Manifestations of a social addiction: forms of despair and desire

Jose Santisteban

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In Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Fine Arts

MANIFESTATIONS OF A SOCIAL ADDITION: FORMS OF DESPAIR AND DESIRE

by Jose Fernando Santisteban

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INTRODUCTION

The term ‘addiction’ has multiple implications in our society and is manifested within almost every facet of our lives, from television commercials to St. Patrick’s Day. Unquestionably, there is a substance or activity available to accommodate anyone’s needs or desires no matter how absurd, harmful or ‘necessary’ they may be. *Is this ultimately a positive aspect of our culture?* Of course! That is what makes this society unique, the freedom of choice. However, it seems more often than not, that “choice” is influenced by a plethora of other factors. These may include, but are not limited to: advertising firms, tobacco and alcohol industries, pharmaceutical companies, peers and genetic predisposition. In essence, we are in the midst of a “social addiction”; a period where compulsive behavior is encouraged.

What, you may ask, has inspired me to confront such an issue? I will touch upon this more extensively later, but as an undergraduate student I studied literature and philosophy. Both of these areas of study instigated a genuine concern for the ‘human condition’, or that unfortunate yet undeniable state of perpetual fear and anxiety we all cope with. Cope is the keyword. Some are able to constructively deal with their fears and anxieties in a positive fashion
while others choose to drink, smoke take a prescription, etc…

There are also addictions that may be considered positive. These would be where the benefits of a particular compulsive act outweigh the consequences. An activity such as exercising would be a prime example. Respectively, a negative addiction would be one where the consequences outweigh the benefits. Obviously, this is a subjective matter because what is perceived as a consequence or benefit by one person may not be considered as one by another. Nevertheless, according to these definitions, practically every individual in our culture has an addiction of some shape or form, whether it be positive, negative, minor or serious.

It is not a rare circumstance for leaders of industry to acknowledge and perhaps feed off these vulnerabilities and insecurities, For instance, in the 1920’s when the tobacco industry sought to expand its market, they turned to women. The industry insinuated the fight for equality would be closer to a victory if women were capable of deconstructing the stereotype that smoking is solely a masculine activity.\footnote{Stanton A. Glantz, John Slade, Lisa A. Baro, Peter Hanauer, Deborah E. Barnes, \textit{The Cigarette Papers} (San Francisco: University of California Press)chpt 2} They did not honestly care whether or not women were seen as equals! The tobacco giants merely sought financial gain. This level of deception is unfortunately all too common among such industries. There comes a time, which is now, that we must question whose welfare the leaders of industry have in mind when producing and marketing their products.

The body of work completed during this past year is the result of an exploration of these issues. It represents my emotional and intellectual response to this exploration and is intended to confront industry, deconstruct stereotypes, reveal an evolving social affliction and observe
the human condition. In essence, it questions the cause(s) and effect(s) of compulsive behavior.
INFLUENCES

There are a vast number of influential factors that have ‘motivated’ me to make this body of work and tackle such an issue. Namely, my education, family, other exceptional artists and, of course, the oppressive nature of deceitful industries are the main sources of inspiration.

As a child, my parents traveled frequently on business and generally took me with them. At the time, I dreaded the long flights and train rides, but in retrospect these travels had a major impact on the way I perceive the world. We went to places like Guatemala, Mexico, Ecuador, Germany, Austria and a number of other European countries. Perhaps one lesson I immediately learned was that we do not all share the same luxuries or comforts, much less the same frame of mind. I remember seeing children the same age as I was, or even younger, selling chicklets or mangos by themselves on the street. Such experiences cultivated within me a curiosity and a desire to understand the variations in human existence.

The education I received during my undergraduate years has been an inspiration. As previously mentioned, I studied literature and philosophy, and many of these courses that I took demanded an existential approach. After reading works such as Hamlet, The Divine Comedy, and The Odyssey (fascination with Greek tragedy) one can only try to resist the temptation to
explore the depths of human suffering. At first, this might sound odd and possibly depressing. However, this is an issue we all relate to and inevitably face during some point in our lives. It is part of the human condition. Other courses, such as psychology, sparked another desire within me: to understand the physiological aspects of the human brain in order to better comprehend human behavior. This organ is the most crucial and complicated part of our bodies, It is indeed a mystery, especially the limbic region where the pineal gland rests, a.k.a.- the "seat of the soul". Economics is another course that was invaluable. It revealed to me the nature of supply/demand, marketing and essentially the motivations and strategies behind big business.

