

GAGOSIAN GALLERY
whitewall

Frank Gehry's Fish Lamps at Gagosian



Frank Gehry's "Fish Lamps" opened in congruent exhibitions at Gagosian galleries in Los Angeles and Paris last month. Created in 2012, these sculpted pieces are a more complex take on his original objects created in 1984. The collection is split between both cities.

In 1983, the Formica Corporation commissioned Frank Gehry to build objects out of a new plastic laminate called ColorCore. While working with this unfamiliar material, the architect accidentally shattered a fragment, resulting in numerous shards that resembled fish scales. This evolved into fabricating "Frank Gehry: Unique Lamps," which first exhibited at Gagosian in 1984. Over the next two years, over 30 lamps were created.

Constructing its shape from a wooden model, wire armature is stretched over it, then cut to remove the model and resoldered back together. The shards are individually glued on the armature, employing irregular pieces to overlap as scales. Incandescent light emanates through the center of the fish. One encounters a soft, fiery glow throughout the darkness of the gallery space.

Gehry created the Los Angeles exhibition design fresh from his architectural role in Ken Price's recent retrospective at LACMA. The environment is quiet, contemplative, and magical. The objects range in size and position, meandering from the floor, to the wall, to several lamps suspended from the ceiling, and back down again. An adjacent, well-lit room opens up to his 2012 Fish Lamp Sketches, giving insight into this creative process.

Gehry envisioned fish as "a perfect form," and has repeated this depiction in numerous projects since the first lamps were created. The stillness of his 2012 rendition is a thoughtful exploration of nature, completely removed from the distractions of quotidian life.