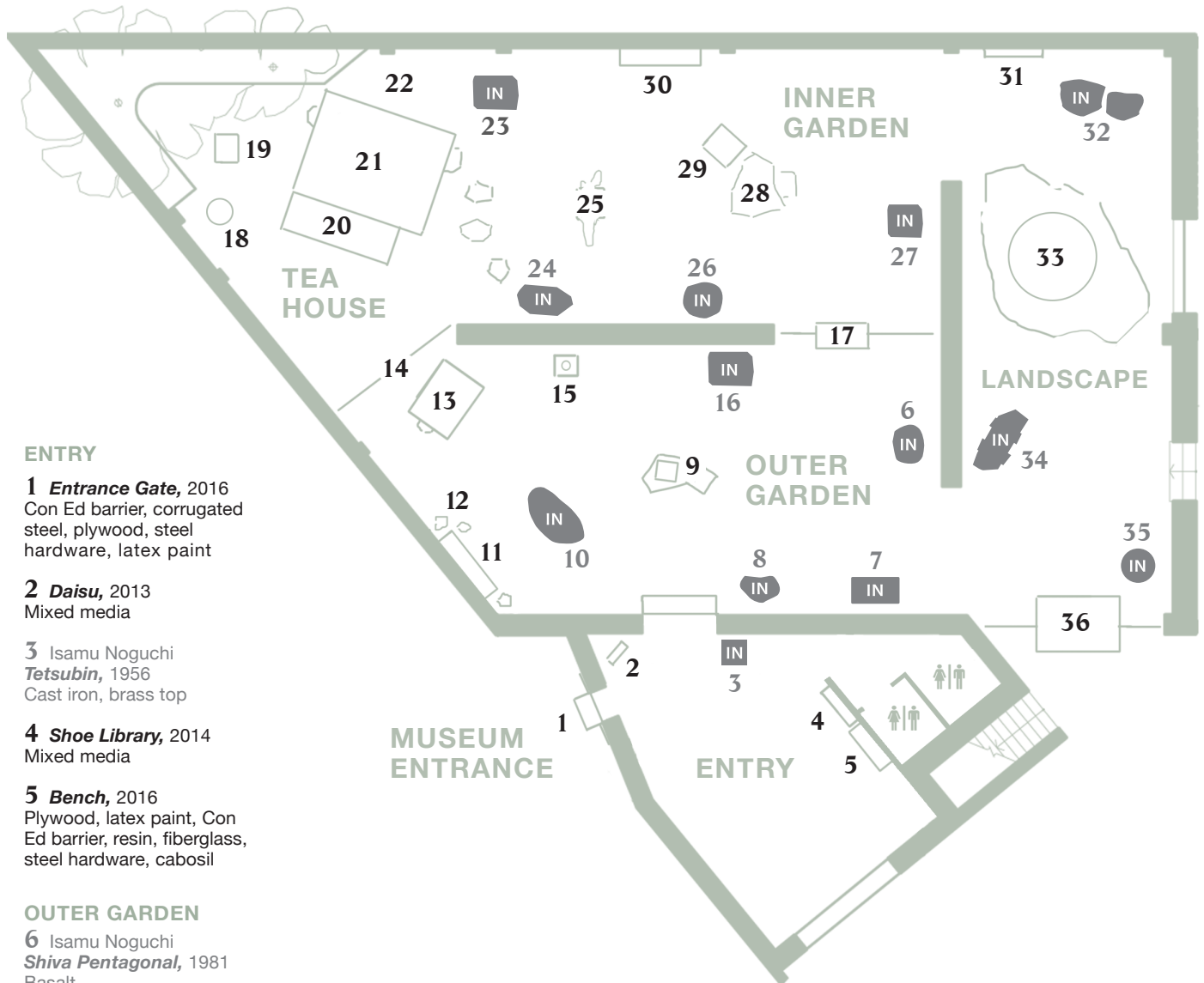


Tom Sachs: TEA CEREMONY

TEA GARDEN ENTRY/AREA 1

The Noguchi Museum March 23 to July 24, 2016



ENTRY

- 1 Entrance Gate**, 2016
Con Ed barrier, corrugated steel, plywood, steel hardware, latex paint
- 2 Daisu**, 2013
Mixed media
- 3** Isamu Noguchi
Tetsubin, 1956
Cast iron, brass top
- 4 Shoe Library**, 2014
Mixed media
- 5 Bench**, 2016
Plywood, latex paint, Con Ed barrier, resin, fiberglass, steel hardware, cabosil

OUTER GARDEN

- 6** Isamu Noguchi
Shiva Pentagonal, 1981
Basalt
- 7** Isamu Noguchi
Narrow Gate, 1981
Basalt
- 8** Isamu Noguchi
Garden Seat, 1983
Basalt
- 9** *Ishidōrō*, 2015
Mixed media
- 10** Isamu Noguchi
Woman, 1983–85
Basalt

- 11** *Waiting Arbor*, 2014
Con Ed barrier, corrugated steel, expanded polystyrene, steel hardware
- 12** *Hibachi*, and *Berms*, 2015–16
Steel, plywood, latex paint, fiberglass, epoxy

- 13** *LAV 3*, 2014
Mixed media
- 14** *Room Dividers*, 2016
Con Ed barrier, snow fence, zip ties
- 15** *Stupa*, 2013
Bronze

- 16** Isamu Noguchi
The Stone Within, 1982
Basalt

- 17** *Chumon (Middle Gate)*, 2014
Con Ed barrier, plywood, latex paint, oil drum, broomsticks

TEA HOUSE

- 18** *BBQ*, 2015
Steel, English porcelain, RTV silicone
- 19** *Sawhaus*, 2015
Mixed media
- 20** *Mizuya Addition*, 2015
Con Ed barrier, expanded polystyrene, resin, plywood, steel hardware, latex paint
- 21** *Tea House*, 2011–12
Mixed media
- 22** *Chiri-ana (Trash Pit)*, 2015
