity of our cultural anxieties.”



## *Lament (detail), 2001-2006*

Hand-embroidered cotton thread on found knit gloves,  
sewing needles, found backpack frame, aluminum

60 in. x 11 ft. 8 in. x 12 in. (152.4 cm x 3.55 m x 30.5 cm)

Collection of the artist; courtesy Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York

- *How does this object represent emotion and the human experience?*
- *How does this object make you feel when you first look at it?*
- *What kind of gloves are these? Who would have worn them?*
- *What do the wings represent to you? What do the needles represent?*
- *Why do you think the artist titled his work “Lament”? How might this work, while representing a darker side of our consciousness, also represent hope? How has the artist achieved this dichotomy?*
- *What does it say about our culture?*
- *Discuss the way the artist has put this piece together. Why do you think this artist chose to use hand embroidery rather than machine embroidery when making this work of art?*

Paul Villinski's art is about rescue, retrieval, and redemption. He works with found objects such as discarded beer cans or lost gloves to make works that are penetrating in their poignancy, evoking emotions that range from sadness and regret to hope and the triumph of the spirit. Beer cans are transformed into flocks of gilded or sootcovered butterflies installed on thin wires so that they move with a passing breeze, and street-dirty lost gloves reappear as a compelling series of bird wings. For Villinski, the found gloves and his constructed wings are emblematic of human experience and emotions. He comments, “they have qualities we fear coming to know: carelessly left behind, forgotten, or discarded, weathered, damaged, exhausted and worn through, run over by life, homeless. Lost and found. So I bring them into the studio and into pieces and give them homes with the others.” *Lament* is constructed of dozens of found gloves in shades of black, navy blue, and brown. They are stitched together in overlapping layers to create a massive pair of bird wings. The center is the empty frame of a backpack, suggesting that the wearer has discarded the wings after use, or has himself been lost forever, much like Icarus. A delicate and almost unseen embroidered mesh, carried out in a deeply saturated blue, is used to stitch together the gloves, creating a spiderlike memory of the artist's intervention. The simple gesture of the stitching and the numerous needles from which threads hang ends gives *Lament* an eerie surface shimmer.

# **Lesson Plans**

## **Lesson Plan 1: The Embroidered Form**

**Suggested level:** Grades K-2

**Time:** One class period

### **Objectives:**

- a) To understand that the act of drawing can take different physical forms.
- b) To learn the basic definition of embroidery: a fiber being passed through a supporting ground.
- c) To create a drawing using simple embroidery and piercing/pricking techniques.
- d) To work with narrative to create art.

### **Materials:**

- White foam sheets
- Markers
- Fabric
- Glue
- Hole puncher
- Yarn, thread, raffia, wire, etc.

### **Vocabulary:**

Pierce, line, drawing, embroidery, thread

### **Activity:**

#### **Part One: Discussion/Gallery Inquiry**

Students will discuss stories they remember hearing, both from books and movies and from people they know. They will do a drawing with marker on paper. During a tour of "Pricked", students will complete an inquiry with Maira Kalman's "*I Feel a Sense of Dread*", Nils Karsten's "*La-La-Land*", and Petter Hellsing's "*Sarki's Story*."

- What is happening in each of these pictures?
- What materials have been used? Is it a drawing? A sculpture? Would you categorize this artwork as a drawing, or sculpture or both? Why?
- How do you think the artist made each work?
- Why did the artist make this work, and what do you think they were thinking about?
- What story is the artist trying to tell?

#### **Part Two: Craft Workshop**

Students will draw a character they remember hearing about in a story as large as possible on a sheet of white craft foam. They will then pierce along the drawing's outline with the hole puncher and weave yarn and other fibers through the holes. Students may also collage fabric and other media into the drawing, and pierce through these as well in order to work with, and understand the differences between, line and solid shapes.

#### **Part Three: Review**

Students will view their work as a group. What is going on in the pictures? What kind of materials were used? Do these drawings remind you of anything you saw in the exhibition? Are they drawing or sculpture? or both?

