

## **Artist Statement**

I grew up in the Midwest and attended college in Minnesota and Wisconsin where I studied sculpture. I decided to take a break from college, and joined the U.S. Army as a cavalry scout one week after 9/11. After serving in the United States Army and being deployed to Iraq, I faced new challenges dealing with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and was not sure what to do with my life.

I was fortunate to get back into art and start learning the medium of glass. My interest in sculpture stems from my experiences as a soldier. I have a new appreciation for life and how I look at it. Being wounded and dealing with the pains of combat (both mentally and physically) takes a toll on a person. These experiences have led me to search for passionate and creative means of exploring my emotions, political beliefs, personal views of the world around me and psychological distress. I feel art is not meant to fix problems, but to make others aware that they exist. This awareness may lead to change or at the very least comfort and understanding through conversation.

Creating art is an escape for me. It is my outlet from within, from the confines of my own mind. The experiences I had in the military and particularly in Iraq, shaped who I have become as a man and as a person. I do not always know how to interpret my thoughts and memories of these experiences in words, so my art becomes my medium.

Art has changed my life by giving me focus and helping me begin to heal from those life changing experiences. Learning how powerful art is and the impact it can have on a person's life has been the one major reason I am where I am today, driving me to learn more and to educate others about art.