Made in USA

The purpose of the artist should not to be to impose personal views or opinions, but rather to ignite and to motivate the viewers to enquire about their 'ordinary' environment.

The society in the United States, like most of societies around the world, is full of paradoxes and inconsistencies. However, we tend not to question what is accepted as normal because we tend to adapt to our environment by following customs, traditions and rules.

Made in USA is not a just a critique or an adoration to the American culture, but all together, as well as any grey areas in between.

As an immigrant, probably the first visual element that affected me the most (and still does), was the multi-use of the American flag in popular culture. Coming from a foreign country (Spain), where growing up I could not have any symbol of the national flag without being accused of being a fascist, I could never imagined that in the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, the opposite reality was true. Since patriotism is nurtured in elementary schools across the United States, children learn from a very early age that to be patriotic is the norm.

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

For those of us living in the United States during the 9/11 attacks, it is unquestionable the scar left impregnated in all of us. First, we were confronted with a recorded reality that we did not even know it was possible outside the special effects of Hollywood studios. Second, we experienced it repeatedly. We saw the same footage hundreds of times, from as many different angles possible, making it permanent in our long-term memory. Lastly, it affected American patriotism forever. The moths after the attack, American flags were hanging from almost every house in the country, and the hate for the Middle East culture overshadowed the centuries of tension with Russia.

The meaning of patriotism has changed with presidencies, world conflicts, and new generations. Even though the love for the country has always been embedded in American society, the way patriotism is expressed and communicated has transformed. As a result, it has affected popular culture and the American flag is used nowadays in contradicting ways. The flag must never touch the ground; however, it is not uncommon to find American flag bikinis and underwear for sale at the mall. While the flag should be folded in a certain way and cannot be ordinarily disposed, thousands of companies around the country use the symbol of the flag printed on their products, which probably will be trashed at some point. The flag is constantly present in advertisements and films, and celebrities use patriotic clothing to create controversy and/or to spark sexuality.

Made in USA invites the viewer to love American culture as it is, as well as to be confused by it. There are no simple answers, only complicated questions.

What does patriotism mean for you?

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