

BANNISTER GALLERY

**Rhode Island I.M.A.G.I.N.E.s Peace:
A Metals Exhibition**

October 7-29, 2021

Artist Statements

Matthew Coté

Necktie (Signature Collection)

2020

Brass, bronze, nickel, silver, steel sheet, steel chain, cotton, polyester, and a revolver

I use the medium of jewelry/metalsmithing to convey artistic activism. As a worn object jewelry can reach outside the gallery, or the typical viewing space. The wearer becomes a participant in the concept of the piece. I draw inspiration from political campaign slogans, flags, and propaganda; all of which have simple designs that grab attention. My inspiration also pulls from topography and, to an extent, gematria (changing words into numbers to place within a design). These inspirations are a visual path for the eye and the mind to discover the ideas within the piece. What you learn along the way may, or may not, take you to the inevitable conclusion, but what's ultimately important is the journey.

Lauren DelBrocco

Curiosity

2019

Dismantled hand gun, silver, brass, acrylic glass, copper

Look through the eye lens, down the gun barrel.

Hold the piece up towards the light.

Slide open aperture lever.

Spin cylinder.

1 of the 5 cylinder slots is a bullet.

Reminiscent of a camera and children's colposcope, the piece reflects

opportunity or devastation.

Humans are most venerable and innocent when children. "An estimated 4.6 million children live in homes with at least one unlocked and loaded gun — and most children know where these guns are kept."

My piece *Curiosity* is discussing the dangers of children living in homes without proper gun safety precautions. The single bullet in the cylinder could destroy families and devastate communities.

Let's capture happy moments of prospering life and opportunities not crime scenes and torn apart futures.

Peter Diepenbrock

American DNA, Revealed

2019

Guns, steel, bronze brazing

The Gun Collection - Submersion Project

2019

Wood, mixed media, epoxy

Peter Diepenbrock has achieved a distinguished record of accomplishment as one of Rhode Island's most prolific contemporary sculptors. Diepenbrock holds a BFA, and a BID in Industrial Design from the Rhode Island School of Design. He has exhibited his mid-scale work locally and nationally in prestigious museums and fine art galleries. In addition, Peter has received several awards for his earlier design work including the Marc Harrison Award for Excellence; Best Design Award at Accent On Design, New York International Gift Show; Excellence in Design for Dansk International; as well as multiple Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA) Fellowships in Craft, Design and Sculpture. Past design projects include flatware for Dansk International; functional objects for The Museum of Modern Art; metal furnishings for Dennis Miller Associates in New York; and the Troy Collection, founded by Peter, as a collection of sculptural and functional objects, sold through Barneys, The Nature Company, and over 400 boutiques across the country.

His current public art practice has produced dozens of larger commissions which can be seen publicly and in private collections throughout the northeast. Past public sculptural projects include the 9/11 Memorial for the Rhode Island State House, Torsion III for The University of Rhode Island, Torsion IV for The Glass House in Bridge Water, New Jersey, Transversion for The Lakewood Public Library, Lakewood, Ohio, and the monumental roof top Clock Man for The Foundry in Providence

RI. Current commissions underway, are three 'Bunny Bikes' for the City of East Providence to be placed along the bike path at River Side Square, and a large suspended sculpture for the Hasbro Children's Hospital in Providence RI.

Peter currently resides in Jamestown, Rhode Island.

Shingo Furukawa

Untitled (Be a Cowboy)

2019

Steel, brass, aluminum, found objects/materials

I'm generally unmoved by conversations that revolve around guns themselves, whether for or against. Guns are a difficult subject. They have evolved to be borderline complete as a piece of design. They are elegant in their function. There's no escaping the fact that guns are an amazing object. Guns are also a fascinating object in that they carry so much, I mean, so much, sociopolitical baggage. Do they need any more detractors or advocate when they are already loaded with meaning? And then there's a metaphorical association that, you got to admit it, is just comically and perfectly appropriate - and pathetic - in the similar vein as, say, a lifted turbo diesel truck with 6" exhaust tip.

Yeah yeah yeah, it's a dick, we got it, thank you.

