

3D PRINTED PLASTIC GUNS

“It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology) but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real...” – Jean Baudrillard, *The Hyperreal and the Imaginary*

MIRIAM

She wasn't always from the city. She was softly spoken and a daydreamer. She enjoyed the act of making, when the act itself flowed easily, she didn't have to think too much and felt as if her time spent working would always result in a polished, finished product. She was impatient but not lazy. She wanted success, but an enjoyable type of success where her job could be efficiently but creatively done. In a certain way, she seemed destined for 3D printing. She picked it up so easily.

She was first shown examples of 3D printing during her sculpture course. Her class all went for a tour, looking at the different tools on campus. The object that stood out the most for her was the spanner. A plastic spanner, sturdy, a translucent white, with multiple separately printed parts that were put together with plastic screws. These abstract parts could make a coherent whole.

3D printing became a major part of her artistic practice. She continued to print and print. In the last year of her undergraduate degree, she decided to invest in a 3D printer. The *MakerBot Replicator Mini Compact 3D Printer 5th Generation* was now priced at around \$2000, on

special. She had saved, and decided this was the one machine that she could splurge a little on.

Soon reality began to set-in. She found herself searching online job classifieds. She didn't really know where to start in the world's fifth most expensive city. She didn't particularly want a nine to five job, but she didn't really know the alternative. Creative and desperate she would come up with a better solution.

INSTRUCTION MANUAL: HOW TO MAKE A CAREER 3D PRINTING GUNS

You will need:

MakerBot Replicator Mini Compact 3D Printer 5th Generation

PLA Filament spool – colours variable depending on your mood

Computer-Aided Designs (CAD) blueprints in STerolithography (stl) format

Access to the DeepWeb, as far as it will go down

Current unemployment rate at 15.2%

Fond memories of a toy oven and other plastic consumerist desires

- 1) Analyse the career market and your specific context

Will the choices you make now serve you better in the end?

- 2) Purchase equipment and tools needed

Officeworks sells the MakerBot for \$2000.

3) Set up the 3D Printer

This should be self-explanatory.

4) Find CAD Blueprints

This is where you must access the depths of the internet, to find the particular files you need.

5) Use appropriate software

You need to make sure your computer can read stl. files.

6) Print out object parts

It never comes out as a perfectly formed gun first go.

7) Assemble gun

See other instruction manual for details.

8) Refer back to the Deep Web

This is where all your clients will be lurking.

9) Always pay attention.

Remember disable cookies and set up a Virtual Private Network (VPN).

10) Delivery Service

Door-to-door is most reliable.

INTERIOR MONOLOGUE

“You weren’t the only one 3D printing, you didn’t invent 3D printing.”

People keep wondering why I am so obsessed.

Am I original enough? I know this has been done before. It seems like everything in art has been done before.

I want freedom the most, the freedom to do what I want. Without the constraints of money, space and time.

I’ve spent all these years studying, working, relocating and hard work never pays off.

You have a bunch of friends and then the semester ends and they all just exist as names on a Facebook page that you never bother to contact again.

The city, all these people and crowds and I still find it so easy to be alone.

DEEP WEB DISCUSSIONS

Liberator CAD stl. files

324252

by 324252 >> Tue Oct 06, 1:59pm

Posts: 8

Joined: Tue Oct 04

Hi, does anyone know about the CAD

5:20am

files for the liberator? Want

a similar model with all 3D printed

parts.

RE: Liberator CAD stl. files

539359

by 539359 >> Tue Oct 06, 4:34pm

Posts: 188

Joined: Wed Sep 08

have u tried AR-15 parts?? easy

6:02pm

download

Re: Liberator CAD stl. files

683933

By 683933 >> Wed Oct 07, 12:03am

Posts: 233

Joined: Fri April 03

Defense distributed site has the best

5:43pm

copies. Make sure your VPN

settings are on.