Plywood, bronze, asbestos tile, RTV, epoxy, latex paint

INNER GARDEN

- 23** Isamu Noguchi
Brilliance, 1982
Basalt
- 24** Isamu Noguchi
Human Sacrifice, 1984
Basalt
- 25** *Bonsai*, 2016
Bronze
- 26** Isamu Noguchi
Deepening Knowledge, 1969
Basalt
- 27** Isamu Noguchi
Break Through Capistrano, 1982
Basalt
- 28** *Tsukubai*, 2014
Mixed media
- 29** *Ishidōrō*, 2015
Bronze
- 30** *Waiting Arbor*, 2015
Con Ed barrier, corrugated steel, steel hardware, expanded polystyrene

LANDSCAPE

- 31** *Hyper Pixel Display v1*, 2016
Con Ed barrier, steel hardware, Vizio D-Series
- 32** Isamu Noguchi
Mountain Breaking Theater, 1984
Basalt
- 33** *Pond Berm*, 2016
Plywood, latex paint, steel hardware, carp, koi
- 34** Isamu Noguchi
Give and Take, 1984
Basalt
- 35** Isamu Noguchi
Awa Odori, 1982
Mannari granite

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INTRODUCTION

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Sachs, like Isamu Noguchi, is a cultural synthesizer committed to the traditional American dream of a pluralistic, crazy quilt society. Both believe that our best futures have at least a foot in the past; that technology should affirm craft; that the most sustaining serenity is tinged with chaos; that polarities like East and West can exist harmoniously in productively ambiguous relationships; that the conceptual and the formal are not hand and glove but earth and atmosphere; and that the balkanization of creativity into categories such as "art" and "design" is nonsense.