My family has been a major influence in the decision to pursue the matter of addiction. I recall, as a child, my father driving me to school in the morning and lighting up his tobacco pipe. Amazingly, I can still remember exactly the way it smells and the brand he smoked, Borkum Snuff. It became a ritual, or so I perceived it. Eventually, however, my father grew concerned with his health and had the desire to quit. He would throw his pipes out the window, and the next day, buy another! Fortunately, my father did find the strength to quit about eight years ago. Gramps, my great grandfather who passed a few years ago, is another influence. The memories of taking visits with my family to the "farm" where he and my uncle lived are still fresh in my mind. Gramps always had a Swisher Sweet (cigar) in his mouth, and my uncle always had a spit cup in his hand. This sight, although maybe not the most elegant, soon became familiar and soothing. There regrettably were times when I would sneak into Gramp’s, or my dad’s, cigars or tobacco and run off to try it. I vaguely remember getting sick after smoking a Swisher Sweet of
my Grandfather’s and asking myself “why do people make themselves do things like this?“.

There also came a time when I made the decision to begin using tobacco products. Initially, I will admit, I thought it did appear as if though smoking were a ‘cool’ thing to do. This choice evolved into a habit, however, and began to control certain aspects of my life. The vice had such a hold on me that I could only quit, ironically, when I was extremely ill. I was so ill, in fact, that I literally could not inhale tobacco smoke. Since then, I have quit twice more. I believe I began smoking again because of a ‘stressful’ situation, but it was essentially just and excuse. The last time I quit, I hope, will actually be the last. I have come to realize that the costs far outweigh the benefits of smoking.

There are several visual artists who have influenced me. Among those is Diego Rivera. His work has inspired me like no other for the reason that it is unique, tells a story or narrative and deals with many of the same issues I am concerned with such as the decay of human existence and social/political ideology. One of his fresco’s, Banquet of the Rich 1928, embodies many of the issues I pursue in my work. In the piece there is a high-class dinner party with smug individuals drinking martinis and counting their money. At the end of the table there is also the Statue of Liberty. Rivera seems to be standing up against these overwhelming industries that form the backbone of our economy by providing such an absurd image of greed. It also appears that he is relaying alcohol is synonymous with corruption. Finally, the facial expression on each individual carries is a sign that Rivera is also concerned with the human condition.

Andy Warhol is another visual artist who inspires me. His use of multiples and breaking of convention has led me to experiment with both medium and concept.
LITTLE CIGARS
SWISHER SWEETS
LITTLE CIGARS
SWISHER SWEETS
20 FILTERED LITTLE CIGARS BY KING EDWARD

DR. PETER BREGGIN, described as “the conscience of American psychiatry,” speaks out on why therapy, empathy, and love must replace the drugs, electroshock, and biochemical theories of the “New Psychiatry.”
Warhol's work is concerned with the nature of the consumer, violence and the media; all issues that I am concerned with as well. Dale Chihuly has also been a marked influence in that a lecture I saw him give my junior year is what inspired me to pursue using glass as an artistic medium. An extreme amount of admiration and respect for William Morris, Lino Tagliapietra, Pino Signoretto, Cesare Toffolo and Lucia Bubacco resides within me because of their technical mastery as well as their conceptual ingenuity.

The manner in which advertising, tobacco, pharmaceutical, alcohol and various other industries have dealt with the production and marketing of their products also perpetuates my desire to convey the exploitation. Advertising firms/agencies are guilty of being a vehicle for these other industries. Without the capability to market their products through ads, industries such as these realize their sales would drastically drop.