SYDNEY

When she first arrived space wasn't really a matter. The excitement made her accept that there was only going to be a thin wall between her and the next person. The distance from Randwick to the Opera House was eight kilometres and the journey by bus took half an hour. This eight kilometre long, two kilometre wide rectangle that she tried to draw in her mind was equal to the size of her family farm. Whilst she easily remembered travelling eight kilometres out west, it felt as if she was seeing the same desert landscape repeated on loop. In Sydney eight kilometres was a crowded space, full of people, different houses and different landscapes.

There was Surry Hills with its terrace houses three storeys high, a little patch of green here and there, winding roads and deep descents. There were the industrial suburbs of Alexandria and Mascot, where the majority of buildings became sheds and factory outlets with aeroplanes flying overhead. She often wandered around these streets, these suburbs, carrying a faux leather handbag, with the gun parts wrapped in airtight cling wrap bags. She walked down alleyways in the daytime, where bands of youths weren't afraid to graffiti. She knocked on back-doors which were simple steel metal frames covered with mesh to keep blowflies out. Someone always answered, usually dressed in a beanie or a singlet top, or both. They would give her crunched up fifty dollar notes, speak in a mumble and shut the door with a ruffled bang.

TRAVEL ITINERARY

Purpose: Business

Trip start: 5th September

Destination: N/A

Trip end: N/A

Departing Flight

Depart	Sydney, NSW, Australia	Qantas 81
11:15	Sydney Airport (SYD)	Economy
Arrive	Singapore, Singapore	Airbus A333
16:30	Changi airport (SIN)	6,296 km

Total time: 8hr 15min

Frequent Flyer Points: 60,090

Departing Flight

Depart	Singapore, Singapore	China Eastern Airlines 568
17:05	Changi airport (SIN)	Business Class
Arrive	Shanghai, China	Airbus A332
22:05	Pudong Int'l airport (PVG)	3,796 km

Total time: 5hr 0min

Frequent Flyer Points: 88,897

Depart	Shanghai, China	Aeroflot Russian Airlines 207
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01:15	Pudong Int'l airport (PVG)	First Class
Arrive	Moscow, Russian Federation	Airbus A333
06:15	Sheremetyevo Airport (SVO)	6,828 km

Total time: 10hr 0min

Frequent Flyer Points: 122,666

PHONE CALL

She wasn't the only one trying to live out a dream. Her friend, Blake, an aviation engineering drop-out had managed to find an outlet for his obsession with planes and airports. He was mathematically gifted but fundamentally lazy when it came to work, assignment deadlines and lecture attendance. For a while he drifted about at home, making numerous google searches about frequent flyer points. He loved finding loopholes in bureaucratic systems and he was determined to beat the system and fly all over the world.

After countless attempts at hacking computer systems, he eventually succeeded and could fly anywhere he wanted to through his selected group of airlines and associated hotels. Staff who knew his name by heart tried to stop him, but they couldn't deny the frequent flyer points that came up on his card – there was no way to determine how and when he acquired them; whether it was ethical or whether he was a cheat.

For a while, he remained a mystery to her, and she had lost track of where he was. But one day he rang her just before she was about to meet a client. She was near Erskineville Oval,

sitting on the wooden bench and rearranging the contents in her handbag. She heard a husky voice speak in her ear.

“Hi Miriam, it’s me Blake.”

“Blake?” She paused awkwardly.

“How are you going?”

“I’m going well. Great. I’m still working. I haven’t heard from you for ages. Where are you?”

“I’m in the Four Seasons Hotel in Bangkok. I was in New York yesterday. LAX airport 12 hours before that. Berlin two days before that. ”

“Oh... still travelling.”

“Of course, still travelling. It’s what I want. True freedom.”

“You live a miserable life. Why travel when you never even leave the airport?”

“But I can do what I want. Don’t judge, I’m not selling plastic guns.”

