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Gagosian Gallery

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PRESS RELEASE

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FRANK GEHRY: *A STUDY*

Thursday, March 18 – Saturday, May 1, 1999

Opening Reception: Thursday, March 18,, 1999, 6-8pm

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition of a monumental work of sculpture by Frank Gehry. This is his first sculptural presentation in a commercial gallery in this country.

The sculpture, which Gehry has made specifically for this exhibition, is a vaulting structure of shaped wood ribs, overlaid with thin strips of maple, then clad with a dramatically sculpted "skin" constructed from 16,000 pounds of overlapping shaped sheets of gray lead. The form measures approximately 20 feet high, 25 feet wide, and 40 feet long. Because of its open configuration, the viewer can enter the sculpture and walk entirely through its cave, or shelter-like interior. In this way, it epitomizes Gehry's complex fusion of sculpture and architecture.

Although Gehry considers *A Study* to be an abstract organic shape, it reminded him initially of a gigantic horse's skull, suggesting the prehistoric and evoking unspecified but powerful emotion. This expressionistic character is fundamental to all of Gehry's creations, and to his manner of working, which, in early phases of design, is quick, intuitive, and highly gestural. His first design for *A Study* was merely a loose and vivacious pen and ink drawing. Next, he took a piece of red velvet stiffened with wax and crumpled it into the sculptural shape. This object was then scanned into a computer for further articulation.

(Continue to page 2)

A Study will undergo construction for one month on site at Gagosian Gallery, which was designed by Richard Meier. Gehry's monumental object will crowd and loom up in the space, an effect that reminds him of Magritte's gigantic apple squeezed into the confines of a small room. This reference is pertinent, for it reveals the emotional and psychological quotient in Gehry's creations. They always exhibit a dynamic relationship between chaos and refinement, as well as a perceptual spasm fired by the disruption of the commonplace.

Gehry's project at Gagosian Gallery is the third distinct version of the "horse's skull." It was originally conceived in 1989 as an entry pavilion for the Peter B, Lewis residence, which was never realized, and more recently as a large interior chamber for Gehry's Pariser Platz 3 building now under construction in Berlin.

A Study exhibited at Gagosian Gallery is quintessential, for it embodies the highly developed spectrum of effect and function that has secured Frank Gehry's place as one of the greatest innovators in architecture and architectural art in our century.

For more information contact Nadine Johnson 212-228-5555.