

CLAYmore Flask



Thomas Dang (U.S. Marine Corps)



Porcelain, Slip Cast (June 2012), 5 1/2 X 7 X 1 1/2 in., Courtesy T. Dang

Description:

During my two combat tours in Iraq I was confronted with and involved in many hostile engagements. Through these struggles a compelling camaraderie ignited between the combat veterans with whom I served. The purpose of my work is to allow for veterans and the community to engage in a dialogue around issues of warfare and to connect visually with the actions our young men and women have faced overseas. By doing so, we continue to keep alive and to honor those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

The *CLAYmore Flask* is a commentary on the history and use of the Claymore mine, and represents the sacrifices of combat veterans who have a history of using the mine on the battle field. This piece, where the function has been altered—from mine to flask—offers an opportunity for a dialogue of shared war stories among comrades. By conflating the purpose of the object, comrades can recall the harsh existence of overseas battlefields, but also the moments when therapeutic recollections of home occurred while sipping a canteen cup of horrible coffee. These small respites assisted in maintaining peace of mind. Presenting this artwork on the home front allows for veterans and the community to engage in the dialogue, to visually connect with the actions our men and women face overseas, and to keep alive and to honor the stories of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.