

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Dave Muller**

***Sex & Death & Rock & Roll***

**Blum & Poe, New York**

**April 28 – June 30, 2018**

Blum & Poe is pleased to present *Sex & Death & Rock & Roll*, Dave Muller's tenth solo exhibition with the gallery. This presentation marks the first New York solo show for the Los Angeles-based artist in a decade.

In over fifty new paintings depicting the circular labels of assorted vinyl albums and singles, Muller draws upon his endless fascination and encyclopedic knowledge of music and its capacity to shape both individual and cultural identities. He culls resonant records from the '20s through the '90s, some familiar and others forgotten, tapping into shared poetic moments and a collective dialogue.

The exhibition's title updates the 1977 song "Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll" by Ian Dury & the Blockheads, lyrics that came to stereotype the excesses of rock star lifestyle. Paintings are organized thematically in four titular sections: *Sex*, *Death*, *Rock & Roll*, and the *Ampersand*. Record paintings in a range of sizes are installed rhythmically over a series of hand-painted murals. The *Sex* gallery becomes a lush garden space with walls of painted foliage framing works that pay homage to one of the great musical genres. In the *Death* room positioned directly above, depictions of "Paint It Black" and "Stairway to Heaven" question the afterlife and draw focus to albums by rock stars with legendary deaths (Kurt Cobain, Elvis Presley). The *Rock & Roll* category presents a historical timeline of popular musical instruments, starting with the Divje Babe flute, a prehistoric flute made from holes punched through a bear's femur bone. The final chapter of the exhibition, the *Ampersand* room, expands on the artist's interest in the addendums, music compilations, B-sides, promo copies, the additional and the connected, as well as graphic design, typography, and symbolism.

Muller appropriates album art in a painterly style that is both whimsical and factual. The paintings are autobiographical and expressive; adoring as well as historically referential. He is careful to include details like hype stickers, anachronistic price tags, and extinct record shop labels, always attending to age, use, wear, and tear. Smaller paintings fit inside the central holes of larger ones, offering the contextual effect of a re-mix or playlist. In *She Signed Her Letter All Yours... ... Ya-Ya* (2018), three individual paintings of various reissues of the same Kate Bush album offer an overview of a record's life across several years. These paintings tell idiosyncratic stories of politics, subculture, and atmosphere that have morphed through eras and cultures.

In addition to being the shape of a record, the circle has been a fertile form that Muller continues to revisit. Early paintings and sculptures depicted disco balls, flower balls, and clover balls. Watercolors of newspaper cutouts were arranged in star-like rings. Though the paintings are not 3-D, they are sculptural—Muller suggests, "perhaps 2 ½-D."

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“Spheres often appear in nature. Bubbles are held together by surface tension. Plants might group in spherical clusters to maximize the amount of light striking a given volume. You curl up into a ball to stay warm.”

Dave Muller was born in 1964 in San Francisco and lives and works in Los Angeles. His work has been the subject of numerous exhibitions in the United States and abroad, including solo shows at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis; Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Castilla y León, León, Spain; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; and St. Louis Art Museum, MI. His work is represented in the public collections of such notable institutions as the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA; Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, among others.