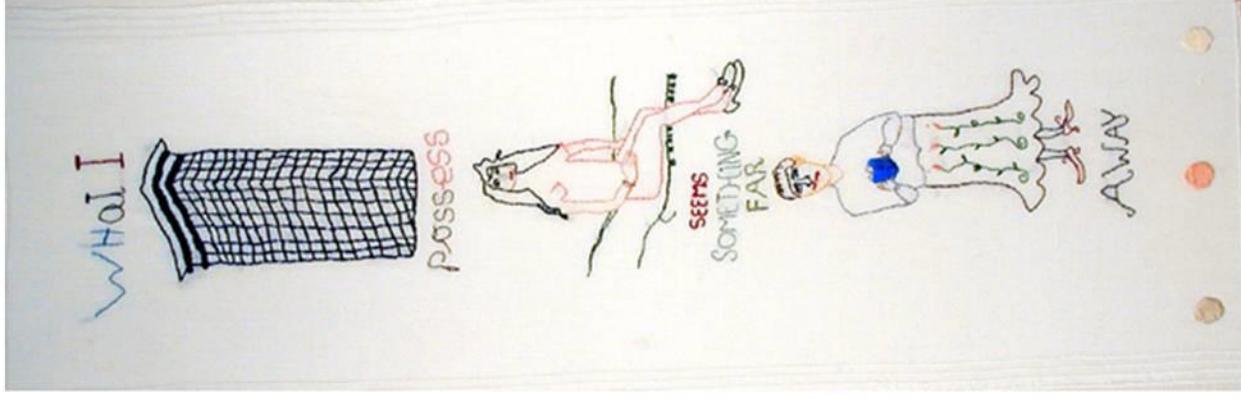
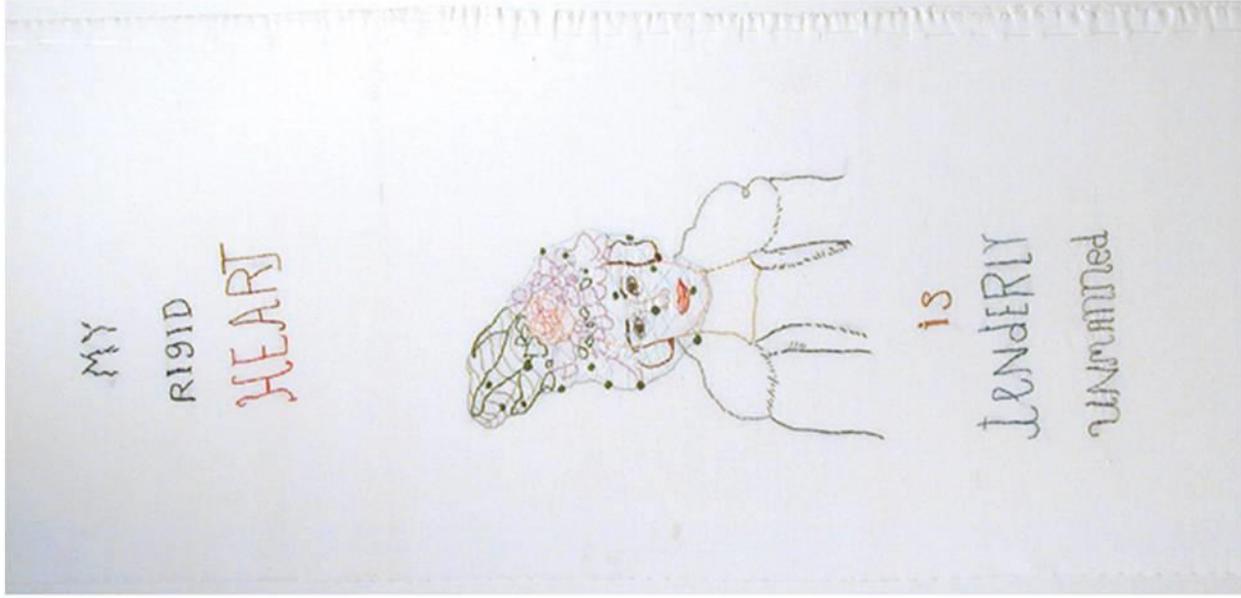
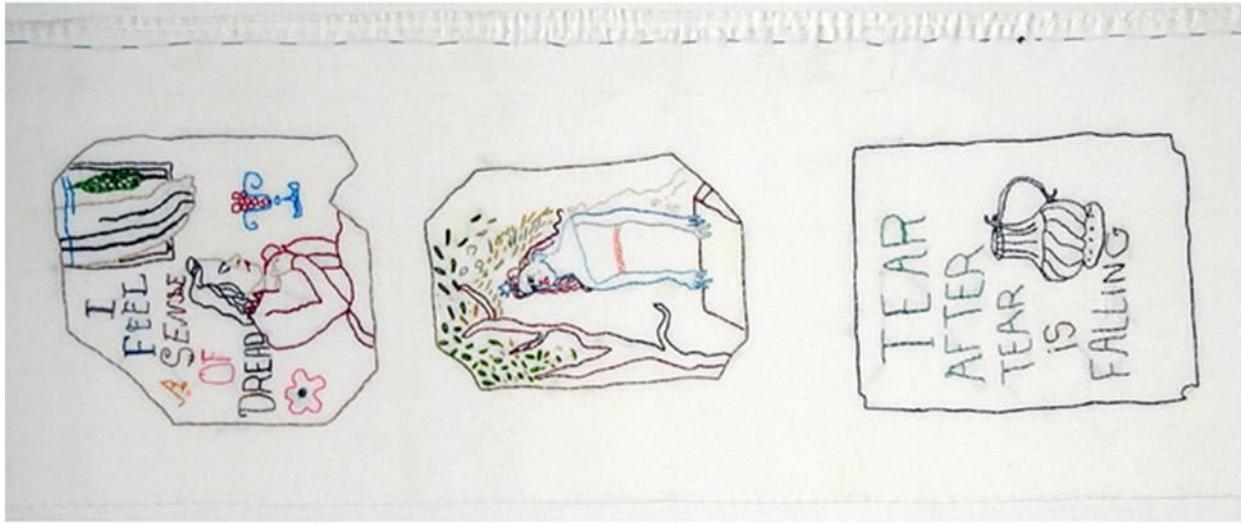
**Nils Karsten**  
*La-La Land, 2007*

