

Review: **Patrick Marold's** *Must-See Work at Denver Airport and Goodwin | Fine Art*  
by: Michael Paglia , June 29, 2016



Patrick Marold: *Residuum*, Installation View

Photo: Wes Magyar

Patrick Marold: *Residuum*, an intriguing solo at **Goodwin Fine Art**, features abstract process pieces by one of Denver's most accomplished conceptual artists. They have the refined elegance and quiet, contemplative character that have been key components of Patrick Marold's work over the past decade — but they also reflect a cathartic experience inspired by his most important creation to date, the site-specific installation “*Shadow Array*,” at Denver International Airport.



Patrick Marold, *Shadow Array*, Denver International Airport

*Shadow Array*, named **Best New Public Art** in Westword's Best of Denver 2016, is part of the new Westin hotel and adjacent RTD train-to-the-plane station. For this commission, Marold was assigned the two man-made hillsides that bookend the station's platform — a considerable mandate, since the bifurcated site covers some seven acres. Though Marold had worked on large-scale pieces, including the “*Windmill*” project in Vail several years ago, he'd never addressed anything nearly this big. The enormous amount of ground he had to cover is the reason that “*Shadow Array*” wound up costing over \$2 million (lighting included), making it one

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of the most ambitious and expensive works of public art ever erected in the city. But to put that in perspective, it would have cost more than a million dollars just to cover the site with sod.

Marold has long been interested in having his art interact with the landscape and with natural forces. Studying the site three years ago, he realized that many things he might do there would simply disappear in the glaring sunlight on the high plains, where DIA is located, so he decided to work with the shadows, which can be emphatic. He then determined the material he wanted to use — beetle-killed pine — which underscored the nature-based concepts he was orchestrating in “Shadow Array.” Marold located a family-run logging company in southern Colorado that provided him with 75-foot-long logs that were delivered at the rate of a truckload a week to a farm he had rented near Watkins; he employed a crew of workers there to hand-strip the bark from the logs. The logs were left on the ground to dry for as long as a year; Marold wanted to use them in a raw state, because he felt that would be the best way to preserve them for at least 25 years.



Patrick Marold, *Shadow Array*, Denver International Airport

The resulting composition is linear, with nearly 250 logs set at, or near, a right angle to the train tracks. Mounted on steel rods, the lineup of logs is positioned so that both sides together resemble a rib cage, with those on each side of the tracks mirroring those on the other. Each of the “ribs” comprises two logs jointed at an angle, which produces not only jointed forms, but jointed shadows, as well. The way the composite log elements are placed, passengers encounter them in a flashing sequence as their train slows down to stop at the station. Although these visual effects are currently muted by the tall wheat planted to stabilize the formerly naked hillside, the plan calls for the wheat to disappear, succeeded by shorter prairie grasses and wildflowers now being established in the shade of the wheat.

The site, the concept and the materials place “Shadow Array” and the rest of Marold’s oeuvre firmly in the Western landscape tradition, even if the artist gives the old warhorse more than one twist.



Patrick Marold: Residuum, Installation View

Photo: Wes Magyar

During the years it took to complete “Shadow Array,” Marold thought about the marks left by his creation. The land in Watkins was scarred by the process of preparing the logs, for example; the dents on the ground where they’d been dragged, piles of shaved bark and tire tracks from the logging trucks were all a product of making the piece. Marold realized that these marks were impermanent and transitory, and although he could photograph them, they would lose their improvisational character and therefore their authenticity. The pieces in Residuum are his attempt to convey the same kind of interaction between materials in smaller artworks; after all, he couldn’t display that plot of land at Goodwin.





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The show features two distinct bodies of work. The first consists of pieces based on the interaction of chunks of charred wood (in some cases existing Marold sculptures) that have been artfully rubbed against paper or panels, and sometimes the chunks of wood themselves; the results have an organic quality in terms of the drawing style. A good example: “Tantrum,” in charred maple charcoal on panel, which shows smeared diagonal lines crossing each other against a white ground. Another knockout is “Monolith,” in which heavy scuffs of charred spruce stand out against an oversized sheet of white paper.



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Photo: Wes Magyar

Marold has used varied processes to create these drawings. In some cases, he simply dragged or rotated the charred wood over the panel of paper. For others, he stood on a forklift that was raised up and down, so that his whole body moved while he held a charred log in a more or less constant position as it rubbed against the surface he'd selected. Several of the wooden elements used to make the marks have been included as freestanding sculptures in this show; you can easily see how arduous it must have been to manipulate these heavy chunks of wood in the ways that Marold did, as demonstrated by the drawings themselves.



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Photo: Wes Magyar

The other body of work in Residuum is clearly distinct, yet arises from the same impulse: the consequential marks made by one work being used to produce others. Here, though, it's not logs that are used to make the marks, but rather a large, solid-glass sculpture called "Fractured Lens," which is also part of the show. Marold attached photosensitive paper to parts of the glass sculpture, which produced photograms as light passed through the glass and onto the paper. Being produced mechanically gives the photograms a character that's very distinct from the expressive charred smears on paper, but they're still compatible with the drawings in a couple of ways. The first is the conceptual link of how one piece may be used to produce others. And second, the photograms are grayscale and work beautifully with the black and white of the marked-up paper or panels. Still, I could see each type easily anchoring its own show.

The beauty and thoughtfulness of Marold's work makes Residuum a must-see, just like his award-winning *Shadow Array*.

Patrick Marold: Residuum is up through July 23, Goodwin Fine Art, 1255 Delaware Street, 303-573-1255, [goodwinfineart.com](http://goodwinfineart.com)