

Anissa Mack

I'm Like You, Do You
Like Me?
in "Heart of Gold"

P.S. 1
Long Island City,
New York

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What do Teddy Roosevelt, Bruce Springsteen and Anissa Mack have in common? Answer: they have expanded upon the curious context of the bandanna. This 22-inch square of dyed cotton, printed with black floral and paisley designs forming playful designs, seems common and innocent, yet it has an elaborate, somewhat exotic past. Some trace its origins to decorated silk squares from India, and the word does originate from the Sanskrit term for "tying." Others maintain American cowboys adapted it from Mexican *vaqueros*. Its identity has ranged from decoration to function. For Hollywood actors starring in westerns, it was mostly decorative; while for working cowboys it served to absorb neck perspiration and to protect the throat from dust. Bandits and pirates hid their faces with it, and it could be used as a blindfold for the captured or condemned. It has been found in farmers' pockets to blow a nose or mop a brow and at the end of the sticks carried by hobos. It's still a part of square dancers' costumes, bikers and musicians wear it as a headband, and gay men at one time used various bandannas as a sign of sexual proclivities. All of these cultural and functional factors are called up by Anissa Mack's installation of four variously colored, stained glass bandannas set in

the windows of P.S. 1, as part of an exhibition emphasizing Americana called "Heart of Gold." Glowing in the sunlight, the bandanna is elevated to the spiritual level connoted by stained glass. Mack's clever adaptation of a lowly article with multifarious associations is surprising, humorous and provocative. Her selection is also an astute one given its ordinary-extraordinary duality, and its basic two dimensions. Reminiscent of Jasper John's choices of a target or a flag for painting, Mack similarly elects a banal item with cultural connotations that is ideally suited for the flat format of art. It is both a witty and *au courant* comment.

Judy Collischan

**I'm Like You, Do You
Like Me?, 2002.
Leaded stained
glass, each panel
4 x 4 ft.**

Glass Magaxine, Fall 2002.