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Sachs is not alone in regarding Tea as strong enough to adapt to new worlds. In 1951, Noguchi and his then fiancée, the Japanese movie star Yoshiko (Shirley) Yamaguchi, hosted a tea ceremony in Charles and Ray Eames' iconic midcentury modern Case Study house in Pacific Palisades, California. The guest of honor was Charlie Chaplin. Tea was prepared with traditional utensils, but dinner was served on the Eames' new Wire Base Low Tables (1950), with a selection of Noguchi's also new Akari Light Sculptures (electrified paper lanterns) providing illumination. Yamaguchi likely wore one of the kimonos Noguchi designed for her featuring a side zip and a tight fit.

The premise of Noguchi's life and work was the idea that the truest form of respect you can show another culture, traditional or otherwise, is participation: deep engagement, followed by creative adaptation. Mr. Noguchi, meet Tom Sachs. Now, in the immortal words of James Brown: "Get on up. Get into it. Get involved."

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ENTRY

The traditional culture of Tea has become a technique for removing us from the din and artificiality that civilization has superimposed on nature and our relationship to it. The transition starts here in a space devoted to simple preparations: the changing of shoes and socks, the abandonment of phones and keys. But rather than decompression, we begin with a bit of contradictory pre-tensioning.

Sachs' *Daisu* is a rack of mostly terribly inappropriate garden tools, implements we have employed in despoiling the earth. On the other side of the doorway is *Tetsubin*, Noguchi's version of a cast iron tea kettle. Noguchi gave one of these to legendary Japanese garden designer Mirei Shigemori, who he had enlisted as an advisor on his "somewhat Japanese" garden for UNESCO's Paris headquarters. Shigemori described *Tetsubin* as violating every convention of what a tea kettle should be, and demonstrating that Noguchi had strange ideas about what "new" meant with regard to Tea culture. Exactly. (Examples of Sachs' own newfangled kettles can be seen in the display of Tea utensils in Area 14.)

AREA 1: TEA GARDEN

The Tea Garden is broken into four spaces: the exterior landscape, the outer garden, the inner garden, and the tea house. These create concentric circles of remove. To understand Sachs' version of Tea, you have only to imagine The Noguchi Museum as a remote and rocky version of the natural sublime, and Sachs as an enterprising, twentysomething-century monk who has built a tea garden here in search of quietude and enlightenment.

The Outer Garden

The outer garden is every guest or visitor's first step away from the cares of the world. The difficulty of making this escape is suggested by Noguchi's *Narrow Gate*. In traditional Tea, guests spend a lot of time waiting: decompressing in a waiting arbor; admiring elements of the garden such as Sachs' *Stupa* (a mashup—from bottom to top—of McDonald's arches, a pagoda, and a Brancusi) and *Ishidōrō*, a ceramic-lined lantern built on the frame of a walker; and using the facilities (Sachs' *LAV* is a working replica of a Boeing 767 lavatory with an Incinoleet burn toilet).

The Inner Garden

The *Middle Gate* is a psychological airlock. Once through, the world should drop away. Here you'll find Sachs' *Tsukubai*, a water basin for purification; and a *Bonsai* composed of products we use to plumb and police our own innermost depths.

The Tea House and Mizuya Addition

The *Tea House* is the inner sanctum. Casual visitors may view but not enter. This is where the host and his guests indulge in the most universal and unifying luxury of all: just being. The main room features a *tokonoma*, the small shrine the host customizes as an act of hospitality (the scroll painting *It Ain't Bragging If You Can Back It Up* depicts Muhammad Ali as Sen no Rikyū, the godfather of Tea), a scholar's writing desk (holding five full reams of paper and 274 Sharpies), a *Shot Clock* and *Sochin* (a boombox), because in Sachs' Americanized rendering of Tea, enlightenment is on the clock and more easily achieved to a good soundtrack. The *Mizuya Addition* contains the tools the host employs to prepare and serve tea.