Hand-embroidered silk, Elmwood, stain  
6 ft. 5 9/16 in. x 7 ft. 2 5/8 in. x 1 15/16 in. (1.97 m x 2.20 m x 5 cm)  
Collection of the artist; courtesy Contrasts Gallery, Hong Kong



**Maira Kalman**

**Four Panel Piece: I feel a sense of dread; My rigid heart; What I possess; What had disappeared, 2005**



Silk and cotton thread on linen and cotton  
4 panels, each 49 1/2 x 19 1/2 in. (125.7 x 49.5 cm)  
Collection of the artist; courtesy Julie Saul Gallery, New York

**Petter Hellsing**  
*Sarki's Story, 2002-2007*



Hand-/machine-embroidered found chair, pillow, wall-hanging w/cotton floss and nylon thread  
Dimensions variable  
Collection of the artist

## **Lesson Plan 2: Our Journey Becomes a Memory**

**Suggested level:** Grades 3-5

**Time:** one class period

### **Objectives:**

- a) To understand that memory can be expressed in different ways through art.
- b) To discover and explore the connections to a persons' life.
- c) To create a piece of work using embroidery based on own memory.
- d) To investigate ways of creating stitch marks.

### **Materials:**

- Paper
- Scissors
- Ribbon
- Buttons and other closures – hooks and eyes, press studs, toggles
- Pencils
- Embroidery floss
- Fabric markers
- Felt
- Darning needles
- Elastic
- Beads

### **Vocabulary:**

Inspiration, process, materials, memory, construction, design, scale, fabric, embroidery, reference, history, stitch

### **Activity:**

#### **Part One: Introduction**

Introduce the class to the museum. Outline the missions and philosophy of the museum along with a reminder of “museum manners”. Outline workshop day and objectives to students

Go over vocabulary – process and materials

#### **Part Two**

Hand out to the students' paper with part of an image on it. Ask them to draw what might be outside the given image. Ask students' to give it a name. Write it down. (Link words with images.)

#### **Part Three**

Focus attention on pieces from 'Memory is What Makes Our Lives' section. Ask about narrative of work, history, scale, materials, process.

Show students arm cuff:

- How could they make it?

Demonstrate:

- threading a needle
- tying a knot
- Running stitch

Prepare base: Cut slits and thread ribbon through them for tie.

Ask students to use something from their drawing that they would like to embroider.

Draw this outline onto felt. Stitch with colored embroidery floss.

#### **Part Four: Reflection – show and tell**

Question students – what did they enjoy, what was new, how could they continue at home?

#### **Part Five: Further investigation**

Where in history do you find embroidery? Is it on your body or in your home? What does it say or mean? How do we feel when we see it? Are any unusual materials used?

Take your own picture and use this image as a template.

1. Use a thick piece of paper to punch, pierce and stitch into. Create panels to make into a wall hanging.
2. What might be outside the image in 5 years time? Ask students to draw their ideas onto paper and to title their work. On the back of the image students are to write a story about their drawing.

Create a time capsule by placing drawing and story in a sealed tube (cardboard poster tube). Open in 5 years time in a Social Studies class and discuss with students how imagination can work in conjunction with memory. What are the possibilities?

