

For Immediate Release

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FREEZE!

Shannon Cannings • Corey Pickett

October 13 – November 11, 2017

Artists Reception: October 13, 6:00 – 8:30 pm

Artists Q&A and Walk-Through: October 14, 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Anya Tish Gallery is thrilled to present *FREEZE!*, a two-person exhibition featuring paintings and drawings by Shannon Cannings and soft sculptures by Corey Pickett. Through the lens of their own race and gender, both artists question the role of guns in our society in order to appeal for the re-evaluation of current gun legislation.

By looking past the veneer of consumerism, which has distorted and glorified the meaning of 'gunplay', Shannon Cannings' oil paintings explore how toy guns normalize gun culture and create a tolerance for violent language and behavior from childhood. Using the candy-colored and eye-catching visuals of advertising, Cannings' work draws attention to the juxtaposition of gun violence and the allegedly harmless children's toy. Each painting is meticulously executed to spotlight the shiny, colored plastic of the gun and its glossy, light reflecting packaging to create an almost irresistible product. Cannings' works are the product of a mother's meditation on the convoluted messages of advertising and a response to the controversy surrounding gun control.

In place of gunmetal and steel, Corey Pickett's immense gun sculptures are stuffed with foam and upholstered in a mélange of versicolor patterns. Pickett draws inspiration from his research of the middle passage and uses Victorian and Dutch textiles to visually reference the past conditions of African-Americans. The artist states "Initially these objects were in response to gun violence towards African-Americans; however, my work has expanded to gun violence against all humans". Pickett's ebullient soft sculptures transpose the issue of gun violence to create a comfortable and secure environment in which to contemplate the role of guns in our society.

Shannon Cannings earned her Master of Fine Arts from Syracuse University, New York, and has since exhibited her work across the United States in museums and institutions including Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont, TX and Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, TX. In 2001, she was selected to represent the West Texas region in the Texas Biennale. Her work has been featured in print and online publications including *New American Paintings* and the Houston Press, and *Glasstire*.

Corey Pickett received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2000 and his Master of Education in 2008 from Eastern New Mexico University. In 2017 he is to receive his Master of Fine Arts from the Vermont College of Fine Art. Pickett has exhibited his work throughout the United States in institutions such as the National African American Museum and Cultural Center and is a recipient of the International Sculptural Center's *2017 Outstanding Student Achievement in Contemporary Sculpture Award*.