



A TOWER-ING WORK OF ART

BY LARRY GETLEN

IF YOU'RE ONE of the many New Yorkers with love in your heart for the old Tower Records store on Broadway and West Fourth Street, walk by this weekend for the thrill of seeing a record store at that very same site. It's called Never Records. It's got album covers, cassettes, posters, T-shirts and music playing in the background.

It's also completely fake. But that shouldn't detract from your enjoyment one bit.

That's because Never Records is a featured installation in "Never Can Say Goodbye," an art exhibit running at the old Tower site every Wednesday through Sunday until Feb. 13.

"Never Can Say Goodbye" was created by No Longer Empty (no-longerempty.org), an arts organization dedicated to creating exhibits in vacant storefronts that emphasize the heritage of those sites.

"So many stories have come to me through this exhibition," says Manon Slome, one of the curators. "When artists were approached, their first comment was, 'I spent my youth in that store.'"

Never Records, composed by Ted Riederer, features the work of 46 different artists, including "a k a Vanilla Ice" by Brent Birnbaum, where he not only created an installation out of old Vanilla Ice magazine covers, he does an autograph signing as the famed and faded rap icon.

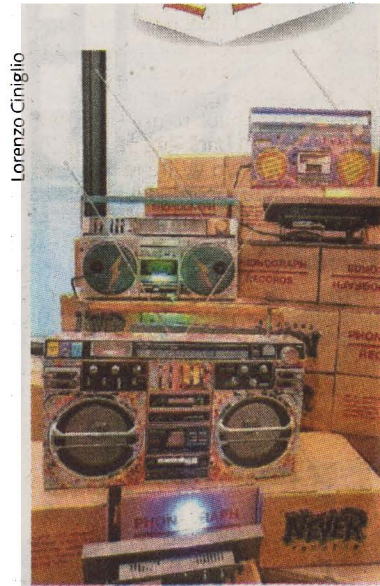
Artists pay tribute to long gone Village record store

There are 11 featured artists in addition to Riederer. Paul Villinski created a piece entirely out of records he bought at Tower, many with the original \$6.99 sticker still on them. Painter Kaz Oshiro designed a three-dimensional wall made to look like boom boxes. And an artist known simply as Invader replicated the covers of the albums "London Calling," "Nevermind" and "Iron Maiden" out of 400 Rubik's Cubes, each cube twisted so the colors serve as his palate.

There will also be live bands, panel discussions and kids' programs in which children can make their own record covers.

With real brick and mortar record stores slowly fading to black, "Never Can Say Goodbye" is a way to revisit the glory years when music was something you held.

"So many of the artists spent their youth there," says Slome. "There's almost nobody who grew up in that time who didn't frequent Tower Records."



Lorenzo Ciniglio

"Bling Box Orchestra" by Ryan Brennan is on display.