From the U.S Congress to the American public, psychiatry's marketing strategy for the 1990's aims at people who feel anxious. It has become an axiom within modern economics that advertising actually creates consumer needs. By targeting people suffering from anxiety, psychiatry should be able to generate an unlimited demand for its drugs.2

If you ponder momentarily, or you may have already, upon the number of alcohol, pharmaceutical (Zoloft, Ambien, diet pills, the patch) and tobacco advertisements you see on TV, in magazines, in the car or store, you might realize the catch-22. These industries would not be successful if the consumers didn't purchase their products, but this doesn't excuse the deceitful tactics they use to ring in vulnerable people or those "open" to suggestion.

None other than the tobacco industry best exemplifies the manner in which these tactics are employed. For years, they have actually stood behind their claim that the association between lung cancer and smoking is inconclusive! From the beginning, this industry was built on lie upon lie. They marketed filtered cigarettes as healthy during the 50’s in order to calm public fears about smoking. Time and time again the giants of this industry have relayed they are the vultures of human vulnerability. One advertising campaign, Project Truth, was aimed at convincing the public that the scientific evidence linking cancer and cigarettes was vague and potentially incorrect. When this failed, the argument became more of a psychological mind game. No matter how devious or blatantly false this fallacy is, it was and continues to be a successful ploy. The industry intrinsically linked smoking with freedom! That the choice to engage in an activity that harmed no one except potentially the person involved is the right of every American. They “instilled the fear that regulation of the industry would deprive smokers of their individual rights and deprive the industry to operate freely in the marketplace... portrayed the industry as struggling to protect everyone’s freedom against an overbearing government”. What a plan. Instead of owning up to the damage they have either consciously or unconsciously implemented upon the public, they desperately attempt to be perceived as martyrs of the human rights movement. Additional criticism of the industry can be directed toward to marketing toward minors with cartoons such as Camel Joe and the actual contents of their cigarettes.

There are over six hundred ingredients in the average cigarette from sugars, prune juice and vinegar to nicotine, carbon monoxide emitting byproducts and a form of

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cyanide. Some of these chemicals are intended to produce a pleasurable flavor so as to behaviorally train the consumer that the product 'tastes' good so it 'is' good. Other chemical's, are directly intended to keep the consumer coming back for more and to provide a 'buzz'. Altered nicotine levels are the prime example of this. The industry claims that the amount is determined upon a natural fluctuation, but there is evidence that they levels are controlled.\(^4\)

Overall, it's clearly evident that this product is not a positive aspect of our society. This is not an argument to criminalize tobacco use, but the product should not be encouraged or advertised on the level it is now.

Next in line is the American Psychiatric Association. This organization is composed of thirty-five thousand of the forty thousand psychiatrists that practice in this country. They also publish a journal that contains ads that promote a biopsychiatric orientation (ads for pharmaceutical manufacturers). This is essentially a psychiatric model that "encourages people to have more faith in a pill than in themselves".\(^5\) The respective form of treatment is the psychosocial model, which consists of therapy and other forms of treatment excluding drugs. This is seen as more successful, yet more difficult. The industry has encouraged an easy way out, irresistible to a person who, already in the midst of some dilemma, just wants to 'feel better'.

Many of the drugs which are prescribed for individuals with problems such as anxiety, compulsive behavior, etc.. are not even proven to be effective, in fact quite the opposite. Xanax, for instance, is a popular anti-anxiety drug, the only one actually approved by the FDA. First of all, the study for the drug lasted only eight weeks and

\(^4\) [http://www.drugs.indiana.edu/druginfo/additives.html](http://www.drugs.indiana.edu/druginfo/additives.html)

\(^5\) Peter R. Breggin, Toxic Psychiatry (New York: St. Martin's Press) 243
consisted of two hundred and twenty six people. Even though the study went eight weeks long, the results only displayed the initial four weeks. Why? Mainly because the placebo patients were far better off, they did not suffer the severe withdrawal and rebound reactions, including an increase in anxiety and in phobic responses, plus a 350% greater number of panic attacks...faced with their own negative results, the Xanax investigators came up with statistical manipulations to show how the data really should have- but didn’t- come out at eight weeks; but apparently, they were embarrassed by these efforts, and they limited the summary and conclusion of their report to data from the first four weeks.

