

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

Wallpaper*

Heavy metal: Richard Serra's weighty installations at Gagosian gallery, New York

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Richard Serra's latest New York City show – held at both Gagosian locations downtown – continue the artists' use of oversized forged and rusted steel. Pictured: 'Every Which Way', 2015. Photography: Christian Mascaro, courtesy of the artist and Gagosian Gallery

Richard Serra's arresting metal sculptures have always had a way of sucking all the oxygen out of the room. And that's a good thing. His current New York City show – held at both Gagosian locations downtown – continue the artists' use of oversized forged and rusted steel to create powerful, Pharaonic forms.

The most visceral piece, sited at the gallery's 21st location, is *NJ-1*, 2015, a walk-through installation made up for enormous 4-metre rusted sheets of weatherproof steel. Echoing his many earlier experiential works, the piece is comprised of two semi-attached oblongs, reminiscent of an industrial tanker or ship run aground (familiar Serra motifs). As the visitor walks through the cathedral-like space there's a definite sensation of dislocation; of exploring a forbidden relic of a massive scale. The artist is constantly forcing you to renegotiate your relationship with the artwork.

Gagosian's 24th Street location is home to *Above Below Betwixt Between*, *Every Which Way*, *Silence (for John Cage)*, *Through*: three solid steel slab works as well as a drawing. The luminous white gallery at 24th street is anchored by *Silence (for John Cage)*, a minimalist masterwork featuring an 80-ton forged steel slab, which, laid-down horizontally, dominates the space. Primitive and raw, it has an almost overwhelming physical presence.

The other pieces in this series continue the same effect, applying the slabs in various configurations to explore the artist's ideas about weight, balance and space. *Every Which Way* is another standout: the work features 16 foot-thick slabs set on a rectangular grid of three heights. Strolling between, one feels as if they are in a kind of funereal procession. The effect is a fitting rejoinder to the other works and *NJ-1*, 2015's powerful material presence.