

"The AK-47 vs. the M16: The Propeller Group, *All the World's Futures*,
Arsenale," *Canvas*, July 2015.

yet critical viewings of the world. Known for work such as the notorious *Habibi*, a bronze statue of head-butting footballer Zinedine Zidane, and the subject of the 2013 exhibition *L'âge d'or* at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha, here he showcases his signature sharp-edged humour. From far away his lilies look serene and organic, but closer inspection reveals their structure of knives and machetes. A shocking realisation follows that they are ruinous to touch – prick your finger and you will bleed – and they suddenly become objects of fear.

THE AK-47 VS THE M16 THE PROPELLER GROUP ALL THE WORLD'S FUTURES, ARSENALE

It turns out that a bullet, when fired into a long oblong of dense, clear gel, filmed and played back in slow motion, is a beautiful thing. Deadly, but beautiful. It pierces what looks

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involved are laden with historical significance. Both are icons of the Cold War, and both have been seen as symbols of freedom: the M16 by the Americans, and the AK-47 (aka Kalashnikov) by the Soviets as a symbol of revolution. What, asks The Propeller Group, happens when these two sworn enemies meet and are forced into a violent dialogue? These "weapons of peace" continue their march across the globe and are still very much in use today. Can they ever force two warring sides to unite, fused in peace like two melting bullets, or are they only ever objects for ripping, tearing and gouging? Can peace ever be born through violence?

What is even more interesting is that of the two videos on display alongside the gel block, the first shows a misfire, with the AK-47 going through but the M16 not triggering. It is in the second video, and the second shot, that the collision is captured. The gel block is the kind used by the FBI for their forensic tests, and created to mimic the density of human tissue. It bears the scars of what The Propeller Group member Tuan Andrew Nguyen refers to as "surreal destruction".

like ice, shooting through in nanoseconds and leaving a trail in its wake that combusts and implodes in roiling toiling waves that send shockwaves through the block. What is so striking is not just the bullet's trajectory itself, but the carnage it wreaks in its wake – no clean, surgical path, but a ragged, torn fault line. And now, another bullet is fired through the same wound – but wait, there are now two bullets hurtling towards each other, colliding in miniature explosions and bursting into small clouds as the gunpowder leaves behind its deadly gift. The ballistics gel block now resembles cracked ice. Imagine that inside your body: swap the clean, clear gel for flesh and blood, organs and veins, skin and bone. What a pretty battlefield.

The AK-47 vs The M16 is part of a series called *Universe of Collisions*, an ongoing project created to explore a unique phenomenon: those rare historical cases in which bullets from opposing sides of the warfield have collided with each other and fused into a single, collapsed projectile. Rather like the odds of two particles colliding in the Hadron Collider, those for two bullets meeting in this way are also many millions to one – and yet they do happen. The guns

RACIST IN SOUTH AFRICA WILLEM BOSHOF SOUTH AFRICAN PAVILION

For its 2015 edition, curators Jeremy Rose and Christopher Till of the South African Pavilion decided to take a leaf from Okwui Enwezor's *All The World's Futures* and examine it from a South African perspective. *What remains is tomorrow* brings together 14 artists in a variety of media, from photography and film to mixed media installations, in order to examine how the past can come back to haunt the present. The artists selected to represent South Africa delve into its complex history and present to deal with violence, imperialism, colonialism, money, power and the country's ongoing race issues and xenophobia. "If we are to understand our contemporary moment, and plot our future so that it is more equitable, just and humane than the present," write the curators in their statement, "[then] we must grapple once more with our history."

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