

Los Angeles Times

Friday, November 6, 1981

GALLERIES HOLLYWOOD

By William Wilson,

The Japanese are said to traditionally hold nature in such reverence that a particularly striking tree or rock is, as far as they are concerned, a work of art. In his first exhibition here Kazuo Kadonaga blends that ancient respect with recent occidental process art.

Kadonaga presents 10 works all designated with the title, "Wood," plus a number and a couple of letters for identification. One is nothing more than a handsome hanging swag sliced from the center of a log. An especially expressionistic piece consists of just 12 short branches, partially burned.

The most distinctive pieces, however, are barkless or milled logs that have been sawed into paper-thin lengths reassembled by stacking. One 15-foot job is beginning to rumple and curl as it dries. Presumably it will go on slowly evolving into some final form.

A variation on this theme is a barkless log sawed half through vertically in inch-wide slices. For some reason plugs of wood have fallen out at unpredictable intervals giving it the curious character of a log turning into a computer.

The general effect of Kadonaga's exhibition is that of exquisite, almost epicene, courtly poetry about natural beauty. We wonder at its refinement even as we watch its vigor drain away.

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Space Gallery, 6015 Santa Monica Blvd., to Dec. 5.