The irony. A medication marketed as the ‘cure’ for anxiety actually does quite the opposite: it creates anxiety, or “As with most psychiatric drugs, the use of the medication eventually causes an increase of the very symptoms that the drug is supposed to ameliorate”(246tp). So why would the FDA approve this, and only this drug for chronic anxiety disorder? Any economist will tell you that, when there is a demand, there is a supply.

The American Psychiatric Association placed an extreme amount of pressure upon the FDA. This compiled upon the fact that the scientific data was fudged and relayed inaccurate results in the drug’s favor, the approval was inevitable. Any sane, responsible or compassionate person of authority would say

Because the public is relatively ignorant of the problem and because Xanax is “especially” likely to addict, Upjohn should have made the danger as emphatically clear as possible.. A genuine concern for the patients should have led investigators to the opposite recommendation: that in order to avoid withdrawal and addiction, the drug should be used for very short periods of time (such as a few days) or not at all.

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6 Peter R. Breggin, *Toxic Psychiatry* (New York: St. Martin’s Press) 252-534

7 Peter R. Breggin, *Toxic Psychiatry* (New York: St. Martin’s Press) 252-534
Why is this voice of reason absent from the industry? Because they are blinded by the color green. Xanax is merely one of the many pharmaceutical products that have such a flagrant history. As soon as the practice of prescribing these drugs became accepted, a domino effect began. The “social addiction” came into effect as children ten years of age and younger were nonchalantly being prescribed stimulants as strong as cocaine (Ritalin, Aderall). Unfortunately, it is quite difficult to stop an avalanche in its tracks, but people can still get out of the way! In other words, since the practice has become socially acceptable, it is unlikely we would revert back to the psychosocial model (vs. biopsychiatric). Cautious measures can be taken, however, to insure that we, as individuals, do not succumb to industry. I could not sum the issue more concisely unless I said “the picture I have drawn looks overwhelming, yet it is not an exaggeration. Psychiatry is a giant industry, protected by a state monopoly and promoted by a psycho-pharmaceutical complex with multi-billion-dollar power”.  

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8 Peter R. Breggin, *Toxic Psychiatry* (New York: St. Martin’s Press) 370
DISCUSSION OF THESIS EXHIBITION

The thesis show consisted of two works, Remnants of Consumption and Contemplation of Despair. There were in fact several other pieces made for this body of work, but it was felt that the two included were the strongest and any other works may have diluted the integrity of the whole article. These other works, however, will be discussed according to the role they played in the development of the thesis.

The installation, Remnants of Consumption, places the origins of a “social addiction” to nicotine within the hands of the tobacco industry. There is a sixteen square foot wood structure, painted black, from which forty individual pieces of sculpted glass hang. There are ropes descending from the structure that form a knot similar to a noose around solid glass hooks. The hooks appear industrial, similar to meat hooks, and vary in size and shape. From each hook hangs a blown form, which also vary in appearance. The blown forms have all, however, been sandblasted (some with holes all the way through), treated with charcoal, burnt cigarettes and cigars, and finally sprayed with a ‘tea’ consisting of raw tobacco and hot water. This treatment gives the blown forms a rather unappealing surface texture. They appear as if though they are charred and deteriorating.
The overbearing structure from which these forms hang is the embodiment of an oppressive industry. It resembles some sort of confinement as well as a device used to control a puppet, or a multitude of puppets. The ropes and hooks are metaphors for the line tobacco companies let out through advertising. Respectively, the ropes resemble a noose because the consumer also plays a part in their own demise by taking the line, even though they may or may not have been deceived. Finally, the blown forms are the remnants of consumption, if you will. They are lungs that have faced years of abuse and neglect; they are the effect (vs. cause). When perceived in this manner, the piece might seem somewhat grotesque. Well, it is not supposed to be appealing simply because the issues at hand are not pleasing. Oddly, the piece does have an eerie calm to it once displayed in its entirety. The feeling of the installation indeed changed from when it was initially displayed upstairs and then in the Bevier Gallery. The former had more of an industrial uneasiness to it, the latter, almost a musical aspect to it. The vents blowing air onto the pieces in turn caused them to sway gently in harmony as a gathering of eroding lungs. The variation in size of the hooks and lung forms does not equate with age, but rather the degree to which the consumer has been addicted.

