

September 5, 2003

Jeanine Hill

Topic

Cultural awareness and Identity

In this lesson, students will explore contemporary bodies of work that have confronted and identified environmental and cultural issues. Students will create work that confronts the values and norms of society by pursuing a social, political economical, and or ecological problem that our society has created based upon information and concepts that were discussed in class. By doing so, students will thereby attain a certain sense of cultural awareness. Through this exploration, students will address the following essential concepts and questions:

What is culture? How has the culture that you live in effected your life?

How can you become in active participant in the creation of your culture through the use of art? How do people actively create culture?

Objectives / Expected Learner Outcomes

1. Following the motivation activity, students will review a series of works, created by artists who are actively engaged in creating art work that confronts social, political, and environmental issues. These artists challenge conventional and contemporary genres, through the use of a variety of materials. The following artists work will be reviewed and interpreted: Agnes Denes, *Wheatfield – A Confrontation*, *Tree Mountain – A Living Time Capsule*, Joseph Beuys, *7000 Oaks Project*, Douglas Bourgeois, *Aperture*. Students will then compare these works looking for inherent differences in their use of the subject matter and meaning. The idea of cultural identity will be discussed, along with its place in art work. Students will answer the following questions regarding the different ways cultural is identified in works of art: How do Denes, Beuys, and Bourgeois identify with their culture? Is there a certain issue that these artists are confronting? Are they similar? Does the use of materials change or impact the meaning of the piece? In reference to Denes and Beuys: How would the meaning of these pieces change if they were constructed out of manmade materials?

2. After conducting a formal inquiry into the works of these artists. Students will then be presented with written work by Langston Hughes, *Let America Be America Again* and Tupac Shakur, *Keep ya head up*. Students will explore the use of cultural identity in written form and will be enabled to discover the power of written form. The students will then be lead into a discussion that compares the works of Hughes and Shakur and the work of Denes, Bueys, and Bourgeois. (The purpose of this discussion is not claiming one art form as

better than the other, but rather to show students the ways in which they can express themselves).

3. Following the discussion, students will be asked to create a body of work that confronts a societal issue through the use of natural and man made materials, which focuses on the entire art making process. Students will be allowed to create a piece of artwork that is included in the following areas: Three dimensional sculpture, a painting, including collages, mixed media work, or abstract expression, and a poem or essay. The students will not be limited to a particular medium or materials. It is up to the individual to decide. However, the students will be asked to explain their reasons and choices regarding what medium or materials were used and the type of art form they created. Students will be asked to submit formal sources that contribute to the history of the concepts behind the work. Students should consider the following questions when beginning and continuing to work on their work: What influence does this issue have on my life? What is the history of this issue and has it affected those who have come before me? What potential impact will this issue have on the future? How do you define its meaning in your life?

4. In the last class session, once their artworks have been created, the students will interpret and evaluate each other's work in reference to the discussed lesson criteria. The students should be prepared to discuss the aesthetic and formal qualities of their work along with the concepts that helped to create the piece. The students should also talk about their work in relationship with the objectives of the lesson and the contemporary and historical works of art they studied.

Standard of Education

National Standards for Visual Art

Content Standard #4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and culture.

Achievement Standard, Proficient:

- Students differentiate among a variety of historical and cultural contexts in terms of characteristics and purposes of works of art
- Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places.
- Students analyze relationships of works of art to one another in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture, justifying conclusion made in analysis and using such conclusions to inform their own art making.

Content Standard #5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

Achievement Standard, Proficient:

- Students identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implication of various purposes, and justify their analyses of purposes in particular works.
- Students describe meanings of artworks by analyzing how specific works are created and how they relate to historical and cultural contexts.

--Students reflect analytically in various interpretations as means for understanding and evaluating works of visual art.

Virginia Visual Arts Standards

AII.17 The student will examine and discuss societal conditions that influence works of art.

AII.18 The student will identify and analyze the function and meaning of a work of art or an artifact in its original context.

AII.20 The student will describe, analyze, interpret, and judge works of art using an expanded art vocabulary.

AII.27 The student will discuss how responses to the natural environment differ from responses to the manmade or constructed environment.

