Bonnie Peterson



Political Embroidery Proposal & Images

Vibrant works that translate recent historical conflicts into tangible art.

- 10+ large wall embroideries
- globe with interventions
- framed annotated topographic map

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Political Embroidery Proposal

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https://bonniepeterson.com/PetersonPoliticalEmbroideryProposal.pdf

Political Embroidery is an exhibit of 10 large wall hangings embroidered with words, images and graphs which explore social issues and the consequences of recent wars. The work employs a mix of source materials such as published reports, historical research and human experiences. The large-scale wall hangings use the impact of novel colors and textures stitched with words and graphs, to engage the viewer. They communicate an emotional reaction to the chaotic and ugly incidents that result from invasions and bombs. The exhibition provides a fresh opportunity for the consideration of current events and ethical questions.

Transportation of this work is easy as the textiles can be folded into my car, in boxes or a suitcase. Their hanging sticks can ship in a tube or be made on-site. The maps fit into standard "mirror" boxes.

I appreciate your consideration and especially welcome your feedback and suggestions.

- More political work, high resolution and detail photos are at my political web page:

  https://www.bonniepeterson.com/3%20Political%20Series%20Contact%20Sheet.htm

- Visit my website to see additional work and detailed images, artist statement and vita. www.bonniepeterson.com

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Click on each image for details & larger images



Drone Shadow, Embroidery on velvet and silk. 52" H x 48" W, (132 x 122 cm)
The Hague IV agreement of 1899 which prohibited dropping bombs from balloons, encircles interesting details about drones.



[Kora (Pilgrimage),](#) Embroidery and transfers on velvet, silk and brocade. 68" H x 70" W, (173 x 178)

An eloquent 9th century peace treaty between the "Kings of China and Tibet," unwinds from the center of Lhasa. "Om mani padme hum," the Tibetan Buddhist mantra (in Tibetan script on one edge) surrounds prayer wheels and monastery ornamentation.

In the old section of Lhasa, crowds of Tibetans walk through the streets following a “kora,” or ritual clockwise route that passes through Barkhor Square in front of the Jokhang Temple. They twirl small metal prayer wheels in one hand. Other ritual routes lead a thousand feet above Sera and Dreprung Monasteries to small buildings clinging to cliff edges marked with prayer flags and incense burning shrines.

An installation of prayer flags is at this link: http://bonniepeterson.com/Works/Prayer%20Flags.htm



Convoy to Sheberghan, Heat transfers and embroidery on silk & velvet, 50" H x 56" W (127 x 142 cm)

A December 2001 massacre of POWs in Afghanistan reported by documentary film maker Jamie Doran in "Convoy of Death," and other journalists, is embroidered on the velvet and brocades.



War Graph, Embroidery and heat transfers on velvet, brocade and silk, 58"H x 70"W (147 x 178 cm)
Graph of Iraq civilian and US military deaths in Iraq. Civilian names, ages, family relationships and incidents are embroidered on the borders.

The German WW1 artist, Kathe Kolwitz quotation is embroidered on the bottom border: "I am not yet finished with the War Series, at the moment it seems to me very bad. Much too bright and harsh and distinct. Sorrow is all darkness." --Kathe Kolwitz,1923, ten years after her son Peter died in battle.



War Crimes, Embroidery & heat transfers on silk, brocade, and velvet, 46" H x 50" W, (117 x 127 cm)

Nine traditional log cabin blocks are surrounded by embroidery of 4 documents prohibiting war crimes: the US Constitution, Geneva Convention, Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Nuremberg Charter. Small images are from the Iraq and Vietnam wars and a photo of my 8th grade class in front of the DC Capitol in 1969.



Iraqi Freedom, Embroidery and transfers on silk, satin & brocade, 40" H x 48" W, (102 x 122 cm)

This work is a collage of images, ancient Iraq and Middle East maps, references to British colonial power and Britian's role in the current Iraq War: an old map of England, a photo of the British monarchy (after WW1, from 1921-32 Britian ruled Iraq). A reference to US power is in the image of the US school children lined up in front of the US Capitol; it was my own 8th grade class trip. References to the peace movement are in photos of my children at the first Daley Plaza, Chicago antiwar protest held just prior to the first US air strike.