#### **Part Six: Links to the Curriculum**

- Social Studies: Communities
  - The Western Hemisphere with contemporary examples
  - The concept of historical chronology (using self as a focal point)
- Language Art:
  - Writing a summary (of journey as seen from the students illustration)
  - Writing a short story

### **Lesson Plan 3: Narrative Notions**

**Suggested level:** Grades 6-8

**Time:** one class period

#### **Objectives:**

**a)** Have students create their own narrative journal pages using images and text to narrate their thoughts, visions, and aspirations. This project can be related to a variety of subject areas in order to satisfy Benchmarks of the *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Visual Arts*. Examples include:

Language Arts, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Journals, Short stories, Novels, Stories, Poems, Plays, Letters

Language Arts, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grades: Imaginative texts (novels, short stories, myths, plays, ballads, narrative poems), Writing stories, Poems, Plays, Video Scripts and Songs.

**b)** Students will learn basic embroidery skills including:

- How to thread a needle and tie off a knot
- Stitching (start with a simple stitch and add additional styles as students are ready for them)
- Finishing edges using an edging fabric or basting ribbon

#### **Materials:**

- Muslin, cheesecloth, or tracing paper
- Embroidery thread
- Needles
- One or more of the following: fabric markers, fabric paint and brushes, fabric pencils
- Edging fabric or basting ribbon
- Pins

#### **Vocabulary and Concepts:**

Aspiration (Aspire), narrative, embroidery, Stream of Consciousness vs. Composed, line, form, shape, representation, objective, non-objective

#### **Activity:**

##### **Part One**

Introduce the project to the students by sharing with them images of Tilleke Schwarz' work (see page ). Ask the students the following:

- How do you think Tilleke Schwarz came up with her ideas?
- What kind of decisions did she make about her composition?
- Does it look like she planned everything out carefully first? If so why? If not, why not?
- How does she make this piece interesting?
- Does this piece feel personal? What makes it feel that way?
- Do you feel like you have learned something about the artist from her work?
- How do you think her work tells a story?
- Could this technique be used to communicate a visual narrative?

## **Part Two**

Begin the project. Ask students to create their own narrative artworks using a combination of images and text, embroidered and painted or drawn elements. Have the students to create their *own* visual language for narrating their stories (not just to mimic what Tilleke has done). Students can:

- 1) Tell their own personal stories by creating a journal page that focuses on aspirational ideas such as:
  - What would they like to do when they grow up?
  - How would they like the world to function?
  - What can they imagine would make the world a better place to live in?
- 2) Alternatively, this project can be used as an opportunity for students to illustrate a play, poem, novel or short story that they are currently studying in Language Arts class, tying this into the school's curriculum.

## **Part Three**

Hand out materials: Give each student one 14"x18" piece of muslin or cheesecloth fabric (alternatively tracing paper can be used if the school has budgetary restraints) and fabric paint and brushes or fabric pencils/markers. Give each student 3-4 needles so that they can work with several colors of thread at one time without having to waste thread by switching out colors.

Give a demonstration that includes:

- Threading a needle
- Tying off a knot
- Sewing simple embroidery stitches
- Knotting off ends

## **Part Four**

Give students an hour and a half to work on their projects, answering technical questions and encouraging/prompting them to challenge themselves with their imagery and aspirations.

## **Part Five**

Spend 20 minutes in a group critique/sharing session where students can share what they've accomplished so far and learn from each other's explorations.

## **Part Six**

Return to this project for a second session to continue the process and finish the project. Begin with a demonstration on finishing edges or basting. This can be done in a variety of ways:

- 1) Students can simply fold over the edges of their fabric and stitch them down with a simple running stitch.
- 2) Students can use a finishing fabric or basting ribbon to finish off edges. This can also be applied using a simple running stitch and allows the students to choose a printed fabric, or colored ribbon border.

## **Part Seven**

Have a second critique discussing content and form as well as covering any technical challenges and solutions that students arrived at throughout the course of the project.

## **Lesson Plan 4: “Neither More Nor Less”**

**Suggested level:** 9-12 grade

**Subject:** Social Studies or Arts and Communications

**Time:** one to two class periods (1½ hours)

### **Objectives:**

To introduce interdisciplinary connections between language, fiber art, and human interest, and explore how both images, language and the themes of values, morals, and behavior is a vehicle for creativity for high school students.

- (a) Students will view the works of 3 artists (Emily Hermant, Tamar Stone, and Andrea Deszo) and discuss how values, morals, and behavior are used as a springboard for their works. In turn, we will use the theme of values, morals, and behavior as a stimulus for making a hands-on project.
- (b) Students will respond to open-ended questions about how values, morals, and behavior are experienced in their own culture, as compared to what the artists’ works are conveying. Additionally, students will learn about the various historical and contemporary themes that are symbolic to the artworks we are discussing.
- (c) In response to the exhibition and discussion, students will take photographs of what they think represents a moral or value, followed by a 5” x 5” needle-punched felted piece to visually express how these values are embedded on a personal and/or social level.
- (d) The needle-punched felt piece will serve as the cover page for a journal where students can continue to document their experiences.
  - \* (Needle-Punch felting is a process in which wool fibers are physically embedded and fused together by hand to create a piece of cloth. This process occurs by physically puncturing the fibers together with a serrated needle. Images and words can be needle-punched into the wool surface by adding additional pieces of wool or embroidery).

