“Repatching America”

Flora Boros

Our nation has bled, but we have patched ourselves together as our fifty states shine like stars, offering support and kindness throughout the nation. We have all pulled together, creating a very large sense of national pride.

This art project represents patching up that hole from which we bled with some red, white and blue spirit. Whether this is to be done by remembering the lyrics of our national anthem, or wearing something to show your support, is up to you. It is now that my pride to be an American rings out loud and clear.

The traditional style Gap jeans create somewhat of a mockery of mass produced and trivial patriotism. A commentary on America's demonstration of patriotic ideals in a manner that is consequential and irrelevant.

When creating this piece and looking back on it, different images have come to mind. American girlhood and the beauty of a young women's spirit and growth in times of change in this country. It also creates an ironic undertone because of the jean's size. It almost conveys that this is the face that is being put on, belongs to someone who shows extraordinary patriotism. Yet, on the inside, because of the owner's age, it lacks the foundation to understand what has occurred fully. Therefore the jeans mix the National Anthem; a widely known song, with the Gap. The gap being a widely bought product, especially the token blue jeans, creating a surface label for everyone to acknowledge because it is now the "in" thing to do. Being that Gap jeans are at an impressionable age through their popularity.

I myself, have changed so much since the September 11th attacks. My family all came from Hungary, a place where, sadly, there are some whose ignorance blinds them when they hear a slip of an American accent into my words. Believing that all Americans are rich and much better off then they are makes certain people jealous of me. Being an American in Hungary, it's very difficult to walk around with a straight face and with my head held up high. Business vendors have tried to cheat me when purchasing things, some people mutter words like, "There goes a
stupid American girl". Granted, not everyone is like this, by far, not at all. But over the summers that have spent in the country, this unfriendliness makes me easily embarrassed and nervous when speaking the language to those I meet.

Yet now, I believe that some of this self-consciousness will disappear since I know the strength that our nation has come to have come out of last year's situation as it has. I know that without a doubt that Hungary wouldn't have been able to step out of the chaos as gracefully as we have. Even richer European countries are still in great recession, trying to build themselves up again. I will now be able to hopefully walk down a street and be happy that I am privileged enough to be born in this strong country.

I related this project to the community around me when putting it up at the High School's Art Festival, whose focus was Americana. Though I had aspired to get individual feedback, the great sense of spirit and unity was immensely beautiful in the lunchroom that afternoon made it worth it all. My project was lucky enough to have been in such a celebration of human and American spirit.

To receive feedback later, however, I asked my mother, who works at the Montclair Art Museum's Library; to see if she could put my jeans out for display. I received many comments like, “These pants are a wonderful way of incorporating so many aspects of American society with modern patriotism. They represent a major part of American society: material things and fashion. They're a gorgeous way o showing American spirit!"

Hopefully this project will show and inspire people to be proud to be an American as much as it has influenced me. God Bless America!