Embroidered on the outside border is a letter I received from George W Bush:
Dear Ms. Peterson, Thank you for your letter about the war in Iraq. American and coalition forces are engaged in efforts to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, to free the Iraqi people... Coalition forces will make every effort to spare innocent civilians from harm. We come to Iraq with respect for its citizens, civilization, and religious faiths. We have no ambition in Iraq except to remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people. Best wishes. Sincerely, George W. Bush



Washington West Quadrangle, Transfers, pen, and stitching on DC topographic map.
28.5" H x 22" W, (74 x 56 cm)

Iraqi civilian casualties and Iraq war imagery on a DC topo map.



Wedding Party Massacre, Embroidery with hand and machine stitching on a satin wedding skirt with sheer fabric and netting underneath, 40" H x 60"- 83" W, (102 x 152-210 cm)

The text describes a May 2004 incident in which 45-47 civilians were killed during a wedding party in western Iraq, having been strafed by aircraft. (Text used with permission of The Guardian of London.)

Installation notes: The skirt and inner netting was smashed under the machine's presser foot during the process, creating a flattened skirt. When viewed against a light source, the folds and multiple skirt layers provide a visible dimensionality. The back is covered with sheer fabrics so the bobbin stitching is visible from the back. It is hand quilted. It can be installed against a wall or suspended from the ceiling in the middle of a room, and either stretched (above) or draped (below).



Cruise Missile Family # 1,2 & 3, embroidery on silk & velvet, each. approx. 27" x 27", (68 x 68 cm)







Dec 17, 2009 –
In the first known US attack in Yemen in 7 years, at least one cruise missile loaded with cluster bombs hit the village of al-Majala, Abyan province in south Yemen. Allegedly targeting an al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula training camp, the missile instead killed 58 people. At least 41 were civilians including 12 pregnant women and 22 children. Three civilians were later killed by cluster bombs.