### **Materials:**

- Polaroid Camera/film
- Felting needle
- Raw wool for felting (various colors)
- 5” x 5” square of sheet foam per student
- 8-10 sheets of paper for each student. (sheets will be cut down into 5” x 5” for body of book)
- Embroidery thread
- Sharp embroidery needle
- Fabric scissors

### **Activity:**

#### **Part One: Introduction**

The “Neither More Nor Less” project introduces students to the medium of documentation, note taking, needle-punch felting, and embroidery through the inspiration of 3 pieces of artwork from the exhibition, and encourages students to explore the relationship between the artists’ works and the meaning of these works on both social and personal levels.

We will discuss how the meanings of these works affect our own values, lives and community. Using “values/ morals” as a springboard, students will photograph images that they feel represents a value or moral, and communicate how they personally connect with their photographs.

This project culminates with a needle-punched felted project book to communicate how morals are strongly embedded in our lives and those around us. The physical act of needle-punch felting is a layering and embedding process by fusing wool fibers together with a serrated needle.

Needle-punched felting is both process and metaphor for how we both consciously and unconsciously document and “embed” morals and values in our lives and those around us, as well as generations to come.

### **Part Two: Exhibition walkthrough and discussion questions (30 minutes)**

The class will complete an inquiry with Andrea Deszo’s *“Lessons From My Mother”* (Image #1):

- Discuss the objective (what we see) and subjective (the meaning, story) interpretation of this piece
- What do you think the artist is trying to communicate about her relationship w/ her mother?
- Describe some examples of morals/ superstitions in which you were raised to believe.
- What is the mood behind this piece (humorous, sarcastic, compulsive, satirical, etc)?
- Why would the artist choose the medium of embroidery in this piece? Discuss how the symbolism and physical act of embroidery relates to the content of this work.
- Do you relate to this work on a personal level? Why/ why not?
- Who is the artist communicating to? (a child, adult, an American audience, etc.?) What are the clues that have helped you arrive to this decision?

The class will complete an inquiry with Emily Hermant’s *“Lies, Lies, Lies...”* (Image #2):

- How does the physical material process of creating this piece (veiling, dissolvable fabric) and the material processes (patterning, layering) support what the artist is trying to communicate in this piece?
- Describe an experience in your life (could be political, social) where you have felt that the truth has been manipulated and edited into lies, and continued to layer into more lies.
- Who do you think Hermant is communicating to in this piece? Who is the audience?
- If this piece could talk, how we it speak to you (whisper, screaming, etc.) Explain why, and hoe the piece provides you with this information.
- What is your response to the message of Hermant’s piece? Does this piece affect you personally and/or socially? Why/ why not?

The class will complete an inquiry with Tamar Stone's "*A Case of Confinement*" (Image #3):

- What period in time do you think this piece is based on? Does it have a dated quality?
- What is your objective/ subjective interpretation of this piece?
- Do you think this piece have relevance to issues in today's society? Describe these issues.
- How do the materials and the material processes of this piece support what the artist is trying to communicate to us?



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Image #1:

Andrea Deszo

**Lessons From My Mother Series, 2005-2006**

Hand-embroidered cotton thread on cotton canvas

One of 44 embroideries: each square 6 x 6 in.

(15.2 x 15.2 cm); each rectangle 9 x 6 in. (22.9 x 15.2 cm)

Collection of the artist

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Image #2:

