

EAST HAWAII CULTURAL CENTER

DEBORAH NEHMAD

SHATTERED

Exhibition On View: December 7, 2024-January 31, 2025

Opening Reception: December 6, 2024 at 6:00 PM

141 Kalākaua St. Downtown Hilo || WWW.EHCC.ORG || 808.961.5711

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This exhibition was made possible by funding from the County of Hawai'i; McInerney Foundation - Bank of Hawai'i, Trustee; and the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts

ARTIST STATEMENT

As a political activist and attorney, I have always been interested in issues of social justice. My artwork visualizes the enormous human cost of gun violence, war and injustice.

The works in this exhibition address the plague of gun violence in America. I didn't set out to make this the focus of my practice when I completed my first piece on the subject in 2008. At that time, I failed to anticipate or appreciate the limitless avarice and selfishness of the arms industry.

However, the epidemic has metastasized to epic proportions. As gun violence – now the leading cause of death for our children – has transformed the experience of attending school from one of making friends and learning to an environment that incites terror in students and their parents, I couldn't focus on anything else.

The Washington Post reported in September 2024 that more than 383,000 students have experienced gun violence at school since the 1999 shooting at Columbine. This figure does not include the indirect victims impacted by every incident – other students, teachers, administrators, families and friends. This figure also fails to consider the trauma inflicted on every child by the periodic mandatory active shooter drills, locked classrooms, and armed security guards patrolling their campus.

As the gun lobby and 2nd Amendment absolutists continue to insist on inflicting their priorities on the majority of citizens who are clamoring for common sense approaches to keep our loved ones safe, my need to express my rage and frustration only intensifies.

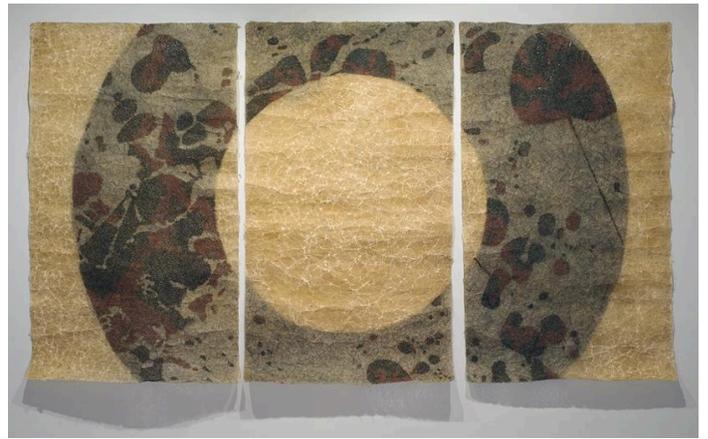
wasted(iii)

2014

68" x 120" (3 panels - 68" x 39" each)

Waxed handmade Nepalese paper,
graphite, pyrography stitching,
beeswax.

\$25,000



*The **wasted** series depicts the toll that the epidemic of gun violence has taken on Americans in the past 15 years. Each burned hole is a death by gun. Red crosses represent homicides, black X's suicides and holes left bare are accidents or of unknown intent. The holes stitched over in red and black are deaths by police intervention.*

***wasted (iii)** continues the conversation about gun violence in America, revealing that nothing has changed in ten years. Burned holes represent the yearly average of adults and children killed by guns from 2009-2013.*

black and blue

2012 - 2014

6 panels - each 48" x 24"

Relief and intaglio woodblock
monoprints, screenprint, sumi ink on
Japanese paper.

\$2,500 each print

\$10,000 for complete set



*Using the woodblocks created with holes burned during the creation of **wasted** and **wasted(ii)**, the entire constellation of blue dots represents the total number of victims killed by guns in America in the years 2003, 2004, and 2005.*

shattered

2023

60" x 118" (pedestal component of variable size) Bullet casings, waxed handmade Nepalese paper, graphite, stitching.