AII.31 The student will research and investigate the intentions of those who created specific works of art.

Student Group Targeted

Grade 10 – Heterogeneous class

Students are required to have a proficient vocabulary when critically analyzing and critiquing works of art, a fluency in communicating in written form, and understand the concept of quality, craftsmanship, and presentation.

Time Required

Four one-hour and twenty minute sessions

Teacher materials and resources:

--A slide projector

--A simple biography of each of the artists and writers that are being presented.
(Note, these biographies are included at the end of this lesson plan.)

References Cited:

Denes, Agnes. (1982). *A Wheatfield—A Confrontation*. Retrieved August 28, 2003, from the on-line Green Museum.

http://www.greenmuseum.org/content/artist_index/artist_id-63_nosplit-z.html

Denes, Agnes. (1996). *Tree Mountain—A Living Time Capsule*. Retrieved August 28, 2003, from on-line at The Art & Science Collaborations Inc.

<http://www.asci.org/news/featured/denes.html>

Beuys, Joseph. (1982-1987). *7,000 Oaks Project*. Retrieved August 28, 2003, from (1995-2003) the Dia Art Foundation.

<http://www.diacenter.org/ltproj/7000/html>

Hughes, Langston. (1932). *Let America Be America Again*. Retrieved September 5, 2003, from the Academy of American Poets.

<http://www.poets.org/poems/Poemprnt.cfm?45442B7C000C07010E70.html>

Shakur, Tupac. (1998). *Keep ya head up*. Greatest Hits [CD]. New York: Amaru/Deathrow/Interscope Records.

Shakur, Tupac. (1998). *Keep ya head up*. Retrieved September 5, 2003, from the on-line website Music Fan Talk.

<http://www.alleyezonme.com/lyrics/lprint.pl?0040.html>

Student materials and resources:

--Access the a library and the internet to supply the formal sources contributing to the art work.

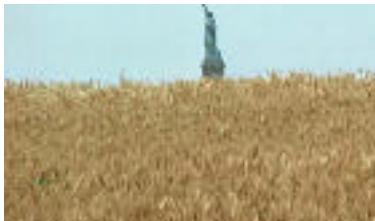
--A sketch pad and drawing materials (e.g. pencils, and pens.)

--A supply of materials that the student wishes to use (e.g. paint, canvas, sculptural supplies, paper, if the student wishes the work to be in written form. Please note that if the student decides to write a piece of work it is to be typed, double spaced, and be written with 12 points.)

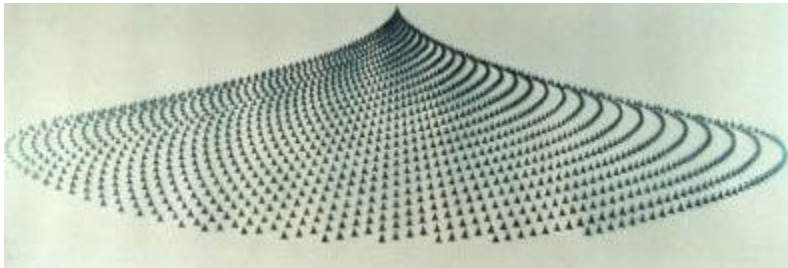
--A supply of natural, raw materials that have been found in their environment (E.g. branches, dirt, mud, leaves, stone and rock, and water). If needed

--A supply of binding material, such as, rope or glue (If needed.)

Agnes Denes, *Wheatfield—A Confrontation*, 1982



Agnes Denes, *Tree Mountain—A Living Time Capsule*, 1996 10,000 trees – 10,000 people- 400 years



Joseph Beuys, *7000 Oaks Project*, 1982-1987



Douglas Bourgeois, *Aperture*, 18 x 16 inches. Oil on panel. 2001



Tupac Shakur, *Keep ya head up.* (1998)

Little somethin for my godson Elijah and a little girl named Corinne

Verse One:

Some say the blacker the berry, the sweeter the juice
I say the darker the flesh then the deeper the roots
I give a holler to my sisters on welfare
Tupac cares, if don't nobody else care
And uhh, I know they like to beat ya down a lot
When you come around the block brothas clown a lot
But please don't cry, dry your eyes, never let up
Forgive but don't forget, girl keep your head up
And when he tells you you ain't nuttin don't believe him
And if he can't learn to love you you should leave him
Cause sista you don't need him
And I ain't tryin to cash up, I just call em how I see em