Emily Hermant

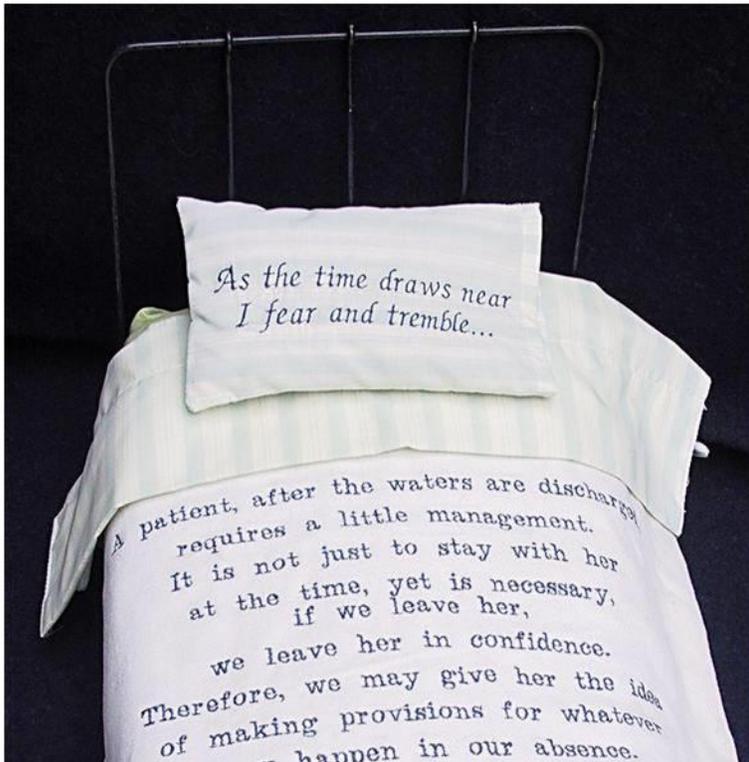
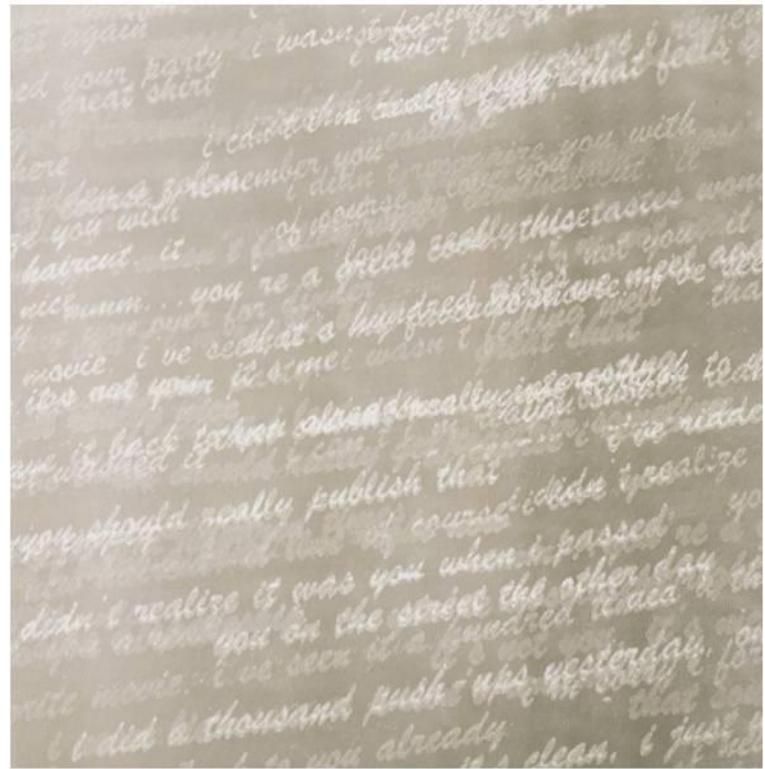
**Lies, lies, lies..., 2004-2007**

Collected and embroidered lies: machine-embroidered polyester on silk organza, dissolved in bleach, treated with fabric hardener, and mounted with straight pins; lying booth: silk-screened ink on organza, wooden embroidery hoop, hardware, interactive web project

Dimensions variable

Collection of the artist

Collection of the artist



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Image #3:

Tamar Stone

**A Case of Confinement, 2005**

Antique blue metal doll bed; vintage cotton/polyester bedsheet; cotton ticking, hand-stuffed with vintage feathers; vintage striped wool blanket; brown paper bag; antique flour bag cover; antique flour bag cover lined with cotton ticking and hand-stuffed with vintage feathers

10 ½ x 10 ½ x 19 in. (26.7 x 26.7 x 48.3 cm)

Private Collection

### **Part Three: Documenting Morals/ Values (15 min)**

Students will be broken up into groups of 5. Each group will be given one polaroid camera containing 10 shots in each camera. Within their given groups, the students will walk around the block for a few minutes and each take 2 photographs of what they think represents “morals, or values.” After they take their 2 photos, they will choose only 1 photo to talk about in their groups. We regroup at the end of the workshop to discuss the photos and their final product.

### **Part Four: Needle-Punched Felting/ Embellishing w/ embroidery/ bookmaking**

In response to their documented images, students will create a 5” x 5” piece of needle-punched felt to communicate what their documentation is conveying to them. They may needle-punch or embroider words, images, etc. Emphasis will be placed on physically layering their felted piece to embed words and symbols of value. This piece of felt will serve as the cover page for a journal where students can continue to document their experiences.

