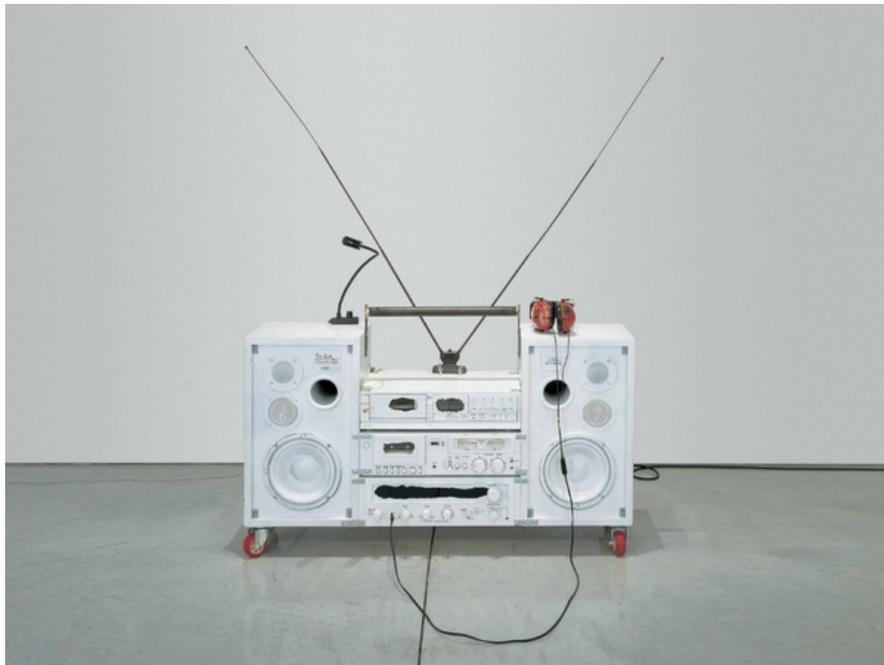


GAGOSIAN GALLERY



Inside Tom Sachs' completely immersive *Boombox Retrospective* at The Contemporary Austin

Nicole Raney



"Model One" (1999) by Tom Sachs. Courtesy of The Contemporary Austin

"Music is the soundtrack of our lives," explained artist Tom Sachs as he stood in front of speakers blaring Lil Wayne. On Saturday, Sachs' *Boombox Retrospective 1999-2015* opened at The Contemporary Austin — but this ain't your mama's fine art. This highly anticipated show of Sachs' sculptures at the Jones Center downtown a collection of working boomboxes.

The entire exhibition functions as a sound system that can be controlled through the "booth," a console in the middle of the gallery embedded into a working mini bar (complete with liquor). From there, carefully curated music playlists — most of which include hip-hop and rap — flow into pieces that range from ceramic boomboxes forged in the kilns out at Laguna Gloria to a set of 12-foot-tall speakers modeled off those used by Hitler during his Nazi propaganda speeches.

The music that plays as you explore the gallery space is just as much a part of the exhibition as the actual work itself. There's even a pirate radio station broadcasting the tunes; next time you're in your car, try turning the dial to 94.3 FM.

Known for his mixed media sculptures and DIY approach, the New York-based Sachs has a varied background that includes studying architecture in London and working as a non-union welder in New York City during the 1990s. His work is heavily influenced by his own social commentary on consumerism and pop culture as well as his appropriation of recognizable characters like Hello Kitty and Bart Simpson.

Sachs often uses a variety of household materials like plywood and duct tape to create a sort of contemporary hardware sculpture. In addition to the boomboxes at the Jones Center, Sachs also has a few larger sculptures on display at Laguna Gloria, including a working water fountain with a bronze figure of beloved picture book character Miffy.

Running at the same time as *Boombox Retrospective 1999-2015* is an exhibition from Sachs' friend, mentor and fellow artist JJ PEET entitled *BRAIN to HAND to OBJECT_*, which can be found at the Laguna Gloria Gatehouse Gallery. In fact, Sachs invited PEET to form his own exhibition at The Contemporary Austin, making it the Texas show for both of these artists. Although his resume leans heavily toward ceramic work and not contemporary bricolage, PEET's show mixes several mediums and materials from plastic flowers to slabs of metal in addition to his original ceramics.

Boombox Retrospective 1999-2015 runs through April 19 at the Jones Center and Laguna Gloria, while *BRAIN to HAND to OBJECT_* is on display exclusively at Laguna Gloria. A special culinary event in February, curated L'Oca D'Oro's Chef Fiore Tedesco and musician Toto Miranda from The Octopus Project, will feature food inspired by Sachs.

For more information about Tom Sachs and his work, visit [The Contemporary Austin website](#) — then experience the exhibition for yourself.