

Intrepid Traveler: Piero Golia Raises The Standard

By Erin Magner | Photo by Joshua White | ModernLuxury.com | May 28, 2010



If you find yourself driving up the Sunset Strip and you spot a massive orb glowing on the horizon, don't call NASA—what you see is Italian-born artist Piero Golia's *Luminous Sphere* installation, which has just taken up residence atop [The Standard](#) hotel. The premise behind the bulbous beacon—which was created in collaboration with Los Angeles Public Domain and LA><ART to celebrate the latter's fifth birthday—is simple. It lights up with Golia is in town, and goes dark when he's away. We chatted with the globetrotting, joke-flinging artist to find out more about his project, while getting some insight into his favorite places to visit while the light is on.

What's the idea behind the installation?

I don't know why I got the idea or when I got the idea... we all make some mistakes! But L.A. is a city on a very big scale, and if you want to communicate with people you should use their own language. L.A. is a city that communicates through landmarks... and this can be a very geographical piece that you see on your way to work and it becomes your own personal thing. [Those who don't know what it means might think] it's on because it's sunny and off because it's raining, or on weekdays it's on and weekends it's off. And then when you see it off on a weekday, [your thinking changes].

Why did you choose The Standard?

When I first came to L.A., I needed to find a place to stay for two weeks—they put me at The Standard and they told me that this is where everybody sooner or later comes.

How often can we expect the light to be on?

I'm scared to fly, [but] for now, I'm not powerful enough to say I'm never going to leave my for six months I don't do anything.

When you are in town, what are a few of your favorite haunts?

I usually like things that people don't go to, because I never understood why people would want to go to a place with a lot of people. I think empty restaurants are the best restaurants in L.A., but unfortunately the ones with good food are not empty. There's a nice Italian place on Beverly called [Tarroni](#) (7605 Beverly Blvd., 323.954.0300)—it's one of the only places I would eat pizza in L.A. My favorite sushi restaurant is [Matsuda](#) (11837 Ventura Blvd., Studio City). I also love going to the mall—it's a little embarrassing, but I'm a big fan of [The Americana](#) in Glendale (889 Americana Way, 818.637.8862). It's the same thing I love about Vegas, the difference between fiction and reality.

What about when you want to get some culture—favorite galleries, movie theaters, etc.?

If I say one gallery, then everybody else will hate me, and I really love people's love so I love them all the same amount. I'm a film buff, so I will go everywhere to see a movie. I love the [Nuart](#) in Santa Monica (11272 Santa Monica Blvd., 310.281.8223), but people in Santa Monica don't want to see [independent movies], and people on the Eastside don't want to drive to Santa Monica, so let's move the theater East and we will be done. No music for me—I can't really go into a room with so many people together, so I don't go to concerts. I go shooting a lot downtown at the [Los Angeles Gun Club](#) (1375 E. 6th St., 213.612.0931). It's all about knowledge.

Would you consider moving the Luminous Sphere to another city—perhaps Naples, where you spend a lot of your time?

No. This is something that only makes sense in L.A. To put something like this in Beijing or Rome or Tokyo, it's not going to evoke the same power as L.A. This is not really the place to make public art... [but] with the Standard, you don't [feel] the weight of a big fortune. They're very simple.

Luminous Sphere will be on view until May 2011 at The Standard, 8300 W. Sunset Blvd., Hollywood. 323.650.9090 or standardhotels.com