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**SAN ANTONIO**

**Dario Robleto at Blue Star Art Space**

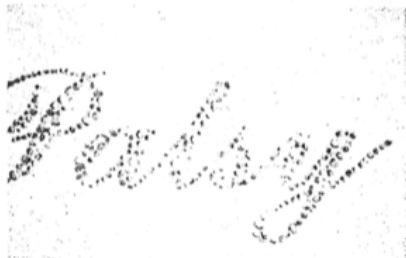
A winning solo show of more than 20 works by newcomer Dario Robleto could be found within the annual survey of San Antonio artists featured at this

dynamic public venue. Alongside solid installations by Phillip Avila and Michele Monseau and intriguing drawings by Moses Gonzales and Yvonne Guerra, Robleto assembled a roomful of altered objects inspired by the foibles and poetry of pop culture. With a sweet comic touch and obsessive intensity, he pays homage to the appeal of

movie stars, puppy love, childhood relics and Top 40 hits.

*Polar Soul*, a grid of 25 altered 45 rpm singles that suggests a kind of serial painting, set the off-beat tone for the show. The iconic allure of the LP was apotheciosized in several sculptural works in which Robleto melted down vinyl records and shaped them into objects that comment on their pop-music source. Vinyl from a melted Sex Pistols album recorded during the group's 1996 reunion tour—made after the demise of bassist Sid Vicious—was re-formed into three small upholstery tacks and titled *We Miss Sid! For It Sounds Like They Still Love Each Other to Me*, copies of albums by Nirvana and Hole were melted and formed into a pair of earplugs that evoke the intense relationship of the bands' lead singers, Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love.

In *I Wish the Ocean Sounded More Like Patsy Cline*, Robleto clusters pink seashells on the wall to form the cursive letters of the country singer's first name.



Dario Robleto: *I Wish the Ocean Sounded More Like Patsy Cline*, 1998, seashells, dimensions variable; at Blue Star Art Space.

With a conceptual quirkiness reminiscent of Tom Friedman's, Robleto claims to have altered the sound of the shells by dividing them into pairs and serenading each pair for 48 hours with recordings of Cline's voice. Robleto's own romantic streak is skewered in *Dario's*

*Shredded Love Letters*, a bottle containing "pills" made from his torn-up missives from junior high days. Another work, *I Miss Everyone Who Has Ever Gone Away*, achieves a different kind of poignancy by presenting folded airplanes constructed from candy wrappers taken from an installation by Felix Gonzalez-Torres.

*Heartbreaker (Why I Love Johnny Depp)* is a gay variation on the interventionist '60s photoworks of Robert Heinecken. Robleto's piece is a photograph of a copy of *Vanity Fair* in which he whited out the interior pages containing a story on the heart-throb and inserted his own essay; he then returned the magazine to the supermarket newsstand from which it was purchased. Robleto's range and surprising depth make evident the kind of talent that is lurking outside the usual art centers of America. Isn't it time for a Whitney Biennial that seeks out such fresh voices?

—Michael Duncan