



GUN OWNERS ARE 32 TIMES MORE
LIKELY TO KILL SOMEONE WITHOUT
CAUSE THAN TO ACT IN SELF-DEFENSE

9 – HEATER – BURNER –
HAPPINESS IS A WARM GUN

TODAY AT ALMOST 140,000 – THERE ARE
10 TIMES MORE FEDERALLY LICENSED GUN
SELLERS IN THE U.S. THAN McDONALDS

WHAT I AM NOT FOR ARE BULLSHIT ARGUMENTS AND LIES

A WELL REGULATED MILITIA, BEING NECESSARY TO THE
SECURITY OF A FREE STATE, THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE
TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS SHALL NOT BE INFRINGED

RECOIL

Tom Hubbard

An installation commissioned by the
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Certain highly polarizing topics in the United States can spark heated debate in an instant: abortion, illegal immigration, and war immediately come to mind. One debate that literally goes back to the founding of the nation – where uttering just a single syllable word can divide friends, family and an entire country alike, however, is – guns. Or perhaps one should add one more word, just two syllables to the singular of that noun to really get the debate going: control – gun control.

Tom Hubbard's artistic response to the polarized world that we now inhabit as it relates to the firearm is the sizable installation *Recoil*. With a nod to the ubiquitous understanding of the gun form, Hubbard has fashioned over 40 porcelain handguns in a monochromatic spectrum of black to white. The barrel of each porcelain gun is stamped with data, quotes and facts related to guns, attempting not to favor one camp over the other in the gun control debate.

Recoil aims to be neutral, but in effect that is impossible. The material is almost always divisive: statistics on background checks, facts on mass shootings, quotes from passionate gun owners, and items related to domestic violence, mental illness, racial profiling and a slew of broader topics that the gun debate encompasses. In short, matters that those on either side of the debate will either nod and agree with or shake their head at in disgust.

