A Perfect Union...more or less

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There is no such thing as "political art," Art certainly has its polities as inscribed in a range of practices. But there is no singular characterization that would allow for a distinct category of production called "political art." If there were such a category, it would certainly work in such a wide variety as not to be a category at all. The denial of this category is at the heart of the statement "all art is political." But we live in turbulent times. We have before, and no doubt we will again. Under these circumstances, acknowledging that there is no such thing as political art as one thing, while acknowledging our desire for a so-called political art is another. Although we can deny "political art" as a category of production, it is all but impossible to resist the urge to look to the recent past for its artistic responses to these political climates. The 1960s and the 1980s certainly had their share of social, gay, emergence and rage. But to what extent does the past provide a template for engaging these sentiments now? Great is the pressure to invoke historical examples of what are considered politically engaged works of art, works that abide by the slogan "say what you mean and say it more." The last four years, however, have spurred convictions that have yet to find an adequate means of expression. Americans are still traumatized over the presidential elections of 2000 and September 11, 2001, not to mention the subsequent harms of war. The states in this last presidential election were greater than the sum of individual issues; for it was not a question of the politics but a question of the guilt itself.

A Perfect Union, more or less will focus on the national fabric in light of the challenges the past four years have presented to core principles Americans use to define themselves. From a basic faith in the electoral system, to the United States' role and standing in the world community, Americans have had to do some serious self-searching about their social and political beliefs and values. The misaligning of raining corrections (religious, political and patriotic) has taken on Americans' ability to imagine the national fabric in any kind of whole or holistic sense. Feelings no doubt, exacerbated by the 2004 elections. Over and above particular, heated issues, the artist in A Perfect Union, more or less has responded to this general sense of trying by asking pointed questions of national identity through a variety of the means by which Americans recognize themselves.