



Northern Illinois  
University

*NIU Art Museum*

## Press Release

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For Immediate Release

### ***Unloaded* an exhibition grappling with the challenging social and political issues surrounding firearms in America today on view at the Northern Illinois University Art Museum**

DeKalb, IL – Northern Illinois University Art Museum presents [\*Unloaded\*](#), a nationally-traveling multi-media group exhibition exploring the historic and social issues surrounding the divisive nature of gun ownership curated by Susanne Slavick, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Art at Carnegie Mellon University, **opening August 25 and running through October 24, 2015** at the Art Museum's galleries in Altgeld Hall on Northern Illinois University's DeKalb campus. Join us for the exhibition opening at the **public reception September 10 from 4:30 – 6 p.m.** Curator and artist **Susanne Slavick** will be on hand for a public **Curator and Artist's Talk *Unloaded (or guns: no means to any end)* Thursday, October 1** to discuss the exhibition and her personal art practice with a small reception beforehand starting at **6:00 p.m. with talk beginning at 7:15 p.m. in Altgeld Hall, 125.**

This exhibition is part of the Art Museum's fall series examining contemporary artists' exploration of relevant social issues in today's world. *Unloaded* examines the historical and social issues surrounding the availability, use and impact of guns in our lives from a number of perspectives, though none endorse them as a means to an end. These contemporary artists shed light on a divisive topic—taking part in the national debate on gun rights deploying art as a device to continue a critical dialog around the challenging issues surrounding firearms in America today.

Curator Susanne Slavick states: "[These works] examine and represent the role that guns play in our national mythologies, suicide rates, incidence of individual and mass murder, cases of domestic violence, and the militarization of civilian life. Gun ownership and control is a divisive topic in this country. The artists in *Unloaded* visualize the power of the gun as icon and instrument, the damage it can do and how weapons might be rejected, broken or silenced. Some show the power that guns wield in our daily realities and personal fantasies. Others mourn and resist that power, doing everything they can to take it away, believing there are better ways to resolve conflicts, ensure safety, and keep the peace."

The exhibition features multi-media work by twenty contemporary artists including: **Lauren F. Adams, Nina Berman, Joshua Bienko, Casey Li Brander, Anthony Cervino, Mel Chin, Cathy Colman, DADPRANKS (Lauren Goshinski, Kate Hansen, Isla Hansen, Elina Malkin, Nina Sarnelle, and Laura A. Warman), James Duesing, Jessica Fenlon, Vanessa German, Jinshan, Andrew Ellis Johnson, Jennifer Nagle Myers, Adrian Piper, Don Porcella, Devan Shimoyama, Susanne Slavick, Renee Stout, and Stephanie Syjuco.**

The exhibition is on display at the NIU Art Museum through October 24, 2015 and contains gun related imagery.

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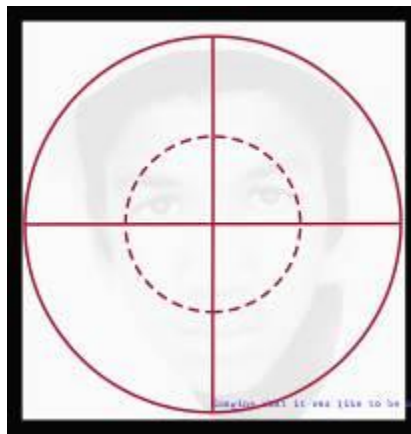
**About Curator Susanne Slavick**

Susanne Slavick, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Art at Carnegie Mellon University, previously taught at Kutztown State College, University of Wisconsin at Madison, and the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam before accepting a position at Carnegie Mellon in 1984. A graduate of Yale University she has also studied at Jagiellonian University in Krakow and the Tyler School of Art in Rome and Philadelphia where she completed her MFA degree. Her work has been represented by Jeffrey Fuller Fine Art and Struve Gallery in Chicago and exhibited at Bradley University, Rutgers University, the Andy Warhol Museum, the Mattress Factory, the Chicago Cultural Center, McDonough Museum of Art and Accola Griefen Gallery. She was awarded an artist's Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Her publications include *Out of Rubble* (Charta, 2011) and articles in *Cultural Politics* (Duke University Press), *Frontiers* (University of Nebraska Press), *Alternet*, and *Guernica Magazine*.

**Images**



Devan Shimoyama. *You will have to sing. Paper won't hold the wound I leave.* 2015. Oil, glitter, and colored pencil on canvas, (64 x 54 in.). Courtesy of the artist.



Adrian Piper. *Imagine (Trayvon Martin)*, 2013. Tiff formatted digital print, (10.43 x 10.76 in.). Courtesy of the artist.



Mel Chin. *Cross for the Unforgiven: 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Multiple, 1 of 2*, 2012. AK47 assault rifles cut and welded, (54 x 54 x 3 in.). Courtesy of the artist.



Stephanie Syjuco. *Rifle*, 1995. Cotton lace crochet panel, (12 x 53.5 in.) Collection of Marcia Tanner.



Andrew Ellis Johnson. *Massacre of the Innocents*, 2015. HD video, detail from film still. Courtesy the artist.

High-resolution images will be sent as a separate attachment upon request.

