



Time Collapses In Dave Muller's New Record Store Pop-Up

The artist has opened his second record store pop-up as the centerpiece of his recent solo exhibition

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In the spring of 2017, the L.A.-based artist Dave Muller and local record purveyor-turned-music producer Ethan Swan created the P&B Records shop at The Meow, a pop-up exhibition-retail space for artist-run businesses located inside a backyard shed at the Mt. Washington home of Angeleno artists Lisa Anne Auerbach and Joel Kyack.

“It was so popular it scared them. They were afraid too many people were gonna start showing up, so now it’s a yoga cottage,” Muller says with a laugh during a call from a road trip the week after he opened his second record store pop-up. This one is the centerpiece of his recent solo exhibition, *Sunset, Sunrise (repeat) b/w The Record Pavilion*, in the upstairs gallery of his L.A. dealer, Blum & Poe.

“It’s kinda like the record store I’d like to go to, combined with an art installation that still works as a record store,” he says. “But I can paint on the ceiling, paint on the walls, all that stuff.”

This “listening library” he’s created for “rehousing” old records he no longer needs—everything from the *La Dolce Vita* soundtrack to *The Velvet Underground: Live At Max’s Kansas City* (both of which I bought from Muller at the exhibition’s July 8 preview)—has already turned into its own sensation. This is partly because he’s only selling each album for the

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price he paid for them at the time of purchase; *La Dolce Vita* still had its \$2.95 price tag and Muller, the mensch, rounded it down to \$2.

“I’m an accumulator by nature, but I just want to break even,” admits Muller, who has held fire sales for records over the years, but enjoys the communal aspect of this pavilion platform. “This is a much better business model, I’ve eliminated the middle man and I get to do this fun thing, being the seller behind the counter at a record store.”

The pay-it-forward positioning of the pavilion has been so appealing that he’s replenishing the store’s stock for a July 30 activation co-organized by DJ/producer Mark “Frosty” McNeill. They’ll both be onsite at the gallery from 10 a.m.-6 p.m., selling and DJing while enlisting a number of Dublab DJs to spin records on portable players throughout the gallery.

Muller’s fascination with music—and vinyl in particular—began as a child when he lived in Marin County, where he frequented the Watts Music shop in Novato, California.

“My parents allowed me to take this affordable record player up into my room and play their records,” he says. “They wouldn’t let me use their really good records, like the Beatles, but they’d let me mess with the others, like Kingston Trio.”

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In the space, visitors will also experience how records keep time—in a diaristic and diurnal fashion—for Muller, who has orchestrated a salon of his most recent “label paintings” whose vinyl-shaped panels orbit around the gallery between two disco darlings as the respective poles of AM/PM—Anita Ward’s *Ring My Bell* on the eastern wall and Amii Stewart’s *Knock on Wood* on the western; both feature sunrise/sunset motifs on their labels.

Muller’s music-focused work has been the subject of museum exhibitions at SFMOMA and the Hammer Museum. It also resides in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art. Morning records are represented by “Grandma’s Hands” by Bill Withers (*Grand*, 2019-22), BJ Baker’s “Have a Happy Day” (*Painted-on Smile*, 2019-22) while late-night albums are the terrain of “The Lovecats” by The Cure (*Love’s Tracks*, 2020-22) or a diptych label painting Lefty Frizzell’s “Silence” (*A Little Country Zeitgeist*, 2019).

Scattered around the room are also six large “price tag paintings,” culled from Muller’s collection of 1500 vintage stickers dating back decades, which are laboriously layered and gessoed so the paint gives the look and textured feel of time, travel, and inflation building upon the plywood panels.

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“They’re like 40 paintings in one painting, but sometimes the works comment on other stuff,” he says. “Literally the price on one of the big ones, \$5.20, is the time sunrise was on July 9 [the date of the opening] in L.A.

In some ways, the show is a nod to the L.A. sculptor, Charles Ray, who did a performance piece when he was in grad school at Rutgers University where he replaced the large clock inside the University Hall with one of his own making in which he turned the minute and hour hands. “I got in there at noon and it was 4:00 when I got out,” Ray told *BOMB* magazine of the work. “And I thought it was 6:00, so I guess I was two hours fast.

“I’ve always liked people who were basically their own clocks,” says Muller, who was driving through Ohio on the last leg of his summer yearly trip to Vermont when we spoke. “It’s sort of like, ‘Is it this year? Is it last year?’ Time collapses a little, but the sun comes up, the sun goes down.”