



11.09.2007

## Commitment

Dario Robleto was born in 1972 and raised in San Antonio, Texas, US, where he lives and works. After studies at the University of Texas El Paso and Yale Summer School of Music and Art, he received his B.F.A. from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 1997.

He has emerged as a leading artist in San Antonio, participating in group shows including Millenium Fever (1998) at Diverseworks, Houston; Inside the Loop (1998) at Blue Star Art Space, San Antonio; Trade (1998) at Salon 300 in Brooklyn; Paradise 8 (1999) at Exit Art, New York; A Girl Like You (1999) at Galerie Praz-Delavallde, Paris.

Solo exhibitions have been held at Cactus Bra Gallery, San Antonio (1997); University of Houston (1997); Diverseworks, Houston (1998); Inman Gallery, Houston (1999); the Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, NC (1999); Finesilver Gallery, San Antonio (2000); and ACME, Los Angeles (2000).

The work *Oh, those Mirrors with Memory* is been showed at Bienal do Mercosul [Mercosul Biennial], in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Find out more about his conceptions of art in the interview below.

### **Your work showed at Mercosul Biennial deals with the imagination of the public. What do you think is the role of the viewers in your work?**

I feel very strongly that the viewer's participation completes the work. I have always asked a lot from my viewers whether through trust and faith in what they are seeing is "real," to assuming they can handle and will want a more complex interaction with art. This is a direct counter to the syndrome I see happening in America of the mass media assuming the public is stupid. Including the political arena which often treats the citizens like they can't handle the truth. Maturing as an artist in this environment has left in me a strong desire to react against it. All the art experiences I have personally ever had, from a little boy to now, have been ones that I actively participated in. From looking up words or places I didn't know in dictionaries and encyclopedias after reading the lyrics of my favorite new musician, or pondering the nature of time by coming across a fossil, I have always understood objects to be the starting points for further exploration. So it comes naturally to me to make things that I hope continue this tradition.

### **How much of that statements are reality and how much of them are fiction?**

As mentioned above, trust and faith are very important topics to me. For more reasons than I can fully go into here. But one that is crucial to me is again in response to the moment and culture I have grown up in. I feel that so little is asked of us anymore as viewers and participants in art. The "reality" television aesthetic is producing a generation of viewers that fully EXPECT for everything to be handed to them without constraints. Observation from every angle, "behind the scenes" access, 24 hour coverage, etc. This perspective, I believe, spills over into all encounters with life. As an artist I have to ask what are we losing or gaining with this new kind of viewer. The thing that has always drawn me to art, and that I love passionately, is myth and mystery. I have to wonder if this is what is at stake to lose with this new attitude. In this atmosphere myth and mystery are viewed suspiciously as lying and concealment rather than awe and wonder that leads to engagement.

But with that said, I am always upfront about the nature of my works when asked. I find lying to be completely boring as you mention in another question. Because I ask so much from my viewer, I want them to know I have asked the same from myself. Everything I do is as much a quest for my own curiosity and wonder as I hope I am passing on to a viewer. I need to know, am I capable of doing this? So everything I ever put out into the world is true in this sense. I may not always succeed but I have tried.

### **Some of the statements are related to some simple actions that would make people's life better. What do you think is the effect of art in someone's life?**

Wonder and awe that leads to engagement and re-enchantment with the world.

**In your academic period, you've studied music and in your previous works it was a present issue. In this work at Biennial music is also present in the description of the actions. How do you think art and music dialogue?**

Music is such a vital part of who I am that I have never separated the two in my mind or actions. Well, really I've never separated any of my passions as different from "art." Whether that be literature, history, rock and mineral collecting etc. It used to be hard for me to talk about one passion influencing another because it never occurred to me they were not all the same thing! Only now, with reflection can I see just how intertwined all my passions are. And I always want it that way. The specifics of DJ culture have been instrumental in my thinking as a material artist. But the way I'd like to answer you today is that music, for me, has always been a visceral, immediate experience as it is for many. Whether it's a melody that makes me stop everything I'm doing or a drumbeat that rattles my deepest core, I love music's immediacy. But I also love lyricists who are clearly poets and are writing poems you sing to. This satisfies my intellect. So it has come natural to me to try and make objects or actions that also have this immediate hook. Something that will grab you in by the gut and keep you there with your brain. I have never accepted you have to sacrifice passion for intellect or that something intellectual can't have soul. Music has taught me this.

**In a previous interview you've said you find lying completely boring and part of a postmodern, ironic, apolitical stance you adamantly oppose. What do you think is the role of sincerity nowadays?**

Oh, there are so many ways to answer this! But I'll try to answer in a way I haven't before and expand on what I've written today. I think the role of sincerity today is to defend mystery, wonder and myth. This may seem contradictory at first, as most understandings of "sincerity" today seem to be rooted in the all-access, hyper-emotional, confessional culture of a TV show. As I mentioned above, this seems to be producing a generation of viewers who expect everything to be handed to them and that "realness" and sincerity is an act of aggressively tearing down the perceived barriers to that access. But tearing down in a destructive way that encourages no real engagement, produces a lazy viewer and is an endpoint. It's like a world of confessional zombies standing around looking at the rubble of their actions. I exaggerate to make my point, but i do believe sincerity today can be used to remind us of the beauty of mystery, wonder and myth. But forms of the 3 that encourage re-enchantment and an endless participation in searching and questioning the world around us. I like that sincerity today can take on this contradictory meaning and actually suggest holding things back so that it encourages this engagement. I want to stress i am not suggesting concealment or slights of hand, but evoking wonder that leads to unexpected and limitless possibilities.

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*Printed in 17.11.2007*

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