A REQUEST

To: 324252@gmail.com

Subject: AR-11 Purchase

Hi, I’m interested in purchasing 20 high calibre guns, must be able to take metal bullets. Can you deliver them to West Wyalong? Postage is too risky. Willing to pay \$5000 max.

To: rm9178@hotmail.com

Subject: RE: AR-11 Purchase

Hi, yes I can make the delivery in a fortnight's time. However I need to know the exact location and will need my travel fees covered. Please call me for further details: 040006729.

INTERIOR MONOLOGUE

Is the travel even worth it?

Would I make more business in the city in that time?

I have to print out all the parts, no mistakes, arrange it all quickly.

Claustrophobia of the city.

Always a chance I will get caught.

Are they watching me?

Did I remember to disconnect the network servers?

Did I turn the GPS off on my phone?

Did I destroy the other phone?

I will venture out west.

Breathe a little bit easier for a while.

BLUE MOUNTAINS LINE

Central – Redfern - Strathfield – Lidcombe - Parramatta – Westmead – Blacktown - Penrith –
Emu Plains – Lapstone – Glenbrook – Blaxland – Warrimoo – Valley Heights – Springwood
– Falconbridge – Linden – Woodford – Hazelbrook – Lawson – Bullaburra – Wentworth
Falls – Leura – Katoomba – Medlow Bath – Blackheath – Mount Victoria – Bell – Zig Zag –
Lithgow – Bathurst.

Blender of emotions, what is she going back to? She places her elbow against the window and the vibrations of the train enter her skull. She's been travelling along an old-fashioned rail line on the diesel train. Passing small towns with no longer functioning train stops, houses, and people forgotten in the blur of the city to the country city. Between Lithgow and Bathurst villages exist as shattered houses lost to the fast-paced, developing city centres. She passes the rocks either side of a recently built freeway. Boulders jut out of the landscape like sculptures frozen in geologic time. Burrs and cactuses, decaying moss eating up the rocks lying closer to the Earth. The Australian country, where Aboriginal artefacts collide with the colonial footmark of dubious visitors to the raging, bush-ravaged environment. She knows the descriptions are hard to conjure, particularly when Australia looks more inviting through an Instagram filter and the flawlessness of high resolution photography.

ESCORT WAY

3 hr 7 min (280km)

Hertz, Car Rental Agency

260 Stewart St, Bathurst NSW 2795

Take Havannah St and Rocket St to Brilliant St/ Mitchell Hwy/ A32

4 min (2.4km)

At the roundabout, continue straight onto Brilliant St/ Mitchell Hwy/ A32

32 min (47.5km)

Follow Northern Distributor Rd, The Escort Way and Eugowra-Forbes Rd to Newell Hwy//

Sherriff St/A39 in Forbes

1 hr 25 min (126km)

Turn left onto Newell Hwy/Sherriff St/A39 (signs for West Wyalong/ National Highway 39)

1 hr 6 min (104km)

She's driving along the Escort Way. The road signs, black and gold, stencilled kangaroos, up ahead for the next ten kilometres. Headlights on full beam, there are no cars ahead in the stark black of a windy midnight. She tries to pay attention, scanning either side of the road waiting for kangaroos to just jump out and stop in the middle of the road, mesmerised by the myriad of lights delving into their corneas. Fake perceptions of light and life.

She has already swerved past a dead kangaroo on her side of the road. Folded body, the red raw hide shone brightly when her lights focus on it for a matter of seconds. She thinks this is the fate of so many kangaroos during the drier months, venturing out to the highways for the sparse remains of replenished grass growing along the tar.

She will stop along the way to see the family property. As she turns off from Escort Way to the Newell Highway, the clumps of trees begin to disappear and she enters the flat terrain.

BLAKE

She always knew Blake had access to the deep web. His life was less real than hers. They shared a similar aptitude for loneliness. He had spent most of his life behind a computer screen, believing that he was going to change the world, one new coding program at a time. Even now he was living out a fantasy and she believed it wouldn't last – he couldn't survive being cooped-up inside airports and airplane cabins for the rest of his life. No one could.