The Landscape

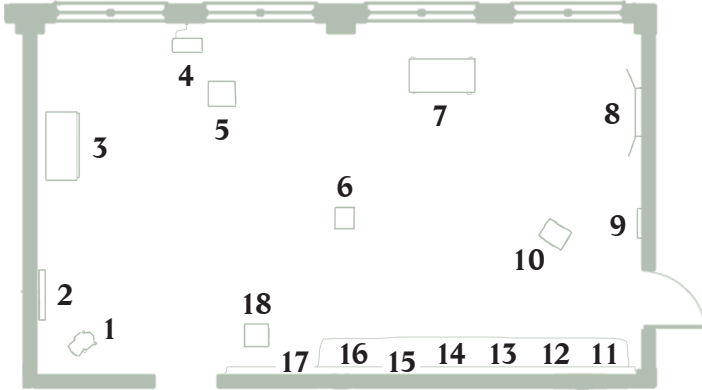
The tea garden occupies the landscape of the total work of art of that is Noguchi's indoor/outdoor galleries and garden. Here buffalo carp and one koi inhabit a tarn set between Noguchi's *Mountain Breaking Theater* and *Give and Take*, collaborations with scale and the sublime. Over this terrain stands Sachs' nod to the surreal presence of a Mt. Fuji, a hyper-pixel video wall displaying his icon, a plywood cinder block (piped via CCTV from the *tokonoma*), rendered heroic in worm's-eye view.

Tom Sachs: TEA CEREMONY

A CAPSULE RETROSPECTIVE

AREA 7

The Noguchi Museum March 23 to July 24, 2016



1 *Untitled (McDonald's Mop Bucket)*, 2003
Foamcore and hot glue, metal wire

2 *McDonald's*, 2013
Synthetic polymer paint and hardware on plywood

3 *Untitled (Unité Facade, B Side)*, 2001
Foamcore and thermal adhesive

4 *Unité Lamp*, 2012
Synthetic polymer paint on plywood, epoxy resin and hardware

5 *Chair*, 2009
Carbon fiber and epoxy resin on IKEA particleboard
Courtesy of Sperone Westwater

6 *Cinderblock*, 2011
Plywood, steel hardware, latex paint, epoxy
(on Noguchi base)

7 *TIE*, 2013
Mixed media (plywood, steel, hardware, basketball)
Collection of Mark Parker

8 *Satan Cabinet*, 2011–12
Mixed media
Collection of Mark Parker

9 *Race Trace*, 2004
Wood, metal, asphalt

10 *Sukebe*, 2012
Epoxy resin, fiberglass, cabosil, steel, synthetic polymer paint, cardboard, and pyrography on plywood, rubber
Courtesy of Baldwin Gallery (on Noguchi base)

11 *White Kelly*, 2012
Plywood, canvas, steel, resin, latex, nylon

12 *Blutcher*, 1996
Mixed media

13 *Sony TR 81*, 1996
Cardboard, thermal adhesive
(on Noguchi base)

14 *McMaster*, 2012
synthetic polymer, silicon bronze

15 *Untitled ("I loved my sister's Barbie so very much. My parents, afraid that I'd turn out gay, encouraged carpentry. In secrecy I made my own. It wasn't love, only lust.")*, 2013
Plywood, hardware, and Vectran
Courtesy of Lora Reynolds Gallery

16 *Tape Dispenser*, 2012
Mixed media
Courtesy of Baldwin Gallery

17 *African American Express*, 2012
Titanium American Express card, synthetic polymer paint on wood

18 *4' x 8' Sheet of Plywood*, 2011
Laminated plywood
Courtesy of Sperone Westwater

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TOM SACHS, CULTURAL APPROPRIATOR: A CAPSULE RETROSPECTIVE

Sachs is the product of a one-world consumer culture. A Mad Hatter of the melting pot, over the last twenty years he has, in his own words, become the Michael Jordan of bricolage, and more specifically of cultural synthesis. Among his many improbable feats of amalgamation before *Tea Ceremony*, was *Nutsy's*, a model car racing environment combining Le Corbusier's totalitarian dream of a clean Paris full of uniform structures, the world-conquering, trillion identical burger devouring ambition of Ray Kroc's McDonald's brand, and the appropriation of African-American music by white America.

