

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

January 22, 2016

CHRIS BURDEN

BUDDHA'S FINGERS

JANUARY 19 - FEBRUARY 20, 2016
OPENING RECEPTION: TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 6-8PM

GAGOSIAN GALLERY
980 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK
WWW.GAGOSIAN.COM



It's about trying to frame something. And draw attention to it and say, "Here's the beauty in this. I'm going to put a frame around it, and I think this is beautiful." That's what artists do. It's really a painting activity.

—Chris Burden

Gagosian New York is pleased to present *Buddha's Fingers* (2014–15), one of the late Chris Burden's last works.

Beginning with a series of startling actions in the early 1970s, Chris Burden challenged his own mental and physical limitations, as well as the boundaries of art and performance. Shut inside a locker for five days (*Five Day Locker*, 1971); shot in the arm (*Shoot*, 1971); and nailed through the palms of his hands to the roof of a car (*Trans-fixed*, 1974), he sought to reflect the violence that defined American politics, society, and media at the time. Burden soon channeled the daring spirit of these early performances into imposing technical feats that similarly explored challenges both individual and social. He used toys (figurines, train sets, Erector parts) as the building blocks for expansive scale models of buildings, dystopic cities, and battlefields, while deploying actual vehicles (ships, trucks, and cars) in surreal and improbable ways.

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Buddha's Fingers (2014–15) is a dense cluster of thirty-two antique cast-iron vernacular street lamps, electrified with cool, bright LED bulbs and standing almost twelve feet tall. The work is related to *Urban Light* (2008), Burden's celebrated permanent installation of 202 lamp posts, which stands at the entrance to LACMA in Los Angeles. In 2000, Burden began collecting the street lamps that used to line residential streets in Los Angeles during the 1920s and 1930s, and repurposed them as sculptural installations. In *Buddha's Fingers*, the hexagonal lamp bases are set in a tight honeycomb formation. The whimsical title refers to the fingered citrus fruit "buddha's hand," a recurrent still-life motif and subject in classical Asian art, and a religious symbol of happiness, longevity, and good fortune.

Chris Burden was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1946, and died in Topanga Canyon, California in 2015. Public collections include Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and Tate Modern, London. Solo museum exhibitions include "Chris Burden: A Twenty Year Survey," Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, California (1988, traveled to Carnegie Mellon Art Gallery, Pittsburgh; and Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, through 1989); "When Robots Rule: The Two Minute Airplane Factory," Tate Gallery, London (1999); "Tower of Power," Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna (2002); "Chris Burden," Baltic Center of Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2002); "14 Magnolia Doubles," South London Gallery (2006); "Chris Burden," Middleheim Museum, Antwerp (2009); "Chris Burden: Three Ghost Ships," Portland Art Museum (2011–12); "Chris Burden," Magasin III, Stockholm (2012–13); "Chris Burden: Extreme Measures," New Museum, New York (2013–14); "Chris Burden: The Master Builder," Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts (2014); and "Chris Burden: Ode to Santos Dumont," Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2015).

For further information please contact the gallery at newyork@gagosian.com or at +1.212.744.2313. All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

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Image: *Buddha's Fingers* (detail), 2014–15, cast iron, glass, electrical wiring, 142 x 108 x 108 inches (360.6 x 274.3 x 274.3 cm) © Chris Burden. Courtesy of the Chris Burden Estate. Photo by Jeff McLane.

Gagosian Gallery was established in 1980 by Larry Gagosian.

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