

## Artist's Statement

My father was a dual citizen of Lebanon and the United States so I grew up with a strong understanding of his and my cultural heritage. One aspect of this heritage that I was familiar with were two fine, inlaid backgammon tables that were made in the Middle East and were always present in my home in Chicago. When I started making wood sculptures nearly 25 years ago, I inexplicably gravitated to the idea of surfacing these sculptures with a kind of self-invented wood overlay technique. As the years went by, and I continued to make and develop these sculptures, I realized that this wood overlay technique had been inspired by my father's backgammon tables. I really don't consider my work to be a product of identity, not exactly anyway. More accurately, my work is a product of extended meaningful unconscious visual learning.

My father passed away many years ago but I still visit my family in Lebanon every few years. In more recent times, I have become more comfortable with the notion of my work as an expression of my heritage. Regarding the origins of my work, I tend to prefer a more nuanced and personal explanation. My sculptures are inspired by the memory and love I have for my father, a very proud Lebanese-American.

My sculptures are constructed out of reclaimed wood and pigmented wood glue. When I am working on a piece, a dialog naturally develops between the sculpture's form and its complex patterned surface. I become interested in finding a balance between these two realms. As the sculpting process unfolds, I focus on synthesizing the visual complexities of a piece in accordance with a feeling that exists within myself.

I create many drawings in connection with each of my sculptures. I work on these drawings as the sculptural process progresses and develops, until completion. Each drawing has a different purpose and is connected to a specific stage of the sculpture's construction. Initially these drawings take the form of straight portraits. At this stage, issues of likeness, proportion and mood are most important. As the sculpture making process unfolds, the drawings serve to work out ideas connected directly to the 3-dimensional piece such as pattern, form, scale, and concept.