But maybe I'm thinking about this a wrong way, that the whole point should be that taking a sophisticated killing machine and turning it into something else. Maybe something a bit amusing, a bit absurd, a bit funny, and hopefully slightly disrespectful.

Ingrid Goldbloom Bloch

Child's Play

2019

Decommissioned Glock, springs, apoxie sculpt, auto paint

Child's Play aims to IMAGINE Peace through transforming a gun into a child's innocent pull-toy. It is part of a series of work that transforms recycled and upcycled materials into something entirely different from their intended purpose with the goal of stimulating conversations around polarizing topics.

Despite continuing educational efforts, the majority of guns in the US are kept loaded and unlocked. The danger these guns pose to curious children is written in the headlines and the public health statistics. Using the concept of play as a catalyst, a conversation around Child Access Prevention (CAP) is critical if we are to protect our children from accidental injury or death by the rampant accessibility of firearms.

I strive to produce art that is both humorous and surprising. I find beauty in common objects, road side debris and cast-offs and hope others will too as they stop and examine how something was made and transformed into something unexpected.

Stefan Gougherty

GAME OVER

2019

Deactivated revolver, stainless steel, industrial paint

This alteration of the deactivated revolver references the proliferation of violence in digital media and the desensitizing effects of this exposure. In a world where guns have become emojis- lethal weapons are trivialized, fetishized, and the real world consequences of pulling the trigger have become abstracted. Blurring the lines between the real and the virtual, it is my hope that this object will remind us that these weapons which are harmless in pixel form are in fact real, lethal and sadly all too common.

Hoss Haley

Reclamation

2019

Steel, lead, wood

I like the idea of the cyclical, of ashes to ashes. The earth is 35% iron, its geology created over millions of years through heat and pressure. Humans have sought to harness heat and pressure for their own purposes. Processes of mining, smelting, casting and forging brought us these weapons. It seems only fitting that these same processes render them static, peaceable.

For RECLAMATION a heavily enforced mold was constructed. The hand guns were brought to a red heat in a furnace, pressed into the mold hydraulically, under 100 tons of pressure. An additional strata of melted lead, representing bullets, was poured over the amalgamation of revolvers.

Vee Hight

The First Step

2021

Concrete, vinyl, enamel, found object

I never shy away from contentious subject matter. In the past I have tackled domestic violence, religious criticism, and gender inequality. However, when the opportunity arose to participate in a project that directly addresses a divisive socio-political topic, I wasn't sure if I should contribute.

It's not that I suddenly had nothing to say. On the contrary, I have lots to say, I am a proud gun owner consistently working to increase my skill, but I wasn't convinced I would be welcome. For the record, the majority of the people I contacted for advice weren't convinced I'd be welcome either. The thing that makes this different from all the other subjects I've tackled, is that I'm on the defensive. Which is poetic, because a gun should only be used for defense.

It's frustrating, as a gun owner, to have someone tell you they know nothing about firearms, they've never held a gun in their life, but they also have ideas on how to safely regulate them. I want to help change that. The first step in tackling gun violence is education, so we can come together and have informed discussions about firearms. I want to guarantee that every person who sees my work walks away knowing the basics. Every gun owner lives by these four rules because following them can save lives, and ultimately that's our goal in this project. It's the first lesson, but I think that's the best place to start.

John Huckins

Ingot & Wire

2020

Recycled firearm

In Potential Material Huckins has reduced a hand gun to a stock material, ready to be made into something. Metal is a material so exquisitely engineered and fawned over by by modern society, our ability to produce from ore and manufacture complex objects is astonishing and prolific. In Potential Materials the artist is simply recycling a piece of steel used and disarmed in a violent crime by using traditional forging and jewelry manufacturing techniques and asking the viewer to wonder; what could it be next?

Rob Jackson

Concealment

2019

Decommissioned handgun, silver

The derringer is recognized as a weapon of concealment. In this case it symbolically presents that government has concealed the fact that little to nothing has been done to protect us from gun violence.

In fact, gun violence has only increased in the 20 years since Columbine.

After what is now almost a daily occurrence in the US, our representatives offer only the hollowness of their *prayers and thoughts*.

In contrast New Zealand's parliament changed their country's gun laws in less than a month after a mass shooting left 50 people dead.