Other appropriations have included: attempts to wring humanity, meaning, faith, or anything comprehensible to the Western mind from the Hello Kitty-verse; an entire body of work produced from groups of James Brown's personal effects bought at auction after the singer's death; the eclectic, but sincere grab bag of ethics and social systems in *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*; music as a seedbed of visual culture; America's defining psychopathologies—byways angels should fear to tread—as in *Barbie Slave Ship*, which analogizes the tyranny of the codes of femininity with slavery on a grand scale; the seductiveness of the military-industrial complex as reflected in the fetishization of the precision engineering found in guns and knives and passed through the prism of luxury brand packaging; and even occasionally the less appalling precincts of the art world, represented here by a replica of a Donald Judd chair made from IKEA particleboard, carbon fiber tape, and resin.

The most important object here is not the Hermès Kelly Bag, but the most seemingly humble: *Untitled (McDonald's Mop Bucket)* is a foamcore copy of the mop bucket the fast food chain McDonald's developed for use in all of its restaurants based on ideal ergonomic practice. It is said to be the perfect mop bucket. By copying it by hand, much as Verrocchio and Michelangelo copied Greek and Roman antiquities, Sachs internalized its lessons of efficiency, labor and industry, and its high valuation of innovation: everywhere and all of the time. It sets a high bar for design with use value, one even Le Corbusier's *Unité*, referenced here in both *Untitled (Unité Facade: B Side)* and *Unité Lamp*, has a hard time measuring up to.

Wherever Sachs has turned, he has breathed belief, life, and soul—in the form of pressing questions and active passions—into the material cultures he has embraced. The elaboration of his hybrid universes often involves the violation of decorum and occasionally seems to replace tradition with nothing but smirking apostasies. But this is to misunderstand the nature of satire. There is a wonderful paragraph near the beginning of Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People From Being a Burthen to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick*, that epitomizes the need corrective action often has to go too far. Sachs employs the strategies of cultural appropriation, but, like Batman, he flirts with darkness in order to do good.

INTRODUCTION

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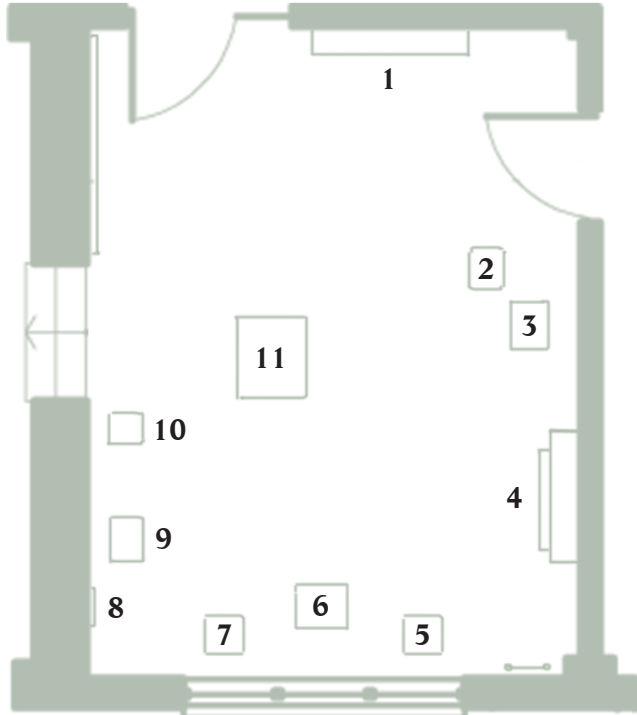
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SACHS' CULTURE OF TEA

AREA 14



1 Large Chawan Cabinet, 2014
Porcelain, gold lustre, pine, latex, glass beads, steel hardware, epoxy resin, UV plexiglass
Courtesy of Salon 94