You know it makes me unhappy (what's that)
When brothas make babies, and leave a young mother to be unhappy
And since we all came from a woman
Got our name from a woman and our game from a woman
I wonder why we take from our women
Why we rape our women, do we hate our women?
I think it's time to kill for our women
Time to heal our women, be real to our women
And if we don't we'll have a race of babies
That will hate the ladies, that make the babies
And since a man can't make one
He has no right to tell a woman when and where to create one
So will the real men get up
I know you're fed up ladies, but keep your head up

Chorus

Eeewww child things are gonna get easier
Eeewww child things are gonna get brighter

Eeewww child things are gonna get easier
Eeewww child things are gonna get brighter

Verse Two:

Aiyyo, I remember Marvin Gaye, used to sing ta me
He had me feelin like black was tha thing to be
And suddenly tha ghetto didn't seem so tough
And though we had it rough, we always had enough
I huffed and puffed about my curfew and broke the rules
Ran with the local crew, and had a smoke or two
And I realize momma really paid the price
She nearly gave her life, to raise me right
And all I had ta give her was my pipe dream
Of how I'd rock the mic, and make it to tha bright screen
I'm tryin to make a dollar out of fifteen cents
It's hard to be legit and still pay tha rent
And in the end it seems I'm headin for tha pen
I try and find my friends, but they're blowin in the wind
Last night my buddy lost his whole family
It's gonna take the man in me to conquer this insanity
It seems tha rain'll never let up
I try to keep my head up, and still keep from gettin wet up
You know it's funny when it rains it pours
They got money for wars, but can't feed the poor
Say there ain't no hope for the youth and the truth is

it ain't no hope for tha future
And then they wonder why we crazy
I blame my mother, for turning my brother into a crack baby
We ain't meant to survive, cause it's a setup
And even though you're fed up
Huh, ya got to keep your head up

Chorus

Verse Three:

And uhh
To all the ladies havin babies on they own
I know it's kinda rough and you're feelin all alone
Daddy's long gone and he left you by ya lonesome
Thank the Lord for my kids, even if nobody else want em
Cause I think we can make it, in fact, I'm sure
And if you fall, stand tall and comeback for more
Cause ain't nuttin worse than when your son
wants to kno why his daddy don't love him no mo'
You can't complain you was dealt this
hell of a hand without a man, feelin helpless
Because there's too many things for you to deal with
Dying inside, but outside you're looking fearless
While tears, is rollin down your cheeks
Ya steady hopin things don't all down this week
Cause if it did, you couldn't take it, and don't blame me
I was given this world I didn't make it
And now my son's getten older and older and cold
From havin the world on his shoulders
While the rich kids is drivin Benz
I'm still tryin to hold on to survivin friends
And it's crazy, it seems it'll never let up, but
please... you got to keep your head up

Langston Hughes, *Let America Be America Again*, 1932

Let America be America again.
Let it be the dream it used to be.
Let it be the pioneer on the plain
Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed--
Let it be that great strong land of love

Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,
But opportunity is real, and life is free,
Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,
Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")

*Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark?
And who are you that draws your veil across the stars?*

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,
I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.
I am the red man driven from the land,
I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek--
And finding only the same old stupid plan
Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.

I am the young man, full of strength and hope,
Tangled in that ancient endless chain
Of profit, power, gain, of grab the land!
Of grab the gold! Of grab the ways of satisfying need!
Of work the men! Of take the pay!
Of owning everything for one's own greed!

I am the farmer, bondsman to the soil.
I am the worker sold to the machine.
I am the Negro, servant to you all.
I am the people, humble, hungry, mean--
Hungry yet today despite the dream.
Beaten yet today--O, Pioneers!
I am the man who never got ahead,
The poorest worker bartered through the years.