Making this piece was a quite a learning experience. Primarily, I had never constructed a piece this massive. Prior to this year, the pieces I made were generally capable of sitting on a pedestal or hanging from the wall or ceiling. This one, however, took months of planning, work, and accommodation to the evolving changes and finally setting up. Honestly, I did not know what I was getting myself into initially until after the winter vacation, At that point I realized I had better get things in gear if I wanted to see this work realized. Subtlety is another cherished lesson I received: less is more. I have the tendency to provide too much information. Maybe this
has to do with an over enthusiastic or naive perspective. Nevertheless, I feel I have grown away from this tendency, at least in terms of this piece. I had initially filled the lung forms completely with cigarette butts. Although this had its own appeal, it did not seem to work. This did relay a certain gluttony or addiction but did not appear to be premeditated. Instead, I chose to place a few butts within some of the forms which added a certain degree of obscurity. Finally, and most importantly, it gradually became apparent that sometimes the "little" details count more collectively than the entire piece or concept. Any distracting aspect can deduct from the overall integrity of the piece, so I struggled with materials, structure, forms and placement for quite a while. Overall, making the installation and seeing it in its finished state was an invaluable experience and truly gratifying.

The other sculpture included in the thesis show is entitled Contemplation of Despair. The piece is a bust of the head of a supposed addict. It is made of clear, lead-crystal glass and consists of two parts: the bottom, which includes the base of the neck to above the eyebrows, and then there is the other half of the skull, which is hollow and placed by the side of the former part. The bottom half has a hollowed area initially intended as a place for objects that would relay the individual had a substance abuse issue (pharmaceutical bottles, etc...). Returning to the issue of subtlety, I came to the decision that the bottles and pills I had initially planned on placing in the head were better omitted entirely. Anyways, what I wanted to convey is already present in the eyes and the absence of contents in the skull. These two characteristics convey that the individual is suffering greatly and preoccupied with nothing else but that suffering. The sculpture shares a likeness to Greek Tragedy and traditional 'tragic heroes'. Not only does the subject appear to be a virtuous, suffering character, but the persona also suffers from a 'tragic flaw': addiction.
An important scientific discovery also plays a role in this piece. The Mu-Opiod gene has been identified as a major precursor to addiction. Statistics show that 95% of study participants who abused alcohol, tobacco or drugs all "shared a specific variation of the gene" (St. Petersburg Times). If considered as an isolated factor, a variation in the gene could account for up to 5% of a person's risk in becoming "addicted". Although this number seems quite small, "if you isolate 5% of the variance for a very common disease, which has a huge public health impact, 5% is worth a lot." In terms of Contemplation of Despair, there is an evident concern for the physiology of brain mechanisms (such as the mu-opiod variant) when viewing the detail of the inner skull region of the piece.

The other works that did not make it in the show were pieces that were either not yet resolved or were omitted because they failed to conform to the body of work. One piece I was quite fond of was Agony of the Vice. This is a sculpture of a suffering individual in which the material used to complete the work is also the very source of the subject's agony, alcoholic containers. The concept and material share and intricate bond: the Rolling Rock bottles form a blanket that suffocates the alcoholic. The main reason Agony of the Vice was not included is because of the lighting. This is essential because the detail of the individual lies behind the bottles, on the interior, so the piece must be illuminated from behind in order to reveal the face. Unfortunately, the lights I initially used were only illuminating direct areas and not the entire inner portion of the sculpture, which left the work somewhat obscure. Overall, however, the piece is successful.

Another piece I worked on this year, entitled One a Day?, consists of blown pills. The notion and image of the pill is a reoccurring theme in this body of work. These
particular 'pills' were vibrant, glamorous and appealing to the eye. Some actually describe them as "eye candy". The reason for this is because of the bright red and deep blue colors, both transparent, incorporated as well as the contents within them. They contain actual pills, money, cards (metaphor for gambling), cigarettes and other such vices. My favorite of these is successful only as an individual piece. It merely has clear, iridescent marbles inside (as well as water). The effect is marvelous: the light refracting from each individual marble, as well as the water, illuminates the pill, making it both gloomy and seductive at the same moment. The piece embodies the desire every individual has within them for a substance or activity that enslaves them to a certain degree, whether positive or negative.

