



701 Center for Contemporary Art in Columbia Offers Works by John Acorn

701 Center for Contemporary Art in Columbia, SC, is presenting the exhibit, *John Acorn: Project Pistols*, on view through Aug. 12, 2012.

This exhibition presents the most recent work by one of South Carolina's premier modern and contemporary art pioneers, who, after more than five decades, still creates striking, ambitious and relevant work today. Acorn, a retired Clemson University art department chair living in Pendleton, SC, is for the first time showing his new body of large sculptures and assemblages constructed mostly from hundreds of wooden cut out, painted pistols. With the pistols, Acorn has since 2008 created some 20 oversized common objects and representations such as a huge charm bracelet, a pendant, a pizza, lifesavers, a Palmetto tree, a heart, a crown, a wreath, a T-shirt, a person and a skull.



John Acorn, *Project Pistols*, in progress, detail. Photo by Donn Young Photography.

The Acorn exhibition is expected to generate considerable excitement among art lovers and Clemson University alumni alike. The latter include partners of the six Columbia architectural firms sponsoring the exhibition. Clemson's art department is part of the university's College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities. "Many of the prominent architects in the Columbia area are Clemson graduates," says local architect Doug Quackenbush, a 701 CCA board member. "They benefited from John's teaching and influence as a professor and chair of the art department. John is an insightful critic, a gentle supporter, a model professional. He's also a wonderful artist and craftsman."

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The sculptural pieces in *Project Pistols* reveal the same superb craftsmanship that Acorn's work has been known for throughout his career. "I confess to being addicted to making things," says Acorn, who in 1998 received the Elizabeth O'Neill Verner Award, the state's Governor's Award for the Arts. The work also carries the kind of political, social and economic commentary that, often in subtle but unmistakable fashion, has been at the heart of much of Acorn's art. And in his current project, Acorn employs an artistic strategy on which much of his work is based: finding art in day-to-day subjects and experiences. "The enlargement of objects and their positioning

alter or transform them into new images," Acorn has said.

"My interest in using the pistol as a subject or theme for my recent artwork is part of my ongoing search and inquiry into the nature of our species, human beings," Acorn says. "I do not intend to be a crusader or missionary on issues regarding firearms. I do admit, however, to wondering about the fact that my culture is so enamored with firearms."

Acorn's sculpture *Life Savers of Pistols* [continued on Page 19](#)

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John Acorn: Project Pistols



Photo by Donn Young Photography.

June 28 – August 12, 2012 701 Center for Contemporary Art

With this premier presentation of his latest body of work, South Carolina contemporary art pioneer John Acorn shows that after more than five decades of art production, he still creates striking, ambitious and relevant work. Constructed from thousands of wooden, cut out, painted pistols, the retired Clemson University art department chair has built oversized sculptural representations of a charm bracelet, a pizza, lifesavers, a Palmetto tree, a heart, a crown, a wreath, a T-shirt, a person, a skull and other common phenomena. "I do not intend to be a crusader or missionary on issues regarding firearms," the Verner Award winner says. "I do admit, however, to wondering about the fact that my culture is so enamored with firearms."

The exhibition is sponsored in part by Columbia, S.C., architectural firms Catalyst Architects, Garvin Design Group, J. Timothy Hance, Architect, P.A., Jumper Carter Sease Architects, Quackenbush Architects + Planners and The LPA Group.

Wed 11-8, Thu-Fri 11-5
Sat 9-5, Sun 1-5
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