

This would all be a little bit too earnest and cloying if Bloom's products were not so carefully crafted and if she did not also venture into more personal gift giving territory to disturbing, satisfying ends. *For MaHong, love Mom*, 2010, is a giant gift box designed to hold a bicycle for her daughter that is so lovingly made I wanted to crawl inside its tissue paper-filled interior and go happily to sleep. The fact that it is adorned with MaHong's dental records and a pattern that matches the floor of the Chinese orphanage from which Bloom adopted her is equal parts perfect and creepy — like all of the best gifts. (Bloom's stepson, [Oskar Mann](#), has also joined in the action, creating a free gift for visitors: a CD compilation of songs that is free for the taking.)

As much as the title of Bloom's show, "Present," refers to a physical object, it also implies an action, to present something new — the harrowing job of any contemporary artist. It no doubt also refers to a state of being — a total awareness of an aesthetic experience. Attacking Minimalism, art historian [Michael Fried](#) wrote of that moment: "Presentness is grace." In the best of Bloom's new work, she shows that state, however fleeting, can be achieved through open and unashamed generosity.

Russeth, Andrew. "Barbara Bloom." *ARTINFO - The Premier Site for News about Art and Culture around the World*. 03 June 2010. Web. 08 June 2010.
<http://www.artinfo.com/news/story/34817/barbara-bloom/>