



Media information
Berlin

September 15, 2021

Inauguration of the sculpture
Kitty Fountain by Tom Sachs
September 15, 5 pm, in front of the PalaisPopulaire
in the context of Berlin Art Week

As part of Berlin Art Week, PalaisPopulaire will inaugurate a new temporary outdoor sculpture on its forecourt on September 15, 2021. Following Tony Cragg's sculpture *Runner*, which kicked off Berlin Art Week in 2019, and VALIE EXPORT's *The Double*, which was presented at the cultural event in 2020, *Kitty Fountain* (2008), a fountain sculpture by the New York artist Tom Sachs, born in 1966, will now be shown.

Tom Sachs' three-meter-high *Kitty Fountain*, cast in bronze, was created in 2008 and was originally part of the monumental sculpture ensemble *The Codependent Fountain Tableau*. This group of fountain sculptures was installed in the Noguchi Gardens of New York's Lever House in 2008 and shown in the same year in an exhibition on Place du Trocadéro overlooking the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

For the ensemble, Sachs brought together the iconic children's characters "Hello Kitty" and "My Melody," both launched by the Japanese company Sanrio in 1974, with "Miffy," a small rabbit designed by Dutch author and graphic designer Dick Bruna in 1955. All three characters are mass marketed as merchandising products and are characterized by strong graphic stylization, running counter to the idea of a detailed, classical sculpture.

For *Kitty Fountain*, Sachs worked using the original toys and merchandise. He and his assistants first made an enlarged version from white foam sheets assembled with hot glue and cut into shape. This prototype was then cast in bronze and elaborately painted white to imitate the feel of the foam surface as convincingly as possible.



Kitty Fountain “was invented purely as a merchandising and licensed character,” Sachs said in 2008. “To then redo that in a ‘fine’ material like bronze, I think is really to the point.”

Sachs’s work alludes to an era in which large corporations produce everything from fast food to military equipment to haute couture, a society in which, as journalist Anne Slowey wrote in a 1997 article about the artist, “merchandising has run amok.” Sachs rose to fame in the late 1990s with DIY artworks in the style of luxury brands, including *Prada Toilet* made from original packaging (1997) and a three-meter-high, functioning *Chanel Guillotine* (1998).

In 2003, Sachs realized *Nutsy’s* for the Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin, a room-filling installation with a self-built McDonald’s and a Le Corbusier skyscraper, a sculpture park, and a mini-car racetrack. Like all of his work, it investigates the intersections between the art world, the luxury industry, as well as merchandising and branding for mass culture. The artist himself started out in the luxury industry. He made his breakthrough with a window display at Barneys in New York. After finishing his studies, he worked as a product designer for the architect Frank Gehry, for the fashion designers Dries Van Noten and Azzedine Alaïa, and for Knoll, among others. Today, he still designs very successful articles for NikeCraft, Nike’s luxury line of sneakers and clothing.

Sachs transferred the spirit of invention and the teamwork he had experienced into his own art production. With his studio, he countered the design teams and PR departments of the “high fashion” industry with a seemingly precarious but very successful “low” model. Under the concept of bricolage (the French word for tinkering), he and a group of friends and tinkerers oppose industrial slickness with amateurish, inventive improvisation and assembly.

Sachs’s *Kitty Fountain* also examines the surrogate nature of consumer culture, which is addictive but cannot really satisfy our actual needs for community and creativity. Today, *Kitty Fountain* encounters a reality that is even more radically commercialized—including the art world. Perhaps that is why Sachs’s Do-It-Yourself art is currently experiencing a major revival. Starting in September 2021, his *SPACE PROGRAM: RARE EARTHS*, consisting of new and previous bricolage works, will transform 3,000 square meters of exhibition space in Hamburg’s Deichtorhallen into an interactive space landscape.

Tom Sachs, born 1966, lives and works in New York. He has had numerous international solo exhibitions: Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin (2003); Fondazione



Prada, Milan (2006); Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (2006); Park Avenue Armory, New York (2012); Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2016); Brooklyn Museum, New York (2016); Noguchi Museum, New York (2016); Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2016); SCHAUWERK Sindelfingen (2019); Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2021).

Press photos can be found at: www.photo-files.de/db-palaispopulaire

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With its commitment to contemporary art, Deutsche Bank has set standards worldwide—whether with its art holdings, one of the world’s most important collections of contemporary works on paper and photographs, with its international exhibition program, or with the PalaisPopulaire, its forum for art and culture in the heart of Berlin. For many years the bank has been Global Lead Partner of Frieze with its art fairs in London, New York, Los Angeles, and as of 2022 in Seoul.