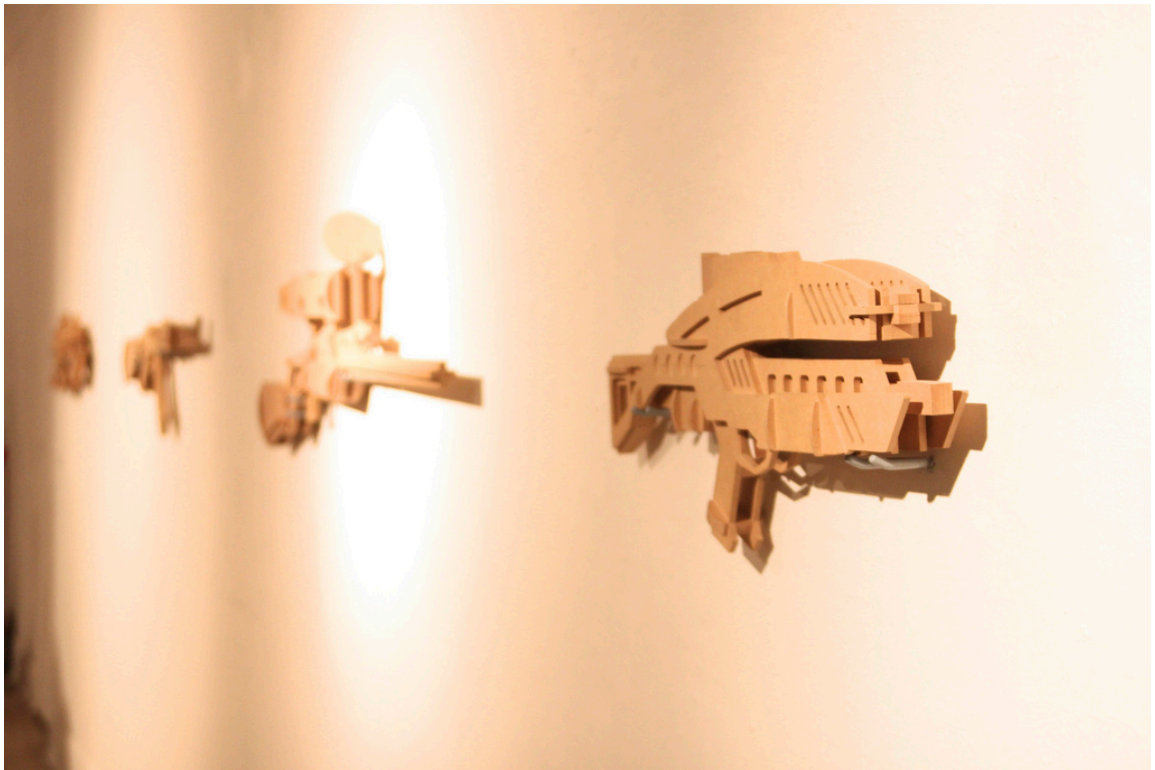


# Fantasy Defense

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## **Fantasy, Metaphor, and Understanding**

Fantasy Defense is a series of sculptures modeled after video game and real world assault weapons. They are constructed in raw materials without color or embellishment to reflect an incomplete understanding of their function in fantasy as well as reality. The ridiculousness of function and comical proportions of the Lancer (Gears of War), Sniper Rifle (Team Fortress 2) and M7 Assault Rifle (Mass Effect) are contrasted with the cold functional reality of the M16 and AK47 (which appear in far too many videogames to list here and are among the most ubiquitous assault rifles in the world). While the effects of video game violence are widely considered, debated and discussed, video game violence is not the primary impetus for these pieces. Actual guns are in fact far more pervasive than video games and according to Justice Department estimates there are enough guns in private hands in the US to arm each and every citizen in the country, while only a quarter of adults are, in fact, gun owners. I believe this reflects a larger American Firearm Fantasy often overlooked yet still a cornerstone of American culture. This is a multifaceted fantasy with actual tangible political ramifications as the self defense angle leads to concealed carry and “castle doctrine” laws while the live-free-or-die aspect has led to widespread private militias aimed at defending individual liberty. One factor that ties the many facets of firearm fantasies together is a romantic worship of certain fictional and mythologized figures as heroes and the individualistic desire become a hero as well. From George Washington to John Wayne to the war heroes of the “greatest generation” our culture is saturated in mythical heroic figures doing the impossible to defend life and liberty; it is the national fascination with our own mythology that I believe drives a whole series of ridiculous paranoid fantasies from self-defense to armed uprising. As a gun owner myself I know that this applies to only a limited number of all firearms enthusiasts but the larger point is this: obscured by the fantasy and videogame violence debate are deep seeded national fantasies which are not only played out on televisions and video monitors by gamers and have real effects in the real world which should be considered in our culture: individualistic, steeped in myth, armed to the teeth, and desperately seeking an opportunity to become a hero.



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Photos by Mark Reichers (<http://bymarkriechers.com/>)