

Tom Sachs: Space Program
Gagosian Gallery - Beverly Hills, CA
20 August 2007

"Going to the moon was THE art project of the twentieth century."

"Ultimately everything I make is a vehicle to support my bricolage."

- Tom Sachs

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition by Tom Sachs.
This is his first exhibition with the gallery.

In his exuberant manufacture of objects and scenarios, Sachs asks barbed questions of modern creativity that relate to conception, production, consumption, and circulation. Using his prodigious technical skill to expound on the make-do ethics of bricolage, Sachs refashions the world out of simple stuff - foam-core, hot-glue, and standard materials, scavenged or readily available from d-i-y catalogs. But beneath his compulsive tinker's mentality and ribald wit is a conceptual delicacy that addresses serious and profound issues - namely the commodification of abstract concepts such as originality, shock, newness, and mystery - expressing them in the personal and physical terms of production and process. Sachs provokes reflection on the haves and havenots, utopian follies, dystopian realities, profligate consumption and even more profligate waste as he expands his scope of creativity from crude yet ingenious perversions of weaponry and luxury accoutrements "HG (Hermès Hand Grenade)," 1995; "Chanel Guillotine (Breakfast Nook)," 1998) to re-imagined living systems on an increasingly ambitious scale ("Nutsy's," 2003).

For more than a decade Sachs has pondered the homespun technical ingenuity and romance with the unknown that brought America the Apollo program. Experimenting with models of varying scale ("Lunar Module (1:18)," 1999; "Crawler," 2003) has culminated in the realization of his own life-size SPACE PROGRAM. Pirating the milestone in collective memory when man took his first walk on the moon, Sachs reconstructs its key components, built to scale his way. By recollecting this historic event as a custom-made experience from the free domain of public imagination, he renders it totally in and of our time, charged by a vigorous artistic idiom that is ambivalent to the core. In a new twist on his shameless cannibalizing of corporate identity, Sachs now has the giants of high-style branding - Nike, Prada, and the like - working for him to produce items (lab coats, space boots) for the detailed inventory of his funky space odyssey.

In addition to the huge, intricately built lunar module that is the centerpiece of SPACE PROGRAM - replete with such classic Sachsian features as a fully stocked booze cabinet, toolkit, and soundtrack necessary for survival on an alien planet - visitors will find a fully functioning mission-control unit. On a grid of monitors, the liturgy of space exploration unfolds in a live demonstration by Sachs and his team, involving countless rituals and procedures, from instrument checks to moon-walking and sample-collecting to splash-down. Thus the gallery becomes a sort of reliquary of both the material traces and special effects of the artist's encounters with the terrible sublime.

Tom Sachs was born in New York in 1966. After studying at the Architectural Association in London in 1987, he received a B.A. from Bennington College, Vermont in 1989. His work has been included in many exhibitions in the U.S. and abroad, and has been collected by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Centre Georges Pompidou, San Francisco MOMA, and the Astrup Fearnley Museet for Moderne Kunst, Oslo. Major solo exhibitions include SITE Santa Fe (1999), the Bohen Foundation, New York (2002), Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin (2003), Astrup Fearnley Museet for Moderne Kunst, Oslo, and Fondazione Prada, Milan (2006). Sachs lives and works in New York.