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### ***Associated Events and Educational Programs***

Many of the Art Museum's events and educational programs associated with the exhibition are free and open to the public. More information about the exhibitions, events, and educational programming at the NIU Art Museum may be found online by visiting [www.niu.edu/artmuseum](http://www.niu.edu/artmuseum). To register for events please contact the Education Coordinator at 815-753-1936 or email [shenn1@niu.edu](mailto:shenn1@niu.edu).

Thursday, September 10

#### **Public Reception**

NIU Art Museum, Altgeld Hall—first floor, west end,  
4:30 – 6 p.m.,

Wednesday, September 30

#### ***Picasso's Guernica as a Weapon of War, 1937 - 2003***

Barbara Jaffee, Associate Professor, Division of Art History at NIU examines the complicated history of Picasso's *Guernica* which the artist himself described as a weapon of war. This lecture explores the grandiose and apocalyptic canvas from its political creation for the 1937 Paris International Exhibition and its subsequent de-politicizing during display in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, as an icon of arts-for-art's sake. Most recently, artist Joshua Bienko's latest appropriation of imagery from Picasso's *Guernica* can be seen in the *Unloaded* exhibition. Altgeld Hall 315, 5 – 6 p.m.

Thursday, October 1

#### ***Unloaded (or guns: no means to any end)***

##### **Curator and Artist's Talk by Susanne Slavick**

Susanne Slavick, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Art, Carnegie Mellon University and curator of *Unloaded* discusses her own artistic practice and the exhibition's response to the divisive social issues surrounding the availability, use and impact of guns in our lives. Co-sponsored by the Studio Division of the NIU School of Art and Design. Join us for a small reception before the talk at the NIU Art Museum, Altgeld Hall—first floor, west end, between 6 – 7 p.m.  
Presentation - Altgeld Hall 125, 7:15 p.m.

Tuesday, October 6

#### ***The Right to Keep and Bear Arms in America: Stronger than Ever***

A public lecture presented by Artemus Ward, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science at NIU examining the changes—both political and legal—in recent gun rights lobbyists' action and Supreme Court decisions that have led to stronger present-day gun rights than ever before in American history. Altgeld Hall 315, 5 – 6 p.m.

Thursday, October 8

#### ***Guns and Consequences: Voices of poets addressing gun violence in their neighborhoods.***

Featuring performance and readings by NIU students and by nationally-known, award-winning, Chicago-based poets and spoken word artists. Co-sponsored by the Center for Black Studies and the Student Diversity and Equality Committee at NIU.

Altgeld Hall 315, 7:30-9 p.m.

Tuesday, October 13

#### ***Gun Culture, Politics and Identity in American Society***

Kirk Miller, Department of Sociology Chair and Associate Professor, NIU describes contemporary American gun culture while highlighting the links to group and individual identity implicated in the politics of guns, security, race, class, and gender.

Altgeld Hall 315, 5 – 6 p.m.

Thursday, October 15

#### **Jessica Fenlon, Artist's Slide Talk**

Altgeld Hall 315, 5 – 6 p.m.

Friday, October 16

#### ***Taking Things Apart***

Hands-on artist workshop on deconstructing difficult topics led by artist Jessica Fenlon  
JAH/VAB 213, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Limit: 12 participants, observers welcome. Pre-Registration required.

Saturday, October 17

#### ***Send and Receive***

A participatory listening project performed by artist Jessica Fenlon that provides a space for viewers to reflect and share with the artist their own personal lived experiences with guns and violence that might resonate or share a connection with the images in *Unloaded*.  
NIU Art Museum, 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.

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### ***About the NIU Art Museum***

The NIU Art Museum contributes to the University's educational curriculum and provides opportunities for art education and cultural enrichment throughout the community. The Museum serves to educate, preserve, exhibit, and enlighten by balancing the challenges of contemporary art with the riches of traditional media for a comprehensive examination of visual culture.

The exhibitions and programs of the NIU Art Museum are sponsored in part by the Illinois Arts Council Agency; the Friends of the NIU Art Museum; and the Dean's Circle of the College of Visual and Performing Arts, NIU Foundation.

### ***Also on display***

August 25 – October 24, 2015

***Embarrassment of Riches***, a group exhibition of six Midwest artists explores themes of sustainability and the intersection of visual art and environmental science as well as humanity's complicated relationship with the earth and environment.

### ***Gallery Hours***

Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturday 12 – 4 p.m.; by appointment for group tours. Exhibitions are open to the public and admission is **FREE**, but donations are always appreciated.

The NIU Art Museum is located on the first floor, west end of Altgeld Hall, located on the corner of College Avenue and Castle Drives on the campus of Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL. Parking is available in the Carroll Avenue Visitor's Pay Lot; handicapped and metered spots in front of Altgeld Hall; and during public receptions and programs in Lot 3 northeast of Gilbert Drive and College Avenue. Campus parking is free on weekends and after 7 p.m. weeknights.

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### **NIU Art Museum**

Altgeld Hall 116, First Floor, West End

1425 W. Lincoln Hwy., Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115, 815-753-1936

[www.niu.edu/artmuseum](http://www.niu.edu/artmuseum)