

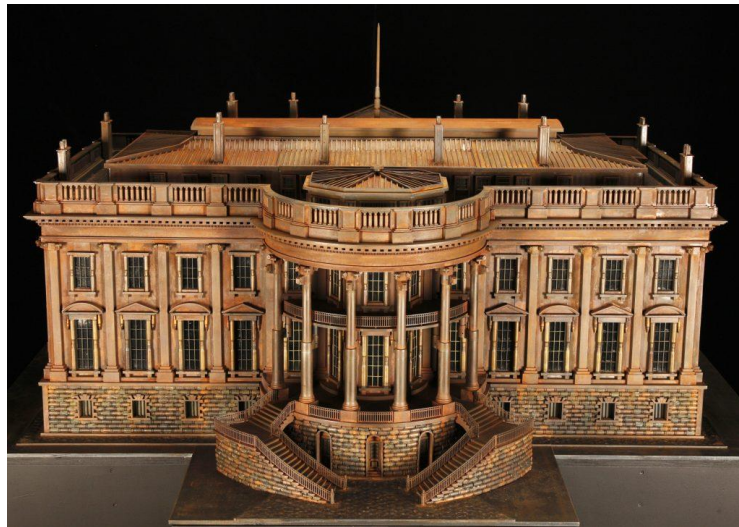
Al Farrow

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SF artist Al Farrow constructs a 'White House' armed with ammunition

By: Charles Desmarias



Al Farrow, "*The White House*" (2018); guns, gun parts, shell casings, and steel; 69 x 77 x 36 inches Photo: Catharine Clark Gallery

San Francisco sculptor Al Farrow has built his work out of one preferred class of materials in recent years: ammunition. His churches, mosques and temples, meticulously crafted from gun parts, bullets and the like, are fascinating for their extraordinary craftsmanship.

On view at Catharine Clark Gallery only through Saturday, June 22, is a work completed last year that departs from his well-worn subject matter. It is a scale model of the White House.

It's the best Farrow piece I have seen. I grant that the religious structures are seductive. A large bullet might suggest a steeple or a minaret, and sacred spaces have certainly been too often in the crosshairs of intolerance.



Al Farrow, "*The White House*" (2018); guns, gun parts, shell casings, and steel; 69 x 77 x 36 in. Detail. Photo: Catharine Clark Gallery

This latest work, however, is, in its subtle and open-ended way, more of a challenge to both the viewer and to us all. It depicts a presidential mansion — and, by extension, the presidency and the nation — built upon violence, latent but ever present.

After the group show at the gallery, the work next year will have a one-object exhibition at the Crocker Art Museum, July 19-Nov. 15, 2020. That is, at the height of the presidential election cycle.

"White House": 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday. Free. Catharine Clark Gallery, 248 Utah St., S.F. 415-399-1439.