But she wanted to remain interested in what Blake was doing. Could she outlast him?

She had tried ringing him, but there was no response.

Airplane mode.

To: blakev@gmail.com

Subject: A new venture

Blake, I'm sending you the CAD files. I know you have connections, please print them out like we discussed before. We might as well test out how these disassembled gun parts will go through airport security. It's true, I don't want to be delivering guns door-to-door for the rest of my life. I have my ambitions – this is going to become a proper business.

DESERTLANDS

She grew up in the drought. Barren paddocks, the dry dusk of a Sunday afternoon in the midst of a dust storm. Bulges in the landscape. The artificialness of steel metal poles in the cracked earth reflected by rays of sunlight.

Hard clay moulded to the earth. Sand dunes and dust. Her face a tense red in the light of the sun's rays. She would stare at a melting horizon where the dust and grit were all a blur, leading to a vanishing point.

She grew up in what felt like a desert. The dams were dry and cracked, desperate sheep walking right down into the centre for a puddle of water, had to be pulled out of the mud. Their wool left encrusted and their hooves cracked. Skulls, bones, ligaments would cover the ground and she would collect and try to re-arrange them, imagining where each part went.

She became desensitised to the death of animals – they would die from the elements, and dissolve back into the Earth. Their fate felt simple enough.

She was back on the family farm, but no one was living there anymore. In a matter of decades, the land had actually become desert, with no more summer grass or even weeds that would sprout in the spring. This world felt drained – discarded houses, run-down villages, abandoned machinery. Where she could once imagine crops, fields of canola taller than her, now, the ground was truly barren, lifeless, and dull.

Although it should have been a pitiful sight, she felt calm in the isolation and the freedom of space. This emptiness felt more real than the city with its neon lights, advertisements and queues of people trying to escape it all with headphones in their ears and faces bent down staring at screens.

She preferred staring out at a desert that seemed to go on forever. This was one stopover before she had to deliver the guns. She had been carrying the parts in an old leather suitcase, all disassembled, just different pieces of plastic in the same unsuspecting-looking cling wrap bags. It looked just like a children's Meccano set, except all the pieces were plastic and deadly.

CONFIRMATION

To: rm9178@hotmail.com

Subject: Tomorrow's meeting

Hi, I can make the delivery tomorrow. Please confirm you will be there.

To: 324252@gmail.com

Subject: RE: Tomorrow's meeting

Yes, all good. I will ring right before. See you there.

PHONE CALL

She received another phone call from Blake.

“Hi Blake, where are you?”

She was used to asking first where he was rather than how he was going.

“Roma, Italia, 5-star hotel room. Frequent Flyer points are increasing and so is my lifestyle.

Vintage chardonnay, first class.” She could tell he hadn’t spoken to anyone for a while

besides air hostesses. His tone was expressionless even though he wanted to sound excited.

But she didn’t want to talk for long, and he didn’t want to know what she was up to.

“I’ve got a job to do, tomorrow arvo, it’s a black spot so don’t bother ringing me.”

And with that she hung up, feeling lonelier than before.

FIRST SHOT

The place was near West Wyalong she just had to follow the Newell Highway further along until she reached the turn-off. The summer's humidity made her sweat all over. The left side of her arm was sunburnt and her hair felt greasy.

In the trunk of her car, she had the guns all assembled now, each individually wrapped in cloth. The bullets with metal castings were in her handbag. She had once thought about taking someone with her, as a back-up because she didn't even know the guy, but that would involve admitting that she was about to sell illegal weaponry. Blake was the only person who knew and he would never come back, he'd rather live out his life in airports with all their spacelessness.

She drove through West Wyalong, a former mining town, but like everything else resources were all exhausted and now the main street existed as a series of broken down buildings and shops. She waved to a man filling up at a petrol station on the corner, before turning off down a dirt road.

