

POETIC PRACTICAL

**THE
UNREALIZED
WORK
OF
CHRIS
BURDEN**

GAGOSIAN

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Yayoi Shionoiri

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Sydney Stutterheim

PART 1: ENERGY 15

Projects that investigate techniques for manipulating energy, including works that harness the forces of the natural world and those that explore the outermost limits of scientific or technological advancement at the time of their making

FORCES OF NATURE 17

- 18 *The Atomic Compass, 2005*
- 24 *The Atomic Compass II, 2006*
- 28 *Proposal for the Estuaire Biennial, Nantes, France, 2006*
- 32 *Beam Drop for Michael Ovitz, 2008*
- 34 *Burden Water Wheel, 2013*
- 38 *Proposal for Rotterdam Centraal Station, 2014*

TECHNOLOGY 43

- 44 *Moon Piece, 1986*
- 46 *Proposal for the Exploratorium, San Francisco, 1987*
- 50 *Three-Dimensional Display of the Expanding/Contracting Cities, 1995*
- 52 *Water Cycle, 1997*
- 56 *Sputnik, 1999*
- 60 *Camera Chair, 2001*

PART 2: SYSTEMS 65

Projects centered on various systems, including works that revolve around transportation, whether by land, sea, or air; those that focus on anthropological, community-related, religious, or societal activities; and others that explore the physical, financial, or logistical capabilities of established institutions

TRANSPORTATION 67

- 68 *Dinner Train*, early 1980s
- 74 *C.B. World Transit*, 1995
- 76 *Proposal for City Space, Copenhagen*, 1995
- 80 *Ring Canal Project*, 1995
- 82 *Car Stories*, 2005

SOCIAL 91

- 92 *Bottle Pile*, ongoing since early 1980s
- 96 *Sex Tower*, 1985
- 102 *Gold Boat*, 1999
- 104 *Vienna Shining*, 2003
- 108 *Church*, early 2010s
- 110 *Iron Bar Edition*, 2013

INSTITUTIONAL 115

- 116 *Proposal for the Seattle Arts Commission*, 1990
- 122 *My Dream Show at the MAK*, 1994
- 126 *Uber Block/Uber Cube*, 2008
- 128 *World Trade Center Memorial*, 2008
- 130 *Proposal for La Monnaie, Paris*, 2013

PART 3: ARCHITECTURE ¹³⁵

Projects stemming from Burden's extensive interests in architecture and engineering, including structures that draw on a traditional architectural vocabulary or take the form of more oblique or whimsical approaches, materials, and interventions; and works that stretch the boundaries of engineering strategies

STRUCTURES ¹³⁷

- 138 *Coffee Cans and Scotch Containers, ongoing since early 1980s*
- 140 *The Little Red School House, 1988*
- 142 *Orange County Skyscraper, 2003*
- 144 *Proposal for the Fourth Plinth Project, London, 2003*
- 150 *Proposal for the Grand Avenue Project, Los Angeles, 2008*
- 152 *Skyscraper Proposal for Inhotim, Brumadinho, Brazil, 2008*
- 156 *Taller, Narrower Erector Skyscraper, 2008*
- 158 *Proposal for Lever House, New York, 2013*

ENGINEERING ¹⁶⁵

- 166 *Swimming Lane, early 1980s*
- 168 *Tower of Babel, 1989*
- 170 *Future Bridge Projects, 2002*
- 172 *1,300 Foot Foot Bridge, 2004*
- 174 *Dry Stack Arch Bridge, 2010*
- 178 *Proposal for Jill and Peter Kraus, Dutchess County, NY, 2010*
- 182 *Buddy L Helix, 2012*

PART 4: POWER 185

Projects that take the form of aesthetic inquiries into the limits of either mechanical or political forces

MECHANICAL 187

- 188 *Spinning Dervish*, 1986
- 192 *The Hand of God*, 1988
- 194 *Stainless Ship*, 1990
- 196 *E-Motorcycle*, late 1990s
- 198 *Proposal for Gagosian Gallery, New York*, 2000
- 204 *Two Quickies Are Better than One*, 2010

POLITICAL 207

- 208 *The Sailing Destroyer*, 1989
- 214 *Proposal for the Blacklisted Ten Project, USC, Los Angeles*, 1990
- 218 *Capitalism and Communism*, 1992
- 222 *Sculpture for East Germany*, 1992
- 224 *The Matterhorn*, 1997
- 226 *Bush/Rambush*, sometime during George W. Bush's presidency
- 228 *The Austrian Navy*, 2002
- 232 *Ever Burning American Flag*, 2007
- 234 *Two Friends from the Cold War*, 2007
- 236 *Rag Tag Army and Christian Strike Force*, 2010

PART 5: XANADU ²⁴¹

Burden's unrealized magnum opus, a metaphorical city condensed to its essential elements, conceived in four full iterations and in proposals detailing some of its individual elements

242 *Xanadu*, 2008

248 *Xanadu (Proposal for LACMA)*, 2008

254 *Xanadu (Proposal for Larry Gagosian)*, 2011

256 *Xanadu (Proposal for New Museum)*, 2012

258 *Chrisville*, n.d.

260 *La Fortina*, n.d.

264 *Fountain*, n.d.

EPILOGUE: THE LAST NOTEBOOK ²⁶⁶

ANATOMY OF THE ARTIST ²⁷⁵

Donatien Grau