Needle-Punched piece will be punctured at edge, and bound into a handmade book.

### **Part Five: Additional considerations/ options:**

As an alternative to needle-punch felting, students may physically stitch a word or symbol on the photograph that personally emphasizes the most symbolic aspect of the photo.

- For example: If you took a photo of a mother holding her child, the emphasis will be to embroider an area on the photo that resonates with you the most. (It could be the mother’s arms cradling the child, etc.) You may choose to outline, cover, or distort the image with thread. Emphasis is based on embroidering the most important value in the photograph to represent the importance of embedding values.

### **Part Six: Discussion questions:**

- Discuss the words/imagery in your needle-punched piece. Why did you choose this particular word/ image to permanently mark into your work?
- What is the story behind both photograph and needle-punched image?
- What helped you arrive to the decision of creating this piece?
- Would you consider your piece to be social/ politically symbolic, or personal, etc.? How and why?

## GLOSSARY

**Canvas Work:** using an open, evenly woven mesh material called canvas; stitches of various length and slant cover the canvas.

**Composition:** the arrangement of lines, colors and form.

**Cotton:** a soft fiber that grows around the seeds of the cotton plant (*Gossypium* spp.), a shrub native to the tropical and subtropical regions of Africa and the Americas. The fiber is most often spun into thread and used to make a soft, breathable textile, which is the most widely used natural-fiber cloth in clothing today.

**Couching:** a series of tiny stitches is used to hold 1 or more threads in position.

**Cross Stitch:** covering a pre-marked pattern on a piece on cloth with two stitches crossed at right angles.

**Cutwork:** parts of the design are cut away before or after the motif has been embroidered. Tiny running stitches are placed close to the edge to give a raised effect to the finished work. (See Hickok)

**Embroidery:** is the art or handicraft of decorating fabric or other materials with designs stitched in strands of thread or yarn using a needle. (Embroidery can also be made using other materials such as metal strips, pearls, beads, quills, and sequins.)

**Form:** an element of art, such as you would see in a sculpture that has three dimensions. A shape; an arrangement of parts.

**Glass:** basic elements of sand, soda lime are combined with coloring agents, and melted together to produce the raw material.

**Hardanger:** a form of embroidery traditionally worked with white thread on white even-weave cloth, using counted thread and drawn thread work techniques. It is sometimes called Whitework embroidery.

**Installation:** something that has been installed in a specific space.

**Irony:** the use of words to convey a meaning that is the opposite of its literal meaning.

**Lace:** patterned openwork fabric made by plaiting, knotting, looping, or twisting. The finest lace is made from linen thread. Handmade laces include needlepoint and bobbin lace, tatting, crochet work, and some fabrics made by netting and darning. For this exhibition the definition of lace is a structure made out of some sort of fiber that allows light to pass through it.

**Line:** a line is an identifiable path of a point moving in space. It can vary in width, direction and length.

**Linen:** is a material made from the fibers of the flax plant.

**Linked (or chain) stitch:** stitch which makes a loop on the surface.

**Metal Thread Work:** use of gold and metallic threads. Often threads are couched in place.

**Needlepoint:** technique of putting stitches on openwork mesh canvas so the canvas is completely covered.

**Nylon:** created as synthetic substitute for silk.

**Pattern:** the repetition of any thing -- shapes, lines, or colors -- also called a motif, in a design; as such it is one of the principles of design.

**Rayon:** is a manufactured fiber derived from naturally occurring cellulose that has been extensively processed. It was originally developed as a cheap alternative to silk.

**Silk:** filaments secreted by caterpillars and spiders. While the silk of most caterpillars and spiders is not practical for textiles, there are a few species of moths whose cocoons yield usable fiber.

**Sampler:** a piece of fabric worked in a variety of stitches and/or designs. Originally used as a reference for techniques or patterns, moral teachings, recording lifecycle and daily events.

**Shape:** is one of the elements of art. When lines meet, shapes are formed. Shapes are flat. Shapes are limited to two dimensions: length and width. Some shapes are geometric, such as squares, circles, triangles, rectangles, and ovals. Other shapes are organic or irregular.

**Smocking:** a centuries-old embroidery technique in which decorative, colored thread is stitched in patterns, pictures, or other designs over rolled pleats or tubes in fabric.

**Stitch:** (a) A single loop of yarn around an implement such as a knitting needle. (b) The link, loop, or knot made in this way. A mode of arranging the threads in sewing, embroidery, knitting, or crocheting: a purl stitch.

**Stump Work:** padding is placed between two layers of fabric and using white silken threads, designs are embroidered to produce a three dimensional effect.

