Hi Mitch,

Well I get this GOD DAMNed thing to paste. I could probably just retype it faster.

These blankets were made by artist Deb Cinamon Whalen with two groups of teenagers. The healing blanket project was created to educate people about the devastating practice of mountain top removal coal mining. Students work together gathering organic materials and seeds, and design the blankets. The blankets are made from wool fleece felted into burlap, and acts as a seed bed. Through a power point presentation and discussion they hear the stories of the people living in Appalachian Mountains, and how their lives and land have been changed forever, they see how a mountain is taken down, and the aftermath.

The blankets are sent to people whose stories have touched us. It is then installed by the recipient into the landscape that needs healing.

They act as a bridge connecting our communities, and offering support.

Contact Deb Cinamon Whalen for more information. 131 Depot Road, East Kingston NH 03827 ( I forgot what my go daddy email address is)

I'll be sending more, Later, Deb

Mitch- I did it!

quote Margaret Mead, “Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that has.”

I am continuously inspired by this statement. An African proverb

lends me further encouragement. It states ”If you think you are too small to make a difference try sleeping in a closed room with a mesquito!” This cross cultural concept is at the core of my artistic work in interdisciplinary and fabric arts.

Norman Thomas'"There are no lost causes. Only causes not yet won"

Ghandi' "Be the change" These are quotes that inspire me.

Every natural system is compromised by some level of pollution.

Humans make choices each day that impact the earth. This is where my inspiration comes from. Many of my pieces are a response to my observations of nature and social issues, combined with my passion to address environmental issues. My work is successful when the viewer is drawn to it for its aesthetic qualities and, after a closer inspection, understands the environmental or social connection, thereby opening the subject to an ongoing discourse. My nature based work may reflect on the miracle of the smallest subject in the environment, such as a seed or an organism. At other times, it may look at the natural cycle of life, growth, and death. By creating this type of art, I hope to connect people with nature, and empower them to become active in trying to help make positive environmental choices.

