Profile of a Fiber Artist

Terese Agnew describes her process as “drawing with thread,” and her intensely embroidered quilts can take up to three years to complete. The images are built slowly, with layer upon layer of brilliant color embroidered by machine into dense thickets. The intricacy of her stitching is balanced by a powerful graphic sophistication: Agnew’s quilts hold the eye from across a room and are just as captivating at close range. While widely reproduced in print, they are rarely shown.

Born during 1959 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, sculptor and fiber artist, Terese Agnew, was encouraged in her youth to pursue her creative interests in artistic endeavors. Her stepfather, a labor organizer and political activist was to influence the direction of her work in her adult life.

She studied sculpture and painting at the University of Wisconsin from 1981 through 1984, early on in 1985, captured the public eye and some notoriety with the sculpture which became known as “The Dragon Project”, a huge fiberglass sculpture installed on a historic water tower in Milwaukee. With months of work to create it and to run the gauntlet of legal maneuvering to acquire the necessary permits, the initial exhibition lasted only five days. In 1995, in collaboration with Mary Zebell, it became a permanent fixture of the “The Wisconsin Workers Memorial” at Milwaukee’s Union Square.

During 1991 the medium for her art became fabric in addition to stone, fiberglass, and other materials used in sculpture. She took up quilt-making, explaining, “Quilting as an art form provides endless possibilities for the process to relate to the subject matter in a way that isn’t arbitrary. The process is fundamentally about putting disconnected things together; assembling fragments into a cohesive whole. I love that factor as a basis for making art, because so many of the things I care about are situations where there has been a “disconnect” in our thinking.” Her quilts appear in many contemporary art collections including the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington D.C., The Renwick Gallery, The Milwaukee in Wisconsin, and the John M. Walsh III Collection of Contemporary Art Quilts in New Jersey.

Agnew’s work is pointedly political, yet stunningly, unfashionably beautiful. “Practice Bomber Range in the Mississippi River Flyway” depicts the rolling Wisconsin farmland, with broad, contour-plowed stripes of midsummer yellow and green. It is a bucolic scene, comforting in its familiarity, and seemingly fit for the folksy clichés of quilt making. Yet after all the time spent embroidering this piece, Agnew cut out its heart. After photographing the quilt’s core, she then superimposed the tight concentric lines of a bomb-sight over her stitched image and printed the photo on canvas. In transplanting this new and sinister perspective back into the center, the lovely bird’s-eye view turns predatory; the quilt takes on a chill. Suddenly the land seems frighteningly vulnerable.

(Continued on Page 3 . . . . )
Another quilt “The D.O.T. Straightens Things Out” is less foreboding, but it also plays brilliantly with the language of quilting and its connotations. After lavishly embroidering a lively, diverse woodland Agnew took her scissors to it, slicing it into neat, even squares.

The resulting blocks were inserted into a bordering grid of dull grey highway, overrunning the woods with tiny cars on roads to nowhere. Like the highways that divide neighborhoods and farms in the name of urban renewal, these roads are an imposition: they have no relationship to the existing landscape. But Agnew exploits scale to lend this piece an optimistic tone: the trees tower over the roadways and the toy-like cars seem futile. The D.O.T.’s engineered grid interrupts the forest, but does not eradicate it. In the end, it’s no match for the rich green texture of Agnew’s resilient woods.

From sculpture to quilting, from stone to fabric, Agnew’s work is inherently creative, as well as socially relevant. Her distinctive work, fusing conceptual and political approaches to art with the painstaking handiwork often associated with “craft” mediums.” Her sculptures stand today in public parks, and a few of her more famous quilts hang in galleries, including the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington DC.

**Share Your Work**

Do you want to share your quilting work with other readers? We are hoping to continue to make this a regular feature of the Quarterly, so search through your “stacks” for your favorite quilts and contact us at:

**mail@quiltnthyme.com**

with photos of your quilts, wall hangings, table-runners, or any other completed quilting project, name, city/state location, and a brief biography and any other pertinent information for placement consideration. If you are local to the store you can bring your finished projects in for us to photograph.

