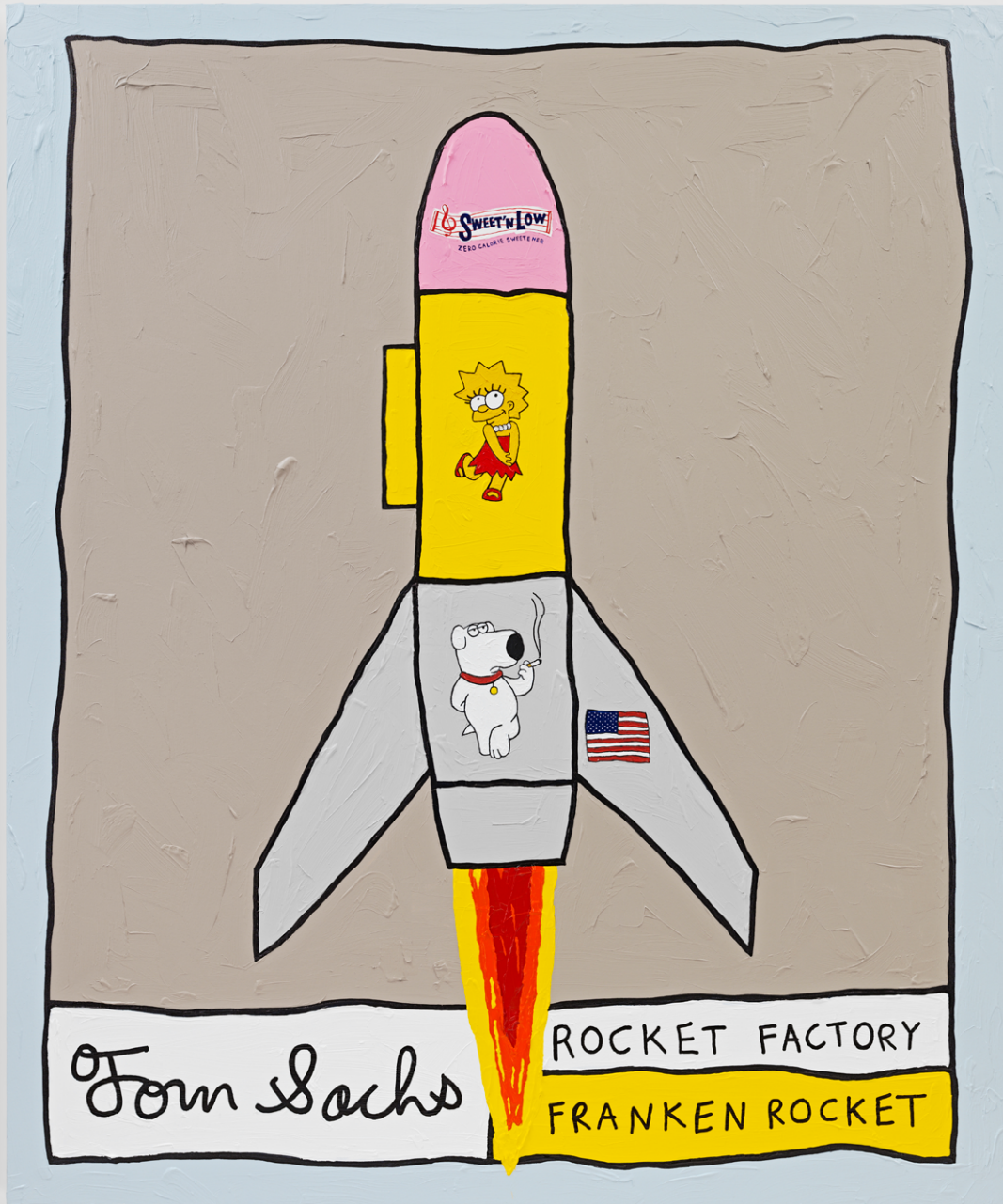


Tom Sachs:

ROCKET FACTORY PAINTINGS



SEOUL FORT HILL

25 JUNE → 20 AUGUST 2022

Thaddaeus Ropac

London Paris Salzburg Seoul

Tom Sachs

Rocket Factory Paintings

Seoul Fort Hill
2F, Fort Hill, 122-1, Dokseodang-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul

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Thaddaeus Ropac Seoul presents *Tom Sachs: Rocket Factory Paintings*, the first exhibition dedicated entirely to the American artist's celebrated breakthrough *Rocket Factory* NFT collection. Fourteen paintings depicting iconically branded Rockets and Rocket Components will be on show. The exhibition, which runs concurrently with the artist's solo shows at Art Sonje Center and HYBE Insight, completes the first comprehensive survey of Sachs' work in Seoul.

Drawing inspiration from the Conceptual art movement between 1968-1972, the *Rocket Factory* NFT collection presents a framework: a series of conditions, a set of rules, but the results are left for the community to decide. From the 150,000+ possible ways to combine the 30 iconically branded Component NFTs, the community gets to choose which 1,000 Rocket NFTs the world deserves.

The thirty brands are each pop culture icons, including Chanel, Budweiser, Coca-Cola and Apple, among others. Here, Sachs builds a Rosetta stone between Pop art and Conceptual art. Together, these brands form a self-portrait of the artist, within which viewers might recognise themselves. 'Brands form our sense of tribal belonging,' says Sachs about his choices. 'In my childhood, at the kitchen table we would discuss dad's new car or mom's new dress. Brands are the foundation of the dominant religion of our era – consumerism.'

