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## A BEAUTIFUL MIND

The most curious shapes take form when Pablo Reinoso works whatever he perceives in his mind straight into sculpture. By SHARON TAN



PABLO REINOSO

"I am interested in all sorts of art. I do not like everything but I am interested in everything."

It is often enough that art serves no further purpose than as eye candy. We do not use the statue of David as a chair: it is a stunning display piece, and has no other use. Pablo Reinoso changed all that by combining practicality with unique innovative forms when he developed art pieces as functional furniture, such as the famous spaghetti bench.

Having sold his first art sculpture at the age of 21 for US\$3,750, he kept track of the buyer of his artwork for 20 years before buying back his sculpture for more than €100,000.

Reinoso is a man who follows his passion and makes a living out of it, with his unique sculptures displayed in many museums, grand houses and beautiful gardens around the world.



SPIDER BENCH

### At what point in life did you realise that you have a passion for art?

My grandfather who was French was living in Argentina after the war, my mother who was French too gave birth to me in Argentina. When my grandfather passed away, my mother took me to France to visit the family. It was during this trip that I visited the Rodin museum and looked at art pieces that I have always read about in books. At that time, there was a sculptor's work that was on show. Upon seeing his work, I decided I wanted to be a sculptor. I was 13 back then and I made my first sculptor that year.

### You have been making furniture from a very young age. Can you remember your first piece of furniture, and what inspired it?

It was in my grandfather's house that I made my first chair. When I was six years old, my grandfather built me a little wooden house, and so I decided to make furniture for my little house. I spent every weekend working on my house and I built a bed, two tables, a chair and a little book shelf for it.





"I do not like the idea of inspiration, art is about expressing myself. Whatever I create comes straight from my mind."

**How did you nurture this passion from that age?  
What were the obstacles to pursuing your passion?**

It is love. You will know if you love someone, and I just knew I love sculpturing. The hardest thing that I realised while following my passion is to actually make a living out of it. Soon after, it got easier. I sold my first sculpture in 1975 at the age of 21 for the price of US\$3,750 dollars. That was a lot of money back then.

**Are there any mentors that you look up to?**

There are many people who have motivated me. They are master sculptors, architects and craftsmen. I am just like everyone, I find people that guide and show me the way to go.

**What made you decide to use furniture to create sculptures?**

I like to explore any kind of art and I can do many forms of art but I am the strongest in furniture and sculptures.

**What kind of materials do you like to work with?**

I work with all sorts of materials, such as wood, stone and steel. From the very beginning, I was working with wood so I would say that I like to work with wood. Next to that, I like stone and marble. It usually depends on the sculpture itself, where the sculpture is going to be and what kind of sculpture I am going to build; I then decide the material that I will use from there. The material will have to relate to the story that I want to tell. Some sculptures require a weaker material and while others require a stronger material. The material I choose will have to make my idea crystal-clear to my audience.

**Do you think smaller or larger sculptures have a greater and more emotional impact?**

The emotion of art is not portrayed by its size but the moment. It is about being placed in the right place. I can give you a small piece of art in a brilliant place, or I can give you a very expressive sculpture. It is about making the link at the right moment with the place where the art is.

**Apart from sculptures, do you have any interest in other kinds of art?**

I am interested in all sorts of art. I do not like everything but I am interested in everything. I often visit museums, artist studios and places wherever there is art. I connect myself with young people who have fresh ideas to make interesting art.

**Do you collect any kind of art?**

Yes, I am a collector. I collect a lot of chairs and many other different forms of artwork. I collect some sculptures but only some as I barely have space for my own sculptures.

**For one of your pieces which I found very interesting, the Huge Sudeley Bench: how did you get your inspiration for that?**

I do not like the idea of inspiration, art is about expressing myself. Whatever I create comes straight from my mind. With the Huge Sudeley Bench, it came with the idea from the spaghetti bench. As many have asked me if they could have the spaghetti bench outdoors, being made from delicate wood, it was not possible. So I made a bench that is suitable for the outdoors and in gardens, as people told me that they want my sculpture in their gardens. I thought of steel and aluminium to replace the wood that I use for the spaghetti bench.

**Which one of your pieces is your favourite?**

That would be asking me to choose one of my children to love more. I love both my children and these pieces are like my children and I love them for different reasons. There is no one favourite piece.

**What advice would you give to a struggling or young artist?**

Work and work and work. In art, you need to just go ahead and experience for yourself. **H**