Yet I'm the one who dreamt our basic dream
In the Old World while still a serf of kings,
Who dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true,
That even yet its mighty daring sings
In every brick and stone, in every furrow turned
That's made America the land it has become.
O, I'm the man who sailed those early seas

In search of what I meant to be my home--
For I'm the one who left dark Ireland's shore,
And Poland's plain, and England's grassy lea,
And torn from Black Africa's strand I came
To build a "homeland of the free."

The free?

Who said the free? Not me?
Surely not me? The millions on relief today?
The millions shot down when we strike?
The millions who have nothing for our pay?
For all the dreams we've dreamed
And all the songs we've sung
And all the hopes we've held
And all the flags we've hung,
The millions who have nothing for our pay--
Except the dream that's almost dead today.

O, let America be America again--
The land that never has been yet--
And yet must be--the land where *every* man is free.
The land that's mine--the poor man's, Indian's, Negro's, ME--
Who made America,
Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,
Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,
Must bring back our mighty dream again.

Sure, call me any ugly name you choose--
The steel of freedom does not stain.
From those who live like leeches on the people's lives,
We must take back our land again,
America!

O, yes,
I say it plain,
America never was America to me,
And yet I swear this oath--
America will be!

Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death,
The rape and rot of graft, and stealth, and lies,
We, the people, must redeem
The land, the mines, the plants, the rivers.
The mountains and the endless plain--
All, all the stretch of these great green states--

And make America again!

From *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
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Day One

1. In order to begin the Motivational activity, prior to class, teachers should bring a printed example of the work of Denes, Bourgeois, Shakur and Hughes. (The works done by Denes, Beuys, and Bourgeois should be printed in color. Due to time restraints the work of Hughes and Shakur should be shortened. The part of them poem and song that the teacher feels is most vital should be used). The teacher should have three copies of each work so that the class may be broken up into three groups. The four printed works should be put inside a manila folder, one that offers no additional outside information. At the beginning of class, have all students clear their desks and the area around their desks. Break the class up into two groups of four and one group of five. Give each group a manila folder. Inside the folder, the teacher should present the students with the following information:

1. An example of each artist's work, along with an artist's statement of the piece (This only applies to Denes and Bueys).
2. Questions that the students should try and answer regarding a comparison of the pieces.

What is the "big idea" or theme behind these works? Are the artists confronting certain issues in their work? Are the messages that are being conveyed similar?

(While the students are reading through the work have Tupac Shakur's song *Keep Ya Head up* playing in the background).

3. Give each group five minutes to discuss these questions amongst themselves.
4. Once this is done have each group discuss their findings and ideas. (The groups should be given a minute a piece to discuss their findings.)
5. Following this the class should have a group discussion regarding this idea of Cultural Identity and its place in art.

2. Following the motivational activity, the class will view the two works of Denes, Beuys, and Bourgeois and participate in a formal inquiry of their work.

3. Following the viewing of the slides, address the formal and aesthetic qualities of each piece. Lead the discussion into how the process of creating a piece of artwork is as important as the finished work of art itself. Discuss and interpret this idea of meaning and the messages that are conveyed.

4. Compare the use of different materials in the works of Denes, Beuys, and Bourgeois, both natural and manmade. Help students understand that the use of different materials can change or alter the overall meaning of the piece.
5. Compare the written art form of Hughes and Shakur with the visual art form of Denes, Bourgeois, and Beuys. Students should answer the following questions: How is cultural identity conveyed differently through these two art forms? Do you feel that one is more successful than the other? What other artists in history have used written for as a way of confronting social problems?
6. Based on the historical and current, social, political, and environmental conditions in the United States, students should articulate and interpret the works of the above artists and the social connotations that is present in their work. Allow the students to contribute their own thoughts and ideas to the discussion and support those ideas with references to content from the class readings, discussions, or lectures. Facilitate the flow of the discussion by asking key questions and by presenting key concepts, rather than impeding on the natural flow of the discussion.

Day Two

1. After providing and establishing the fundamental basis of visual, cultural, and social contexts, students should choose an environmental, cultural, social, or political issue. This will be used as a foundation for their body of work.
2. The students will be required to support this decision with formal sources. The sources should provide an inquiry into the social and cultural history of the issue. The students should supply a written assessment of the issue that is chosen, along with the answers to the following questions: Why did you choose this particular issue? Does it affect you directly or indirectly? After having chosen the main theme or big idea, how will you translate this through the use of visual materials or in written form? Do you think that the use of these forms and materials will change or contribute to the essential meaning of the piece?

