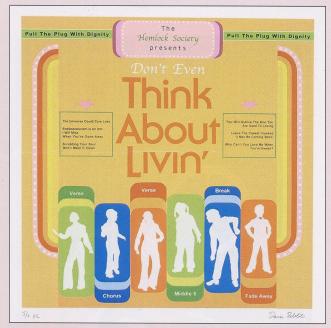
☐ first impression



Dario Robleto, (Don't Even) Think About Livin', 16-color screenprint (18 x 18 in.), 2003. All images courtesy of MS Editions.



Dario Robleto, A Sound Odyssey in Vulcanology, 9-color screenprint (18 \times 18 in.), 2003.

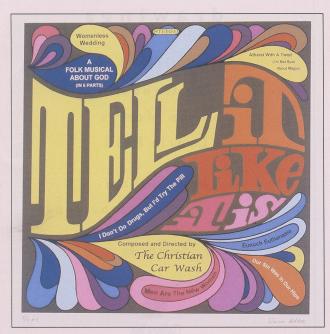
Dario Robleto

Four screenprints, each in an edition of thirty-five plus ten proofs. Each measures 18 x 18 inches and was printed on Sommerset Satin Radiant White paper by Michael Mueller Studio. Published by MS Editions, New York.

Robleto's work draws much of its inspiration from hip-hop music culture, particularly its re-combinatory methods and paraphernalia. He often grinds up vinyl records and recasts them into new forms to make sculpture, such as in Our Sin Was in Our Hips (2001-2), which consists of two cast pelvic bones: a male pelvic bone molded from the dust of his father's record collection, and a corresponding female pelvic bone made from his mother's collection. For every sculpture he makes, he usually makes a corresponding painting, or "album cover." These collages (usually ink and collage on paper), which include design elements from a variety of sources, including albums, books, and signs, evoke a range of period graphics. The texts—which masquerade as compilation titles, songs, or album notes—are from the artist's own writings, and are often the titles of his sculptures.

This series, which consists of four album covers, represents Robleto's first effort to translate his collages into silk-screen prints. In contrast to the collages, which wear evidence of the process of their creation, the prints have a uniform surface. With the cut-and-paste aesthetic rendered invisible, they are more visually akin to the record covers that inspired them.

(Don't Even) Think About Livin' seduces with its bright orange, red, and kelly green. The words "Think About Livin" are printed in orange, so upon first glance the cover has an upbeat, whimsical feel. But closer scrutiny reveals the words "Don't Even" printed in white on the pale orange background. As it turns out, this theme album has fictionally been produced by "the Hemlock Society," the not-for-profit organization that promotes end-of-life choice. According to the artist, the work is an attempt to imagine what a



Dario Robleto, Christian Car Wash, 15-color screenprint (18 x 18 in.), 2003.



Dario Robleto, I Want You, 9-color screenprint (18 x 18 in.), 2003.

fund-raising record by the organization might look like and what the song titles would be. This becomes evident in further reading of the text. A green banner running across the top contains the words "Pull the Plug with Dignity." On either side of the album title, in two rectangles framed in green, song titles are printed in very small type. The humorous titles spice the heavy subject with a dose of levity: "Why Can't You Love Me When You're Awake?" and "Leave the Casket Cracked (I May Be Coming Back)." Robleto ties it all together with graphic images across the bottom that contain human silhouettes, which, understood with their captions ("Verse," "Chorus" . . . "Fade Away"), equate the fundamental parts of a song with the evolution of a human life.

Another cover, titled *A Sound Odyssey in Vulcanology*, is less explicit in its meaning. The work consists of a bright, sun-

like circle printed on a hot, red background. Along the bottom, six variously colored circles, each of which contains a song title, shoot up from the lower right like meteors. In general, Robleto is interested in how the work of particular scientists affects their personal lives, and this cover imagines what an album of love songs might look like by a vulcanologistone who spends much of his life in isolation, wandering around the world's dangerous hot-spots. The listed song titles, when read from left to right, form a poem. One title—"Watch the Steam Push My Soul..."—is followed by another song title that complements it with a rhyme: "And My Bones Settle Back to Coal." Understood in this way, the graphic elements are humorous: the six meteors blasting toward the large circle become six sperms rushing an egg. Seen as a whole, the album conflates desire, love, loneliness,

and human vulnerability into a poignant emotional stew. The pulverization and recombination of elements, both natural and artificial, is a theme underlying much of Robleto's work.

The other two prints evoke mid-1960s and early 1970s album design. *Tell It Like It Is* is presented as "a folk musical about God (in 6 parts)." Composed and directed by "The Christian Car Wash," its graphics spurt and splash. Finally, *I Want You* consists of a silhouetted figure in a circle, with arms spread to evoke the image of a peace sign. The text, which emanates from the center in concentric rings like sound, toys with notions of hippie culture—peace, sex, drugs, transcendence, and spirituality. □