**Guild Member Discounts**

Guild members who show their guild member card will now receive 10% off their entire purchase.*

*Applies to regularly priced inventory only. Does not apply to services or consignment goods nor can it be added to other discount offers.
Terese Agnew is mostly known for creating the epic quilt “Portrait of a Textile Worker,” a 98-inch x 110-inch replication of a 2002 black and white photograph, taken by Charles Kernaghan during an undercover visit of a Bangladesh factory where workers put in up to 16-hour days, six to seven days a week. Rather than utilizing fabric in the traditional sense, the entire quilt is made from over thirty thousand garment labels of some of the most prestigious and high-end fashion designers and clothing lines (Tommy Hilfiger, Ralph Lauren, Disney, Geoffrey Beene, Anne Klein, etc.). Rather than solicit labels from the designers or manufacturers, by word-of-mouth news she was sent labels removed and contributed from personal clothing by an ever-widening circle of individuals, labor organizations, Junior League members, students, retired and unemployed workers, friends, family and acquaintances: she received labels from all over the U.S. (New York, California, Maryland, Alaska, Texas, North Carolina, Florida, Pennsylvania, Illinois, many from Wisconsin and more).

(continued on Page 5 . . .)
“The project began with a massive campaign to get the labels. Thousands of people responded, painstakingly cutting out garment tags one by one. I used the labels in numerous ways to create the image. For example, text on a contrasting background was used as a gradation, text borders were ironed back leaving a unified block of tiny words to form specific tones, names were used as segments in a line and combined with others like lines in a drawing. From twenty feet away, the composition is a representational image of a remote place. As you move closer, the illusionistic devices dissolve into labels as intimately familiar as your own clothes.

My quilts take from one to three years to complete. They are embroidered using a process that’s like drawing with thread. The embroidering is done on a sewing machine in sections that I manually direct under the needle. Detailed images are rendered this way to build density and tactility with thread. The finished works are quilted by hand. Some of these works incorporate detailed cuttings that are tacked on so the fabric edges float on the quilt surface. I want each quilt to mimic a little of the richness and complexity of the world . . . . .

- Therese Agnew

It is a fallacy to think that original design can only be achieved after years of training.

- Constance Howard Inspiration of Embroidery (1966)
Janome *Memory Craft 500E*

Now, with Janome’s Memory Craft 500E embroidery machine, designers can create projects to reflect their personal sense of style. With this machine, it’s easy to personalize, embellish, and monogram home decor items, garments, and accessories.

With 160 built-in embroidery designs and 6 fonts for monogramming the possibilities are endless. The MC500E has a maximum embroidery size of 7.9” x 11” and it comes with 4 embroidery hoops: 7.9” x 11” (RE28b), 7.9” x 7.9” (SQ20b), 5.5” x 7.9” (RE20b), and 5.5” x 5.5” (SQ14b), featuring an extra wide table for expansive workspace.

Designs are easily imported through a USB port and edited through the machine’s advanced on-screen editing functions. Navigation through all of these features has become easier with the MC500E’s new LCD color touchscreen.

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**Janome Skyline S7**

Janome’s Skyline S7 comes with 240 built-in stitches, including 11 one-step buttonholes and 7 alphabets. Quilters and designers will enjoy the AcuFeed™ Flex Layered Fabric Feeding System and the Automatic Presser Foot Lift. The 11 buttonholes can be customized for stitch width, stitch density and buttonhole opening. Along with that, the 7 alphabets also go up to 9mm width with a revised letter size and shape for increased realism and balance. Navigation through all of these features has become easier with the Skyline S7’s new LCD color touchscreen.

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**Elna xPerience 580**

Discover your creative potential with the Elna eXperience 580 with the power, precision and convenience you need. The 120 built-in stitches and 8 one-step buttonholes give you the perfect range of stitches for any task and the built-in needle threader will help save time. You will enjoy a 7mm stitch width, large sewing room and an exclusive pocket door for storage. Utilize the automatic thread cutter, easy reverse button, speed control slider and the memorized needle up/down buttons ensuring your sewing projects are easy to create and trouble-free.

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*Visit our store for a demonstration of these exciting new sewing machines!*
Elna eXpressive 860

*Creative eXpression just got easier!*

The eXpressive 860 meets all of your requirements. Whether it’s sewing or embroidery you want you can create all your designs in a blink of an eye and with impressive ease.

A wide range of categorised embroidery patterns and the possibility to download your own files allows you to endlessly customise your sewing projects without ever compromising on quality.

As for sewing, the eXpressive 860 will help you handle any type of fabric and offers you a choice of 200 stitches so you can create all your sewing ideas flawlessly, from decorative stitches to finishing touches!