Almost unanimously members of parliament voted 119 to 1 in favor of the ban on military-style semi-automatic weapons.

In *Concealment* the words "Prayers" and "Thoughts" are engraved onto the barrel of the gun. These words not only do not stop a discharged bullet, but instead almost seem to sanctify its flight.

The handgrip is replaced with a silver grip in which layers of locations and numbers of deaths of mass shootings have occurred since Columbine.

Nicole Jacquard

An Unfortunate Education

2020

Galvanized steel, wood, silver, acrylic, mica, brass, enamel, copper, paint, derringer gun

The idea for this piece comes from the point of view of an educator and speaks directly about school related massacres. My interest led me to research the first school shooting, and unfortunately, they have been around since the founding fathers. The first shooting at a University was at the University of Virginia – the institution that was built by our third President – Thomas Jefferson.

The overall structure is based on a coffin and references the iconic domed rotunda designed by Jefferson. The grey galvanized steel that create the walls of the building are pierced dogwood flowers. Representing peace, the dogwood is the state flower and tree of Virginia. At the apex of the dome is a gun site, and when lifted it reveals the crosshairs of a modern gun. The dome is divided in half and hinges open to reveal the contents. The Derringer gun, recessed in the wood floor base, references the shooting of the U of V law professor John Anthony Gardner Davis, by student Joseph Semmes in 1840.

Just below the dome is a quote from Jefferson and James Madison, from an 1824 board meeting before the school opened in 1826. It states: No student shall, within the precincts of the University, introduce, keep or use any spirituous or vinous liquors, keep or use weapons or arms of any kind ...

Unfortunately, this is a lesson that keeps repeating itself.

Niki Johnson

Stripes

2019

Altered 32 caliber revolver, manufactured by US Revolver Company ca. 1910

This US Revolver Company pistol is a relic and a classic stick-up gun. With an eighty-nine year gap of traceable history between its manufacture in 1910 and its purchase by the Pittsburg Police Department's gun buyback program in 1999, I decided to focus my alterations on the time the revolver spent as police property, in the sphere of the criminal justice system. Its vertical grooves are intended to invoke the directional lines of prison bars and old prison uniforms. My intention is to draw focus to incarcerated men and women and the communities whose lives have been forever changed by gun violence.

Terry Lavin

Go Ahead, Make My Day (and other clichés)

2020

Cast and fabricated brass and copper, cherry, ebony, handgun

In contemplating how I would approach this project I kept coming back to various catch-phrases and clichés we are all familiar with from popular culture, as well as more insidious examples of how gun-related idioms have thoroughly permeated our daily language. I'm sure anyone reading this could come with a dozen examples in no time.

I decided to create a piece that would cause significant harm to a potential gun-wielder in the event that one dared to use it, in keeping with some of those clichés. The gun grips are remanufactured with sharpened rose thorns, and it's displayed like a trophy on a pedestal as if an act of temptation.

Tim Lazure

229 Under 13

2019

Decommissioned gun, copper, stainless steel, 229 gem stones,
silver, ebony

A 2012-14 study on the firearm fatalities in the United States reported that within that two-year period, an average of 229 children under the age of 13 were fatally wounded. I believe that there is no reason why we should have to bury a single child because of gun violence. To commemorate the deaths of these children, I formed and fabricated this shovel, which has a gem stone set for each child reference in the study.

Michael Nashef

Degrees of Degradation

2019

Concrete, dyed concrete, copper, brass, steel

With this piece I wanted to show the extent of damage gun violence creates. When gun violence occurs, we tend to feel sorry for the victim for a day or two and we continue on with our lives. This rings true specifically if we are not related or close to the victim. But we fail to recognize that with every gun violence there are three degrees of degradation, the victim, the victim's family, and the community around them. Even if we were far from that community its trickle effect can be felt all around us. We start to not feel safe and doubt others and their behavior, which lead to mistrust and suspicion. These three torus shapes that I have included in my piece represent the three degrees that I talked about; they are made out of concrete to symbolize the fragility of such degrees and vary in size to reflect the victim, victim's family, and community. We are whole and complete with ourselves, when we are with our family and around our community, but when someone is shot/killed with gun violence that circle of wholeness breaks and chatters, leaving everyone injured.