Day Three

1. Create a series of sketches that encompass the main thought and desired outcome of the proposed work. These sketches are to be no bigger than 8 1/2" x 11" and can be done in the medium of your choice.
2. Create a body of work, whether it is in written or visual form that displays elements of historical and current contexts. Students should pay close attention to the formal qualities such as line, shape, texture, and form. There should also be an emphasis on the overall unity of the piece and on the presentation of the piece.
3. Write a synopsis (At least one page) giving a brief history of the issue being addressed, this should include formal sources, the thought process that was behind the work's creation, and an overall critique of the body of work.

Day Four

1. Following the completion of the pieces, a group critique will follow. All students should participate as active members in the critiquing of each other's works and should communicate their opinions and beliefs using appropriate vocabulary.

Grading Criteria

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
Quality of formal sources				
Sketches				
Body of Work				
Written synapses				
Contribution to Critique				

--Each element of the grading criteria (Example: Quality of Sketches) will be given a letter grade. Excellent will equal an **A**, Good will be given a **B**, and so on. Anything below Poor is an F. After all elements have been graded an average will be taken.

Example:

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
Quality of formal sources	*			
Sketches		*		
Body of Work	*			
Written Synapses			*	
Contribution to Critique		*		

Quality of formal sources – A
Sketches – B
Body of Work – A
Written Synapses – C
Contribution to Critique – B
Average - B

Suggested Supplemental Activities

1. Investigate the use of mathematics in these and other environmental artists, including Agnes Denes. Write a one page paper describing how an interdisciplinary approach in art making can change the overall meaning of the piece.

2. Investigate other artists who have confronted social issues. Compare their work with the work of Denes and Beuys. Answer the following questions: Is one piece more successful at conveying its messages to the viewer than others? Why? What made the piece successful?

Modifications for special needs students

1. Allowing students to work in a variety of mediums, a student with a disability, whether it is a learning disability or a physical disability the teacher enables each student to express themselves through art.



Langston Hughes

James Langston Hughes was born February 1, 1902, in Joplin, Missouri. His parents divorced when he was a small child, and his father moved to Mexico. He was raised by his grandmother until he was thirteen, when he moved to Lincoln, Illinois, to live with his mother and her husband, eventually settling in Cleveland, Ohio. It was in Lincoln, Illinois, that Hughes began writing poetry. Following graduation, he spent a year in Mexico and a year at Columbia University. During these years, he held odd jobs as an assistant cook, launderer, and a busboy, and travelled to Africa and Europe working as a seaman. In November 1924, he moved to Washington, D.C. Hughes first book of poetry, *The Weary Blues*, was published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1926. He finished his college education at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania three years later. In 1930 his first novel, *Not Without Laughter*, won the Harmon gold medal for literature.

Hughes, who claimed [Paul Lawrence Dunbar](#), [Carl Sandburg](#), and [Walt Whitman](#) as his primary influences, is particularly known for his insightful, colorful portrayals of black life in America from the twenties through the sixties. He wrote novels, short stories and plays, as well as poetry, and is also known for his engagement with the world of jazz and the influence it had on his writing, as in *Montage of a Dream Deferred*. His life and work were enormously important in shaping the artistic contributions of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. Unlike other notable black poets of the period--[Claude McKay](#), [Jean Toomer](#), and [Countee Cullen](#)--Hughes refused to differentiate between his personal experience and the common experience of black America. He wanted to tell the stories of his people in ways that reflected their actual culture, including both their suffering and their love of music, laughter, and language itself.

Langston Hughes died of complications from prostate cancer in May 22, 1967, in New York. In his memory, his residence at 20 East 127th Street in Harlem, New York City, has been given landmark status by the New York City Preservation Commission, and East 127th Street was renamed "Langston Hughes Place."

