

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND ART HISTORY STATEMENT ON CAMPUS CARRY

NOVEMBER 18, 2015

We, the faculty, staff, and graduate students in the Department of Art and Art History in the College of Fine Arts, strongly oppose the presence of guns in classrooms, laboratories, offices, and social spaces on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin.

Many departments can argue for exclusion from Campus Carry SB11 (and we teach in small groups and in large lecture halls, in darkened rooms and laboratories), but as concerned as we are for our own safety and that of our students, we are more concerned about how this law undermines the very basis of what we teach. As professionals engaged with the visual arts, we teach that objects are not neutral, in terms of either value or significance. We educate our students to recognize the embodiment of relationships of authority and power in objects and images. Moreover, cultural and social contexts shape meaning and power relationships between individuals; guns in classrooms, laboratories, or offices signify differently from guns in wartime, police work, or at ranges, and they perpetuate the power dynamics at play in those spheres.

We stand in solidarity with groups on our campus who are affected disproportionately by violence, including communities of color, women, individuals living with disabilities and members of the LGBTQIA community.

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+1 anonymous