

PASCAL

Art, in its expansive and arbitrary facets, is often a personal and resounding answer to both artist and audience. Whether politically, socially, environmentally, or aesthetically- it used by many as a tangible response to the questions that exist in life. For Pascal, however, his work is less about the answer and more about the process of discovery subsequent to the posing of the question itself. He often quotes his fellow countryman, François Mitterand whom once said, "I love the person who is searching, yet I am afraid of the one who thinks he has found the answer."

The first question Pascal explored was his own viability in creating art full-time. The answer came in 1988 after he gave himself one year to become established as a working artist, and within six months he had procured his first gallery exhibition. By 1997, Pascal had moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico permanently, settling in a home/studio atop a mountain reminiscent of those in the south of France, where he grew up. Searching through his various aesthetic affinities, Pascal embarked next upon the gradual process of choosing the medium most conducive to his artistic vision. He arrived at the conclusion of wood, now the sole composition of his sculpture, for its ability to reflect "the tension between the masculine and feminine, the solid and the sensuous." One of its advantages, he explains, is its fluidity in appearance accompanied by retention in strength. He finds mahogany particularly useful, both for the subtlety of the grain, which supports other design elements, and for the size of solid pieces that are obtainable. Pascal also laments wood's obstinate quality, noting that "allowing the medium to take some initiative" can actually bring about positive creative results.

Now each piece Pascal creates is a study in contrast, replete with meaning, void of conclusion. By eliminating the requirement for absolution or answers, Pascal is free to create sculpture that embodies juxtaposition without sacrificing congruence. To view his sculptures, one would assume that they are comprised of numerous elements in addition to wood, such as metals or fabrics. The intertwining, interlacing, interlocking nature of characteristic pieces such as "Synergie" invoke a sense of duality, a fusion of unlike materials. Yet the signature of Pascal's body of work is that each piece is completely crafted in wood. In this relationship between the similar and dissimilar is found the essence of Pascal's art: in illusion there exists honesty, in divergence there exists harmony, in abstraction there exists realism, in complexity there exists simplicity. To Pascal, these ideas need not explanation, but exploration.

Samantha Ferguson