

## GAGOSIAN GALLERY

### SUPERTOUCH

#### Last Look | Nancy Rubins' "Our Friend Fluid Metal" At Gagosian NYC



Wrapping up on September 13 at Gagosian's W 21st St NYC gallery is the awe-inspiring show of new "junk" sculptures by LA-based (but Texas born) artist Nancy Rubins, *Our Friend Fluid Metal*. The title of the exhibition and its sculptures invokes the currency and mutability of aluminum scrap recycled through changing historical, social, and economic conditions; the playground critters that are the building blocks or cells of the new sculptures are made with aluminum reconstituted from military planes. A constellation of four sculptures of varying scale present a carnivalesque riot of found color and form, clustered in webs of compression and tension. The largest, which measures 17 x 42 x 24 feet, breaks out of a wall and looms overhead, a sculptural cumulus that makes light of its expected permanence and weight via a system of compound steel trusses and tension cables. Smaller scale works rise from a single point on the ground and balloon into the air. The nonsense terms that form their titles—*Chunkus Majoris*, *Paquito*, and *Spiral Ragusso*—point to the lighter side of scientific taxonomy.

Rubins' awe-inspiring sculptures are predicated on synthesis, radically articulated mass, and explosive ideas in three dimensions. Geological in scope and metastatic in formation, these rhizomatic structures brim with dark energy, pointing to the inexorable proliferation of manmade refuse. Objects clustered by way of strategic engineering resemble organic reactions; forms mimic living things that grow, mutate, and multiply as defiant growths bursting from tensile constraints, their power enhanced by sheer scale and precarious balance. Rubins' gigantic, physically overwhelming assemblages sit between the oppositional traditions of monumental sculpture, both figurative and abstract, and intimist bricolage that emphasizes the aesthetic

possibilities of everyday found objects. In her use of scrap materials and the individual artistic decisions governing their accumulation, Rubins engages the work of Schwitters in the same sweep as that of Picasso and the Cubists; however by combining these elements in a fashion that is as improbable as it is spectacular, she recasts humble materials as the fantastic residue of baroque fantasy, sliced through with a strong dose of surrealist disbelief.