John Rais

Playtime

2020

Steel, gun, patina, paint

I am steeped in the building of language in metal that reflects the human condition and the fragility and strength of our relationships to the other, and each other.

This latest series of ravens came from earlier works where animals were the subject for furniture pieces. It was about the human interaction with the animal itself, and what the users, ask or expect from that ritual use of furniture. This is a branching out from that inquiry. It is about the animals interacting with the manufactured.

In a sense, I make the objects that I wish I could find, but the love of making prevents me from ever finding exactly what I am looking for or even knowing what it is.

Catherine Rubery

CHANGE

2019

Brass, silver, and disabled gun

My piece represents CHANGE.

Change- (a) to make different in some particular: ALTER

(b) to make radically different: TRANSFORM

(c) to give a different position, course, or direction.

I propose to create a butterfly from the various parts of the handgun. I feel that the butterfly is a perfect example of change. It starts out small and hidden before emerging with its beautifully colored wings.

Like the butterfly, a change is necessary if we as a society are going to decrease the number of deaths related to gun violence.

Gun violence is a subject which causes a wide variety of responses. There are those who feel stronger gun laws will stop the violence while others believe this will make no difference in the numbers of gun related deaths.

We may not agree on the way to curb the violence but I believe we can agree it must change.

Howie Sneider and Peter Tenney

Stop, Dwell, Repeat

2020

Mixed sculpture

Stop, Dwell, Repeat, a fountain of transformation.

The transformation of guns into an object of peace and reflection. The transformation of the viewer, given the space and time to contemplate the role of guns and gun violence in our lives, And finally the transformation of the artists, finding our own voices, healing, making amends and creating positive change through the process.

We chose to leave the guns as raw and honest as they came to us, and to take advantage of their piping and rifled barrels to move water in place of bullets.

We encourage viewers to sit through the cycling of the fountain and to consider the losses and sacrifices that have been made because of guns.

Stop, Dwell, Repeat.

Peter Snyder

"These are very, very good people."

2019

Ash wood with pyrography, plasticene clay, iron oxide wash and acrylics, and handgun

Inscribed with names of children who have perished in school shootings between 2015 and 2018 and relevant quotes (President Obama and Mr. Trump) that have driven public debate.

The design and construction of this piece was not any "labor of love," and crafting it did not provide any healing experience for me – but it was nonetheless necessary. I was unable to get its design out of my mind any other way, and it reflects my anger and disgust at our society's inability to appropriately control the licensing and possession of guns. Burned into the wood are the names of all children (previously publicly disclosed) who have been victims of gun violence in their schools, between 2015 and 2018. They leave behind wounded families ranging from Merced, California to Townsend, South Carolina, from Parkland, Florida to San Antonio, Texas, and all across the rest of this massive country. Most of their names have been covered by the toxic, bloody effluent mass being released by the handgun. You as the viewer can not see them all, but I know that all their names are seared into the wood. The names that you do see will soon be covered as well, as we collectively allow that sludge to continue moving and growing. As I burned in each child's name, I took a few minutes to read what I could about each of their lives and to consider their unique qualities, before I put them to rest on this piece. The relevant quotes offered by two wildly different leaders of country, over this same time period, speak for themselves and require no additional commentary from myself as the artist.

Billie Theide

Imagine

2020

Charter Arms Undercover .38 Special Revolver, commemorative postage stamps, cotton

I purchased this revolver, after researching the make model and year of the gun that killed John Lennon, at a firearms auction in Mattoon, IL in 2017. I paid \$130.00 for the .38 caliber firearm. To legally possess the firearm in Illinois, the auction house required that I present a Firearm Owners Identification card. In 2019, Dave Costley (Dave's Firearms, Urbana, IL) decommissioned the revolver. 2019 commemorative John Lennon postage stamps (Forever) were purchased from the United States Postal Service. The stamp design features a photo of Lennon and the artist's signature. The stamp commemorates Lennon's commitment to the ideals of peace and unity.

