

**Karen Mahardy: Remarks for REFRACT Opening
at Shoreline City Hall, October 17, 2019**



1.

Is a work of visual art only either two-dimensional ..or three-dimensional?

I'm not necessarily talking about what is mathematically two or three dimensional, that is easy to determine.

In Mathematics.....It either is..... or it isn't. What I am talking about is how we categorize and how we think about visual art.

At what point does something become three-dimensional? Is there a place in between dimensions where a piece is both two-dimensional and three-dimensional where we are capturing a moment when a piece is in a state of becoming, contains action [...] as if movement were frozen in time. [?]

This is compelling to me.

What our perception tells us when it is challenged and the lines between two-dimensional and three-dimensional space are blurred, offers an opportunity for us to be still to pay attention to the quietest of detail and become aware of the beauty that only the attentive can see.

I choose to use glass as the material to execute this work for its properties such as transparency, elasticity and the perception that the material is difficult to manipulate.....(let's face it.. That shit is hot!!) [,] creating a sense of wonder.

And as a result, the work might be something that is not seen everyday.

Using glass to create folded or bent forms that capitalize on its properties like: color [,] the overlapping of pattern [,] reflection, refraction, projection [,] transparency and opacity and the visual flattening of form draws us in and compels us to question what we see. Forcing us to slow down from the busy, noisy world where we are being bombarded by quick and easy technology. Giving us a chance to actually contemplate what we see.

In my work I want to take a moment, to be quiet and challenge what is reality and what is perception [,] to take a second or even third look and realize that what we are seeing is not what we thought. And to find a balance between simplicity and complexity that ensures that one does not tire of an object but rather constantly finds new meaning and enriched beauty that causes the aesthetic value of the work to grow over time.

To take a single sheet of glass and fold it and bend it into a shape is creating a new language [,] a new way of expressing ideas in glass. Glass, by its nature wants to be round, soft, voluptuous. It doesn't like hard angles. It doesn't like being forced to do something outside of its nature [,] This new way of hand manipulating glass instead of casting to create angular forms is a new language within the glass medium that allows us to create a sense of movement even though the object is

static [,] enables us to express our thoughts, our ideas, our experiences in a more architectural way while preserving the natural properties of the material [.]

2.

For example, imagine a long rolling wave crashing across a shallow shore [:] the energy [,] the feeling of it rolling and collapsing in on itself and finally settling on the sands of a cold northwestern beach [.]

You can imagine this in many ways [,] perhaps literally.....as we might see in a film, photograph or painting [.] But what happens to that vision when you break it down to its most fundamental essence yet still retain it's process of becoming and then cycling back into the sea [?] Or in contrast take a personal experience such as the beauty of a thin... silvery horizon across a northern sea [,] a place you have never been before [,] a place so beautiful that you wish you could fold it up and take it with you. This language allows us to express these things at their core at their essence and in a way that is new.

Yet, what we are drawing on --the idea of folding glass like we would fold a piece of paper [--] is both a timeless and an everyday activity [.] We take something old that is rooted in tradition. Even mundane and everyday but also grounded in complex mathematics and strip it down and translate it into a different medium to create something new.