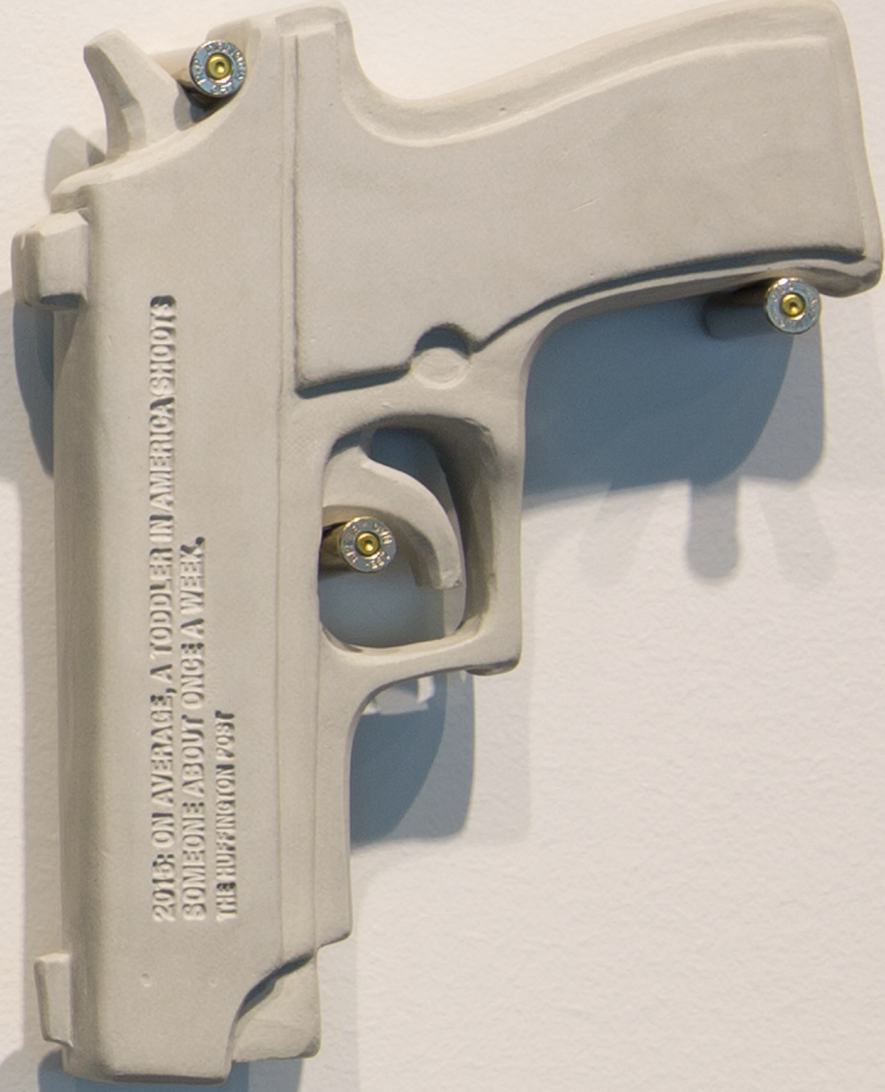
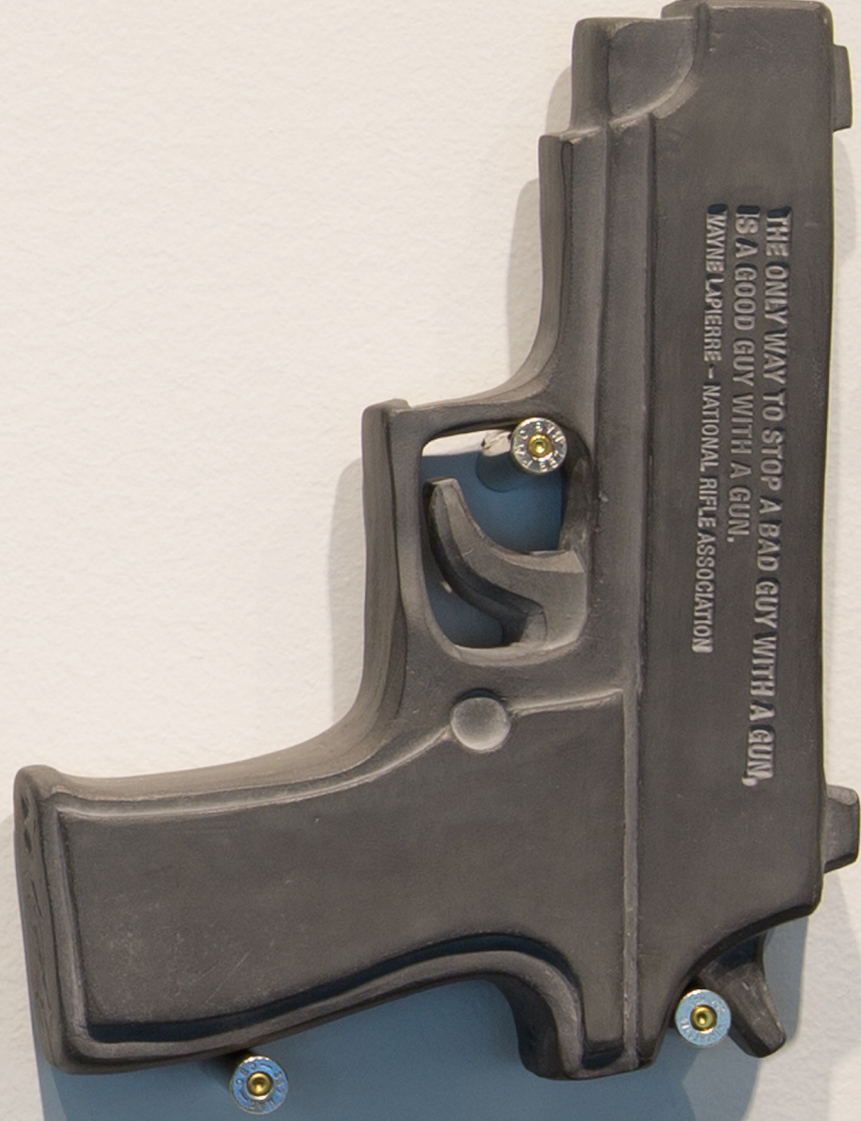
The beauty of *Recoil* is in the understanding of the act of to which it refers. Recoil or kickback is the forceful backward momentum of a gun when it is discharged. According to Newton's third law (for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction), the recoil caused by a gun when fired, therefore perfectly balances the forward movement. Furthermore, the act of recoiling also can mean the act of moving back from something. The ceramic guns in *Recoil* are a device to present both sides of an argument, to ask people to reevaluate previously held beliefs and consider another viewpoint.