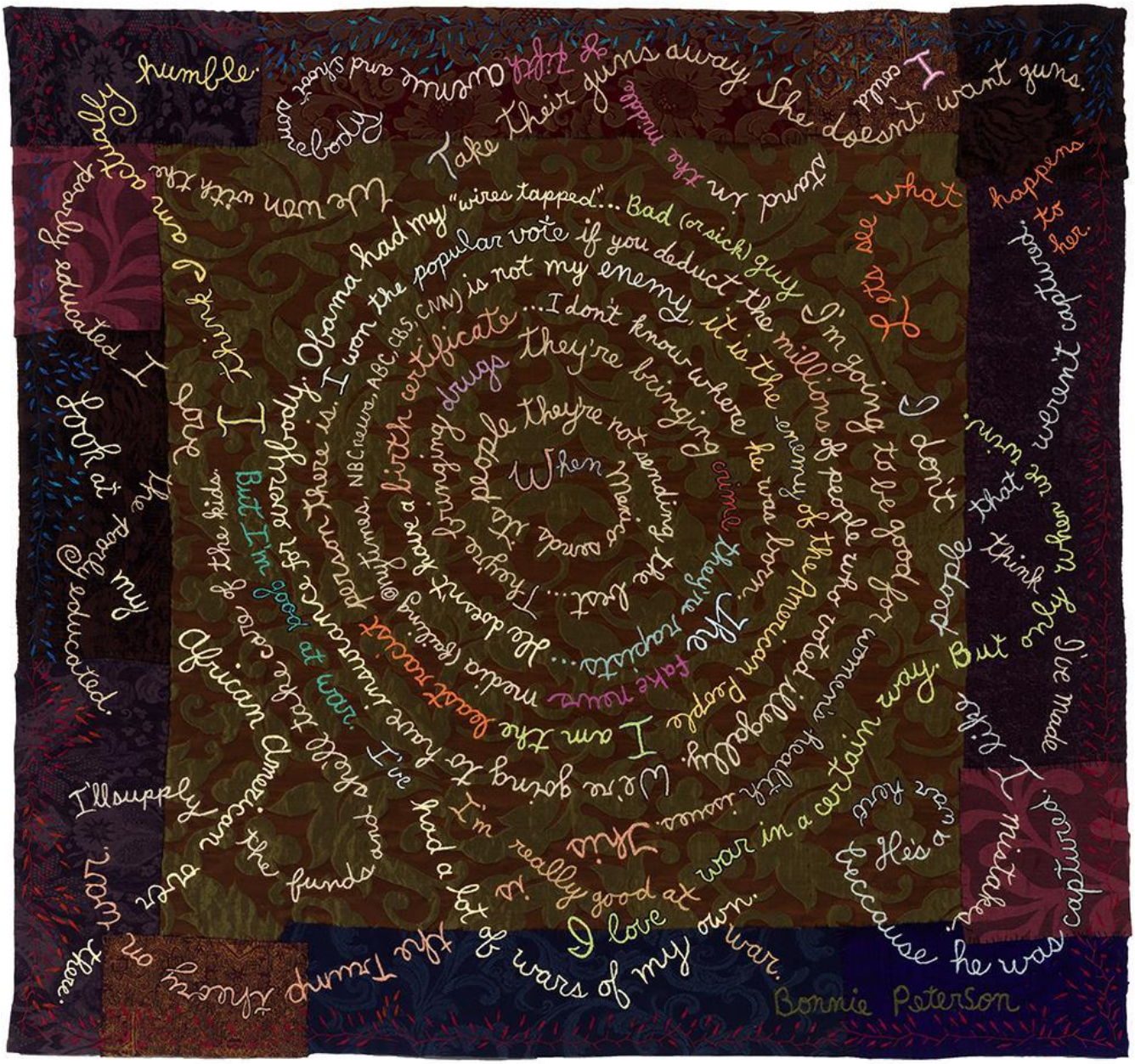
It is unusual to get a report containing so many of the victims' names, ages and family relationships.

Each of these works contains one family's names, ages and relationships.



Confirmation, Embroidery and transfers on brocade, satin, velvet, 54" H x 52" W, (137 x 132 cm)

The history of Justice Clarence Thomas' ascension to the Supreme Court is told through news articles and testimony from the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings.



