

# HYPERALLERGIC

## Mechanized Art that Makes a Mop Talk and a Medicine Cabinet Tell Time

25 March 2016 | By Allison Meier

Even a plank of wood has kinetic possibilities in the art of Tim Hawkinson, whose 2012 *Board Clock* tells the time with an altered knot in its grain, one ring counting the hours, the other the minutes. The piece is one of the more unassuming works from the past 20 years of the California-based artist's career on view in "Counterclockwise" at Pace Gallery.

The retrospective is the first in Pace's new space at 537 West 24th Street (formerly Hasted Kraeutler), and uses the three large rooms to show some of Hawkinson's larger sculptures, like the eerie *Orrery* (2010), where a woman at a spinning wheel twists her head all the way around in circles above the concentric bike-tire tracks turning below. The space also almost hides the tinier ones.



Tim Hawkinson, *Orrery*, 2010, at Pace Gallery.  
All photos courtesy of the author.

It's easy to overlook *Hose* (2013) which hangs off one wall, its short tube made from eggshells, only noticeable through the nearby label text. Timepieces dominate the exhibition, whether clocks, like the *World Clock* (2012) that tracks global time zones with innocuous items like rotating pills in a bottle for Paris or nail clippers for Sydney, or devices to consider the passage of time, like *Signature* (1993) which endlessly scrawls Hawkinson's signature with a jerry-rigged turntable positioned on an old school desk.



Tim Hawkinson, *World Clock*, 2012, Medicine cabinet, ace bandage, lotion bottle, prescription medicine bottle, dentail floss, deodorant, toothbrushes, plastic cup, pump soap boattle, nail clipper, and clock motors.

Even Hawkinson's grandest undertakings, like the 2007 *Überorgan* that filled the Getty Center in Los Angeles with a massive bagpipe-esque device, have felt a bit shambly, like their mad-scientist mix of found objects and motorized parts might fly apart at any moment. That's part of what makes his work more interesting than just it giving unexpected life to household objects like a rogue "Sorcerer's Apprentice."



Every piece has its mechanics visible, such as the *Ranting Mop Head* (1995) that chatters away through a reed in its pareidolic “mouth,” controlled by a lectern with a rotating punch roll just around the corner, or the unsettling *Penitent* (1994), with a skeleton made of dog bones on its knees, the air pump wheezing through a slide whistle visible through the disjointed bones.

What’s lacking in the exhibition is the feeling of something deeper than what’s visible. After you recognize that the medicine cabinet is a clock, and notice all its little movements, there’s not much left to visually contemplate. However, all together the strange devices and concoctions are a curious trip into what feels like a restless mind, where every object, no matter how mundane, has more possibilities than most of us can imagine. A couple of toothbrushes can keep the time, and a mop can be given the power to talk.

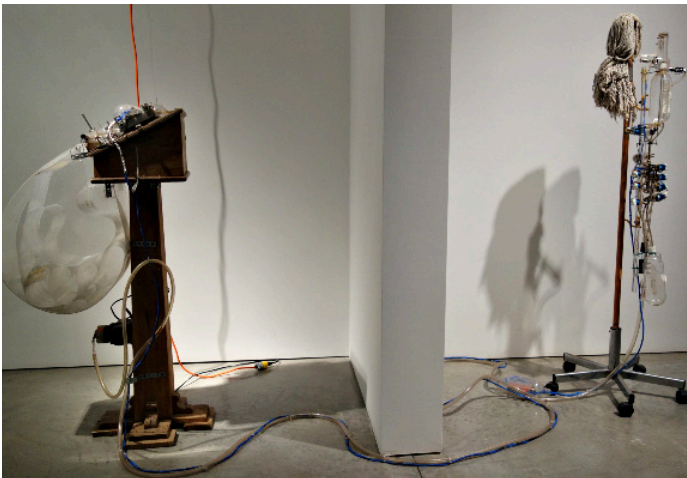
Tim Hawkinson, *Penitent*, 1994, with dog bones made into a kneeling skeleton with a motorized slide whistle in its rib cage.



Installation view of ‘Tim Hawkinson: Counterclockwise.’



Tim Hawkinson, *Signature*, 1993, with a machine that signs sheets of paper with Hawkinson’s signature.



Tim Hawkinson, *Ranting Mop Head*, 1995.



Tim Hawkinson, *Koruru*, 2009, Soda bottles, egg cartons, pill bottles, foil, and vinyl.



Tim Hawkinson, *H.M.S.O.*, 1995, Fabric, string, and wood.



Tim Hawkinson, *Tagalong*, 2013, Polyester resin imprints of the artist's body.



Tim Hawkinson, *Laocoon*, 2004.