

Keiko Fukazawa

About the Artwork

Keiko Fukazawa believes art should define its era and reflect what people are living through. Her recent work, and those exhibited in this show, engages with a devastating social, political, and cultural issue that affects millions of lives in America today.

Senseless massive deaths by firearms have skyrocketed in recent years, yet nothing has been done to systematically address this horrifying and pervasive issue. The country has been divided and immobilized under "all-or-nothing" debates for decades, and there will only be a win-win situation if we listen to each other, engage in healthy dialogue, and agree to act towards ending these terrible and preventable tragedies. However, politicians and the NRA are using this polarizing issue for their own gain, and their inability to progress beyond their own divisive greed efforts towards enacting lasting change.

From this context, Fukazawa has created a series titled *Peacemaker* as her first response to addressing America's glaring gun culture and mass shooting problem. In white porcelain, she has recreated the most used handguns and rifles used in American mass shootings/gun violence from the past 20 years and covers them with the state flowers of where these shootings occurred. The color white represents the mournful state of mind of affected communities and symbolizes the purification of these hideous events. The flowers, which cover each weapon, remind us of life, instead of death.

Ironically, the name of this series, *Peacemaker*, is also the "colloquial" name of the infamous Colt .45, the most celebrated revolver in history, and an enduring symbol of the American West. The revolver was created in 1873 by American firearms inventor and manufacturer Samuel Colt, who was touted as "the Peacemaker," for his work. The creation, proliferation, and romanticization of the Colt .45 revolver was the original model and impetus for all contemporary handguns used in contemporary shootings today.

Fukazawa's most recent project is an installation piece on display called *48 Hours*, which she intends to branch out from her *Peacemaker* portfolio. It is her first step towards creating subsequent installations to be titled *7 Days*, and eventually into one monumental installation piece tentatively called *365 Days*. Every day, about 100 Americans are killed with guns and hundreds more are shot and injured according to annual averages compiled by the Centers for Disease Control. This means over 36,500 Americans are killed with guns every year, including 2,812 children and teens killed or injured, annually. These staggering numbers and facts must be told as they are, especially in this time of "fake" news and contested truth.

365 days will eventually become one huge installation consisting of 36,500 porcelain guns, each labeled with a name of the victim, their age, and address where the violence occurred. The installation will change its form depending on the exhibition space with an effort to show the full impact of all 36,500 guns. Here, *48 Hours* consists of 200 guns, reminding us of the number of people who die by gun violence every 2-day period in America.

About the Artist

For over 35 years, ceramic artist Keiko Fukazawa has created work in multiple national and cultural contexts, embracing a cultural hybridity that says, "anything goes." Her recent residencies in Jingdezhen, China, known as the "porcelain capital" of the world, have sharpened and expanded her perspective, inspiring her to further push social and cultural boundaries with conceptual art.



Photo Credit: William Short

Fukazawa's work has been widely exhibited in museums and galleries in the U.S. and around the world, including: Los Angeles, CA; New York, NY; Medellin, Colombia; Toronto, Canada; Taipei, Taiwan; and Perugia, Italy. She has shown one-person shows at: Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles; Gerald Peters Contemporary, Santa Fe; Garth Clark Gallery, Los Angeles and New York, and numerous group shows at California State University, Los Angeles, and the University of South Florida, Tampa. Museum exhibitions of Fukazawa's work include: Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA); USC Fisher Museum of Art in Los Angeles; American Craft Museum in New York; and Arlington Museum of Art in Texas. Her work is in permanent collections at the National Museum of History in Taipei, Taiwan; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; and Racine Art Museum in Wisconsin.

Fukazawa's art has also been widely awarded and recognized, including receiving the 2015 Artist in Residency Grant from the Asian Cultural Council in New York City and a 2016 COLA Individual Artist's Fellowship from the Department of Cultural Affairs from the City of Los Angeles. Her work has been featured in books like "Loaded: Guns in Contemporary Art" by Suzanne Ramljak; "Sex Pot: Eroticism in Ceramics" by Paul Mathieu; "Contemporary Ceramics" by Susan Peterson; "Color and Fire: Defining Moments in Studio Ceramics, 1950" by Jo Lauria; and "Postmodern Ceramics" by Mark Del Vecchio. She has also been featured in numerous magazines and news articles, including in Art Ltd., Ceramic Arts and Perception, American Ceramics, Los Angeles Times, and the HuffPost. Her most recent artist profile was in "Psychological Perspectives" by Nancy Mozur.

