

The approach

Dave Muller
Death Disco

Preview: 16th January 2013, 6-9 pm
17th January- 10th February 2013

The Approach is pleased to present *Death Disco*, an exhibition of new works by Dave Muller. *Death Disco* expands upon several familiar and more recent threads of the artist's musically obsessed and multivalent art practice, namely death and celebration. Muller addresses feelings of loss and excess, reveling in a sort of joyful morbidity. Through depictions of personal yet emblematic objects, from unoccupied drum sets and stacks of CDs by famous musicians (recently deceased) to his own family photographs, Muller commemorates subjects who are conspicuous in their absence. Though social at his core, Muller avoids direct portrayal of people, choosing instead to direct our attention to the objects and ephemera left in their wake. Tracing elements of humanity through the unique stamp we each leave on the material world, he constructs an intricate multi-faceted portrait of both individuals and society as whole.

The show is comprised of eight paintings and a mixed media music catalogue. The works *She's Not There* and *Where I'm at Is...* (#5, blue), marry the basic concepts of 'music' and 'absence', ideas that are further intertwined throughout the show. *She's Not There* is a portrait formed through an indication of what is missing or extracted from it, in this case the image of Muller's wife, and *Where I'm At Is...* (#5, blue) is a document made in October 2006 of Muller's continuously expanding music archive; a snapshot of a dead moment in time.

Three large scale framed works from the new *Empty Drum Kit* series appear in the exhibition, each depicting a drum kit once played by a now deceased musician or 'dead' band (now permanently disbanded). Focusing on the narrative quality of the now inert instrument, Muller creates indirect portraits of drummers Karen Carpenter, John Bonham and Keith Moon. We envision these musicians playing these drums, meaning the works can be understood not only as still lifes but as portrayals of now still lives.

Double diptych, *This American's Top Forty* (2012), chronologically arranges the painted spines of a selection of CDs into a vertical timeline that charts musicians who've died within the last year. Incorporating a pop-cultural reference to the American weekly music charts radio show and National Public Radio's *This American Life*, this accumulation of objects also offers a way for us to recount the passing of time or tell a story through the physical signifiers of cultural, in this case musical, production.

The familiar motif of the disco ball, recurrent in Muller's work, appears twice in *Death Disco*. There is an obvious musical association with these objects, but Muller is also drawn to them as a compositional device, again employed in the pursuit of inadvertent portraiture. The fragmentation of our view of the subject is extreme, like a wrongly pieced together puzzle, and the main indication of their personal nature is found in the title. Like the *Empty Drum Kits*, these paintings activate our imagination: movement is implied rather than directly depicted- the spinning of the ball and the rotating reflections of the environment and ultimately the mental assembling together of seemingly disparate symbols into a logical visual order.

Dave Muller's recent solo exhibitions include: *Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah*, Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, CA (2012); *Dave Muller*, Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco, CA (2010); *Allover, Not Over at All (adventures in field recordings)*, Gladstone Gallery, Brussels, Belgium (2009); *I Like Your Music I Love Your Music*, Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Castilla y Leon, Spain (2008); *Piles and Globes, Likes and Loves*, Blum & Poe (2007); *I WANT IT LOUDER*, Gladstone Gallery, New York (2006). **Recent group shows include:** *Broodwork: It's About Time*, Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, CA (2011); *Abstract Now and Then*, Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley, CA (2011); *Echoes - La musique faite image*, Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris, France (2011); *Skin Fruit: Selections from the Dakis Joannou Collection*, New Museum, New York, NY (2010); *Jeremy Deller: Marlon Brando, Pocahontas and Me*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO (2008) *Sympathy for the Devil: Art and Rock and Roll Since 1967*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL (2007); The Whitney Biennial, (2004)

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