The final two works go hand in hand. They are a series of goblets that attempt to deconstruct certain stereotypes in our society that relay one drug is better for you than another, most likely because of cultural connotations, stigma and taboo. The reality is that any substance or activity is a danger in extremes. In theory, it makes perfect sense that both tobacco and crack will kill a person in modest, continual doses. One, of course, is more harmful and potentially addictive, but this is actually beside the point. Consider this: Your are given the choice to be shot with a gun in which the bullets travel at 50 meters per second or one which the bullets travel at 100 meters second. Just because the tragic effects may be delayed a short period does not make either fate more desirable or less harmful than the other. You are going to get shot! Respectively, both beer and wine will eventually enslave an individual if he/she engages in frequent, compulsive use. Nevertheless, many assume that just because wine is oftentimes enjoyed at a party in the midst of intellectual conversations that it is different from beer, which is
oftentimes shared in relaxed, casual environments. The only real difference here is an assumption that one form of alcohol ‘belongs’ to a higher class, whereas the other is associated with a middle and low class.

These differences are very subtle, yet nobody can deny their existence. The goblets essentially relay that a drug, is a drug, is a drug. Just because one is rationalized by a majority as acceptable and another as unacceptable changes neither the composition nor the inevitable physically/mentally damaging effects of the drug/vice. The other goblet was perhaps more, maybe too, straight forward. It consisted of a glass foot (base), a syringe as the stem, which penetrated through the cup to almost an inch above the rim. Conceptually, this form deconstructs the “lesser of two evils” fallacy: because one substance or activity is legal, it is not (as) harmful in comparison to one that is legal or acceptable. In fact, the legality or acceptability of a substance usually has very little to do with it’s effect on the body and mind. Oftentimes these issues are influenced by political, social and economic factors.

Finally, over the course of the year I have compiled sketches and paintings for this body of work. Although most are primitive and raw, intended only for the evolution of a concept, some possibly stand as separate works, Among these are two paintings: one entitled *Ghost of a Man*, which is actually inspired by *Agony of the Vice*, and another painting created in the image of *Contemplation of Despair*, entitled *What’s on Your Mind?*. 
As an artist I feel a certain obligation to create work, which potentially encourages change. This is not to say that every time we make something should be an opportunity to jump up on a soapbox, but that there is an inherent responsibility that accompanies this privilege. In this respect I have chosen the concept of addiction as the focus of my thesis and to target these industries, the media and examine the consumer. The reality of the “social addiction” which plagues our culture is one that thrives on vulnerability and greed. The relentless growth of this cultural affliction can only be retarded through a conscious effort.

In all honesty my intentions are not to regurgitate cliche statistics nor provide you with mere subjective opinion. Optimally, I hope to make a reality more accessible through my own perspective. We, as a society have been given every reason to preserve our being, yet we persist in the continual degradation of ourselves.

Think for a second about the exact state we are in now, without connotations. We are a society of methadone clinics, treatment centers, pop-a-pill cures and immediate gratification. To return is impossible. First of all, return to what? These characteristics always existed, it is just a matter how prevalent and evident they have become.
The body of work here has not changed the world much less the attitudes of big business or advertising corporations. If it has at least, however, managed to influence or change the manner of perception of a single individual, it has been successful. If the work has made apparent, on any level, that there is a greedy leech called industry sucking the life out of its host, than the work has fulfilled its’ obligation.
TECHNICAL INFORMATION

This section consists of a brief discussion of the technical processes involved in the creation of this body of work. The reason for including such information is because, when dealing with conceptual art, technique and concept are intricately weaved together. It also might serve of interest to fellow artists.

