

RealAmerican: A Question?

Laura E. Migliorino

The concept behind “ Real American “ is to ask what makes an American an American? What assumptions do we make when we see or meet someone who we think is not “ American “. Is being American about being white or about being born on US soil? The Constitution states that the President of the United States must be a natural born US citizen, but would a American of Asian decent even be considered for the Presidency? Many Americans who are Muslim are often seen as “ foreign “ because the “ look “ foreign.“ Real American “ seeks to challenge, defy and illuminate the viewer on issues of race, ethnicity and the nature of being American.

The photographs in “ Real American “ are a series of paired portraits. One portrait is of someone who “ looks “ American, basically anyone who Caucasian, of European/Anglo ethnicity. If they were seen walking down the street or riding the subway nothing about them would indicate their immigrant status. They pass as American. The complimentary photo is of someone who is born in the US, but who may look like a foreigner. Because of their look, race or religious dress they could be treated differently, even scorned yet fit the Constitutional definition of a “ Real American “. In short a) foreigners who look American b) Americans who look foreign.