

Tom Sachs

Fondazione Prada

Milan

6 April - 11 June 2006

On April 6, Fondazione Prada inaugurated a show dedicated to the American artist Tom Sachs. The exhibition, which will remain open from 6 April to 15 June 2006, presents works made from 1995 on, and two large installations conceived specially for the 1,500 square metres of the Fondazione space in Via Fogazzaro 36 in Milan.

The first installation, *The Island* (2006), is a large-scale (1:7; maximum height 4.7 m) reconstruction of the command area on the bridge of an aircraft carrier, called the “island”, combining the control tower and other important ship functions. Sachs took his inspiration from the first and most important American aircraft carrier to run on nuclear power, Enterprise CVN 65. *The Island* is fully equipped with working radar, monitor, and radio devices, and television cameras; the cabin is furnished with everyday necessities and has two berths, a cabinet stocked with cigarettes and alcoholic beverages, and a toilet, in addition to a series of things needed for the maintenance of the “island”.

For the other installation, *Balaenoptera Musculus* (2006), a life-sized reconstruction of an 18-metre long blue whale, Tom Sachs took his inspiration from the whale model hanging in the ocean life hall at the American Museum of Natural History, in New York. The whale, which, for its size, Sachs calls “adolescent”, is made in foam core, cardboard, and white polyurethane foam, a material often used for architectural models. More than four months were needed to complete the entire structure and cover it with foam core sheeting laminated with hot silicon glue.

The third work, on show for the first time at the Fondazione Prada space, *Untitled (1989 Chevy Caprice)*, 2006, is a police car that Sachs personalized with writing and equipped with a set of burglary tools.

Alongside the three big works, a series of other works is on display: five rifles made between 1994 and 2004, built with recycled materials and fully functioning, complete with safety catch; *Delinquency Chamber*, a room endowed with every comfort, to which one can retreat to drink, smoke, sit down and play the videogame “Grand Theft Auto”, a violent and realistic game set in the city of “Los Santos”: inside are a refrigerator, a stereo system, a ventilation system to extract the smoke, and a waste bin; *Untitled (McDonald’s Mop Bucket)*, 2003, made of foam core, painstakingly reproduces the bucket and mop ringer used for cleaning the floors of public spaces, while *Electrolux* (1999, foam core) is a replica of a vacuum cleaner. The artist, using a term from the musical world, calls these last two works “dubs”: objects that really exist and are widely used, recreated by hand, often using recycled materials.

The works on show at Fondazione Prada offer a panorama of the themes inspiring Sachs’s work, elaborated in reproductions of objects in a caustic parody of the unbridled consumerism,

the wild rush for luxury goods, and the aggressiveness associated with contemporary society; they are sculptures representing the violence, sex, and instruments of war that have penetrated our day-to-day lives, camouflaged by slogans and seductive wrappings; they are “the images and objects that make up the military zone of consumption and fashion which are the crux of Tom Sachs’s visual passion”, as Germano Celant writes in his contribution to the catalogue.

Tom Sachs takes his inspiration from the collective American imagination, borrowing his subjects from among the status symbols of mass culture: weapons, fast food, hip hop, surfing, and skateboarding, and he mixes them with the manias of rich and snobbish American society that sees in luxury, conformism, and designer labels an acknowledgment of belonging to the ruling social class.

Tom Sachs (New York, 1966) studied at Bennington College in Vermont and at the Architectural Association of London. His works have been shown in many important museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Bothen Foundation, all in New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin; the Hamburger Kunsthalle in Hamburg; and the Astrup Fearnley Museet for Moderne Kunst in Oslo, where a monograph show is still in course.

The exhibition is curated by Germano Celant, and is accompanied by a 491-page catalogue that offers a sweeping look at the artist’s career and works, essays by Germano Celant and Malcolm Gladwell, and a lengthy interview between Germano Celant and Tom Sachs.

On Friday, 7 April at 6 o’clock pm, Tom Sachs met with the public at the exhibition venue. The initiative was part of the *InContemporanea* project launched by the Province of Milan Assessorato di Cultura.

Event information

<i>Title:</i>	Tom Sachs
<i>Calendar:</i>	6 April - 11 June 2006
<i>Location:</i>	Fondazione Prada
<i>Address:</i>	Via Fogazzaro 36, Milan
<i>Hours:</i>	Tuesday - Sunday, 10 am - 8 pm; closed Mondays
<i>Admission:</i>	free
<i>Publication:</i>	Fondazione Prada
<i>Information:</i>	Fondazione Prada, tel. + 39 02 54670515, fax + 39 02 54670258 www.fondazioneprada.org info@fondazioneprada.org
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