2 Kama, 2013
Bronze

3 Geta, 2013
Con Ed barrier, NIKE waffle sole, Sharpie, plywood, latex paint, steel hardware, nylon ribbon

4 Mizuya Back Up Unit (with various SMUTs, utensils and ladder), 2014
Mixed media

(Below)
Mouse Oracle, 2015
Mixed media
(on Noguchi base)

Fat Albert Prisoner Transport System, 2016
Steel, mixed media

5 Shuki, 2014
Con Ed barrier, plywood, epoxy, steel hardware, latex paint, cable clamps, Mini-Maglite

6 Lobster, 2016
Steel, linear polyurethane paint

7 Kama, 2015
Mixed media

8 I Have Been—and Always Shall Be—Your Friend, 2016
Army tarp, Kapton, Tyvek, linen, watercolor, acrylic, ink, strapping tape, pool cue

9 Shoburo, 2012
Mixed media
(on Noguchi base)

10 Rikyu's Ecstasy, 2015
Plywood, epoxy, mixed media

11 Kabuto, 2015
Helmet, paracord, foamcore, fiberglass, epoxy

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SACHS' CULTURE OF TEA

There are terms in Japanese to distinguish between tea ceremony guests who own famous utensils—a bowl, a scoop, a tea leaf storage container—and those who do not. There are tea bowls as famous as the *Mona Lisa*. Many have names and provenances as complex as any panel painting by Leonardo da Vinci. These special utensils are venerated with a fervor we might associate with the religious relics used by the pre-Reformation Catholic Church.

Sachs' material culture of Tea abounds in special objects and tools, the products of an ergonomic mania and an accelerated, but deep, process of formal and functional refinement. Resinware, for example, is Sachs' improvement on traditional lacquerware. Resin is softer and more durable, and is even dishwasher safe-ish. *Tokkuri*, Sachs' sake bottle, an example of resinware, carries a Maglite attachment that: 1. facilitates safe pouring in the dim environment in the tea house, 2. enables the guest to admire the flow of liquid, and 3. creates drama. *Kama*, a Panasonic water heater with an integrated ladle holder and precise, one-touch functionality is an obvious improvement on the whole ritual of charcoal making and water temperature management required in traditional Tea. Sachs' bronze brazier, also *Kama*, was adapted from a Chinese form by the addition of a Jack-o-lantern smile and the head of Yoda, replacing the traditional chrysanthemum blossom, on the lid. Yoda is, of course, the most important representative of Eastern philosophies in the United States. (*Sawhaus* and *BBQ* in the clearing behind the *Tea House* are Sachs' variations on the traditional equipment required to make charcoal.)

The *Mizuya Backup Unit* contains many of the SMUTs (Sachs Modular Utility Trays), modeled on airline and cafeteria service equipment, necessary to serve Tea in the Sachs style. These include SMUTs for basic Tea service and less-conventional after dinner activities such as *Spin the Bottle*, *Cards*, and *Mouse Oracle*, a Yoruban-derived method of divination employing mice and bat bones.

Shoburo is a complete, portable Tea set—a variation on a tradition of tools designed for outdoor use—made for picnicking on Mars. *Large Chawan Cabinet* brings together a selection of Sachs' tea bowls, including some “heroes,” Sachs' term for particularly fine examples worthy of naming, and lesser but still excellent bowls.

For the chance to admire one of Sachs' bowls, and a few other implements up close, take Tea in the Museum Cafe or attend a formal or express ceremony performed by Tom Sachs or Johnny Fogg. Apply for selection by lottery at noguchi.org/programs/exhibitions/tom-sachs-tea-ceremony.

