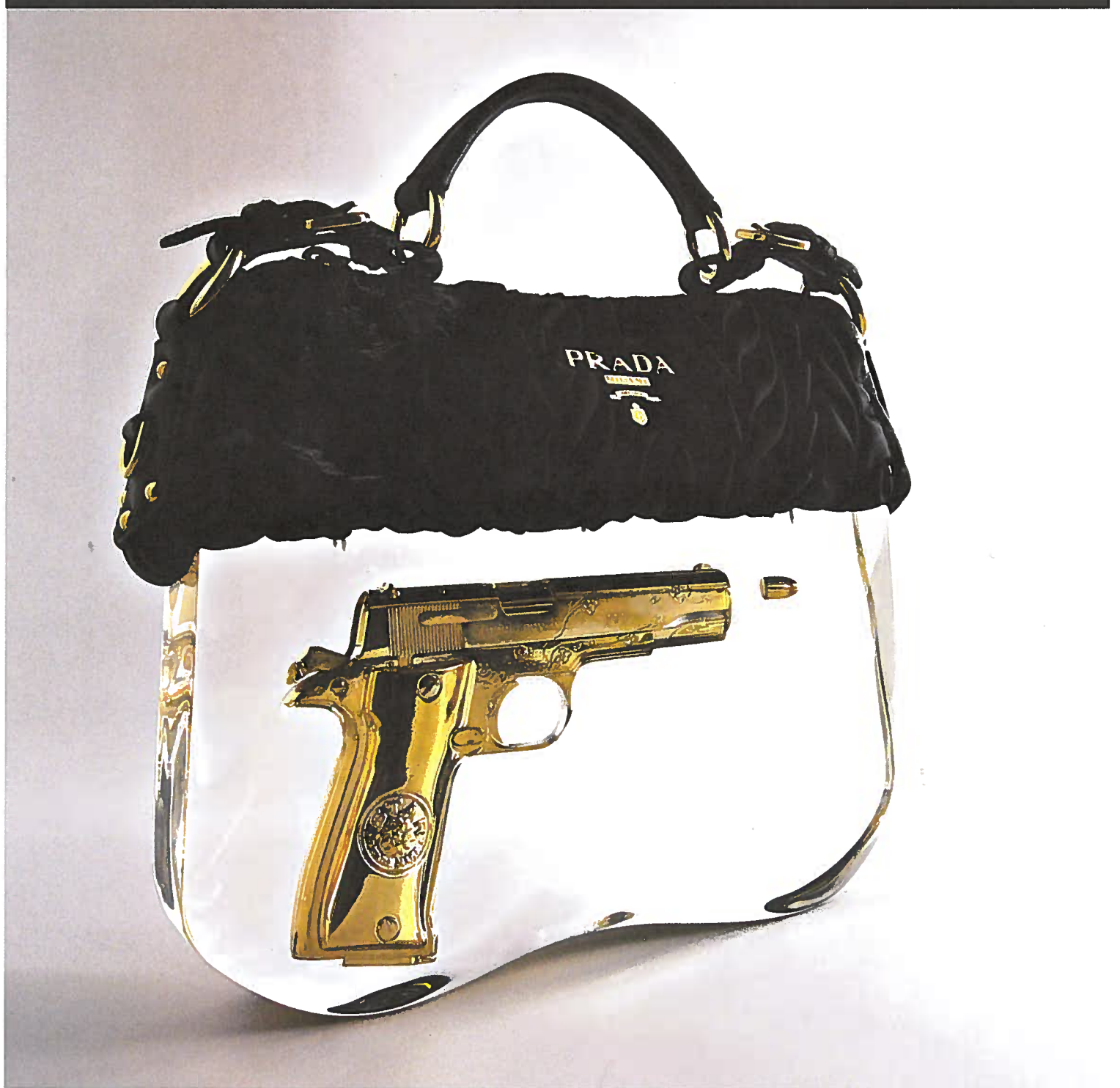


BAGGAGE CHECK



PACKING MORE THAN JUST HEAT, THIS IS ONE CARRY-ON THAT'LL NEVER MAKE IT THROUGH SECURITY WRITER: SHONQUIS MORENO

Is it surprising to learn that Dutch designer Ted Noten spent four years as a psychiatric nurse before becoming one of the world's foremost jewelry artists? In the early '90s, Noten gained notoriety for a transparent handbag containing a mouse wearing a pearl necklace, and for others that held everything from a revolver and negligé to a cut of beef, an ice pick or even drug capsules. By placing symbolic everyday objects in new contexts, Noten pokes at our conventions, values and collective conscience. His recent "Lady K Bag" (pictured) contains an engraved and heavily gold-plated gun, with one gold bullet included. What better way to expose our inner workings than to cast our belongings in clear acrylic? And yet with these peek-a-boo purses, Noten reveals only more mystery. Clearly, his work relies on opacity as much as transparency. And when he wrote in a recent manifesto that contemporary jewelry is "autistic," "superfluous" and "dead," it was apparent that his poking has never been more pointed. **SQ** tednoten.com