While the current NFT space is largely concerned with creating digital versions of physical artworks, Sachs turns this idea on its head, using the digital Rocket NFTs created by the community as the blueprints for creating physical artworks. The digital rockets are minted and born from the community, but each digital Rocket that Sachs paints is entirely his choice.

Each painting on view is derived from the digital art that comprises the *Rocket Factory*. Originating as a series of digital iPad drawings, the multi-layered NFT collection has become among the artist's most ambitious projects to date. The quintessential crossover, the *Rocket Factory* spans the worlds of digital Web 3.0 and the physical plywood-space functioning as a transdimensional manufacturing plant where every Rocket NFT is recreated as a Physical Rocket Sculpture.

Tom Sachs: Rocket Factory Paintings continues the artist's three-decade-long career, producing handmade recreations of cultural icons by reimagining his own work, and transforming pixels into paintings. These Rocket Paintings represent the golden intersection of three brands and a provocative title. Guided by the materiality of paint, thick impasto brushstrokes crash like waves against clean, hard-edged borders – these are paintings that all follow the same structure, yet are each different. Sachs employs the techniques of traditional oil painting, championed by Abstract

Expressionism, and refined by the modern advances of synthetic polymer. While challenging our understanding of art, Sachs continuously prioritises the viscerally handmade object by pulling the metaverse back into the meatspace.

About the Tom Sachs Rocket Factory

Tom Sachs' Rocket Factory is the definitive transdimensional NFT collection, linking physical 'meatspace' with the digital cryptosphere. Released in the summer of 2021, the Rocket Factory invites the community to assemble three separate Component NFTs into a single Rocket NFT - using the blockchain.

The Rocket Factory developed this new Web 3.0 functionality, dubbed 'comburning', as a first-of-its-kind method for building new NFTs, using existing NFTs. The process introduces endless possibilities to this emerging technology, and is a continuation of Sachs' three decades as a world-renowned sculptor.

In the studio, we say 1 plus 1 equals 1 million.

Every Rocket NFT is built as a physical sculpture at Sachs' studio in Lower Manhattan. Each Rocket is painstakingly hand-painted to match its digital NFT twin, launched, recovered and shipped to its owner. The Rocket Factory has launched Physical Rockets in 14 different locations around the world, and will be doing a Physical Rocket Launch in Seoul at Oil Tank Culture Park on 25 June 2022.

At HYBE INSIGHT, *Tom Sachs: Boombox Retrospective* will focus on the artist's interpretation of the boombox over the past 20 years. With wit and ingenuity, this everyday object – an icon of street culture – is transformed into a sound system that plays music and activates the space. Encompassing art, science, function and myth, the works on view combine both auditory and visual aspects of sound drawing on the artist's love for music.

SPACE PROGRAM: Indoctrination at Art Sonje Center is not a survey. It is an indoctrination center presenting the values of the studio; the curtain has been pulled back to show visitors not only how each work is made, but the philosophy behind the making. The exhibition spaces include a bricolage version of the Apollo Program's Saturn V Moon Rocket, and an array of *Special Effects* sculptures activated during each mission, each now displayed as totemic tributes to Sachs' historical journeys to other worlds. The second floor is dedicated to the meticulous ritual of *Indoctrination*, welcoming visitors to learn about the Studio's codes and rules. By participating in various missions and tests of knowledge, guests will learn what it takes to go to space with only plywood, hot glue, and solder.



Photography by Mario Sorrenti

About the artist

A relentlessly innovative and subversive sculptor, Tom Sachs is best known for his elaborate, bricolage recreations of masterpieces of engineering and design. Humble foam core and plywood replace the gleaming aluminium and polycarbonate of mass-produced items, fabricated with the combination of industrial vigour and handmade artistry that have become his trademark. The themes central to his universe focus on American culture and society, which he treats with a heavy dose of humour and irony. He playfully engages with the corporate ecosystem and the idea of 'brand image' by riffing on luxury consumer items and global brands, which are transformed through their inclusion in an art context.

The artist has long been fascinated with space exploration, in particular the Apollo Program from the 1960s and 1970s, as well as NASA's ongoing role as an incubator for pioneering new technologies that later resurface in everyday life and consumer products. Sachs has realised an entire body of space-related works, including models of various spacecraft, shoes made from materials developed for use in space, and his immersive Space Programs to the Moon, Mars and Europa. As arts leader Deborah Cullinan observes, 'His work reminds us of the seduction and utopian idealism that permeated our culture in the postwar period of space exploration, which [...] continues to imbue the NASA brand with romance and intrigue.'

Sachs's major projects have included his versions of the Apollo 11 Lunar Excursion Module, the bridge of the battleship USS Enterprise, and 1:1 models of a McDonald's Frying Station and Chanel Guillotine, now in the collection of Centre Pompidou, Paris. An important survey of his

work was shown at the Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin in 2003 followed by solo exhibitions at the Astrup Fearnley, Oslo (2006); Fondazione Prada, Milan (2006); *Space Program: Mars*, Park Avenue Armory, New York (2012); *Space Program: Europa*, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2016); and *Boombox Retrospective 1999–2016*, Brooklyn Museum, New York (2016). In 2016–17, he created *Tea Ceremony* for the Noguchi Museum, New York and the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas – a distinctive reworking of chanoyu, a traditional Japanese tea ceremony, including the myriad elements essential to the ritual. His *Swiss Passport Office*, created for Thaddaeus Ropac, London in 2018, reflected contemporary concerns relating to Brexit, the Syrian crisis, Trump's immigration policies and global citizenship. A retrospective of his work was shown at SCHAUWERK Sindelfingen, Germany in 2019, followed by *Space Program: Rare Earths* at Deichtorhallen Hamburg in 2021.

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