

# Mark Bleshenski

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## *Sculpture*

### **Displaying artwork at Anton Art Center (outside only)**

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### Artist Statement

I have always been fascinated with common found objects made by man and reshaped by the forces of time, man, and nature. Wind, waves, sand, sun, machines, hands, all working together to decompose the item, returning its elements to nature. I gather these relics and artifacts, envisioning ways to integrate them into my work. A piece of iron, or wood, a brick, a bottle, an old tool. Anything is fair game for inclusion.

My work references culture by the juxtaposition of these everyday items with other objects. Some of the artifacts have strong cultural, even cross cultural and international importance by themselves. A coke bottle is an iconic symbol used on a daily basis around the world. I manipulate and combine these objects with constructions, into something completely new and hopefully unexpected and intriguing to the viewer.

In my current work, I manipulate common glass bottles so they maintain their recognizable origins, but flow and bend in unusual ways as if they were compacted like soda cans. I am deconstructing the vessel and reconstructing it as a new form. In some cases the vessels become metaphors for the shell of the psyche, while other objects represent cultural influences. In other cases, it is purely an experiment with form.

## *Plumbum*

Plumbum is the Latin word for lead because lead was used in plumbing in ancient times. The elemental symbol for lead, Pb, is based on that word. The City of Flint's problems have been in the news for years,

culminating recently in the tragic water crisis caused by a failure of government to protect its citizens. All of us can sympathize with the horror of toxic water unknowingly entering our home and poisoning our families. The installation, Plumbum, is a collection of bottles and jars filled with tap water, contorted and bent to represent the effects of the toxicity of the lead. They are labeled with the results of tap water testing that was done on 300 homes in December 2015 and display the sample number, the ward, and the lead level of the first draw from those tests, as they were published online.

Though it does not actually move, the piece has a visual kinetic property because all the bottles act as lenses, refracting light and causing motion inside them as one passes the work.