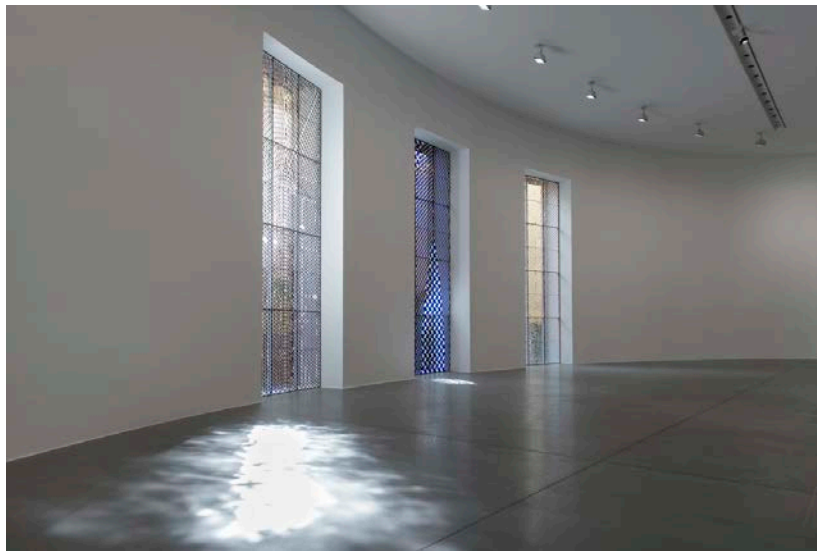


GAGOSIAN GALLERY



Richard Wright Replaced Gagosian Rome's Windows with a Bold Take on Stained Glass

Kat Herriman



Installation view of Richard Wright at Gagosian Gallery, Rome. © Richard Wright. Photo by Matteo D'Eletto M3 Studio. Courtesy the artist and Gagosian Gallery.

When the Tate Britain commissioned artist Richard Wright to develop a site-specific piece for their 2011 renovation, Wright partnered with the York Glaziers Trust, one of Europe's oldest stained-glass conservation studios, to create a set of windows for the historic building. The resulting project, a dazzling set of panes inset with rhythmic motifs, was such a success that the Turner Prize-winning artist continued to collaborate with the trust. He's since developed increasingly complex patterns and the latest experiment has taken up residence at Gagosian's two-story space in Rome, where the artist replaced existing windows with his own.

Evocative of a triptych in a cathedral, Wright's optically enticing windows anchor his solo show. Set in Gagosian's elliptically shaped gallery, the sculptural intervention calls attention to the unique curvature of the room while simultaneously drawing the viewer's attention to the exterior courtyard, which one can only observe through Wright's sparkling geometries.

Almost grid-like, Wright's abstract constructions draw upon a variety of influences including De Stijl and Russian abstraction. A continuation of his interest in melding graphic design with painting and architecture, Wright's installation manipulates the gallery's natural elements, light and space, in order to bring attention to the unexpected richness of transparency. Made by hand,

each pane has its own finish. His first foray into colored glass with the York Glaziers Trust, the center panel, inset with blue, represents the next evolution of their collaboration. Reflected onto the floor, Wright's panels flood the elongated rotunda with shifting constellations of beams and shadows, shades and textures. Tranquil and meditative, the windows don't compete with the airy beauty of the space but rather enhance the existing architecture.

The scale of the tripartite stained-glass installation is only accentuated by the rest of the exhibition—a small selection of works on paper. Compact and intricate, Wright's drawings occupy a baroque wooden table in the center of the ellipse. The tableau feels reminiscent of an altar. A closer look brings the viewer into Wright's universe of intervention—psychedelic abstractions scrawled across selected texts. Much like his windows, these drawings expand upon a pre-existing infrastructure in order to create a renewed sense of appreciation. Upon exiting the show, one notices Wright's final flourish, a graphic hung above the lobby door. Like a secret revealed, this last detail completes the experience of sumptuous discovery.

—Kat Herriman

Richard Wright is on view at Gagosian Gallery, Rome, Sept. 29–Dec. 18, 2015.