

ARTTALK

Turn, Turn, Turn

"Can you hold heartbreak in your hands?" asks artist **Dario Robleto**. "Is **Patsy Cline**'s essence embedded in the sculptural object of the record?" In one work, Robleto extracted parts of songs he remembered from his mother's honky-tonk bar's jukebox, slicing them from the grooves with a knife. He then melted these pieces to a liquid to coat the heads of matches. The matches were slipped to strangers in bars.

fickle, but the artists never abandoned it."

The show traces the vinyl record's transformation, in the hands of such artists as **Jasper Johns**, **Carrie Mae Weems**, **William Cordova**, and **Lyota Yagi**, from practical musical object to raw art material.



Christian Marclay's "Recycled Records" from 1983 (left) and 1984.

Robleto's melting of records brings them closer to their material origin, petroleum.



Dario Robleto's *There's an Old Flame Burning in Your Eyes, or, Why Honky Tonk Love Is the Saddest Kind of Love*, 1998.

As they lit each other's cigarettes, Cline's chorus burned out in a puff.

Melted, smashed, or played on a turntable, records assume many forms in the exhibition "The Record: Contemporary Art and Vinyl," opening on September 2 at the Nasher Museum of Art in Durham, North Carolina. "The record is a tangible object connected to personal history, loaded with culture, feelings, and memories," says **Trevor Schoonmaker**, curator of contemporary art at the Nasher and organizer of the show. "The public has largely abandoned the record, because we are

Dave Muller's giant painted album covers and **Mark Soo's** stereo-photos resurrecting **Elvis's** recording studio share a sense of nostalgia that honors the record's original function. Other works innovate:

Laurie Anderson's *Viophonograph* (1976) makes a violin into a turntable; **Jeroen Diepenmaat** replaces a record



Jeroen Diepenmaat's *Pour des dents d'un blanc éclatant et saines*, 2005.

needle with a taxidermied bird. **Christian Marclay** turns records into collages, while **Sean Duffy** glues a bunch together to form a treelike sculpture.

In the late '60s, growing up in a tough Washington, D.C., neighborhood, **Mike Stevens** led an imaginary life as a soul superstar named Minging Mike, designing his own elaborate album covers. Stevens was thorough, down to the liner notes. He even made records out of cardboard, drawing on the grooves by hand. His fake albums are "drastic acts of artistic and self-creation," Schoonmaker says.

Visitors can rifle through eight bins of albums selected by the show's artists on the basis of their cover art. The Nasher has brought in eight new turntables so they can listen to the music too.



On the record: Sean Duffy's *Burn Out Sun*, 2003.

"A record is the product of slowly compressing and cooking tiny prehistoric bodies over eons," Robleto says. "It is alchemy at its core: the transmutation of matter."

—Marina Galperina