

Inside the Studio of David Shaw

BY KRISTIN IVERSEN

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David Shaw

A visit to Shaw's Sunset Park studio will allow you to immediately abandon any idea you might have had about how you are or aren't supposed to experience art. In fact, "abandon" is the perfect word to describe what it is like to even briefly inhabit Shaw's space, taking in his varied sculptures, drawings, and installations. First, you must rid yourself of any perceptions of what is natural and what is contrived, because an inability to embrace the duality (really the multiplicity) inherent in Shaw's work would mean missing both the small and large conversations that each piece insists you engage in.

And second, ignore any idea that art is meant only to be seen; Shaw's work demands that you look, yes, but also touch or, rather, feel. His evident delight in playing with common perceptions of reality is contagious; the sculptures tease and toy with viewers as a means of garnering a response—gnarled tree stumps insinuate themselves into uncomfortable positions with holographically laminated Vs; glass explodes on smooth wooden surfaces like bursts of crystalline rain drops; shiny, sinuous, stripped tree branches reach out from metal pentagrams graced with slender spikes. It's a feast for the senses, one that asks you to succumb to whatever manipulation Shaw presents next. •

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