

Daily News ART

Seeing Beauty for Tree

November 6, 1981

By Tricia Crane

(Daily News staff Writer)

I am not creating beauty, but discovering the natural beauty of the material. The material I happen, to choose is wood. If I chose to examine iron, I would have to find out what iron ore does. My role is to discover. I am not a traditional, sculptor who works out of a concept and realizes his concept in the material. I don't~ know what I will find until I start carving."

Kazuo Kadonaga grew up surrounded by a forest in the mountains north. of Tokyo. But the 35-yea-old artist says he never really appreciated trees until he started painting.

"I had taken trees for granted. When I began to study them in paintings I decided I should work directly with the material of the trees, to explore different ways et looking at a tree, not to take a tree for granted."

Kadonaga's wood sculptures are currently on exhibit at SPACE gallery in Hollywood. His discussion of his work was translated by artist Masami Teraoka, whose wonderful,

Kadonaga's Works Force Us to Re-examine the Familiar

whimsical prints are also seen at SPACE. But Kadonaga's works are those that he has cut into paper-thin slices, then reassembled so they retain the original log shapes.

The smallest of these is about a foot long, and the largest is more than 20 feet of aromatic cedar.

The works come to us from Kadonaga's last exhibition at Gallerie Nouvelles images Den Haag, Holland. The weather there was damp enough that the wood remained fairly flat. But on opening night at SPACE gallery, with the dry desert winds blowing outside and into the exhibition space, these sliced works began to curl and warp, becoming magically kinetic. Kadonaga marveled at the sight of his stacked slices separating even as he watched. This is the artist's first exhibition in Southern California.

Born and raised in Ishikawa-ken, Japan, Kadonaga's father

owned and operated a forest and lumber company. The processing of trees was an all too familiar sight to him until he left home to attend architecture school, quit and began painting. With the forest as his subject. Kadonaga soon gave up paper and water colors to work with wood.

In order to cut the wood without losing any, he began to employ huge mill blades. Rather than sawing the wood and inevitably losing some in the form of sawdust, Kadonaga used huge slicing blades for clean and continuous lines.

The artist says he finds it interesting that so many Americans, when they look at his work, ask him what kind of wood each piece is and that they don't knew woods by their different colors and smells.

Kadonaga's works force us to re-examine the familiar and to appreciate, the way the Japanese do, the nature of fine materials.

Kazuo Kadonaga's works can be seen through Dec. 5 at SPACE, 6015 Santa Monica Blvd. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

