

**Carol Milne:** Remarks for REFRACT Opening  
at Shoreline City Hall ,October 17, 2019

**“In the Name Of Love”**



“In the Name of Love” depicts bombs as gifts. They are hot cast “grenades” with bullet-shaped interiors. Removable kiln cast, lead crystal bows held in place with a pin adorn each grenade.

These pieces were art therapy: originally created to channel my anger over our invasion of Iraq. The news dwelt on the positive results: we got rid of a dictator, brought freedom to the people, stopped insurgents. But along with the good came loads of bad: tens of thousands of civilians were killed, cities were demolished and homes destroyed, lives were left in tatters. What does it mean to give a bomb as a gift?

A gift has a giver and a receiver. It's usually given with good intentions, and received with joy. But are good intentions enough? When it's no longer welcome, is it still a gift?

Each piece in this series is named (however improbable the name may sound) after an actual U.S military operation in Iraq. For example: “Operation Gimlet Crusader,” “Operation Cave Dweller”, and my favorite, “Operation Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood.”

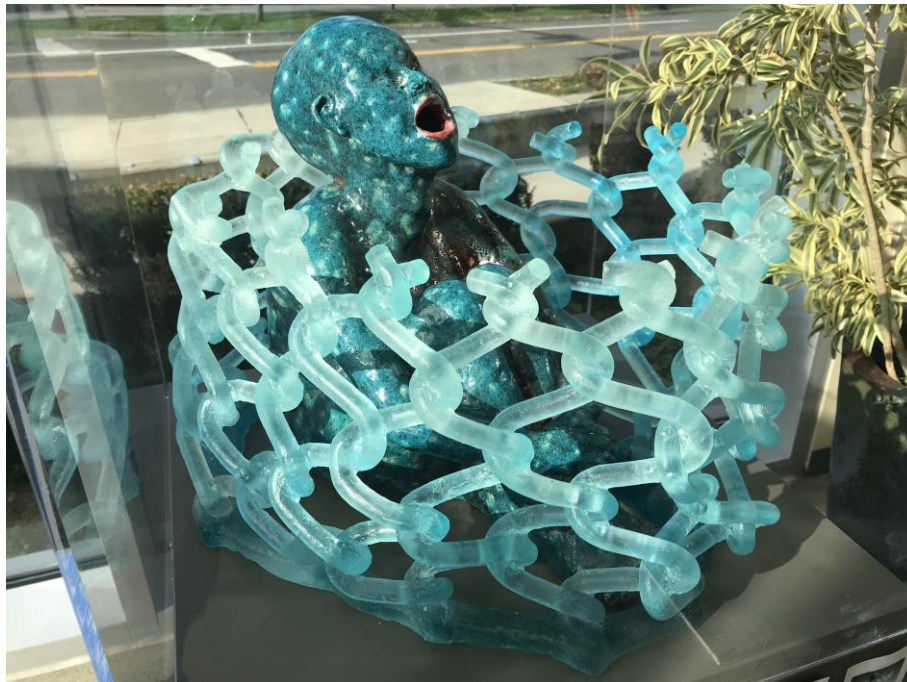
This is not current work, however, it does seem newly relevant. Only the landscape has changed. The war is now on our own turf: in the White House, in the Congress, in the Senate, amongst us as individuals. We’re dealing with an explosive president setting off twitter Bombs every day. A creator of chaos and dissension rules, and enjoys creating havoc and division. What is the gift here? In the thick of it, it’s difficult to see, but the gift is a newly engaged public on the rampage. We’re creating a public strategy for fighting back against bullies and threats to our democracy. There is much good in that.

As far as process, two different casting processes were used for this work.

The grenades were cast in multi-part (as many as 9 pieces) molds made of resin bonded sand. Molten glass was scooped by ladle out of a furnace and poured into the molds. The molds were then annealed (cooled slowly) in a kiln. The resin burned off and the sand fell away from the glass. Some of the pieces have black smoke trails in them from the resin escaping through the glass. I see this as a feature, although purists often see this as a flaw.

The bows were created using the lost wax casting process. (Create something in wax, encase it in a plaster mold, melt the wax out of the mold, put the mold in a kiln and melt glass into the space left by the wax, destroy the mold to get the glass piece out.) They were early experiments in learning what could be done with glass. Look closely and you will see twists, strings, loops, weaves, ladders, coils, and knit. Some of the castings, like “Operation Desert Scorpion”, were incomplete. But these are the ones that helped me learn how and where the glass needed to be coaxed into the mold. Keep in mind, molten glass is like honey. It does not want to do what I want it to do.

### **“The Scream”**



In keeping with the political theme ... “The Scream” is also an older piece that feels newly relevant. It is part of a series I call “Cozy”. The figure is in a seated crouch. Drawn into herself, she’s apparently motivated by either self-protection or alienation. The raku process

seemed fitting for the figure. Bisqued clay is glazed, heated quickly, and then cooled quickly by placing the red hot piece into a trash can of combustible materials. The shock of the cooling combined with the oxygen deprivation from the burning material in a closed space, causes crackling and unpredictable colors and effects in the glazes. So the figure is transformed by fire. The glass fence around the figure raises the question of why? Is the fence to protect the figure from what's outside? Or to protect the outside from the figure? Besides the obvious fact that a glass fence is little deterrent and could only be for show.

What was originally intended as a generic expression of alienation and frustration, can now be taken literally. The caging of illegal immigrants and children on our borders brings me the same feeling of angst expressed by "The Scream".

The fence was created using the lost wax casting process. (Create something in wax, encase it in a plaster mold, melt the wax out of the mold, put the mold in a kiln and melt glass into the space left by the wax, destroy the mold to get the glass piece out.) It is experimental in its use of glass as a mesh versus a solid form.