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## **RECOIL**

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?

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