

Gwen Westerman

Quilt Artist

1:48

1. Learning Objectives

Students learn about

- Artists are influenced by art they love
- American Indians influence many artists
- Artists are influenced by historical art forms, beading, weaving
- Intersections of art across many cultures
- Personal interpretation and reaction to visual art
- The tools used to create quilts

2. Key Concepts

- Cultural influences
- Individual view of art, artist and viewer
- Themes used in quilting
- Characteristics of visual art; color, line, shape, value, form, texture and space
- Principles of visual art; repetition, pattern, emphasis, contrast and balance
- Tools and techniques used to create quilts
- Each of us is given a gift

3. Teachers Quick Reference

Dakota

Star Quilt

Star quilt comes from a traditional place, but the Dakota were not traditional quilters.

The traditional practice comes from the four-point star. It was part of the Dakota tradition, the star was painted and beaded into art.

The star represents the morning star, which signals the beginning of a new day and we should be thankful “we can see another day”.

Missionaries taught the Dakota to sew and how to quilt.

Star Quilt is a gift of honor today- for significant accomplishments.

“We come from the Stars”- a quilt that uses very traditional colors and brass bells, a mirror with bead work. The mirror is to see yourself in that quilt.

“For My Mother” multiple meaning with the turtle and the Earth. The Earth is our mother.

The quilts tell special stories. Each one has a meaning.

Gwen considers herself an artist, different than the perception her grandmother had of herself.

Gwen’s quilting is created around prayers and memories, allowing her to sit still and just listen.

4. Content Review

- What type of art is this?
- What materials are used?
- What culture influence do you notice in Gwen’s art?
- Name three Dakota cultural references that are included in the quilting.
- Explain the story she tells through her art.
- What is the intention of the quilts?
- List seven characteristics of art that are involved in Gwen’s quilts?
- Identify the tools used by Gwen.
- What contributions from American Indian tribes and communities influence her art?

5. Discussion Questions

- Who taught Gwen to quilt?
- What connection does Gwen recognize in her art?
- What thoughts are taken into consideration when creating her quilts?
- What are the intersections between cultures in Gwen’s quilts?
- List the Characteristics and principles of visual art; color, line, shape, value, form, texture and space, repetition, pattern, emphasis, contrast and most importantly balance.
- What are the traditional colors for the Dakota?
- What traditional symbols does Gwen use in her quilts?
- How Does Gwen show her deep cultural connection to her Dakota background?
- Create an analysis of this art based on the artist’s intention, cultural symbols, characteristics and principles.
- Analyze how visual art is influenced by personal, social, cultural and historical contexts.

6. References

Gwen Westerman

<http://www.gwenwesterman.com/>

MN State University- Mankato

www.mnsu.edu

Red Cloud Heritage Center, Pine Ridge, South Dakota

<http://www.redcloudschool.org/>

Minnesota Historical Society

www.mnhs.org

Did You Know 8:46

Native Report, Tadd Johnson

Mni Sota Makoce-The land of the Dakota by Gwen Westerman and Bruce White

<http://www.wdse.org/shows/native/watch/season-10-episode-1>