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Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

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I Love You Three-Fifths

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Brittany Tucker
Artist Statement 2018
I Love You Three-Fifths

Disparities in representation are gaps that can be filled. They're also abundances that can be destroyed or dispersed. Misrepresentation is another useful tactic. In "I Love You Three-Fifths" I'm choosing to misrepresent the white body by caricaturing and simplifying it in order to address the relationship between American blackness and whiteness through portraiture. This "dis-representation" allows me to paint intimacy and interaction without committing to the Western ritual of rendering white bodies. Instantly, by rendering myself realistically, I become the primary subject. I am real while the white man is the joke of the painting. It's a reversal of the minstrel. However, the intimacy with which I interact with the cartoons in the paintings points to a 21st century black American experience of subtle and soft racism in daily life. I operate in the paintings and in life as a marked subject, an outsider. I constantly juggle stereotype threats and here, the white cartoon is simply a stereotype. A cartoon finger in my mouth is akin to a so-called micro-aggression, and this hug wasn't always safe. Slavery in America began in 1619, it's four-hundred years later and I'm in love but it's hard to forgive you. You didn't do anything. Yet you benefit. Yet I wade through it. I was taught but I could've been told, I could've been told or I could've remembered. I could have remembered or I could have lived and died in it. I could have lived and died in it but I was taught instead. And you have your mommy read all of your essays for you before you turn them in. It's complicated. But I love you. I love you three-fifths. It's a compromise.





