



BIENNIAL
School of Art, Design
& Creative Industries



Ulrich Museum of Art

The XXIII Faculty Biennial ***It's All Part of the Process***

Artist Statement

Jennifer Ray

At its surface, my ongoing project *In Range* is a documentation of objects I find at open shooting ranges - improvised targets that have been abandoned, leaving traces of their previous owners. I treat these objects as sculptural material, often photographing them on-site as if I were in the studio, and using lighting and my arrangements to assert particular narratives.

This subset of images focuses on conflicting and contradictory pushes and pulls in American culture. Pop culture has long driven us forward, allowing us to become familiar with identities and ideas that might otherwise be perceived as threatening - but that never comes without risk and reprisal. These vinyl records, found on the shooting range, all represent marginalized identities and controversial works. The original performers of *Hair* were even victims of an attempted bombing and a fatal arson at the hands of those offended by its message. These photos are dark celebrations of all the brave artists and cultural figures who breathe unity and joy into our world, and of those who dare to hold a critical mirror up for self-scrutiny, risking that we might not like what we see.

In opposition are the lonely forces of tribalism and conformity, forever working to convince us that the world is black and white, good and evil. And yet, even those forces are rife with contradiction and misinterpretation. The righteous bomb throwers who try to destroy what offends them often forget their own gospel truths commanding love for their enemies. This fear of the Other, fear of strangeness, and fear of ambiguity drive the violent impulse of this country.