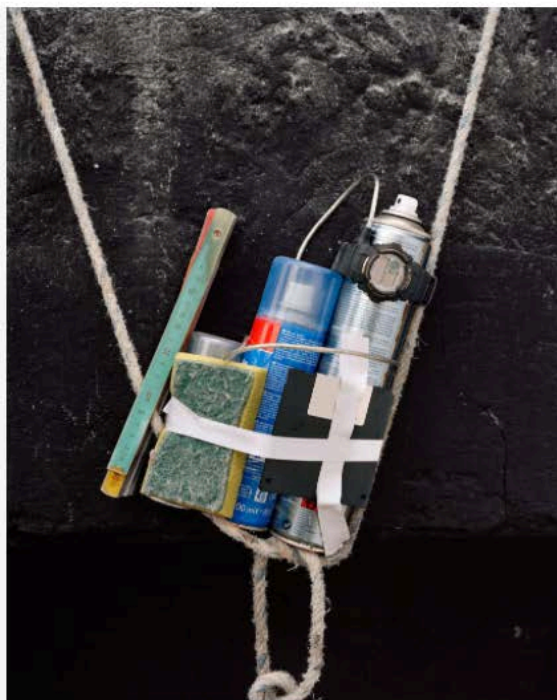


LAURA MALLONEE PHOTO 10.23.15 6:40 AM

# ORDINARY HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS THAT ARE DEFINITELY NOT BOMBS

1 / 11 Bomb #2  PETROS EFSTATHIADIS

THE FAKE BOMBS in Petros Efstathiadis' series *Bomb* are fashioned from household objects like lightbulbs and hair brushes wrapped with wire and tape. They're harmless, but just realistic enough that you'd call the cops if you saw one in public.

[Efstathiadis's](#) unsettling [images](#) show how almost anything can appear suspicious, even dangerous, in an era of terrorism and [generational warfare](#) and the constant drumbeat of fear. "The things we see everyday on TV make us believe something similar will happen to us," he says. "We become insecure."

The Greek photographer started the ongoing project in 2012, when hundreds of thousands of people, some of them [armed with Molotov cocktails](#), gathered in cities throughout Greece to protest government austerity measures. The ongoing conflicts of the Middle East and the mounting refugee crisis further fueled [fears of terrorism](#). “The situation was explosive,” he says.

Efstathiadis felt Greek society was growing increasingly paranoid, and was struck by the idea that the homemade fireworks he made as a child in the 1980s would be considered homemade bombs today. He decided to parody the situation with bomb-like sculptures made with harmless materials.

He borrows objects from people in his hometown of Liparo and combines them to create each bomb. He seeks out items that reveal something about the people who loaned them, like the alarm clock a worker has used all his life. He’s made 20 mock bombs so far; each is disassembled and the items returned when he’s done shooting. “I don’t care about the actual sculpture, only the photograph and the idea behind the sculpture,” he says.

Some of the bombs look like something you’d find in *The Anarchist’s Cookbook*, but others are laughable from the start. One features a few spray cans, a floppy disk and an old plastic watch. Another is comprised of a radio, a pink bar of soap, several coins, and a daisy all lashed to a brick. It’s intentionally silly.

Although created as a critique of Greek society, *Bombs* resonates in the US, where just last month police in Arlington, Texas, arrested 14-year-old [Ahmed Mohamed](#) after he brought [a homemade clock](#) to school. His teacher thought it was a bomb.

Yet the point of Efstathiadis’s series isn’t merely noting our paranoia, but fighting the cause of it. If one goal of terrorism is to make people live in a state of fear, pointing out the depth of our fear may well be a way of combating it. “These bombs are harmless. They mock war and terror,” he says. “It’s a response to the absurdity of violence.”