"Imagine," released in 1971, has long been considered John Lennon's finest solo album. The typeface on the front cover of the "Imagine" album was transferred to and hand embroidered on the unique stitched muslin bag. On a side note, John Lennon collected postage stamps as a child. Lennon's stamp album was on display in 2018-2019 at the National Postal Museum in Washington, DC.

Making objects that are commentaries on historical subjects is not unfamiliar to me. I previously designed and fabricated a variety of objects commemorating historical figures, memorable places, events, and things (Robert F. Kennedy, John Lennon, Elizabeth Taylor, English Spode, the Chicago World's Fair, tropical Florida, The Last Supper, and Pinkie and Blue Boy among others).

As for my work in general, I see beauty in the mundane. I am preoccupied with displacing tangible artifacts to influence perceptions, trigger memories, and alter realities. My creative practice is driven by my passion for history and collecting, an

interest in hybridization, the absurd, and the human propensity for excess and ornamentation. I look beyond material and process; I am comfortable working in a variety of materials and select those that are suited to an articulated and researched concept.

James Thurman

Saturday Night Special (dump 'em to the bottom of the sea)

2019

Belt buckle (recycled gun parts, Thurmanite, rubber gasket, copper, pewter, microhardware)

For over twenty years, I have been exploring a process of using eco-resin to create a composite material made of layered recycled paper, now called “Thurmanite®.” Throughout human history, we have adorned ourselves with materials found in our surroundings and I am interested in continuing that tradition. Even before my work began with Thurmanite®, I was drawn to creating rotational and radial forms in my studio work, eventually leading to my Certification as a machinist. I’ve continued the utilize lathework in my studio, creating either entirely lathe-made finished vessels and plates, or smaller components that are incorporated into my wearable jewelry.

I regularly use belt buckles as a means of creating a wearable artwork that serves as a tableau for a particular conceptual narrative. Previously, my work has more subtly addressed themes of societal responsibility, especially related to environmental impact and capitalism as an essentially exploitive system. The events of 2020 pushed me to be more direct and explicit with my content. For me, use of aquatic imagery is both a plea for environmental responsibility but also a guide towards harmony and peace, modeled after the denizens of the oceans living in sync with their habitat. The monstrous is a way that we reconcile Otherness while the fantastical embodies escapist or aspirational emotions.

Jennifer Walstead

"Kill 'em with Kindness" Necklace

2019

Brass, copper, silver, freshwater pearls, faux pearls, gun fragments

Everyone loves a dangerous dame.... For as long as there have been storytellers, humans have been thrilled and terrified by tales of seductive women who bring the helpless to their knees. For most, the term "femme fatale" conjures an image of the stealthy, seductive and vindictive vamp that appeared in 1940s film noir. My work series follows the femme fatale phenomenon beyond film noir and across multiple genres, tracing the evolution of this archetype over nearly 90 years within great cinema.

Within the artwork, I was inspired by the strength and empowerment of women playing in the femme fatale roles. Most Film noir movies rely heavily on the use and balance of many contrasting concepts and ideas to achieve their melancholic impressions. The femme fatale's sexuality is linked with her deceptive nature - noir made danger sexy. Just looking at weapons such as guns can inflict fear and uneasiness in people. My concept is to make the dangerous; sexy, and the feministic nature of this necklace will highlight the beauty of what can be created when deconstructing the form of a gun.

We need to create a world where everyone can embrace and accept the positives and negatives of each other while living in the moment without greed and ignorance, in order to achieve a self-sustained non-violent world without labels. Awareness is the very beginning to a solution; by having everyone come together to spread a unified message is essential to stopping gun violence.

Stephen Yusko

Collateral Cathedral

2019

Forge-welded firearms, steel, wood, silver leaf, paint, 18k gold

I am intrigued by the structure of things. The visual vocabulary of architectural elements, agricultural implements and industrial processes tells a story. The shapes, textures and connections of the materials I use are part of that story. My work expands on this visual vocabulary by exploring themes of balance and motion, distance and perspective and the concept of home. Vessels become sanctuaries, where observations, ideas and experiences are kept. House and cathedral forms are metaphors for us, on a journey or staying put, questioning where is 'here' and what is 'home.'

The foundation of Collateral Cathedral is a forge-welded block of components from nearly twenty decommissioned handguns.

