

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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AROUND THE GALLERIES

By HOLLY MYERS
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Summer show: hot wheels

It must be nice to be **Chris Burden**. The Gagosian Gallery calls you, offers you its summer show. Maybe you're lounging by the pool, maybe you're tromping through the brush in Topanga. You think for a minute, then turn to your assistant: "Why don't we just give 'em a couple of the cars?"

Your assistant raises his eyebrows. Isn't that too easy?

"Just park 'em there in the gallery. We'll take a few photographs, if they want something to sell — hang those up. And don't we have an old video kicking around somewhere?"

OK, that's probably not how it happened, but that is, indeed, what the show consists of: two vehicles from Burden's personal collection, parked on the gallery floor; a few big Polaroids depicting Burden and his assistant standing next to these vehicles; and a video, made in 2004, of another work, called "Metropolis." The effect is that of a formidable artist at the height of his career reaching into his sock drawer for ideas.

The funny thing is, it kind of works. The show's title is "Yin Yang," and the two vehicles — a 1973 Lotus Europa and a 1954 International T6 tractor — illustrate the concept beautifully: one 1,500 pounds, fast, extremely fragile and totally impractical, the other 5,000 pounds, creeping-slow and all but indestructible.



DOUGLAS M. PARKER Gagosian Gallery

VROOM WITH A VIEW: Chris Burden's exhibit includes a 1973 Lotus Europa, along with photographs and a 2004 video.

The virtue of the display is its apparent lack of irony. The photographs are kind of goofy, but Burden's affection for the vehicles, rooted in a professed admiration for engineering and industrial design, is infectious: They're beautiful objects and share the space with a quiet, touching sort of dignity.

The video, screened in a small room just off the main space, presents another clever inversion: tiny, plastic Hot Wheels cars buzzing on a track that weaves around a slow-moving model monorail. It is a mesmerizing spectacle of mindless intensity. The blind determination of these hardy little cars, their dizzy

rattle against the edges of each curve, the delicious sound of plastic scraping plastic, the thrilling precariousness of it all — it's enough to awaken the 9-year-old boy in anyone.

Gagosian Gallery, 456 N. Camden Drive, Beverly Hills, (310) 271-9400, through Aug. 10. Closed Sundays and Mondays.
www.gagosian.com.