

CRAVE

ART // ARTISTS

Bring the Beat Back: Gary Simmons in Detroit

Culture Lab Detroit and the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit present Gary Simmons's amazing, immersive installation that celebrates the music scene.



by Miss Rosen

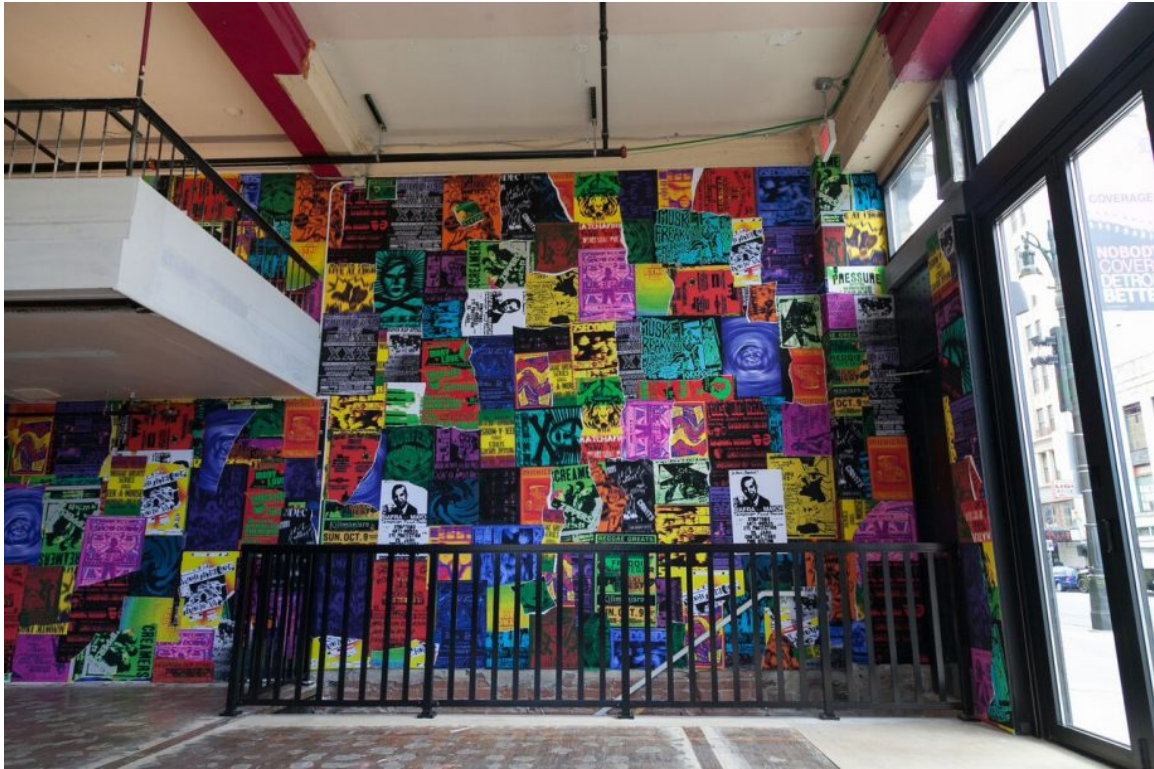
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Native New Yorker **Gary Simmons** (b. 1964) creates art that will envelop you in its embrace, like a song that fills your ears then lingers in your brain. His work is immersive, so much so, that you perceive it with your eyes while you feel it in your soul.