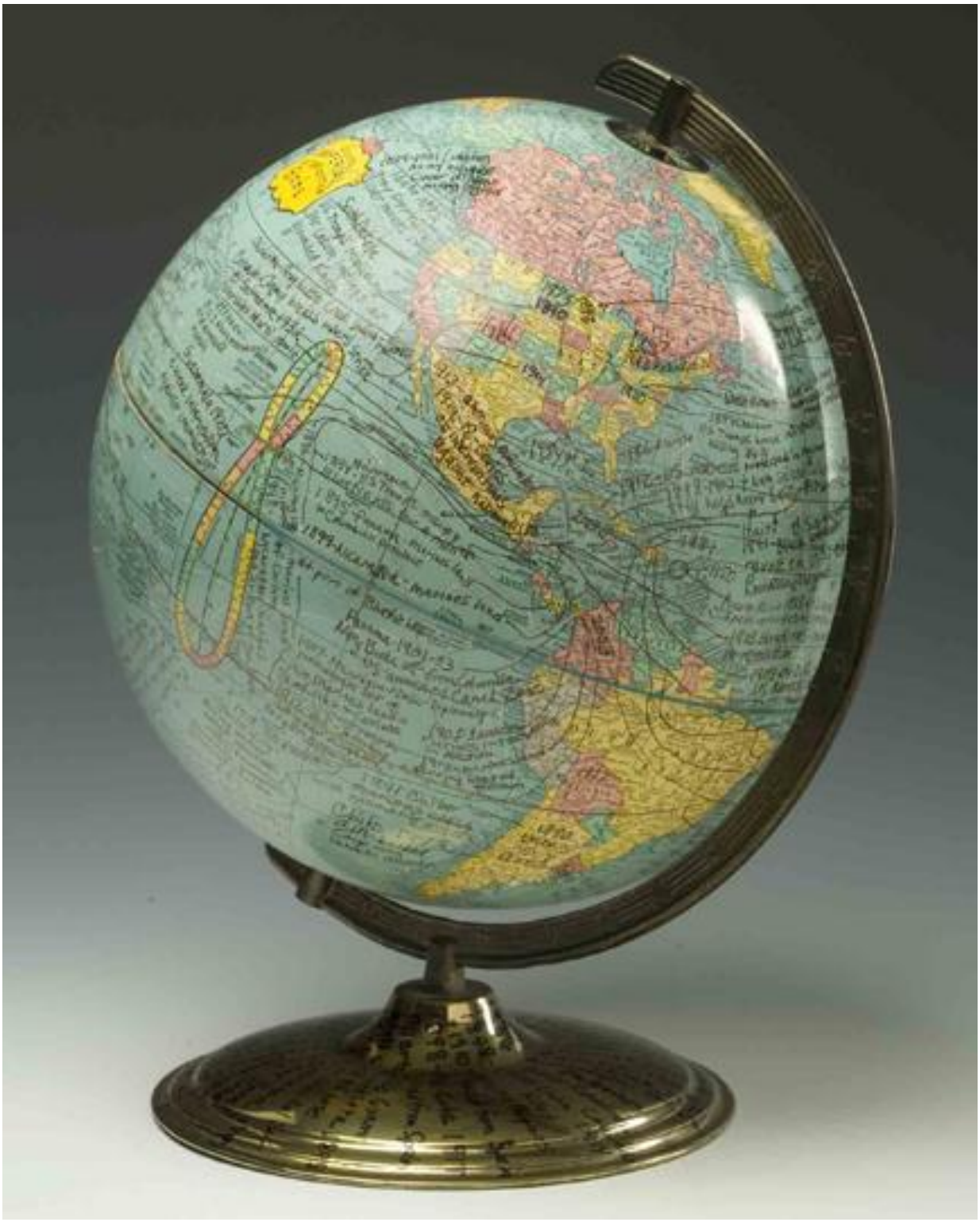
Unraveling, Embroidery on brocade. 32” H x 34” W (81 x 86 cm)

Trump’s words are a whirlwind of boasts, bullying and condescension. Some are tantalizingly progressive-sounding but the policies favor corporations over individuals, wealthy over poor, and crushing human rights. This “new normal” hate speech and patronizing behavior distracts and misleads. The milieu of chaos fosters uncertainty and fear and we worry about the consequences.



Overseas, Embroidery, paint & transfers on brocade, satin, velvet. 48” H x 58” W, (122 x 147 cm)

Maps & news text tell a brief history of Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) where I attended junior year of high school in 1971.



Imperial Intervention Globe, 16 L x 12 W x 12 D (41 x 30 x 30 cm)

Traditional school globe on metal stand, marker and paint pen. The globe is annotated with details about US military interventions.