\$25,000



The cries and nightmares of young survivors of school shootings are handwritten to reveal how their lives have been literally shattered by bullets and the voracious selfishness of the gun lobby. Their cries for help are obscured by a layer of beeswax to represent how their pleas become mere background noise to the shouts of Second Amendment advocates and deep pockets of the arms manufacturers. "shattered" bullet casings representing the number of children killed in school shootings since 2000 are strewn below amidst empty casings representing bullets that did not find their targets.

old glory?

2017

Waxed handmade Nepalese paper, graphite, hand stitching, pigmented prints, pyrography, collage.

60" x 118"

\$25,000



old glory? functions as a catalogue of tragedy. The "stripes" are comprised of 33,000 stitches documenting the average number of deaths from gun violence in America from 2014-2016. The stripes of black x's represent suicides, the stripes of red "crosshairs" represent homicides. The "stars" are presented as

targets burned with holes representing the number of victims of mass shootings in that state over the past 25 years.

old glory? (iii)

2017

Waxed handmade Nepalese paper, graphite, hand stitching, pigmented prints, pyrography, collage.

60" x 118"

\$25,000



old glory? (iii) addresses the impact of gun violence on the survivors. The blue area contains columns of sequential handwritten numbers from 1-30,000+ representing the number of Americans wounded by guns in 2018. The balance of the background contains columns of sequential numbers written in pencil from 1-45000+ representing the number of those directly affected by an incident including family, friends, classmates, teachers, etc. The red stripes contain hand stitched quotes from both the wounded and their caretakers.

one nation under guns

2024

Handmade Nepalese paper, hand stitching, pyrography.

60" x 118"

\$22,000



There are more guns than people in America. We place a higher value on the "constitutional right" to bear arms than the safety of our children. Adults refuse to safely store their firearms in their homes. The gun lobby demonizes universal background checks as well as efforts to incorporate safety mechanisms that restrict the use of a weapon to the registered owner. Meanwhile, the gun industry is profiting from the sales of ineffective,

expensive efforts to “make our schools safer” and subjecting our children to traumatizing active shooter drills.

one nation under guns depicts this madness as a canopy of guns overlaying a contour map of the United States. Burned holes represent the number and location of students killed at school shootings since 2020.

targeted dissonance (i) - (vi)

2016

Direct gravure etchings on gampi
chine collé on Somerset
each 22” x 15”



*These etchings, when spattered with red ink, are the basis of a video entitled **bullets** highlighting the stark difference in resources and media attention devoted to Americans killed by acts of foreign terrorism as opposed to those killed in mass shootings.*

targeted dissonance (video)

2016

Video comprised of 17 direct gravure monoprints plus original soundtrack by David Goldberg.

NFS

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

I was born and raised in Long Island, New York. I moved to Washington DC after receiving my BA at Smith College with a major in government. In DC, I worked as a legislative aide on Capitol Hill and for the Carter administration. I then attended Georgetown Law School at night and worked at a law firm during the day. My legal work brought me to Hawai'i in 1984. In 1985, an accident precipitated a series of life-altering events. By 1998, I had earned an MFA in printmaking from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

My art career has included numerous solo shows and group exhibitions in Hawai'i, on the continent, and internationally. My work can be found in many public and private collections including the New York Museum of Modern Art, the Fine Art Museums of San Francisco, Yale University Art Gallery, the Davis Museum and Cultural Center at Wellesley College, Smith College Museum of Art, Hood Museum at Dartmouth College, the Hammer Museum at UCLA, the Honolulu Museum of Art and the Hawaii State Art Museum. I have received numerous awards, including multiple purchases by the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (HISAM) and from funds provided by the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation. I was one of six Hawai'i artists included in the Sixth Biennial of Hawaii Artists at The Contemporary Museum. I am also a recipient of the HISAM Individual Artist Award for Excellence in the Visual Arts.

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