Recoil is installed in a linear manner, which allows viewers to easily read the inscriptions from a short distance. From afar the piece draws attention to the massive amount of guns owned in this country, over 300 million – nearly one for every man, woman and child in the United States. It also conjures our shared understanding of the gun's existence as a pure form, a structure so universally understood that it does not require an object. Everyone has mimicked the act of shooting a gun by simply extending an index finger while folding back their remaining digits and using their thumb as a trigger. Hubbard's guns in *Recoil* are not replicas of any real-world model, but simply are read as firearms by their collectively understood form.

Recoil is a long time in the making, not just in the literal labor to fashion it – a huge undertaking – but also through the social and historical place from which it draws context. While one could argue the gun control debate from which *Recoil* derives its framework goes back to the initiation of the Second Amendment, this detailed artwork leans more toward recent events. In fact, it was impossible for Hubbard to address all the national episodes in the gun control debate that occurred while he was creating *Recoil* – there were simply too many to incorporate into the artwork. After taking on such a challenging and exhaustive subject, one can only wonder what Hubbard will address next.

Paula Katz
Executive Director
Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art





Guns are complicated. Tangled up in the gun debate are issues of security, identity, personal freedom, domestic violence, mental health, and racism among others. If that's not enough, the issue is loaded with contradictions. The U.S. has more guns per resident than any other developed nation and has a gun homicide rate 25 times that of other developed countries. So, do more guns really make us safer as the NRA proclaims?

After the tragedy in Newtown, CT the American public was promised a national discussion on gun rights and gun violence. Unfortunately, this discussion never materialized in any meaningful way as opponents of the gun issue dug in firmly and staunchly held their familiar positions. Much of the debate revolves around the Second Amendment and how it is interpreted. Many believe it is sacrosanct while others seek to pass legislation either expanding or limiting the rights of gun owners. Meanwhile, the violence shows no sign of stopping or even slowing.

Aurora – Cleveland – Charleston – San Bernardino – Orlando – Dallas

As the election nears, gun sales and conceal carry permits are on the rise along with fear, paranoia and the carnage from gun violence. The Pro- and Anti-gun camps are separated by a great divide, and most politicians are either too afraid to touch this political "third rail" or too deep in the pockets of the gun lobby to act.

I do not believe either camp, the politicians or the pundits. I do not believe that the government seeks to disarm the American public nor do I believe that guns automatically make you safer. As an artist, I see this chasm as an opportunity to start the open and constructive dialogue we have failed to have on this divisive subject.

Where do you stand on this issue?

Tom Hubbard
September 2016

Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art
National Performance Network / Visual Artists Network
Haystack Mountain School of Crafts
Tod Martens Photography
Tire City Potters
Paula Katz
Lisa Hubbard
Calvin Hubbard
Grady Hubbard



THERE IS NO VICTORY UNTIL
WE GET GUNS IN SCHOOLS AND
ELSEWHERE TO PROTECT OURSELVES
AN ARMED SOCIETY, IS A POLITE SOCIETY
WINNING EVEN THE MOST COMMON-SENSE
REFORMS WILL REQUIRE A FIGHT...
DON'T TREAD ON ME
AIN'T GOOD FOR NOTHIN'. BUT PUT A MAN SIX FEET IN A HOLE
LIKE MOST RIGHTS, THE RIGHT SECURED
BY THE SECOND AMENDMENT IS NOT
UNLIMITED...