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Contact: Andrew Freeman

Bond Public Relations and Brand Strategy

504.897.0462

andrew@bondpublicrelations.com

**International Art Stars Turn Guns from the Streets of New Orleans into Works of Art
at Aspen Ideas Festival and Aspen Action Forum**

The Aspen Institute announces Guns in the Hands of Artists exhibition organized by Jonathan Ferrara Gallery

ASPEN, Co.—In 1996 gallery owner Jonathan Ferrara and artist Brian Borrello organized the first *Guns in the Hands of Artists* exhibition in New Orleans—transforming guns removed from the city’s streets into original works of art. The persistence of violent gun crime in New Orleans and across America led Ferrara to reprise the project this past October at his eponymous gallery in New Orleans. This iteration of the exhibition features over thirty nationally known artists who have used decommissioned guns from the streets of New Orleans to create original works of art dealing with the issue of guns in our society. With underwriting support from The Helis Foundation and the City of New Orleans, *Guns in the Hands of Artists* will be exhibited at the Aspen Institute during the Aspen Ideas Festival and the Aspen Action Forum before travelling the country for the next three years.

“As an artist, activist and social entrepreneur, I asked myself, ‘What can I do to address this issue that pervades our society?’” said Jonathan Ferrara. “Putting together this exhibition is my way of doing something. It’s my goal to use art and the creative process to facilitate new, frank dialogue about gun violence. The exhibition fosters a new discourse by bringing the discussion into the realm of art; without the often partisan and polarized politics that surround the issue.”

With the cooperation of the City of New Orleans and the New Orleans Police Department, Ferrara obtained 186 guns by way of the department’s gun buy-back program. Over thirty painters, sculptors, poets, and filmmakers were challenged to create new works using these guns. Many of these artists have first hand experience with gun violence. Artists include **Mel Chin, Skylar Fein, Peter Sarkisian, Ron Bechet, Bradley McCallum** and **Deborah Luster** who lost her mother to gun violence.

As part of an examination of violence in this country, the Aspen Ideas Festival will present this exhibition from June 28th through July 4th. Aspen Ideas passholders are invited to attend a panel discussion on “Guns in the Hands of Artists: Change through the Lens of Art”, featuring artists **Brian Borrello, Ron Bechet, MK Guth** and **Bradley McCallum**, and to join tours of the exhibition led by organizer and curator Ferrara. The exhibition will also be open prior to each evening’s film in the Paepcke building, and anyone with a ticket to that night’s film is welcome to come early to walk through the exhibition in the Paepcke gallery.

The Aspen Action Forum will also present the exhibition July 27th – July 31st as part of their focus on collaborative leadership and action. A public reception will be held on July 27th at 5:00 p.m. with Ferrara giving a keynote speech to introduce the exhibition.

For general public viewing outside of the Aspen Ideas Festival and Action Forum, please call 970-925-7010 for the latest information about viewing dates and times.

To complement the exhibition, Ferrara is publishing a book on the project featuring photographs of the artwork with a collection of essays on guns and gun violence by nationally known thought leaders including **Walter Isaacson**, curator **Dan Cameron**, John Barry, Maria Cuomo Cole, Dan Gross, Ace Atkins, Gregg Hurwitz and Robert Crais. The book is being published by crowd-funding website Inkshares and will be available Fall 2015.

Artists featured in *Guns in the Hands of Artists*:

Neil Alexander	New Bedford, MA	MK Guth	Portland, OR
Katrina Andry	New Orleans, LA	Generic Art Solutions	New Orleans, LA
Luis Cruz Azaceta	New Orleans, LA	Marcus Kenney	Savannah, GA
John Barnes	New Orleans, LA	Deborah Luster	New Orleans, LA
Ron Bechet	New Orleans, LA	Bradley McCallum	New York, NY
Brian Borrello	Portland, OR	Adam Mysock	New Orleans, LA
Mel Chin	Asheville, NC	Sybille Perretti	New Orleans, LA
Andrei Codrescu	Yellville, AK	Ted Riederer	New York, NY
Stephen Paul Day	New Orleans, LA	Peter Sarkisian	Santa Fe, NM
Luke Dubois	New York, NY	Bob Tannen	New Orleans, LA
Margaret Evangeline	New York, NY	Nicholas Varney	New York, NY
Skylar Fein	New Orleans, LA	William Villalongo	New York, NY
Jonathan Ferrara	New Orleans, LA	Sidonie Villere	New Orleans, LA
Rico Gatson	New York, NY	Paul Villinski	New York, NY

About Jonathan Ferrara Gallery

Jonathan Ferrara Gallery is a collective environment of creative visions; a commercial gallery with a public conscience. Artist, activist, and entrepreneur Jonathan Ferrara opened the gallery in 1998 to give artists a voice. Since its inception, the gallery has focused on cutting edge works by local, national and international artists with a sense of purpose, mission, and message. In recent years, it has gained a national reputation and increasingly presents artists and exhibitions in cities across the US and in Europe including Miami Project during Art Basel Miami Beach, the VOLTA Fair in New York City and Basel, Switzerland, artMRKT Houston, San Francisco and Seattle as well as, working with museums, institutions and private collections across the country.

Digital Resources for Guns in the Hand of Artists

- [Mini-Documentary on Guns in the Hands of Artists](#)
- [Hi-Res Images of Artwork](#)
- [Video Interviews with Artists](#)
- [Past Press for Guns in the Hands of Artists](#)
- [Inkshares: Guns in the Hands of Artists book](#)

About The Aspen Institute

The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. The Institute is based in Washington, DC; Aspen, Colorado; and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It also has offices in New York City and an international network of partners. For more information, visit www.aspeninstitute.org.

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