She travelled along the dirt road for three kilometres before she reached what looked like a metal shed where the roof had been knocked over by the wind. This was the end of the road, she had double-checked the signs, and this was it.

A barbed-wire fence ran across the property. There was a single rusted gate that was left open. Skid marks were all over the end of the road. She could smell the stench of dead sheep; a familiar but confronting smell.

There wasn't a house nearby, only one desolate shed. She didn't want to yell out so she tried walking around the back, where she could peer into the open side first. She crept round cautiously, even though the sound of her walking in boots on dried crops must have been easy to hear.

"Hello, is anyone there?"

There was no response.

She had one gun loaded in her hand. She would bite the nerves and protect herself.

"Hello, anyone there?"

She walked into the shed.

There was a stain of blood on the concrete. She looked around. The shed was sparse besides one working bench. She couldn't find a body. There was sheep wool in the corner and the smell of rotting bones.

The gun was still loaded in her hand. She was alone, she knew it, out of sight. Would anyone come back to a place like this? She wanted to test out the gun, pull the trigger once. She knew no one would hear. The gun always felt light but she had to keep a steady hand and pull the trigger tightly with force.

The gun fired and the cracking sound echoed. A splash of fire. A sharp, quick but powerful sound that delved right into her eardrum. The plastic bullet fired into the side of the shed, a hole, a gunshot shaped mark right through the tin. Silence prevailed again, the fun was over. Her creation could work. Like everything else, she thought, this is actually real.

She wanted to try it again, aiming for the other side of the shed. The bullets were still inside, all she needed to do was pull the trigger again. This time she felt more confident, her movements were quicker.

Another sound, but this time it was closer. Pieces of plastic imploded near her face. The gun had broken fully a part, with pieces of plastic littering her surrounds. She felt an overwhelming sense of impermanence. Her creations would never last. Her killing machines could also be fragile. Sometimes they worked, sometimes they didn't. But she hadn't received any complaints yet. Or was she just too well hidden?

She couldn't bear the smell any longer. She got back in the car and switched the key. She would try to find a river near-by and wash her hands. She didn't want the smell of burning plastic and dead sheep anywhere.

OVERSEAS

To: 324252@gmail.com

Subject: work in progress

Miriam, what do you mean it all works fine. I downloaded the design, got a friend of mine to visit me at the Hilton. He printed and tried it out. Worked perfectly. I went through airport security and it worked like a charm. Just keep reassembling and disassembling them, it's your best bet. So how did the delivery go? You'd be relieved that you can stop going from door to door like an annoying saleswoman. You need to take more risks if you really want to make your business grow.

HYPERREAL

She couldn't wait for another response. The sale had been a dud. The accumulation of work had only resulted in her knowing the limits of her potential; the crux of fallibility. How could she keep up with the better models that were being developed and create a sustainable business?

Everything would collapse. Her lifestyle, her revenue, her chance to feel autonomous as she lived in between the gaps of the deep web and an ever-changing landscape.

Absentmindedly, she flicked through the newsfeed on her phone.

The headline caught her attention '*Man shot by plastic gun in hotel room*'.

"Breaking news: A man in his late twenties has died in the Hilton Hotel, 6th Avenue, New York. He was found dead at 10am from a gunshot wound to the head. The gun was 3D printed but contained metal bullets. At the moment the death is being treated as suspicious..."

She knew it was Blake. Did he even write that email she had just read? Was it really the same type of gun that had collapsed for her, that could kill him so easily? Could she trust what was written on her newsfeed? Maybe he had set it all up. He would ring her in a fortnight's time and say that he was in Dubai or Warsaw or any place that had a decent airport and a five-star hotel. Or maybe he would just steal her business ideas and she would only encounter him on a TOR forum using an alias but nonetheless she would still know it was him. He was always predicable in that sense. However she knew the story was about him. Whether it was fiction or not, she just had to wait. To wait somewhere between the deep web, the claustrophobic city and a sheep-stinking desert.