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THE PREHISTORY OF TEA IN SPACE

AREA 8

THE PREHISTORY OF TEA IN SPACE

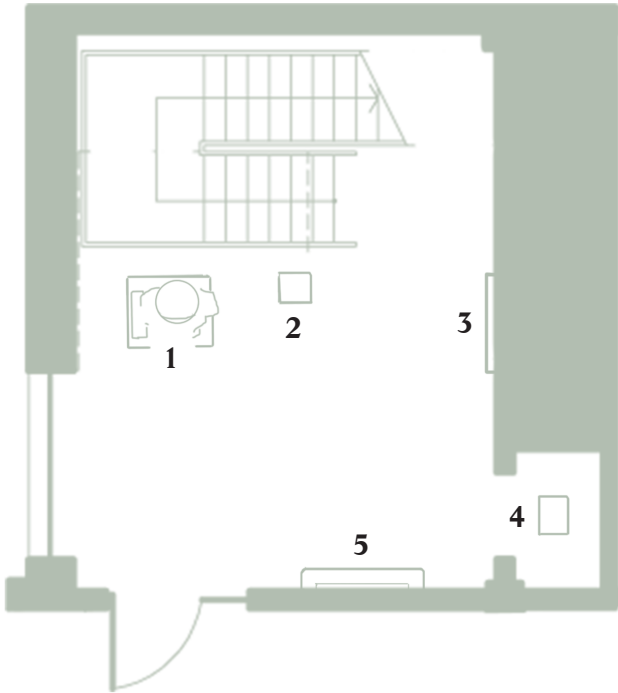
Before there was a tea garden, there was the inhospitable surface of the red planet. The first tea ceremony Sachs planned was the one performed by Cmdr. Mary Eannarino and Lt. Sam Ratanarat in full space suits in a tea house on Mars in 2012: as part of the artist's exhibition at the Park Avenue Armory, *Space Program 2.0: Mars*. Within the mission narrative, the two astronauts developed a certain level of interpersonal tension that could not be resolved with logic (i.e. by showing them a film on the self-perpetuating dangers of negative feedback loops). Performing a tea ceremony became their ritual of reconciliation, the mental shift they needed to reestablish their individual and collective equilibrium.

Imagine that you are in charge of NASA's program of manned space exploration with responsibility for training, operations and the missions themselves. The one thing you know for sure is that success depends on getting brilliant, type-A personalities to remain calm, centered, and focused on task, day after day, under strain. What's more, they have to do it in harmonious, or at least self-correcting teams. Strong discipline is one solution, and it works well enough, when properly employed, in war. But NASA has found it inadequate to the task in the nonconforming culture it has built to support the creativity, innovation and maverick behavior space exploration requires.

It's in the exploration of outer space that Sachs began to understand where the cultural values of NASA, Tea, and his studio naturally overlapped. The most important of these shared values is iterative refinement: the very definition of craft. Sachs trains himself and his collaborators to reach a level of what Raphael called *disegno*, the synching of the hands, eyes, and mind to the point that the craftsman becomes capable of not only reproducing, but gradually improving, any object.

RCS Losers is a display of early concepts for the cones of the small booster rockets used to adjust the orientation of a spacecraft. The attention lavished on the shape testing and development this critical component of the Apollo command modules stands in stark and direct contrast to the ceramic bowl in *First Tea on Mars*, a relic from *Space Program 2.0: Mars*. It was store-bought and considered only long enough to get branded with the NASA logo. With so many mission-critical details to manage at the time, Sachs thought no more about it than that. Only later, as the ignominy of not having made that bowl himself gnawed at him, did he realize that what he had initially treated as a throwaway accessory was a door to a whole other universe of craft and one that could, with care and attention, be brought into close alignment with his space program. That humble bowl is the direct inspiration for *Tom Sachs: Tea Ceremony*. In the four years since, Sachs has made hundreds pinch-formed tea bowls (see the *Large Chawan Cabinet* next door in Area 14.)

For more on the prehistory of Tea in space, consult Sachs' *Space Program* and *Tea Garden* zines and *Tea Ceremony Manual* (available for preorder now in the Museum Shop). Sachs' first tea ceremony is best experienced in Van Neistat's film *A Space Program*, now in general release.



