

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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Frank Gehry's Whimsical Fish Lamps at Gagosian Gallery Rome

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Frank Gehry Untitled (London I), 2013

Metal wire, ColorCore formica, silicone, and wooden base, 61 3/8 × 58 1/4 × 64 7/8 inches (155.9 × 148 × 164.8 cm)

© Frank Gehry. Photo by Josh White

Frank Gehry: Fish Lamps,” at Gagosian Gallery in Rome, is an exhibition of the renowned architect’s playful and dynamic light sculptures. The fish has been an important motif throughout Gehry’s celebrated six-decade career, providing inspiration for many of his design and architecture projects. “The fish is a perfect form,” he has been quoted as saying.

The iconography and natural characteristics of the fish have informed some of Gehry’s most famous projects, including the Marqués de Riscal Vineyard Hotel in Elciego (2006), the Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Chicago (2004), the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao (1997), the Standing Glass Fish for the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden (1986), and the Fish Sculpture at Vila Olímpica in Barcelona (1989–92).

Gehry was inspired to create his first fish lamp when he accidentally shattered a piece of ColorCore plastic laminate that he was using to make objects for a 1983 commission from the Formica Corporation. The shards reminded him of fish scales, leading to the creation in 1984 of the first “Fish Lamps,” which were exhibited in “Frank Gehry: Unique Lamps,” at Gagosian Los Angeles.

The architect's latest "Fish Lamps," which he began creating in 2012, vary in scale from life-size to gigantic, with each unique piece made by hand. According to Gagosian Gallery, Gehry's use of ColorCore has become bolder, and he has incorporated larger and more jagged elements. Some of the groupings of fish are displayed on pedestals, while others are in the form of chandeliers and wall sconces.

"Frank Gehry: Fish Lamps" highlights Gehry's talent for creating objects that embody the harmonious consolidation of form, function, and material. The synthesis of the life-affirming incandescent glow, the organically textural surfaces, and the expressively fluid, animated forms elevate Gehry's ethereal and dynamic creations from objects of design to functional, sculptural masterpieces of art.

"Frank Gehry: Fish Lamps" is at Gagosian Gallery Rome until September 16, 2016