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GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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Mind the gap: Gagosian New York presents a host of Chris Burden's bridges

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Chris Burden's fascination with bridges is explored in a new posthumous show at the Gagosian's Park Avenue space in New York City. Pictured: Antique Bridge, 2003. Photography: Josh White/JWPictures.com

When New York City's New Museum staged its 2013 retrospective for the late sculptor Chris Burden, some of the most arresting pieces of work were several intricately realised bridge constructions that debuted during the show. While those structures spanned the width of the room, a selection of Burden's small-scale bridges is currently being displayed at the Gagosian's Park Avenue and 75th Street space.

Of course, Burden's fascination with bridges didn't just materialise in 2013. Back in 1997, the sculptor was captivated by a drawing of an unrealised bridge from the 19th century and created his piece, *The 1/4 Ton Bridge*, from vintage Meccano and Erector sets.

‘As a sculptor, I’m interested in architecture and I’ve made artworks that are literally architectural,’ Burden has said. ‘What I like about bridges as a kicker is that a bridge’s function is extremely pure and clear. Yet, if you look through the history of bridges, the solutions are infinite.’

Rather than being merely aesthetic constructions, Burden's bridges are accurate down to a tee. In addition to understanding the mechanics of proportion and weight – which he's also demonstrated in other kinetic, transport themed works – Burden also commissioned stainless steel replicas of the 'Erector Mysto Type I' set to ensure that his bridges would resist rust and corrosion. These improved components appear in *Indo-China Bridge*, 2002; *Tower of London Bridge*, 2003; and *Victoria Falls Bridge*, 2003. The full extent of Burden's imagination is best captured in *Tyne Bridge Kit*, 2004 – a wooden cabinet made specifically for a 31ft model of the titular bridge, which involves 20,000 pieces, and includes tools and instructions (thankfully).

The Gagosian's love for Burden doesn't stop there. At its Madison Avenue location, the gallery is exhibiting one of Burden's last works, *Buddha's Fingers*, 2014–15. Taking cues from *Urban Light*, 2008, which permanently holds court at LACMA's entrance and catapulted Burden into the public consciousness, a forest of 32 cast-iron antique street lamps are set in a honeycomb formation.