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**Betty Woodard**

*Corning, California*

As the first to submit a completed “Nationwide Row by Row Experience” quilt to Quilt’n Thyme Sew & Vac, Betty has been awarded a $25 Shop Gift Certificate (for including our row) and 25 Fat Quarters for completing the first submission.

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**And the Winner Is....!**
Favorite Overall .
Card Tricks
by Carolyn Denton

Best Representation of Theme
Flags of Service
by Joann Wilson

Best Use of Fabric
U.S. Map
by Jeanine Quist

Untitled
by Joann Wilson

America’s Heart
by Beth Camper

Pillow
by Sharon Williams

Liberty
by Sharon Williams

Rodeo Star
by Patty Kelly

Red & Blue Stars
by Virgina Giessner

(Continued on Page 9 . . . )
Editor’s Note: The winners of this competition were featured in the August 2015 issue of Quilt’n Thyme’s Monthly News Brief. All entries to the competition are featured in this issue for those who missed the exhibit.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR MACHINE

Learn all of the capabilities of your Serger and/or Sewing Machine in monthly sessions with Sherry Bishop. She will push all of the buttons, manipulate all of the tensions, and show you all of your equipment’s secrets!

Please bring in your machine with its Owner’s Manual and all of the accessories and sewing supplies you will need to work on your sewing project, to include:

- Scissors
- Rotary Cutter
- Cutting Mat
- Needles
- Fabric
- Oil
- Tools

Most important bring your questions so we can find solutions to your sewing challenges.

Classes are held on the 3rd Saturday of every Month
at Quilt’n Thyme Sew & Vac
9 am - 4 pm
1 hour lunch break - bring your own lunch and snacks
Quilting Treasures

Native Pine
### Quilt’n Thyme Sew & Vac
### October, 2015 Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>10/1</td>
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<td>9-4</td>
<td>Machine Quilting</td>
<td>Merri Caywood</td>
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<td>9-4</td>
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to this issue, once upon a Saturday morning, while walking to the kitchen for a cup of coffee, with my wife sitting on the couch watching a feature on a quilter as part of a PBS documentary, *Crafts In America*, my agenda was interrupted by what was being aired, an interview with Terese Agnew about the Portrait of a Textile quilt she created. What initially piqued my interest was not the fact that this was about sewing, quilting, or anything else except the complexity of the project and the innovative and creative approach of the artist to express her inner “muse”.

Understand that this editor is not a quilter, but rather a writer who undertakes reporting, analyzing, questioning, observing, communicating, and interpreting, by means of the written word, what he experiences. Whether it be literary, artistic (no matter what the medium), musical, performance, or any other expressive endeavor, he appreciates the inspiration, the dedication, and the challenges that results in a stunning creative work.

While this editor may not agree, or even accept, the “message” that an artist is trying to communicate, he cannot dismiss the work itself, or the accomplishment of the artist to implement the completion of the creative piece. In other words, he must give credit where credit is due.

This, dear reader, is why the artist’s profile and her most famous work is featured in this Quarterly’s issue.

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**“Like Us on FaceBook!”**

If you visit our FaceBook page at www.facebook.com/quiltnthyme you will discover that activity, in the form of new posts after months of static in-attention, We have also been doing some housecleaning on the site, deleting older posts that had been present for six months or longer.

New posts, consisting of announcements of sales, newly arrived fabric and designer lines that are available in our store, tidbits of wit and wisdom, and news announcements, are posted almost daily, with some days seeing two or three posts on a given day, all as an effort in keeping our customers up-to-date.

We also post sales announcements for quick (one to three day) sales in our store, as well as feature “FaceBook Only Sales” which are only announced on our site. To take advantage of all of these potential savings, bookmark our site and visit it often so that you don’t miss a thing.

**Get the Word Out!**

Quilt’n Thyme News, with a circulation of over 700 customers, spanning local, statewide, and out-of-state locales, who have signed up to receive this Quarterly, provides you with an excellent resource for getting the word out about the services you offer.

A free quarterly placement of your scanned business card is available upon request. If you want to be listed in this publication, please sign up with us at mail@quiltnthyme.com and drop your card off at our store for placement consideration by store management.

Future offerings of quarter-page, half-page, and even full-page advertising placements are being considered to provide opportunities for additional exposure. An independent contractor is available to assist you in the development of such ads.

Management reserves the right to reject any ad request or submission. Any requests for placing ads for competing quilt shops, sewing and fabric stores, department stores and outlets, etc. will not be accepted.