CHRIS BURDEN: YIN YANG

Saturday, June 2 – Friday, August 3, 2007
Opening reception for the artist: Friday, June 1st, from 6 to 8 pm

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition by Chris Burden. Invited by the gallery to put together a summer show, Burden has responded with a project that poses the ancient concept of Yin Yang (which describes two primal opposing but complementary principles or cosmic forces said to be found in all non-static objects and processes in the universe) to his longstanding obsession with machines, motor vehicles, and ready-mades.

Lotus, a 1973 Lotus Europa sports car, and Bulldozer, an International T6 crawler, are both from Burden’s personal collection of vehicles but they represent polar opposites. Both occupy roughly the same footprint, but the Lotus is very light (1,500 pounds) and the Bulldozer is very heavy (5,000 pounds). The Lotus is a fast and small sports race car. The Lotus brings to mind the conceptual ideal of the perfect race machine, a vehicle designed and built so sparsely it is the essence of efficiency in that it wins the race, but disintegrates as soon as it crosses the finish line. It is very fragile and totally impractical. Burden rarely drives the Lotus except for taking it out for an occasional exhilarating spin. By contrast, Bulldozer is a heavy duty farm vehicle, built like an ox – reliable, dense, and chunky. At fifty-three years old (almost the artist’s age) it is slow, yet almost unstoppable. The bulldozer is used in the every day operations on Burden’s rural property.

Metropolis is a documentary made about Chris Burden’s sculpture by the same name, a vast and intense kinetic model of a frenetic modern city. The model city is crisscrossed by an elaborate system of Hot Wheel Car roadways and Monorail train tracks. The noise of the speeding Hot Wheel cars, the continuous flow of the Monorail trains, and the random car crashes that punctuate the traffic din, produces in the viewer synesthetic sensations of the real stresses and strains of living in a dynamic and bustling city. One can easily imagine the Lotus being one of the cars in Metropolis.

Chris Burden was born in Boston, MA in 1946. He received his BFA from the Pomona College at Claremont, CA and then went onto receive an MFA from the University of California, Irvine. Burden first received attention in 1971 for his highly controversial performance piece entitled Shoot in which he had a friend shoot him in the arm with a rifle. Since then, his work has continued to explore the idea of personal danger but also that of science, technology and politics. Burden’s solo shows include the South London Gallery (2006), Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna (2002), the Tate Gallery, London (1999) and the Lannan Foundation, Los Angeles (1992). Burden lives and works in Topanga, CA.

Please contact the gallery for more information.