

High Caliber

Black Crow Studios takes aim at gun violence

by LINDSEY SHOOK



PHOTOS: TRACY HINER

Founder of Black Crow Studios, Tracy Hiner's most recent collaboration with the Caliber Foundation, a nonprofit that gets illegal guns off the streets, proves art can make a difference. Her collection of wallcoverings and photography are made of and with gun pieces obtained from evidence archives and gun buy-back programs. Proceeds from the sale of her work fund more buy-back programs, creating a positive step in the life cycle of a gun.

Why did you want to get involved with the Raise the Caliber program?

Gun violence affects all major cities. Specifically, it affects where I live and work in Long Beach, California, on a daily basis. Therefore, I was drawn to the Caliber Foundation because they were not just raising money for their cause but actually repurposing illegal guns taken from evidence archives and used to commit crimes. When you are holding the shredded guns in your hands, you can feel the weight of the damage they have caused. It is very moving.

Can you explain your creative process, from gun part to wallcovering?

The images began with the gun pieces I received. I don't usually do photography and had never tried this concept prior to the collection. It was a big risk but I had a feeling it would turn out really cool, or it would be a total disaster that would force me to come up with something completely different! I lay out the guns in a still-life arrangement in a fish tank, then slowly fill the tank with water. I have lights and a camera set up and I mix a series of colors that I think will interact well together.

Once everything is just right and the camera is focused properly, I drop paint in while rapidly photographing the scene. It usually only takes about 20 to 30 seconds before the tank is full of paint, which means I don't have time to look at the images during the process; I can only see what was captured after. There are times when the paint is coming through parts of the guns in the most fascinating ways, creating one unique, moment in time.

What is next for Black Crow Studios?

We are looking to engage in more collaborations with artists who share our vision and anticipate launching two new collaborations next year that will push our creative boundaries.

PURCHASE AN EXCLUSIVE wallcovering made by Black Crow Studios just for this issue at californiahomedesign.com/caliber



TOP: Wallcovering created by Hiner with the gun parts.
BOTTOM: Brass bangle featuring the serial number from shell casings.