

# SEANKELLY

Toro, Andrea. "José Dávila – Tension, compression, balance," *Metal Magazine*, September 19, 2017.

## METAL



Jose Dávila studied architecture in Mexico, but his love was for the arts. Though he never worked as an architect, the self-taught artist put his degree to hand, creating sculptures that compound paradoxical materials coming together in perfect balance. Glass, stone, and straps playing a game of push and pull, elements that represent the duality of delicacy and solidity working as one. His pieces and installations are not only beautiful, but make us wonder and analyze if there may be more than meets the eye. Davila says there is, representing the ease and hardship of everyday life. You can find his latest exhibition, *Every Blind Wondering Ends in a Circle*, at the Blue Project Foundation in Barcelona until October 29.

Your latest installations were synthesized of a collection of marble, glass, boulders and straps. What led you to choosing to work with these materials?

I like marble for being one of the most used materials in the history of sculpture, but also in the sense that is in fact a rock that we extract from the mountains, and in its raw state it's as primitive as a boulder. Boulders have a lot of energy, boulders were always there, and will always be there. Glass is a symbol of modernism, like a magic trick, it's a solid we can see through, a precious object we have to take care of. And the strap makes everything come together. The ratchet straps are a perfect example of mechanics.

Has it been challenging to work with such heavy or conversely delicate objects?

Yes, there are obvious challenges in the moving, loading, and managing of these materials in the studio. However, the real challenging part is trying to make them transmit something different

from what people usually relate them to, bringing them to a grade zero and making people unafraid of them.



Tension, compression and balance hold your work together. Do these elements go beyond creating an aesthetically pleasing structure into a deeper connotation?

I hope they do, they certainly have connotations of all sorts. Tension, compression and balance are definitely not only aesthetical but a fractal or an allegory of what we all, personally and as a society, have to go through everyday. These are not only concepts but also realities we have to face everyday – as an artist and as a person – in the world that surrounds us.

We can clearly see how your background in architecture influences your sculptures. When did you decide you wanted to utilize all these skills to create art?

It took me a while to reconcile with them. I've never worked as an architect, so I find it quite funny that people sometimes are more focused in what I studied academically for five years, than what I've been doing professionally for twenty – which is being a self-taught artist.

What do you most enjoy about putting together an installation or exhibition?

Seeing an idea materialize.



What do you expect people to think or feel when entering these spaces and immersing themselves in your work?

I expect or at least hope, that my work serves as a trampoline to trigger people's minds. I want to make people wonder well beyond what they are seeing.

Where do you find inspiration?

I'm not sure if I get inspired but rather motivated. Motivation in art that I see, in music I hear, in conversations, in the city, in books; when for strange reasons I get to see something I've seen for years, suddenly, in a different way. I like the change of perspective on things.

This has already been a seemingly busy year for you, showing your work in Barcelona, Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne and Gateshead. What plans do you have for 2018?

I have upcoming gallery shows in Madrid, Mexico city and Copenhagen. I'm finishing my public sculpture project for the PST Triennial in Los Angeles. As well as a book on my work with Hatje Cantz and an institutional show in Vienna.