**White Work:** when various stitches are worked with white threads on white fabric.

**Wire:** a single, usually cylindrical, elongated strand of drawn metal.

**Wool:** the fiber from the outer coat of primarily sheep and goat.

**Yarn:** the general term for any assemblage of fibers that has been put together in a continuous strand suitable for weaving, knitting and other textile techniques.

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[www.craftster.org/forum/](http://www.craftster.org/forum/)



**Sonya Clark**, American, b. 1967  
Resides: Richmond, Va.  
Clark received her BFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and her MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. She has won numerous awards and grants, including a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, the Ruth Chenven Foundation award, and a Red Gate Artist-in-Residence Grant in Beijing, China. She has had twenty-five solo exhibitions and has been featured in group exhibitions in the United States and Europe. She is the designer and director of the Beaded Prayers Project, a collaborative art project created by 4,500 participants from over thirty countries, which has been touring globally since 2000.



**Cindy Hickok**, American, b. 1936  
Resides: Houston  
Cindy Hickok's work is in museum collections in New York, Houston, France, and Hungary. Hickok received her BS in Applied Art at Iowa State University in 1959, and since that time has exhibited widely at an international level. Her work is known for its quiet humor, and is frequently inspired by events of daily life, or by scenes and figures drawn from the history of art.



**Clyde Olliver**, Welsh, b. 1949  
Resides: Cumbria, Wales  
Olliver merges fiber with other sculptural materials, especially stone, in his work. He began stitching when he was a child and worked for a time as a studio assistant to a tapestry maker. His formal studies in art began in 1991 and he received his degree in textiles from Goldsmiths, University of London. In addition to participating in exhibitions in the United Kingdom and Europe, he is an active teacher and lecturer. This is Olliver's first showing in New York.



**Tilleke Schwarz**, Dutch, b. 1946  
Resides: Pijnacker, the Netherlands  
Schwarz chose to study textile design at an early age, and combined this interest with her parallel interest in painting. She is best known for her engaging, humorous, and whimsical embroideries on linen that record her life, travels, and experiences. Schwarz's work has been shown worldwide. She is a frequent lecturer and also writes on textiles for European and American magazines.



**Laura Splan**, American, b. 1973  
Resides: Brooklyn  
Splan received her MFA from Mills College in Oakland, in 2002, although she had been exhibiting her work since 1994, when she was given a solo show at the University of California, Irvine Mesa Arts Building Gallery. Her work has been seen in over fifty group exhibitions across the United States. She has lectured at the New York Academy of Sciences and at Mills College, among many others, and has received the Murphy and Cadogan Fine Arts Fellowship, the Heringer Prize for Excellence in Art, and the Kala Art Institute Fellowship Award.



**Paul Villinski**, American, b. 1960  
Resides: Long Island City, N.Y.  
Villinski studied at the Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, and received his BFA with honors from The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York, in 1984. His work has been included in over ninety exhibitions. He has been the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts grant and has been artist-in-residence at the Millay Colony for the Arts, New York; the Djerassi Resident Artists Program, California; and the Ucross Foundation, Wyoming. He has also been adjunct lecturer at CUNY La Guardia Community College, New York.

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**Morwenna Catt** [www.morwennacatt.co.uk](http://www.morwennacatt.co.uk)

**Judy Chicago** [www.judychicago.com](http://www.judychicago.com)

**Sonya Clark** [www.sonyaclarck.com](http://www.sonyaclarck.com)

**Orly Cogan** [www.orlycogan.com](http://www.orlycogan.com)

**Annet Couwenberg** [www.annetcouwenberg.com](http://www.annetcouwenberg.com)

**Ana de la Cueva**  
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**Xiang Yang** [www.xiang-yang.org](http://www.xiang-yang.org)

## **Museum of Arts & Design (MAD)**

The Museum of Arts & Design is the country's leading cultural institution dedicated to the collection and exhibition of contemporary objects created in a wide range of media, such as clay, glass, wood, metal, and fiber. The Museum celebrates materials and processes that are today embraced by practitioners in the fields of craft, decorative arts, and design. MAD's distinguished permanent collection includes over 2,000 objects by renowned and emerging artists and designers from around the world, representing many forms of creativity and craftsmanship.

MAD will reopen to the public in September 2008 in its new home at Two Columbus Circle. The new museum will include dedicated galleries for our own collections, a jewelry study center, spacious galleries for our temporary special exhibitions as well as studios for practicing artists. These studios will be open to the public, which will offer our visitors a unique opportunity to experience the creation of art and to interact with artists. We believe that this will further underscore our commitment to the community of art practitioners that have shaped and continue to shape our field, and to the celebration of creativity as expressed in the handmade.

## **The Crafted Classroom**

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## **Craft Discovery**

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