1 Space Suit, 2007–11
Tyvek and mixed media
Collection of Joshua
Rechnitz

**2 Cinderblock
(Windowed)**, 2009–11
Epoxy resin, steel, and
latex paint on plywood
Collection of Joshua
Rechnitz
(on Noguchi base)

3 Descent, 2015
Pyrography, plywood,
latex paint

4 First Tea on Mars,
2015
Con Ed barrier, plywood,
epoxy, steel hardware,
plexiglass, latex paint,
mixed media
(on Noguchi base)

5 RCS Losers, 2007
Foamcore, thermal
adhesive
Courtesy of Gagosian
Gallery

Unless otherwise noted,
all Tom Sachs works
are courtesy of the artist.

INTRODUCTION

Tom Sachs: Tea Ceremony is an immersive work of bricolage that juxtaposes the cultures of Tea (the ritualized drinking of *matcha* in Japan and the microcosmic universe that goes with it); Sachs' studio, where the mission is participatory, appropriative, gently transgressive world-building; NASA, with its can-do spirit, and seat-of-the-pants engineering (now the hallmark of humanity's search for the future); and The Noguchi Museum, an oasis outside time and space charged with deep, wordless, enduring values.

Sachs, like Isamu Noguchi, is a cultural synthesizer committed to the traditional American dream of a pluralistic, crazy quilt society. Both believe that our best futures have at least a foot in the past; that technology should affirm craft; that the most sustaining serenities are tinged with chaos; that polarities like East and West can exist harmoniously in productively ambiguous relationships; that the conceptual and the formal are not hand and glove but earth and atmosphere; and that the balkanization of creativity into categories such as "art" and "design" is nonsense.

Traditional tea ceremony was refined over many years, reached a mature state, was codified, and then, like most cultural phenomena that survive an originating generation, more or less stopped developing. The fads that become full-fledged cultures are the ones that capture lasting values in universal experiences. Tea is one of those because it celebrates hospitality, reinforces the development of community through ritual, and creates a holistic but intimate sense of connection to the world in fundamental combinations of earth, air, fire, and water.

Sachs is not alone in regarding Tea as strong enough to adapt to new worlds. In 1951, Noguchi and his then fiancée, the Japanese movie star Yoshiko (Shirley) Yamaguchi, hosted a tea ceremony in Charles and Ray Eames' iconic midcentury modern Case Study house in Pacific Palisades, California. The guest of honor was Charlie Chaplin. Tea was prepared with traditional utensils, but dinner was served on the Eames' new Wire Base Low Tables (1950), with a selection of Noguchi's also new Akari Light Sculptures (electrified paper lanterns) providing illumination. Yamaguchi likely wore one of the kimonos Noguchi designed for her featuring a side zip and a tight fit.

The premise of Noguchi's life and work was the idea that the truest form of respect you can show another culture, traditional or otherwise, is participation: deep engagement, followed by creative adaptation. Mr. Noguchi, meet Tom Sachs. Now, in the immortal words of James Brown: "Get on up. Get into it. Get involved."
—Senior Curator Dakin Hart

WHY TOM SACHS: TEA CEREMONY AT THE NOGUCHI MUSEUM? A Formal Proof in Noguchi's Words

1. I believe in the true development of old traditions.
2. To be hybrid anticipates the future.
3. The future does not belong only to the futurists.
4. Nothing is new, but everything's new.
5. I like the Japan that I know and want to know, not the Japan that is imposed upon me...I am not about today or yesterday, but only that which is useful to me. Many people live in Japan historically; I don't.
6. I expect Japan to be the first country to take off as a whole into outer space!
7. Ultimately, I like to think, when you get to the furthest point of technology, when you get to outer space, what do you find to bring back?
Rocks!
8. I don't look at art as something separate and sacrosanct.
It's part of usefulness.
9. Consult NASA.
10. So that art might have the kind of authority that religions have had in getting people to respect and value their part of the earth.

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