

A material change pays off

Over the last five years, **David Ryan** has made a name for himself as the master of medium-density fiberboard. With great consistency, the Las Vegas artist has transformed the unlovely material homebuilders use by the truckload into whimsically elegant abstractions that appear to float on the wall like laser-cut clouds in an electrifying palette of scorching oranges, neon greens, icy whites and sumptuous burgundies, among a synthetic rainbow of gorgeous tints.

Although Ryan's multilayered, multipart relief sculptures seemed to be as light as feathers, they were not. As they grew in complexity and size, reaching upward of 4 feet by 5 feet, each began to weigh up to a quarter ton. This made transport and installation difficult. Worse, it made it almost impossible for Ryan to work in his studio, cutting, joining and spray-painting his jigsaw-puzzle-style pieces, unless he had a couple of studio assistants standing around to do the heavy lifting.



DAVID RYAN

'LHC': David Ryan cut and spray-painted pieces of Coraform to create the 5-by-8-foot abstraction. It is at Mark Moore Gallery.

So he quit using the material. And he took up Coraform, a high-density urethane commonly used as insulation. It's as easy to cut as the fiberboard, a whole lot lighter and only a

bit more expensive.

It's worth every penny. In a small side room at the Mark Moore Gallery, Ryan's first large work made of spray-painted pieces of precisely cut

Coraform packs more punch than his previous works. It commands so much more space than its actual dimensions suggest that it's hard to believe that it extends only four inches from the wall. The nearly 5- by 8-foot abstraction fills the room with a satisfying wallop of sculptural presence and makes you want to walk all around it, exploring its shapely details from every angle and discovering its spatial ambiguities.

Titled "LHC," after the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland that may be capable of creating black holes, Ryan's diabolically beautiful wall-relief is sculpture at its space-saving best: Bold enough to fill the whole room with its powerful pleasures yet compact enough to hang over the sofa.

Mark Moore Gallery, 2525 Michigan Ave., Bergamot Station, Santa Monica, (310) 453-3031, through Aug. 16. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.markmooregallery.com