



ART BY NUMBERS

An artist who follows mathematical principles to create.
By **Beth Young**.

Photo Fred Wissink



George Papadimas is artistic eccentricity personified. Dressed in a staple uniform of black stovepipe jeans and a form fitting T-shirt in the same shade, the HCM City-based artist who hails from Melbourne, Australia, gesticulates wildly as he describes his art's direction, from past to present.

Like most creative types, George has a tendency to do this in minute detail; however, he interjects frequently to make sure the listener understands, pausing often to ask, "Do you know what I mean?"

If there's a misunderstanding—in near-scientific language—for behind every piece that he creates, there is a methodical, mathematical process centred on chaos and order or Yin and Yang. The concept has fascinated him since his career's inception.

Though he studied as a

painter, George's work has taken a decidedly different course. For a two-man exhibition called *Static Motion* last year with Vietnamese artist Nguyen Thanh Truc, he created imposing black matte painted steel sculptures. Once upon a time he compiled a series that focused entirely on text, and, in line with his ongoing study of contradictory natural elements, another using red and blue as its basis.

Much of George's work transforms when looked at from different angles. "As you walk around them, some pieces morph," he says.

George believes that there is a force beyond his design process that dictates his work's structure. Two pieces he created for the *Static Motion* exhibition highlight his meaning. "I didn't realise it until I'd finished, but if you turn this piece (pointing to one sculpture) upside down

and place it on top of that one, they fit together exactly."

In fact, George considers himself a "process artist". He can flit from painting to sculpture at will as the end product isn't really his concern. It's the natural progression from beginning to end that counts. "It happens naturally. Yes, there's a methodical process, but there's a real organic-ness about the result."

Innate or not, George is still the quintessential perfectionist, unsatisfied until a creation is just so. As he follows a numerical path, his artworks must be accurate, and he is pedantic about achieving precision. "I strive for extreme perfection," he says.

As such, George stands by during the pre-fabrication process to ensure his vision is realised. "It's about achieving a higher level of accuracy," he explains. "I'll hold the steel at

the exact angle I want and say, 'Quick, quick, weld it now!'"

His artistic exploration is never finished. Work that he completed years ago still has room to evolve. For example, a collection comprising ten television screens that flashed different colours in accordance with a particular number sequence is now being put to music. George says he's continually looking to give his work extra depth, more layers. "I like to reinvestigate old theories," he says.

George's excitement about his work is contagious. He talks at break-neck pace about experiments he's working on, exhibitions he has planned and the process that dictates his creations. Even though mathematical formulas guide his creative process, there's no shortage of directions he can take.

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