

ARTINFO

Dave Muller in Los Angeles



Dave Muller, "Half Empty and Half Full" (2009) Photo by Joshua White, courtesy the artist and Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

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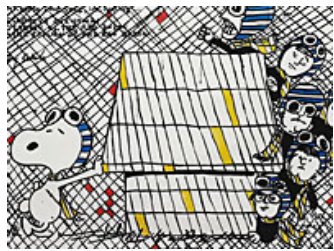


PHOTO GALLERY
Dave Muller in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES—In the early '90s in Los Angeles, [Dave Muller](#) started out his artistic career by re-creating exhibition announcements for shows by artists he liked. Inspired by indie rock posters, Muller, who is also a DJ and musician, would do more than simply copy these announcements — he would interpret and build upon them, making them his own by painting them in his delicate watercolor style and infusing a sense of humor. At the same time he also started the famed "Three Day Weekend" project, for which he curated three-day shows (which also became alternative social gatherings) of work by other artists in his home and other impromptu spaces.

Nearly two decades later, Muller's artistic practice has evolved beyond the watercolor replicas and Three Day Weekends (though he does hope to organize one again someday), but his root interests in music and art persist. Just consider the title of his new show at [Blum & Poe](#) — "iamthewalrus," taken from a **Beatles** song. The stars of the exhibition, which is up through April 4, are 16 large-scale acrylics on paper, which are supplemented by a set of smaller drawings. The larger works fall into two groups. First, there are pieces that each encompass two distinct images laid out side-by-side, usually an abstract line rendering and a figurative nature picture. The paintings force the viewer to contemplate strange associations — a blowfish in relation to a **Jackson Pollock**-like drip picture, for instance — and laid out like so many giant dominoes in the gallery, with one even lying flat on the floor, their installation suggests the interconnectedness of art and culture with the natural environment.

The second set, with visual imagery drawn largely from records and the Beatles, is where the music comes in: Two works show scattered pieces of shredded paper — personal documents in one case, the *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album cover in the other; one work depicts the first record Muller ever bought (*Snoopy and His Friends the Royal Guardsmen*); another juxtaposes drawings of the Beatles as Russian nested dolls and of a pile of their album covers. In these works, Muller mingles the personal and the musical; a Beatles album is given equal importance to that of his own papers, as both are torn up and then re-created to look like abstract art, and a child's first record becomes a monumental, larger-than-life-size piece of art.

Significantly, though, Muller never presents the objects of contemplation themselves, only his own renderings of them. His practice has always been something of a give-and-take experiment — an adoption of the objects that punctuate his world, an homage to them, and a reinvention.

Here, Muller suggests what else to see in L.A. this weekend:

“[John Miller's L.A. list from two weeks ago](#) scorched a lot of earth that I might have treaded upon. One of his picks, ‘[Dan Graham: Beyond](#)’ at MOCA, would certainly be on my list. As an added bonus MOCA has a permanent-collection show, ‘A Changing Ratio: Painting And Sculpture From the Collection,’ that has a whole room of [Mark Rothko](#) paintings. A whole room of Rothkos!”

1. [Stan VanDerBeek](#) at [The Box](#), through April 18

“[Mara McCarthy's](#) The Box is the Mitchell Alpus Gallery of the West, putting up historical shows museums should envy. Even within that context, the current VanDerBeek show is exceptional, with scads of projectors, both still and otherwise, bombarding most available surfaces (some constructed) with images. Images, images, images — and then even more images (detourned/collaged) that he used as animation frames in his films. Add to this a mural sent panel by panel via fax, and you begin to feel that VanDerBeek devoured media for lunch. Next up at The Box: [Judith Burnstein](#) (an Alpus artist), followed by [Simone Forti](#). Far out!”

2. **Nine Lives: Visionary Artists from L.A.** at the [UCLA Hammer Museum](#), through May 31

“Ever thought the L.A. art scene was cohesive? Sunshine or noir? Put that stuff to rest! This show presents us with a goodie bag of oddballs and misfits that only an art nut could love. OK, not really, but that sure felt good to write.”

3. **Walead Beshty: Passages** at [LA><ART](#), through May 2

“No open-toed shoes/sandals for this show, and I won't be wearing any skirts/dresses either, warm as it has been getting in L.A. Walead has tricked out the floor of LA><ART with mirrors that the viewing public has broken simply by entering the gallery. On the walls in the main space: ‘photographs produced by passing unused film through airport X-ray machines.’ In the project space, a slide show depicting architecture of derelict shopping centers. Finish off this experience with a beer at the [Mandrake Bar](#) down the street, and look at [Brian Sharp's](#) addition to their ‘wheat-pasted wall’ project.”

4. **Anthony Burdin: Forever Haunt You** at [Michael Benevento](#), through May 1

“I organized a one-person show of Anthony's work at a Three Day Weekend in 1998. A favorite. Around 2004 he stopped returning my calls, and I haven't seen or spoken with him since. This show opened when I was out of town (missed him again), and I haven't seen it yet. So it's only fitting that when I tried to view his works on the Benevento Web site, they wouldn't load. Now I *have* to go. See you there?”

5. [The Fowler Museum](#) at UCLA, ongoing

“In the last five or six years my musical tastes have veered evermore toward the ethnographic. So it's nice to have a museum in L.A. that caters visually to my sound interests. Currently there are six shows, all running through at least mid-June. My favorite is ‘Fowler in Focus: Masks of Sri Lanka,’ a show of brightly painted wooden masks that ‘transform Sri Lankan dancers into specific characters that appear in curing rituals or popular entertainment.’ On April 5, anthropologist [David Blundell](#) will lead a tour of the exhibition, after which the performance group Saphabhumi (meaning ‘resplendent seven lands’) will present ‘ecstatic healing ritual dances.”