Tupac Amaru Shakur

1971 - 1996

DOB: June 16, 1971 - Brooklyn, NY

DOD: September 13, 1996 - Las Vegas, NV

Height: 5'10 **Weight:** 168

Mother: Afeni Shakur

Father: William Garland

Step Father: Jeral Wayne Williams

AKA Mutula Shakur

Half Sister: Sekyiwa Shakur

Half Brother: Maurice Harding

(Mopreme of Thug Life)

Godfather: Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt

Music Groups: One Nation Emcees, Two From The Crew, Strictly Dope, Digital Underground, Thug Life, Outlaw Immortal:

Aliases: MC New York, 2Pac, Makaveli (the don)

Marital Status: Divorced (Keisha Morris) & Engaged (Kidida Jones)

Tupac Shakur was born Lesane Parish Crooks in Brooklyn, NY in 1971. While still a small child, his mother changed his name to "Shakur". "Shakur" means "Thankful To God" in Arabic.

From childhood, everyone called him the "Black Prince." Formisbehaving, he had to read an entire edition of The New York Black Panther who, a few months before her birth, had been sentenced to sixty years for a fatal armored car robbery.

With Mutulu away, the family experienced hard times. No matter where they moved-the Bronx, Harlem, homeless shelters-couldn't fit in. Because I was from everywhere. I didn't have no buddies that I grew up with."

By the age of twelve, Tupac had discovered his loves for acting, writing love songs and poetry. As a young teen, his family studying acting and ballet. At this school, Tupac left a lasting impression on his teachers and was showing tremendous potential in California with the rest of his family. That's when Tupac began to, as he called it, "Hang with the wrong crowd."

At age fifteen, he fell into rap; he started writing lyrics, walking with a swagger, and milking his background in New York for New York and made people think he was a tough guy.

By the time he was twenty, Tupac had been arrested eight times, even serving eight months in prison after being convicted of a six-year-old boy who was killed after getting caught in gang-war crossfire between Shakur's gang and a rival group.

Not held back by his lack of formal education, Tupac joined the Rap group Digital Underground as a dancer. Not long before "Now", which was also a success. The hit single "Brenda's Got A Baby" launched Tupac's career like a rocket. His stunning album "Strictly for my N.I.G.G.A.Z.," which was an even bigger success and introduced Tupac's music onto the pop charts.

In November of 1994, he was shot five times during a robbery in which thieves made off with \$40,000 worth of his jewelry. Despite these accomplishments, including 1995's Me Against the World

The highlight of Tupac's acting career came when he appeared in "Poetic Justice" besides Janet Jackson. The role made Tupac the star in the movie "Above the Rim" and a Platinum album "Me against the world," Tupac's rising career was short-lived. Hours before Tupac would be found guilty, Tupac was robbed at gun point by men whose intent and purpose is still uncertain. Tupac answered his critics by releasing his best album, "All Eyes On Me." "All Eyes On Me" has currently sold over 6 million copies. Tupac costarring roles in three other films, "Gridlock'd", "Bullet", and "Gar



On September 7th, Tupac Shakur was shot by unknown gunmen at this very day. This picture was taken minutes before the fatal shooting.

Following his passing, Shakur's label released an album, *The Don Under a Crown of Thorns*, with a map of the country's major gang areas which Shakur played the role of a drug addict to mostly good reviews. Unreleased recordings in the vaults for potential future release.

September 13, 2003 will mark the seventh anniversary of Tupac's death.

For more information on the life and death of Tupac Shakur:

[Read articles about Tupac Shakur](#)

[View Vibe Magazine's Tupac Biography](#)

[Read and hear interviews with Tupac Shakur](#)

[Find out information about Tupac's autopsy](#)

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TupacFans.Com, The Unofficial Source

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Agnes Denes

Conceptual artist Agnes Denes, born in 1938, draws from science and philosophy in her art. She was educated at the New School for Social Research and Columbia University in New York City. Fascinated by Einsteinian physics, she explores the structure of matter and idea, and, it is said, the mysteries of human existence. Mathematical diagrams and projected maps, often on graph paper, such as the "Study of Distortion Series: Isometric Systems in Isotropic Space: The Snail," or the "Pyramid Series," reflect this.

