



CHRIS BURDEN

Measured

Opening reception: Saturday, September 29, 6–8pm
September 29, 2018–January 26, 2019
6–24 Britannia Street, London

Chris Burden, *Porsche with Meteorite*, 2013, restored 1974 Porsche 914, 390-pound meteorite, and steel structure © Chris Burden/Licensed by the Chris Burden Estate and Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

September 11, 2018

“Limits” is a relative term. Like beauty, it is often in the eye of the beholder.
—Chris Burden

Gagosian is pleased to present *Measured*, an exhibition of two large-scale works by Chris Burden: *1 Ton Crane Truck* (2009) and *Porsche with Meteorite* (2013).

With a series of startling actions in the early 1970s, Burden challenged his own mental and physical limitations, and with them the boundaries of art and performance. Shut inside a locker for five days (*Five Day Locker Piece*, 1971), shot in the arm (*Shoot*, 1971), and nailed through the palms of his hands to the roof of his Volkswagen (*Trans-fixed*, 1974), he sought to reflect the violence that defined American politics, society, and media. Over the course of his career, the daring spirit of these early performances evolved into compelling large-scale sculptures that embody technical feats on an imposing scale. Burden used toys (figurines, train sets, Erector parts) as the building blocks for expansive scale models of skyscrapers, dystopic cities, and battlefields; conversely, he deployed actual vehicles (ships, trucks, and cars) in surreal and gravity-defying ways.

At the Britannia Street galleries, a functional 1964 F350 Ford crane-truck is held in balance with the weight of a one-ton cast-iron cube, and a Porsche 914 sports car is suspended in equilibrium with a meteorite. Both vehicles have been restored to pristine condition using contemporary materials, from fresh paint to new tires. In *1 Ton Crane Truck*, the Ford is painted bright orange and the custom-made cube suspended from its crane boom announces its weight—"1 TON"—in recessed lettering, forcing the viewer to consider the physical capacities of the familiar American vehicle.

Burden pushed this precarious sense of balance even further in *Porsche with Meteorite*. Like a giant seesaw, a yellow Porsche and a nickel-iron meteorite hang from either end of a steel beam. The fulcrum, placed off-center, distributes the weight so that both objects are raised from the floor. The Porsche, at 993.4 kilograms (2,190 lbs.), weighs down the short end of the beam, and the meteorite, at 176.9 kilograms (390 lbs.), counterbalances it on the long end. *Porsche with Meteorite* thus draws attention to the relativity of size, weight, and value, juxtaposing refined German manufacture with an extraterrestrial metal chunk.

Both *1 Ton Crane Truck* and *Porsche with Meteorite* were included in *Chris Burden: Extreme Measures*, Burden's career retrospective at the New Museum, New York, in 2013-14.

In 2008, Burden's *Urban Light*, an installation of 202 functional streetlamps, was permanently installed at the entrance to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. A widely recognized icon of the city, the work will remain on view after the completion of LACMA's new campus.

Chris Burden was born in Boston in 1946, and died in Topanga Canyon, California, in 2015. Collections include the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and Tate, London. Solo museum exhibitions include *Chris Burden: A Twenty-Year Survey*, Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA (1988, traveled to Carnegie Mellon University Art Gallery, Pittsburgh; and Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, through 1989); *When Robots Rule: The Two-Minute Airplane Factory*, Tate Britain, London (1999); *Tower of Power*, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna (2002); *14 Magnolia Double Lamps*, South London Gallery (2006); Middelheim Museum, Antwerp, Belgium (2009); *Chris Burden: Three Ghost Ships*, Portland Art Museum, OR (2011-12); *Magasin III*, Stockholm (2012-13); *Chris Burden: Extreme Measures*, New Museum, New York (2013-14); *Chris Burden: The Master Builder*, Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA (2014); and *Chris Burden: Ode to Santos Dumont*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2015).

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