

Biography

Taliyah Bradberry is a junior majoring in studio art and history of art and minoring in African American and Diaspora Studies and museum studies.

Title

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Artist Statement

? reimagines the American flag through recycled denim, a material deeply connected to the cultural narrative of being “American.” By cutting and layering the denim, the work disrupts the illusion of unity often associated with patriotic imagery. Instead of presenting a complete image of the flag, it appears fragmented, reflecting the growing polarization of our country and its educational systems. The inclusion of the Pledge of Allegiance, something many of us are taught the second we enter the educational system, is showcased in red to emphasize the conservative takeover of patriotism. In the current moment, marked by initiatives such as Project 2025 and the rollback of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, this language takes on new weight. While the Pledge claims unity and justice, these policies often work against the very inclusivity they imply. Directly inspired by ongoing debates surrounding patriotism, “wokeness,” and DEI in higher education, this piece interrogates what it means to belong in institutions that uphold national ideals even as they obscure systemic racism. Ultimately, this work serves as a critique of the growing alignment between conservative patriotism and higher education, exposing the gap between the ideals we are taught to uphold and the realities many students, particularly Black students, continue to navigate.