



RICHARD KLEIN

STATEMENT

I've primarily utilized found objects—particularly glass objects—in my work since the late 1990s. The objects I'm attracted to are commonplace—cheap, everyday castoffs from our material culture that are sourced from the recycling stream, tag sales and flea markets and occasionally eBay. I value found objects because of the meanings and associations that come with them due to their former roles in our lives. Other than drinking glasses, bottles and jars are perhaps the most ubiquitous glass objects used on a daily basis and are some of the oldest glass forms made by humankind, with their origins going back to the invention of glass blowing in the ancient Middle East.

I'm attracted to bottles not only because of their ubiquity and history, but also because of the way they are physical objects that delineate a space that is clearly visible yet separate from the surrounding world. Like the human body and mind, they are vessels that can hold and contain substances, feelings, and ideas. I present them mounted on the wall, as seemingly weightless as a passing thought.

Transparency, refraction, and reflection speak of the immaterial. Obsessive craftsmanship, repetition, and accumulation reinforce materiality. Analogous to the human condition, these small sculptures exist in the space between these two extremes.

The use of other found objects in these works strengthens and expands the metaphorical allusions contained in each one's overall form. The former life of each individual object is valued due to the accumulated experience it contains. I hand gild the back surfaces of each bottle with white gold leaf to turn their curved surfaces into mirrors that reflect and distort both their contents and the exterior world. The often-dazzling reflections change with light conditions as well as the viewer's position, acknowledging the way that the bottle's former contents—usually a liquid—would reflect and refract light.

The historical and cultural influences in these works include (among other things) Surrealism, 'Outsider' Art, Arte Povera, psychedelia and optical science. While the bottle sculptures recall the fragility and the capriciousness of life, the way they play with light suggests the possibility of transformation. My work, despite its philosophical rigor, always revels in an undeniable sense of elegance and beauty.