

MICHAEL ROUSSEAU

“My Country, ‘Tis Of Thee”

These paintings are rendered factually and are derived from prolonged looking and recording of each detail. Each weapon is presented at actual size and faithfully in their detail. I am documenting the guns as a species, if you will.

The weapons in these paintings are real and owned by real people. Each one was in front of me. They were not sourced from the internet. I did not choose them. They are what the owners had.

The question I have been asked the most about this new body of work is, “why guns?”.

My reasoning is quite simple: They simultaneously fascinate and frighten me.

This has been a series that I have wanted to do for 8 years and the opportunity, desire and access finally came together. This series will not lessen my aversion or respect for them, but will allow me to grow.

I did not do this series to be topical or prove a point.

There are plenty of figures, data, charts, polls, and graphs about guns in America. Guns are embedded in our society and culture. Guns are not new. Gun violence is not new. America is violent. I don't need to convince you of this.

I did not do this series to promote or denounce guns or ownership.

I am not interested in your arguments about the Second Amendment right to bear arms. I am presenting them as they are- as objects. What do these objects say and why.

I did not do this series to promote a political stance.

I am not interested in dividing or lobbying or political agendas.

I am not interested in how laws are dissected or interpreted.

I am very troubled by the degree politics plays in all of this.

I DID do this in the hope that it will create a real dialogue that I believe is necessary.

I present the guns “as is”. It is you, the viewer, who will react to them and begin the discussion.

Make up your own mind.

This is part of our country.

Speak up.

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