

## After Zoe Leonard's 1992 "I want a President"

I want a president who has lived below the poverty line. I want a president that's been a youth worker. Union worker. Postal worker. Sex worker. Worked at a non profit. For the Arts. I want a president who has waited for the subway in July on a Thursday during rush hour. Who has used a metro pass, Bart Pass, tokens and Uber Pool. I want a president who has had their hometown gentrified, friends laid off and the bus don't run no more. I want my president to have to walk 20 minutes to his closest Grocery Store. I want a president who has filed the paperwork for citizenship and felt the wait ticking at their Liberty like a starving bird. I want a president who's needed asylum. Who's been denied fair housing in Oakland, Williamsburg, Atlanta. Who's walked past abandoned homes in Detroit, Baltimore, Ohio, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama. Who knows New Orleans pre and post Katrina, can tell you what used to be there, and the neighbors names. Who knows the blues like hollow lullaby. I want a president who has been to a Black Lives Matter protest. Has organized. Has looked at the stats. Has been arrested for their right to assemble. Has said the names. Has said the names. Has said the names. Who's stood on the front line in front of America's police. Who's held a gun knowing its weight on a life. Who's had to Juke and whip and nae nae back into a smile. I want a president that can vogue with the best of them, has snapped for the kids. I want a president who respects water. Has tasted Flints. Who respects women. Lets them finish their sentences. I want my president to have no health insurance and stub their toe. I want them to look at the cost and tell me if it makes sense. Then to go get an an abortion and tell me the people waiting outside holding pictures of fetuses makes sense. I want a president that isn't racist. Another mixed president. A President with tattoos. A president who's taught public school. I want a president that couldn't find a job out of college and has an outstanding private student Loan from Sallie Mae. I want a president who's been stop and frisked. Did time for dimebag. I want a woman president. I do. I want my president to be a big brown girl who wears ball gowns that glisten from the tears of her haters, shining for all her ancestors to see. I want a poet for president. A professor for president. I want my president to speak Spanish. Tagalog. Chinese. Arabic. Gullah. A president who uses the word Aint. I want a president that once was a foster child. I want a president that has walked the mile. Does the work. Has worked. Like an everyman. Who's just tryna do some good in this world. Who wants to be the change. Who knows our children are watching and doesn't want to recruit them like an army of bones. I want a president who knows what it's like to feel like an average American who's whole life has force fed a dream they keep raising the bar on. I want a president who's been told "That dream aint for you" and know its a lie, just needs to be redefined. I want more from my president. Like empathy. More and More and More and more and more. I'm American. Isn't that my right?