

**IMAGE FILES 006:
YASI GHANBARI**



The idea of engagement is something I've been thinking about for the last few years and has informed my art and my life. How do I decide what to engage with? Can I pay someone else to engage for me? Does clicking a "like" button on Facebook constitute engagement? More interestingly, what are all of the weird avoidance behaviors I engage in to avoid engaging? These questions, I think, stem from a desire to understand the boundaries between oneself and a greater community. This is the work of being a self-aware person and the work never ends.

When I started seeing a lot of my friends posting articles on Facebook (how I get the news curated for me) about the Trayvon Martin case verdict, my first thought was to ask: who are we crucifying for our sins this time? Very cynical I know, but my fear is that we rally around change in sensational circumstances, but do not carry that desire for change into our daily lives. I do not want my cynicism to diminish the fact that the verdict is symptomatic of white supremacy and therefore completely unacceptable, but I do wish to open up a place for self-examination.

Around the time of the Martin case my Alma Mater, Oberlin College, was in the news because a student reported seeing someone on campus dressed as a member of the KKK. This sighting also coincided with a series of racist and sexist signs appearing around campus. Later two students were caught and several news sources framed the hate crimes as a hoax or "troll" because one of the students said that was their intention (<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/356529/how-oberlin-created-hate-crime-year-michelle-malkin>). I have no idea how it became permissible to label racism as a troll. Racism is racism whether or not you say "LOL" at the end of it. One reason these actions were labeled as a troll was because one of the students had campaigned for Obama. "I campaigned for Obama" could very well be the newest iteration of the tried and true "I have a black friend" defense against racism. For me the example of this student campaigning for Obama, but circulating hate speech on campus, became an extreme example of being progressive publicly and regressive privately.

The last few months have shown an increase in race related media coverage because of the Trayvon Martin case, Oberlin's race incidents, and Miley Cyrus twerking (news coverage of her twerking at the VMA's eclipsed news of the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream* speech). The coverage of these events has given me the opportunity to confront my feelings of cynicism and further consider the role of the individual in creating change.

The above image is me in my first year of middle school back in 1996. When I saw this image, I felt I had to use it in some way not only because I look like a young hippy stoner, but because it somehow today rings ironic. Over time my schools and workplaces have become less and less diverse, a thought that I have mostly repressed. I wanted to reflect on my childhood and my art as a starting point to think about how race intersects with the critical work I am already making about feminism and socioeconomic instability.





*My first art prize, 5th grade, 1995.
The students in my class were asked to make a drawing that represented America.*



