

# GUILTY PLEASURES STATEMENT

As a socio-political artist the goal of my work is to raise awareness and dialogue on issues of importance, such as the role of the corporation. For years I've been making work about Halliburton and war profiteering, US military deaths, Iraqi civilian deaths, the Patriot Act, Blackwater, etc.

I remember watching the documentary Control Room about how truth is created by those who deliver it. In the film, the senior producer of Al Jazeera, Hassan Ibrahim, was asked after his friend was killed, "Who is going to stop the US, the war?" He responded,

"I have absolute confidence in the American Constitution and I have absolute confidence in the ability of the American people... ..The United States people are going to stop the United States Empire."

I cried, knowing that he said that 4 years ago. I cried, thought to myself I'll make a drawing later and then I went out for a cocktail with my friends.

If the American people are going to stop this war... Who are they and what of they been up to?

Personally, I like to feel that I am socially minded in my daily life: I bring canvas bags shopping, I donate to Democracy Now!, I volunteer at anti-war protests, I buy organic and environmentally friendly products, I'm a vegetarian, I drive a prius...

That's all very nice on paper, but in truth it's such a minute percentage of how I actually spend my time and energy. How would I explain my life to someone who lost his wife... father... sister... son... how about all of the above? If my child died in my arms, what would I want to hear? "Sorry for your loss, but I didn't vote for Bush?" What do I say to my student, a mother of two, who's husband was killed during his third tour, just weeks before he was suppose to come home? How much of my day was spent thinking about the 36 people who died in a roadside bomb this morning compared to my traffic situation and the price of filling up my gas tank?

Guilty Pleasures is a mixed media installation based series that addresses these dichotomies. It is personal. I have been documenting and archiving my American life for over a year now. I have been saving every receipt. I highlight what I spend on gas, drinks, and everything else that I consume. I am filling the walls with receipts and tallying them up as I go along. I am drawing pretty portraits in my studio while I make notations of the days events in Iraq. I am shocked at how much time I spend watching movies, so I am stacking TV's up for all to see. I write down quotes of the funny things I hear my friends say everyday. It's all ridiculous and harmless but gut wrenching when you juxtapose it against the war going on at the same time. I am being honest and it's ugly. I am putting a spotlight on the skeletons in my closet.

Hassan Ibrahim is still waiting for me to do something. I went to the beach today.