Denes says, "We must create a new language, consider a transitory state of new illusions and layers of validity, and accept the possibility that there may be no language to describe ultimate reality, beyond the language of visions." She is interested in the invisible becoming visible and has completed a series of extremely close-up photographs.

Agnes Denes is one of the originators of Conceptual art as an American artist and scholar of international renown. Denes has investigated the physical and social sciences, philosophy, linguistics, psychology, art history, poetry and music and transformed her explorations into works of visual art. Denes is also a pioneer of environmental art, dealing with ecological, cultural and social issues in her work which is often monumental in scale.

Perhaps best know for Wheatfield -- A Confrontation (1982), a two-acre wheat field she planted and harvested in downtown Manhattan, a work that addresses human values and misplaced priorities. In 1996 she completed Tree Mountain -- A Living Time Capsule in Finland, a massive earthwork and reclamation project that reaches four hundred years into the future to benefit future generations with a meaningful legacy.

In 1998 she planted a forest of endangered species in Australia and a cropland in the heart of Caracas, Venezuela. Agnes Denes has had over 325 solo and group exhibitions on four continents, including Documenta VI in Kassel (1977), three Venice Biennales (1978, 1980, 2001) and "Master of Drawing" Invitational at the Kunsthalle in Nurnberg (1982). She has shown at the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. In 1992 she had a major retrospective at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum at Cornell University, for which five art historians contributed catalogue essays. An artist of enormous vision, Denes has written four books and holds a doctorate in fine arts. Among her numerous awards are the Rome Prize for the American Academy in Rome (1997-98); the Eugene McDermott Achievement Award from M.I.T., "In Recognition of Major Contribution to the Arts" (1990); the American Academy of Arts and Letters Purchase Award (1985); four National Endowment Fellowships and four NYSCA grants; and the DAAD Fellowship from Berlin. Denes is a Research Fellow at the Studio For Creative Inquiry at Carnegie Mellon University; the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at M.I.T. and the Courant Institute at N.Y.U. She lectures extensively at universities in the U.S. and abroad and has participated in global conferences in Moscow, Oxford, Rio de Janeiro, Kyoto, etc.

Selected public collections include: Metropolitan Museum of Art, MOMA and Whitney Museum of American Art in New York; National Museum of American Art, Corcoran Gallery of Art; and Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C.; Kunsthalle, Nurnberg; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio; Honolulu Academy of Arts, Hawaii; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania, and many others.

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Credit:

Les Krantz, "American Artists, Illustrated Survey of Leading Contemporary Artists"

<http://www.davidjr.com/evo1/agnesdenes.html#bio>

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in northwestern Germany near the Dutch border. He grew up in the nearby towns of Kleve and Rindern, the c
1 medicine. In 1940 he joined the military, volunteering in order to avoid the draft. He was trained as an aircr
ld in a British prisoner-of-war camp for several months, and returned to Kleve in 1945.

was a long process and figures, at least obliquely, in much of his artwork. Beuys often said that his interest in
ho rubbed him with fat and wrapped him in felt to heal and warm his body. While the story appears to have l
y one of the most enduring aspects of his mythic biography.

plans for a career in medicine and enrolled in the Düsseldorf Academy of Art to study sculpture. He graduated
ophy, science, poetry, literature, and the occult. He married in 1959 and two years later, at the age of 40, wa

o an important center for contemporary art and Beuys became acquainted with the experimental work of artis
performance, and everyday life. Their ideas were a catalyst for Beuys' own performances, which he called "ac
drawings, and room installations. He also created numerous actions and began making editioned objects and j

itical reform increased and he was involved in the founding of several activist groups: in 1967, the German St
n, which proposed increased political power for individuals; and in 1972, the Free International University, wh
nding members of the Green Party.

alls for reform of all kinds, and his unconventional artistic style (incorporating ritualized movement and sound
it also cost him his job. Beuys was dismissed in 1972 from his teaching position over his insistence that admi

g as part of his expanded definition of art, Beuys also continued to make objects, installations, multiples, and
ie last years of his life at a hectic pace, participating in dozens of exhibitions and traveling widely on behalf of
; and artwork have continued to spark lively debate.

s: *Life and Works*. Translated into English by Patricia Lech. Woodbury, New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1979.

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