

## THE BEAT GOES ON: CORY ARCANGEL AT TEAM GALLERY, NEW YORK

BY *John Chiaverina* POSTED 04/14/16 11:54 AM

Through April 30



Installation view of "Cory Arcangel: MCs," 2016, showing a detail of the Oberheim DMX digital drum machine.  
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND TEAM GALLERY

Introduced in 1981, the Oberheim DMX drum machine quickly staked out a legacy within the nascent rap, electronic, and pop communities where it was commonly deployed. The DMX's brittle thump can be heard all over 1983 classics like New Order's "Blue Monday," Herbie Hancock's "Rockit," and Run DMC's "Sucker MCs." The latter song's drum pattern—and the machine it was made on—is the centerpiece of Cory Arcangel's new exhibition, "MCs," at Team Gallery's Wooster Street location.

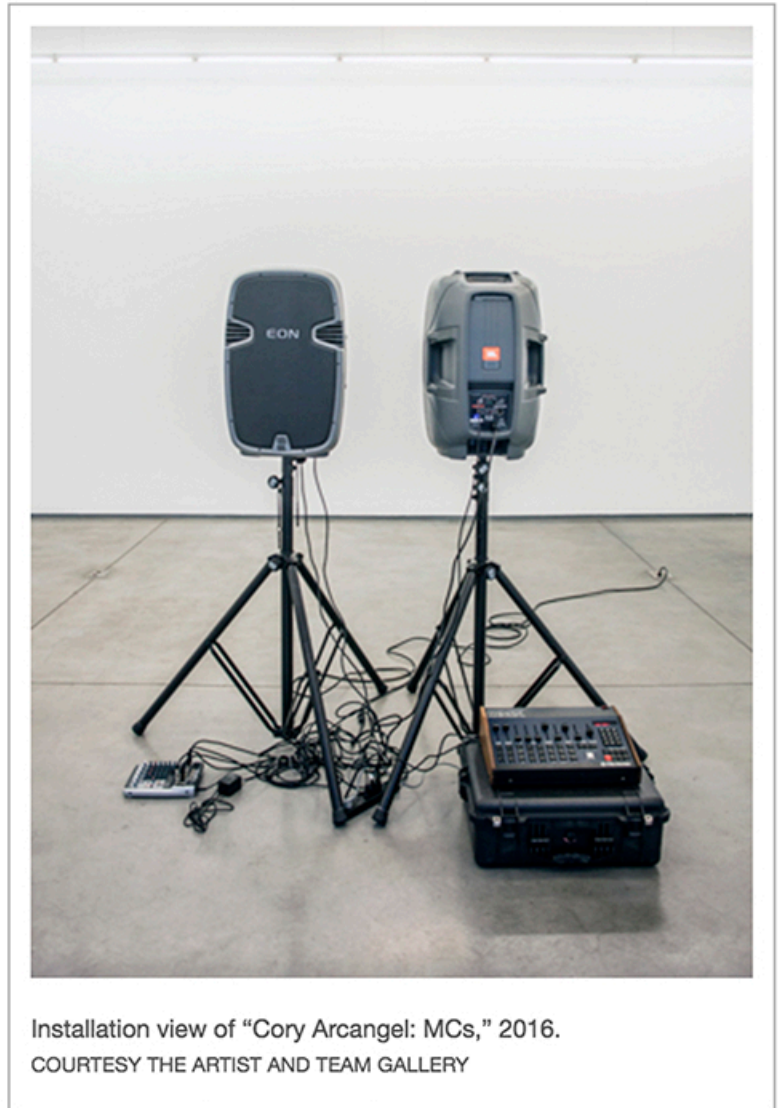
The show features the DMX in the center of the gallery space alongside a pair of raised speakers facing in opposite directions. For 24 hours a day until the close of the exhibition, the speakers will blast out the programmed DMX rhythm pattern to "Sucker MCs" on loop. Nonstop. Even when the gallery is closed. This is to be the last show at Team's Wooster space.

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Standing in an essentially empty white gallery, with the skeleton groove to “Sucker MCs” pummeling itself into my brain, my imagination started to fill in all the blanks. Breakdancers started appearing, people in Adidas track suits began creating graffiti. I spent serious time hanging out, hoping some kids (or middle-aged adults) would come in and start freestyle rapping. That didn’t happen; however a few reps from the New York Mets did try to sell me tickets for their upcoming season. Run DMC does come from Queens!

“MCs” is the kind of simple, elegant move that isolates a moment within an iconic piece of pop culture, letting it exist on its own as a kind of minimalist gesture, that Arcangel has been exploring for his entire career. Easy parallels can be found in some of the artist’s hacked video-game work, namely his now-classic 2002 creation *Super Mario Clouds*. In it, Arcangel removed everything in the original Nintendo game except for the scrolling clouds, creating a work that fits within multiple traditions: hacker and video-game culture, as well as the history of Minimalism and Pop art.

Arcangel’s Team Gallery piece similarly sits in a couple of zones at once. Run DMC provides an accessible entryway to exploring more formal issues often associated with contemporary composition or sound art. Walking around the gallery, the room’s natural reverb mutated the sound of the beat depending on where I was standing. I had no problem listening to the pattern for an extended period of time—like a lot of good minimalist compositions, it started doing new things to my head the longer I hung out. I only wish it was louder.



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