Photo/courtesy Kate Waller Barrett Chapter, DAR



Courtesy photo

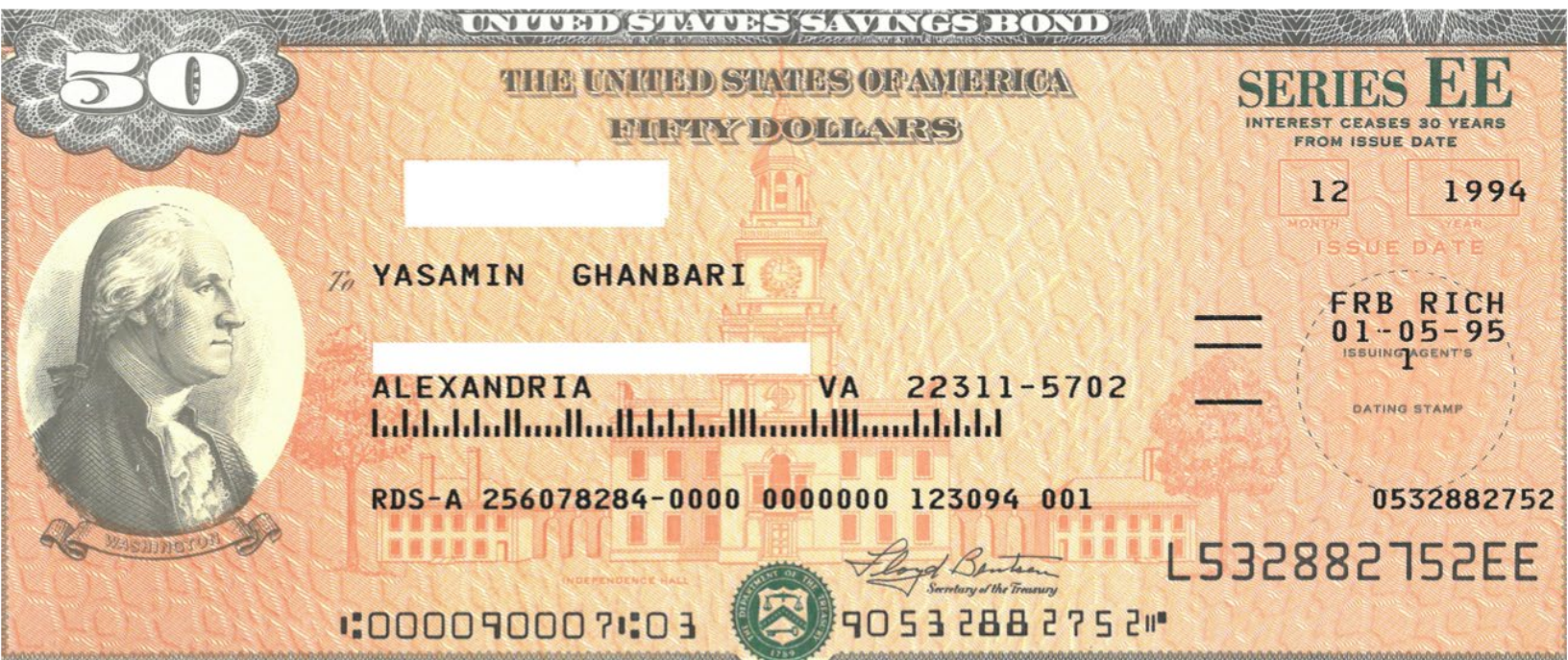
52 people in attendance. At the Wild Bird Center, in photo at top right, Brent Troutman from Scales & Tales (an environmental education program), holds a wounded American eagle whose left wing was amputated after a fight with another eagle. At bottom right, Dr. Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, associate professor of history at Howard University, is signing copies of her book, "Living In, Living Out, African-American Domestic in Washington, D.C., 1910-1940," at Northern Virginia Community College's Alexandria. Clark-Lewis formerly was a member of the Social Sciences faculty at NVCC. At bottom left, from left: Mayor Patricia S. Ticer, candidate Brian Moran, Rep. James P. Moran, and Del. Bernard Cohen pose together at a Feb. 26 Democratic kick-off party held at the West End Dinner Theater for Brian Moran's entrance into the delegate's race. Selected from 113 contestants at John Adams Elementary School, Yasamin Ghanari (front right), grand prize winner of a U.S. Savings Bond, is pictured with, from left, Principal Johnie Harris, fourth grade teacher Stephanie Stephens and Vice Principal Larry Barfield. Standing beside Ghanari is classmate Nathan Hale, also displaying his winning poster. This year's poster contest, sponsored by the Kate Waller Barrett Chapter of the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, required students to design a postage stamp representing any part of the U.S. Constitution.



Photo/Carolou Marquet, NVCC



<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/04/nyregion/for-daughters-of-the-american-revolution-more-black-members.html?pagewanted=1&r=0>



\$50.00 savings bond worth \$52.00 almost 20 years after its issue date.



Photo by Yasamin Ghanbari

Right Point: Malkin talks tough.

*<http://www.oberlin.edu/stupub/ocreview/2006/02/17/news/article4.html>
After posting the Malkin article on page 2, I remembered that I managed to repress taking her picture for the college newspaper in 2006. Her rhetoric is the same.*



<https://vimeo.com/8687408>, *Bunkering*, 2010 (406 views)
<https://vimeo.com/57569704>, *Sex Interview*, 2013 (4,032 views)

Yasi Ghanbari is an artist living in Brooklyn, NY. She received her BA from Oberlin College in 2007 and her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2010 in Film, Video, and New Media. She has shown her work nationally, internationally, and on the internet.

www.yasighanbari.com

IFP002:
IMAGE FILES 006 YASI GHANBARI
was published by
IMAGE FILE PRESS
on November 12, 2013
using the typeface
Akkurat Pro
<http://imagefilepress.net>
info@imagefilepress.net