

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 August 29, 2014

Inman Gallery is pleased to present:

Dario Robleto
Life, Left to Struggle in the Sun

September 5 – October 18, 2014

Opening Reception:
 Friday September 5
 6:00 – 8:30pm

*Gallery hours: Tues. – Sat., 11 – 6
 and by appointment*



Dario Robleto, detail of *Setlists for a Setting Sun (Dark Was the Night)*, 2014

Cyanotypes, prints, watercolor paper, butterflies, butterfly antennae made from stretched audiotape of Blind Willie Johnson's "Dark Was the Night" (Recorded 1927, launched on Voyager I probe in 1977), various cave minerals and crystals, homemade crystals, coral, nickel plated sea urchin shells, sea urchin teeth, various seashells, beetle wings, ocean water, pigments, cut paper, mica flakes, feathers, mirrors, plastic and glass domes, audio recording, digital player, headphones, wood, polyurethane, Plexiglas

Inman Gallery is pleased to present *Life, Left to Struggle in the Sun*, an exhibition of recent work by **Dario Robleto** spanning both galleries. This will be Robleto's sixth solo show with Inman, opening Friday, September 5th with a reception from 6 to 8:30pm, and continuing through October 18th.

When NASA launched the Voyager spacecraft in 1977, they included a 12" gold-plated phonograph record on board. The record was a gesture of good will and a synopsis of the human experience for whoever might discover it. A committee chaired by astronomer Carl Sagan selected its contents: 115 images and a playlist of Earth-sounds, from thunder to birdsong to Chuck Berry. A message whose optimism outstretches its scientific foundation, the Golden Record has fascinated Dario Robleto since childhood. It represents the convergence of two of his favorite themes: the cultural synthesis of a mix-tape or a dj set, and the expanding boundaries of human understanding.

While the Golden Record has been central to his recent work, Robleto, characteristically, doesn't limit himself to any one topic or era. He has an alchemist's zeal for alloys and compounds but a historian's penchant for context and analysis. He breaks down as much as he fuses together. In keeping with those opposing impulses, this exhibition is a collection of collections, related but divergent. Each sculpture or series of wall-works delves into its own specific field with an attention to detail that can suggest whole new areas of investigation. Each is its own Golden Record, launched to a different corner of Robleto's universe.

Two teeming assemblages (both titled *Setlists for a Setting Sun*, with separate subtitles) are the Golden Record's closest relatives in the show, each grown from one supporting historical detail: *Dark Was the Night* tells the story of Blind Willie Johnson, whose song of the same name was included on the record, while *The Crystal Palace* traces a necessary technological precursor, the world's first live recording, to London's Crystal Palace. The cyanotypes, seashells, homemade crystals and countless other curiosities filling the two vitrines hum with connections, excursions and subplots whose dizzying scope and historical depth reemphasize just how tightly packed the Golden Record really was.

Surrounding *Setlists for a Setting Sun* in the main gallery is a suite of eight digital prints collectively titled *The Sky, Once Choked With Stars, Will Slowly Darken*. The images are taken from the covers of concert albums, their now-deceased headliners digitally removed. Without their "star," the remaining stage lights

become stars themselves, and the otherworldly Hubble-like images project the absent musicians to more distant, but possibly more enduring, spheres. The show's title work, a grid of sixteen cyanotypes printed from writers' and musicians' drawings and handwritten notes, is likewise an homage to Robleto's artistic heroes. The density of information – in the cyanotypes' scribbled revisions and the connections from print to print – suggests that a network of personal, artistic and scientific relationships underlies every individual achievement.

If *Life, Left to Struggle in the Sun* and *The Sky, Once Choked With Stars* skew towards Robleto's identity as a music fan, *The Moon Won't Let You Down*, in the south gallery, highlights his interest in astronomy. The maple box is an anthology of amateur photographs of "super moons" (full moons at the point in their orbit closest to Earth) and a celebration of amateurism when that word had more to do with love than credentials.

Dario Robleto is perhaps best known for his meditations on loss and absence, but a group of outsized personalities, still vital, congregates around these new works. Thomas Edison, inventor of the phonograph and the light bulb, and Joseph Paxton, gardener, engineer and architect of the Crystal Palace, crop up in *Setlists For a Setting Sun*. John Herschel, inventor of the cyanotype and celebrated astronomer, is behind *The Moon Won't Let You Down*. And every corner of the exhibition invokes Carl Sagan and Ann Druyan, Sagan's wife and the creative director of the Golden Record. Though not traditionally considered artists, these wide-ranging intellects, unrestricted by topic or sub-discipline, serve as models for Robleto's own omnivorous curiosity. Always attracted by frontiers – the deep sea, the brink of the solar system, the edge of death – Robleto is following his practice, and the examples of these polymaths, into his own borderland, where distinctions between art and science, amateur and professional, matter less than the spirit of inquiry and the earnest desire to understand what it means to be human.



Dario Robleto, detail of *The Moon Won't Let You Down*, 2012

Van Dyke prints of amateur astronomers' "super moon" photographs (moon at closest point to Earth), watercolor paper, sepia, beeswax, curly maple, gold-mirrored Plexiglas, linseed oil, brass

Dario Robleto was born in San Antonio, Texas in 1972 and received his BFA from the University of Texas at San Antonio. He lives and works in Houston, TX. The artist has had over 30 solo exhibitions since 1997. On view currently is *The Boundary of Life is Quietly Crossed* at the **Menil Collection**, Houston (through January 4, 2015). An upcoming solo exhibition at the **Baltimore Museum of Art** opens November 16, 2014 and runs through March 29, 2015. Other recent solo exhibitions were mounted at the **Des Moines Art Center** (2011); the **Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver** (2011) and **New Orleans Museum of Art** (2012). In 2008 a 10-year survey exhibition, *Alloy of Love*, was organized by the **Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery** at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York. Accompanied by a major monograph, *Alloy of Love* traveled to the **Frye Art Museum** in Seattle, Washington. Notable group shows include *The Record/ Contemporary Art and Vinyl*, **Nasher Museum of Art** at Duke University (2011-2013); *Old, Weird, America*, **Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston** (2008); *Human/Nature: Artists Respond to a Changing Planet*, **Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego** (2008); *Whitney Biennial*, **Whitney Museum of American Art**, New York (2004). Robleto has been visiting artist and lecturer at many colleges and universities including Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; California College of the Arts, Oakland, CA; and the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI, among many others. In 2009 his work was featured on the cover of Yo La Tengo's album, *Popular Songs*. His awards have included the International Association of Art Critics Award in 2004 for best exhibition in a commercial gallery at the national level and recipient of both the 2007 Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant and the 2009 USA Rasmuson Fellowship. In 2011 he was a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellow.

For more information, please contact the gallery at 713.526.7800 or info@inmangallery.com