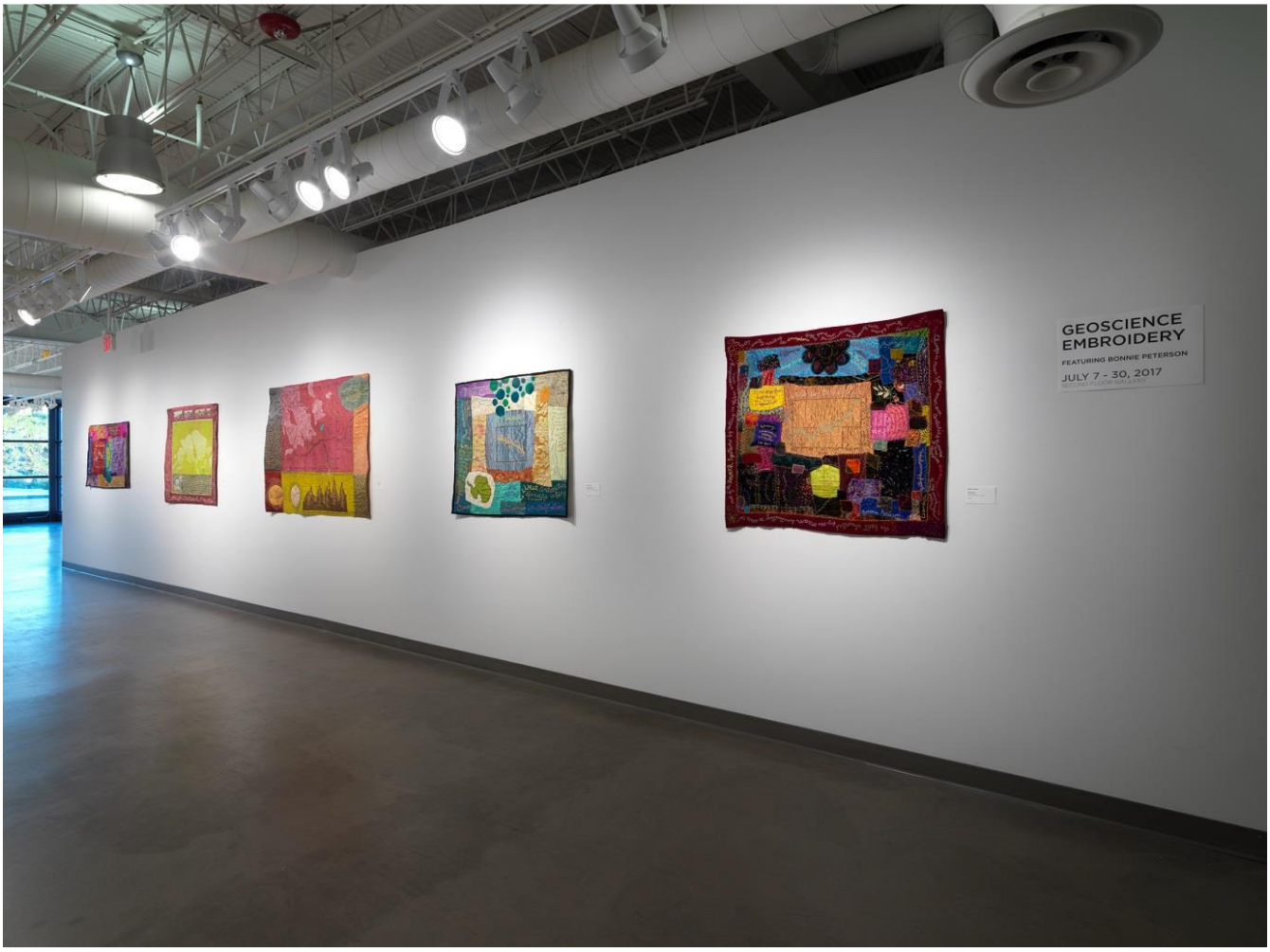
Installation at Notebaert Nature Museum, Chicago (October 15, 2022-October 15, 2023):






NATURAL
CONSEQUENCES
The Geoscience embroideries of
BONNIE
PETERSON
BONNIEPETERSON.COM

Installation at Evanston Art Center, Evanston, IL







Tutsi Testimony, 322" & 312" H x 1.5" W (818 x 792 x 4 cm)

Embroidery on ribbons, of testimony from survivors of the Rwandan Genocide.

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Its Me, Embroidery and transfers on silk, 17" H x 18" W (43 x 46 cm)

The embroidery surrounds maps and photos from Iraq and Vietnam.

Text of the embroidery: *"Its me, I'm responsible. I'm paying the taxes that pay for the rope that ties the guy's hands and my bucks are paying for the gas that drives the truck."* -Arthur Miller, on the Vietnam War.