Remnants of Consumption incorporated solid glass sculpting (hooks), blowing (lung forms), and the creation of a wood support unit. The glass hooks were indeed challenging as I initially began working on them. Many would stretch to long or crack due to the extremes the glass was being pushed to. Finally, however, I began making them consistently by merely keeping them slightly thicker, providing a meat hook like quality. Gravity is the main shaping tool for these solid pieces in that if metal tools are used, the evidence is left on the glass as disagreeable indentations or scratches, However, if one uses gravity to his/her advantage, the pieces pretty much make themselves. The tops of the hooks were made by looping the glass around a graphite rod and then melting in the attached point. For the lung forms, I simply blew large, or small, tear shaped bubble. After puntying\(^9\) up, the heat was concentrated on the top of the form. At this point, a copper needle or some sort of sharp object is stuck inside the form pushing outward. This causes a point to extend from the surface of the lip. From here, the point

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\(^9\) This is the process of reversing the orientation of the piece with a solid steel rod and a bit of glass.
is clipped with the diamond shears and the remaining hole is reamed open. The entire form is heated and 'swung out' so as to stretch it. Later, as discussed in the previous section, the blown forms are sandblasted, some to the extent that other smaller holes and lines are created. The wood structure consists of fourteen 16ft. two by fours. Ten of them were used to create the length of the structure while the remaining four were used to make the ends, These were merely two of the pieces screwed perpendicular to each other. On the flat piece, a series of ten would inserts were created to serve as a securing device for the other two by fours, The entire structure was made so it could be easily assembled and disassembled.

The casted piece that was included in the thesis show, Contemplation of Despair, is made of a glass extremely high in lead content, This kind of glass is typically called 'crystal' because of the high index of refraction the lead gives the glass, not unlike that of actual crystals. The technique used to create the piece is called lost wax casting. Initially, a wax sculpture is 'encased' with mold material. Usually this is a 33.3% mix of water, plaster and silica. However, refractory materials such as Mizzou and Ransom and Randolph are now popular because of their ability to maintain their structural integrity at high temperatures. Anyways, before the wax is encased, pieces of copper are place in the 'undercuts' or areas where are will not be able to escape or rise to the surface. The copper inserts, or 'vents', allow the air to escape leaving the remaining glass bubble-free. After the mold has been made, the copper is pulled out, leaving a hole behind small enough that a negligible amount of glass will escape, but all of the air will. Then, the mold is taken to a steamer where the wax is melted out. At this point, the mold was dried out, placed in the oven pre-filled with large chunks of lead-crystal glass, and
slowly brought up to fifteen hundred fifty degrees. When the annealing process was complete, the coldworking process began. The flakes and mold material left behind where removed by grinding or sandblasting. Then the piece was polished and finally glossed with clear acrylic coating.

Agony of the Vice was made using several different techniques. The first way was a zircar shell painted on. This is an amazing refractory material that does not usually ‘bubble’ due to the minute amount of chemical water it maintains. Using this technique, a crisp clear form was yielded (initially began with lost wax). Another method was slumping over a positive of the form. This was indeed successful using plate glass, but mores with actual Rolling Rock beer bottles. The bottles were initially slumped individually and then slumped over a positive at fourteen hundred eighty five degrees. The ‘frame’ for the piece merely consists of metal that has been rusted with saltwater. There is a light behind the piece that is not successful and will be exchanged with a different method of illumination.

The pill series One a Day? consists of lampworked and blown pieces. The lampworked ones are quite simple. They are small solid pieces of glass, one clear and one color, which are fused together in the flame and marvered/shaped flat and rounded off at the ends. The blown forms, however, are slightly more intricate. They are created using the inculmo technique. This is a classic Italian or Venetian technique that is the process of joining two or more bubbles together. The final effect is quite pleasing, either a pleasurable contrast or complement. The pills were then filled with objects of desire, which are prevalent in our culture, such as cigarettes, money, and, of course, pills.
Finally, there were goblets created that consist of blown elements and found objects. The found objects are syringes and beer bottles. The syringe was merely adhered to the surface of a glass foot and goblet top, creating an eerie reaction when considering the pain one would go through if they actually drank from the vessel. Inside the syringe are the lampworked pills encased in transparent, amber resin. The other forms are merely beer bottles that have been drastically altered or distorted through furnace techniques.
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