For my quilted and sculptural projects I combined Digital photos of fast food litter along our roads, printed on to silk, with silk shibori fabric I hand dyed. The organic qualities of the shibori complement the roadside landscapes. The shibori dyed fabric is composed of wavy, organic lines that remind me of tall grass blowing on a windy day, or the surface of rippling water. These materials were sewn and woven together to create a series of wall hangings, and a sculptural piece. I like to weave or collage the fabrics in layers. This acts as a metaphor, the layers representing the complexities of the social and environmental issues, which are interwoven. Silk is particularly interesting because as delicate as it appears, it is actually very strong and resilient, as is the environment and societies capacity to change.  
I started this project photographing cups, boxes, and crinkled up bags of fast food. After a while it appeared that the Dunkin Donuts trash was the most abundant. Next in the hierarchy was McDonald’s, followed by Wendy’s and finally, Burger King.The trash was photographed on a regular basis over the course of a year, on walks near my home. “Coffee Break” is the first quilt in the series. The iconic orange and magenta colors of Dunkin Donuts pepper our roadside landscapes from sea to sea. The goal of “Coffee Break” is to stimulate discussions about litter. The work not only question who is throwing trash out the car window, but also asks why this occurs. There are numerous possibilities. It could be one or two people who litter on a daily basis, or it could be the result of the careless random acts of a number of people. It is also possible that being alone in the car offers some sort of autonomy that causes individuals to litter. The public should be questioning the practice and effects of littering. Social discourse is needed to discover the root of this problem and to vocalize a collective desire for a solution.   
The fabric for “Coffee Break” was made from hand dyed fuji silk using the company’s recognizable color scheme of magenta and orange. The shibiori fabric was under dyed before adding the shibori design. Haboti silk is very smooth with a very high thread count, and was used for printing the photos. This material proved an appropriate match, because the clarity of the photo on the haboti is strongest; and Dunkin Donuts litter is most noticeable. Many of my pictures portrayed the litter like murder victims left to rot at the roads edge. These pictures did not work for the piece; the garbage was too exposed. As I learned in John Hubenthal’s class, ambiguity can be a powerful way to transmit a message. Starting over, I had to reshoot, looking for partially buried and hidden litter. The photos I initially thought were too obscure turned out to be some of the best for this project. The design was based on the fact that the photo pieces had to be cut from 8x10 images, since my camera doesn’t have good enough resolution to blow up photos any larger. The magenta diagonal piecing pulls you into the piece as well as moving your eye through it. The shibori lines flow with the grasses in the photos.   
The second piece in the series, “Teach Your Children” used the litter images from Mc Donald’s, Wendy’s, and Burger King. These photos were printed on to fuji silk. The photos were not as sharp, I wasn’t as interested in clearly delineating one particular fast food brand; rather, I was looking at the hurried effects of fast food trash from several sources. This piece is about what we teach our children, the lessons passed along from one generation to the next. Originally this was to be as big as the first quilt. I traced many hands of men, women, and children. The photos are cut into strips and woven into each other, and little abstracted compositions fill the squares. These sections were ironed to “Wonder Under” a product that stabilizes the weavings and enables them to be fused to another layer of material. Then they were cut into the shapes of the many hands. The shibori fabric for this quilt was under dyed, then repeatedly shibori dyed to create the many colors and depth. Finally, it was hand painted then glazed to unify the piece.   
My original intent was to sew the hands onto the fabric, and make a quilt. This turned out to be very unsatisfactory. It looked like a bunch of hands floating on some pretty fabric. For my second attempt I wove photos taken on hikes in the mountains with the shibori fabric, being sensitive to the play of light coming through the forest. This created a smaller surface for the back ground than was anticipated. I could have gone on and composed a larger piece; if the photos were larger then the squares could have been larger also, and it would possibly have become a different scale. I decided it was most powerful with just two hands: one small, vulnerable child's hand reaching up to a discerning adult hand. The simple imagery made clear the message of one generation’s lessons handed off to another generation.  
The next piece in the series,”Bittersweet” is a sculpture in which the frame of the piece is a spiraling, thick branch of bittersweet. This wood spoke to me as a metaphor about humanity’s relationship with the earth, both bitter and sweet at the same time, and our need for industry verses our love of nature. The patterns I created for the hands in “Teach Your Children” were used to create the hands for this one. The same process of weaving and fusing was used, only this time the hands became three dimensional. The tops were all colorful litter pictures woven together; bits of nature could be seen in the hands. Each hand was sewn with colorful threads and depicts fingernails, knuckle lines, rings etc. Next they were sewn to photos of flora and fauna, and stuffed. The hands were shaped and sculpted by hand sewing, and then were attached to the bittersweet. I sewed more hands, some with wires hidden inside to make them more bendable. Others were made out of photos printed on sheer organza, stuffed with the trash and leaves from the roadside. These hands display a vulnerability. The organza addresses decomposition, and the fragile nature of our environment. Silk threads of red and gold are woven into the structure, reminiscent of a bird at work, but moving the viewer’s eye through the piece.   
One unexpected discovery from the collection of photos was the very large volume of beer cans and liquor bottles along our roads. Questions about drinking and driving , car accidents, underage drinking, and alcoholism came up. A lot of the beer cans had been tossed out of car windows by kids, underage drinkers not wanting to be caught with open containers in the car. These issues led to the last wall hangings. There is an old traditional quilt pattern called Drunkard’s Path, made with a square that has a ninety degree circle sewn on top. These squares are put together to make a Semetrical block. I used the the squares to create dizzying paths that lead to nowhere. The first quilt showed the recognizable cans as the path, in the other, the images of the cans and bottles were altered in photo shop, pushed to the point where the viewer would be forced to scrutinize the piece to understand it. Both paths are on top of flora and fauna images. I used the cascade of red mosses, leaves, and mushrooms in the background to add more movement in the composition. Quilted lines add to the layers of confusion that consuming alcohol can cause.  
These fast food pieces question what we are teaching our children. It is not just about the trash any more. Man’s relationship with the earth is a struggle of industrialism vs environment, and the dwindling resources available. Man’s hand on nature, factory farming, and a healthy diet are all issues addressed by the images in this body of work. Besides the trash, the photos reflect the diverse ecosystems where I found the trash. The photos have poison ivy,poke berry, ferns, and grasses. A vast variety of plant material can be viewed in a small area.  
Suzi Gablik, an artist and critic who has written extensively on the role of the artist in today's society, believes artists can change society for the better. In fact, she believes it is our responsibility to do so. She has called artists the shamans of our culture, claiming that we have the opportunity to reconnect man with nature and the mystical spirituality of the universe. Her book, *The Reenchantment of Art,* was very inspirational to me, and verified my theories about my Healing Blanket project. In her book, Gablik says,”I believe that

I believe that what we will see in the next few years is a new paradigm based on the notion of participation, in which art will begin to redefine itself in terms of social relatedness and ecological healing, so that artists will gravitate toward different activities, attitudes and roles than those that operated under the aesthetics of modernism.”( 27). There is a new generation of artists, just as Gablik predicted, who are concerned with social and environmental issues. They have expanded the idea of what art is. It no longer has to be on the wall in a gallery or in a home like furniture, and it no longer needs to be in a museum or on a pedestal.