

Conservation Through Conversation: Material and Technique in the Work of Dario Robleto

Contemporary artist Dario Robleto (b.1972) challenges conservation ethics and practice because he often uses transformed historic and culturally sensitive material as his source materials, a fact which he represents through a written description, called liner notes, that are an integral component to the work. The conservation issues posed by Robleto's materials and the exchange between text and image were examined during a series of interviews conducted between the author and artist that began in 2013. Topics covered include technique, materials, and practice, with special focus given to *A Defeated Soldier Wishes to Walk His Daughter Down the Wedding Aisle*, 2004.

Artistic Method		Artworks	
<p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> occurs before any material manipulation and/or material collection; the first step helps to decide what materials to use, what story to tell, and how to tell it culminates in the final artwork as written material lists, referred as "liner notes" <p>Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> does the material exist? where and how can it be obtained? <p>Collaboration: With the public, historic figures, scientists, and/or engineers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> receives representation in the final work provides a source for materials and for inspiration 	<p>Technique: Transformation of found materials into new forms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grinding up record albums into dust that can be mixed with a binder and cast anew macerating letters into pulp that can be reconstituted as new paper melting and stretching audio tape into hair-like fibers 	<p>Found Materials</p> <p>Historic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> wartime letters, pulverized and made into new paper melted bullet lead from various battlefields <p>Culturally Sensitive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> human hair human wedding ring finger bones <p>Rare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a million year old blossom (preserved in amber) a wand made by a practicing witch 	<p>Language</p> <p>Three Types</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> as text embedded in the work as verbal communication as Liner Notes <p>Liner Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lyricized, edited material lists of an object's components that identify the original context of <i>some</i> materials included in the object; often a sole witness integral to the artwork a verbal representation of the artist's intent

A Defeated Soldier Wishes to Walk His Daughter Down the Wedding Aisle Dario Robleto, 2004, 21" x 80" x 20", mixed media, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

The work is one of a series of sculptures born from a direct response by Robleto to the events of September 11, 2001 and the ensuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is inspired by a Civil War era letter in Dario's collection in which a veteran amputee expresses his desire to walk his daughter down the wedding aisle.



Images courtesy the artist and Inman Gallery

Liner Notes:

Cast of a hand-carved wooden and iron leg that a wounded Civil War soldier constructed for himself, made from The Shirelles' "Soldier Boy" melted vinyl records and femur bone dust, fitted inside a pair of WWI military cavalry boots made from Skeeter Davis' "The End Of The World" melted vinyl records, oil can filled with homemade tincture (gun oil, rose oil, bacteria cultured from the grooves of Negro prison songs and prison choir records, wormwood, golden rod, aloe juice, resurrection plant, Apothecary's rose and bugleweed), brass, rust, dirt from various battlefields, ballistic gelatin, white rose petals, white rice



Conservation

