

JASON VASS

Douglas Tausik Ryder
Body Language



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Woodworking as digital art? How one man uses tech to make his monumental sculptures

By **DEBORAH VANKIN** STAFF WRITER

In an age of ever-emerging digital art forms, woodworking is still seen largely as a traditional, tactile and especially analog process — hardly the first place to push technological boundaries.

But L.A. artist Douglas Tausik Ryder has spent about seven years perfecting his process, using 3D modeling and an industrial CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machine tool in his studio to create large-scale wood sculptures that reference the female body and other organic forms. Five of them constitute a new solo exhibition, “Body Language,” that opens this weekend at Jason Vass gallery in the downtown L.A. Arts District.

Part of the reason I chose wood — it’s really associated with a practice of thousands of years that’s very hand-tool-oriented,” Tausik Ryder said on a recent visit to his studio. “And I wanted to connect the conversation about the digital workflow with a traditional form, relevant contemporary technologies with the oldest traditions.”

Tausik Ryder creates 3D computer models of the enormous works, which stand up to 9 feet tall — making a digital map breaking down the sculptures into parts he can assemble. He then crafts wooden maquettes and refines them by hand, carving, sanding, shaping each with molding putty, until it suits his vision — all while adjusting the related computer code on the digital model as he goes.

Then he heads into the machine room. In 2005 Tausik Ryder bought an industrial machine that once manufactured aluminum aircraft parts. He rebuilt it, upgrading the electronics, and he’s the only artist he knows who works independently with one, using no outside fabricator, he said. The digital cutting tool carves the individual sections that ultimately make up the work.

As such, each finished sculpture — one is headed to the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2020 — has a patchwork-like quality, the faint lines of the individual puzzle-like pieces and the different grains of wood purposefully noticeable. The slick forms walk the line between abstract and figurative, at once solid and airy, with prominent negative space that Tausik Ryder invites visitors to explore.



Douglas Tausik Ryder's "Venus," on view at Jason Vass gallery.(Douglas Tausik Ryder)

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“Go in, sit inside,” he said of a hollowed-out sphere, a womb-like work called “Venus” that was inspired by Paleolithic fertility figures and his wife’s pregnancy four years ago. Another, “Reclining Nude,” is made of three disconnected, torus-shaped modules that together form the outline of a woman laying on her side. A third, “Field Study,” is a cluster of curvaceous, ribbon-like swirls that suggest an expanding rib cage.



Douglas Tausik Ryder's "Reclining Nude," on view at Jason Vass gallery.(Douglas Tausik Ryder)

“All my work is a conflict between the geometric and the biological,” Tausik Ryder said. “So: the ideal versus the body, the actual messy, biological living thing – it’s a struggle. I thought: ‘I’ll explore that conflict and do both.’”

His process is as much an exploration in contradictions, he said.

“I get my fingernails dirty and my head in the code.”





Douglas Tausik Ryder
Shroud (2011)
Wood, cloth, epoxy resin, paint
30 x 13 inches



Douglas Tausik Ryder
Field Study (2011)
Wood
73 x 27 inches



Douglas Tausik Ryder
Innerlight (2019)
Wood, paint
60 x 34 inches



Douglas Tausik Ryder
Post Industrial Bride (2019)
Wood
90 x 32 inches



Douglas Tausik Ryder
Reclining Nude (2019)
Wood
64 x 71 inches



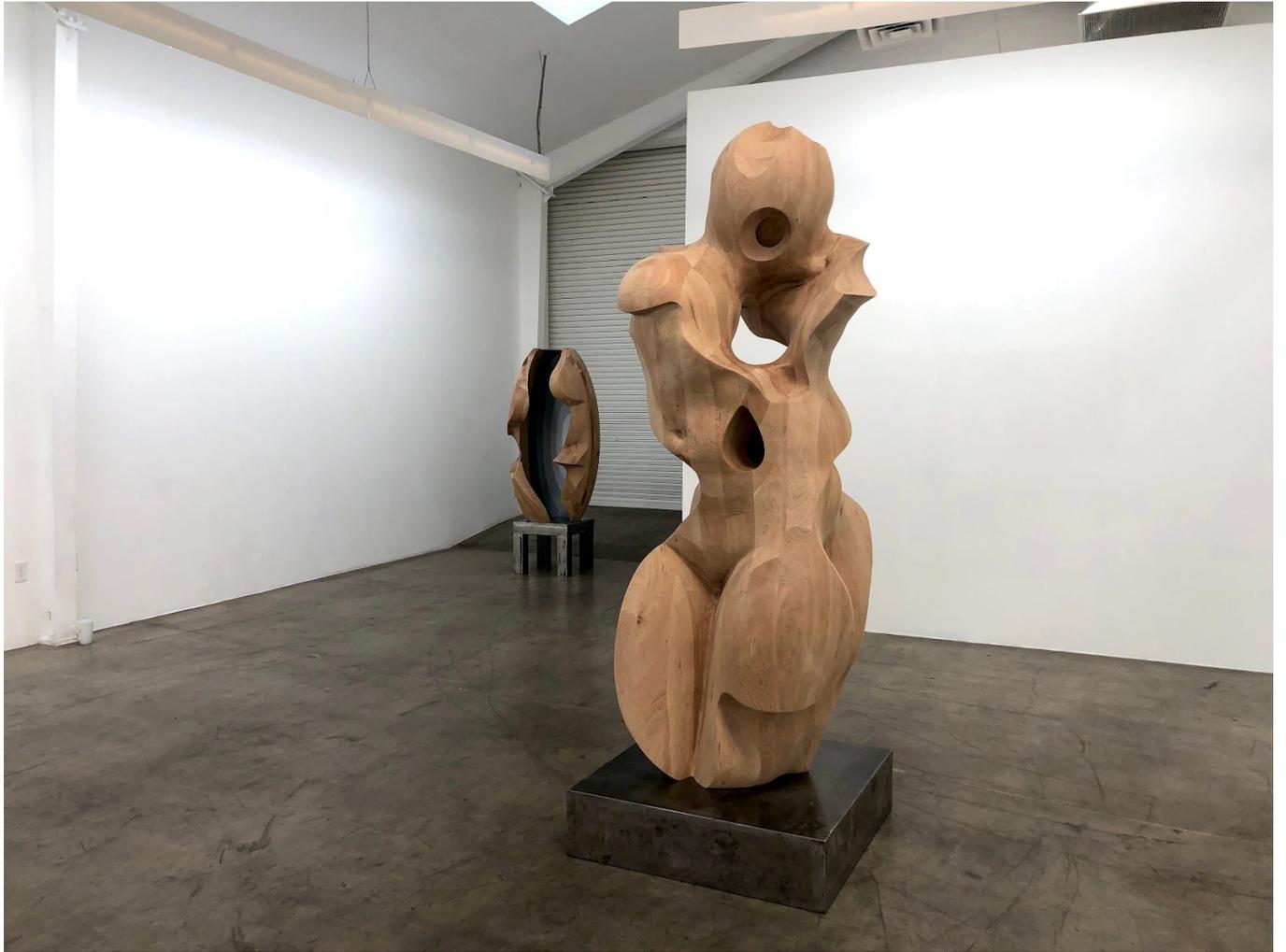
Douglas Tausik Ryder
Venus (2017)
Wood
96 x 95 inches



Douglas Tausik Ryder
Untitled (2009)
Wood
84 x 36 inches



Douglas Tausik Ryder
Drawing of Untitled (2009)
Graphite, paper
24 x 22 inches



BODY LANGUAGE
DOUGLAS TAUSIK RYDER





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