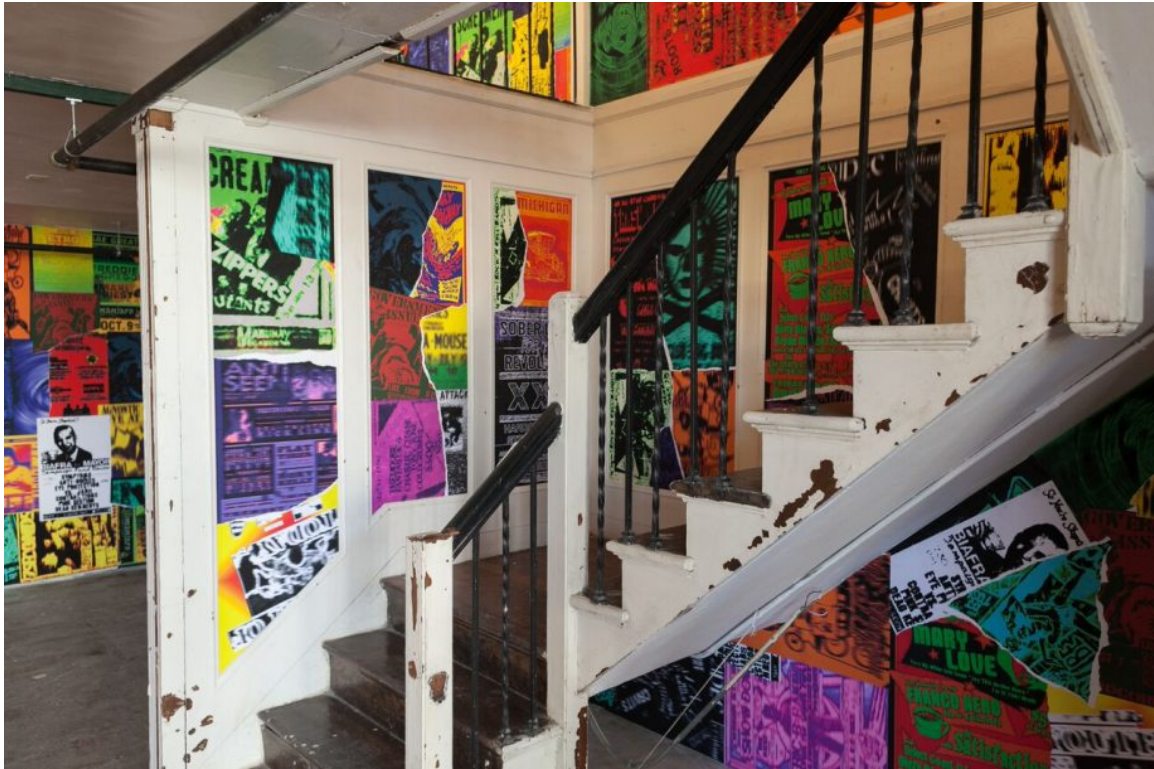
Also: The Peter Tosh Museum Opens on the Legend's 72nd Birthday

Simmons has taken his talents to the city of Detroit, partnering with **Culture Lab Detroit** and **Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit**, with the support of **Bedrock**, to create a public work currently on view at **1301 Broadway, #101, Detroit**, now through January 1, 2017. The installation, his first public project in Detroit, is the latest iteration of an ongoing series that has taken form in Aspen, London, and San Francisco. Here, Simmons takes flight, creating the largest work to date, and the first one shown outside gallery walls.



Simmons has designed 13 posters that pay homage to the Detroit music scene that honor the wide array of cultures and styles that created them. The posters have been wheatpasted throughout the space, creating a wallpapered effect. But this is not the neat, sweet sensibility of interior design—this is the live wire energy that comes from guerilla techniques that comes from the streets.

The effect is intense, dense, and sensational. While promotional posters for bands and shows line public walls calling out for our attention as we move to and fro, when condensed into an interior space, they come alive in a sonic way. Though the images never make a sound, you can feel them vibrate like the bass in the floor when the club is live and everyone is turned.



The installation is eye candy overload, like maybe you ate a couple too many shrooms and suddenly the sounds that you are hearing come alive. You don't really know where to look first; you just have to take it in, feel the flow and enjoy the rhythms. Then, as you acclimate, you can get into the groove, taking in Simmons's mesmerizing homage to dub, Motown, punk, reggae, rock, punk, and techno.

"Music has always been a big influence on me and my work," Simmons told *Bomb* magazine—and the installation makes it clear the work has autobiographical overtones. The work speaks to a profound love that so many of us possess, a deeply personal relationship with the intangible power and beauty of music.



The same way that music gets under your skin and into your bones, this is what Simmons does with his installation. He brings us into a silent room and deafens us with the sonic possibilities of the silent image. Your pupils dilate as your pulse picks up, your heart beating “one, two, one, two” in time with the drums. You know it, you feel it—you’ve been here before. It all comes rushing back like a memory buried deep within: the rush of freedom that music brings, like the spirit finally freed from the cage of flesh.

It is nothing short of delicious.



All photos: ©John Froelich, Courtesy of Culture Lab Detroit