

Kathy Battista in conversation with Mieko Meguro Graham

22 September 2025, New York City

The following is from an interview that took place in New York City on September 22, 2025 between writer, curator and lecturer Kathy Battista, a longtime friend of Dan Graham's, and Mieko Meguro, artist, curator, head of The Dan Graham and Mieko Graham Foundation and wife of the late Dan Graham.

Kathy Battista This exhibition is inspired by Dan Graham's *Rock My Religion* video from 1984. It is a seminal work in his oeuvre and one that has had wide cultural influence. Can you comment on how important this work was to Dan?

Mieko Meguro The first time I met Dan in 1992 we were talking about Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Shintoism and I asked him what his religion was. Dan said, "Rock". I was laughing so hard.

KB Can you talk about Dan's interest in music, for example which were his favorite bands and/or genres of music?

MM He has so many, like Ray Davies and The Kinks, Neil Young, Bob Dylan, Devo, Neil Diamond, The Mamas and Papas, The Byrds, The Beach boys... Sonic Youth, but they were more like friends. His favorite genre was rock, but he also liked country music, and he really liked classic 1960s music that he grew up with, like the girl band genre. He liked records and CDs. And then he started making the CDs, which were so fun.

KB Young people today are obsessed with social media like TikTok, where music and homemade videos have become ubiquitous. Dan's work is an intellectual forerunner of using popular culture to create content. Do you think Dan would have used TikTok if it was available in the 1980s?

MM He loved music so much. Life with Dan we were surrounded by music. I'm sure if he could use TikTok he would, but I don't know how he would have used it. Because he never played music. He was a good listener, but not a musician himself. And he didn't do social media.

KB As Chair of Dan's Foundation how do you think the legacy of his work will be maintained? Are you focusing on exhibitions, screenings, publications?

MM The foundation is a really big project, and I feel overwhelmed with the responsibility. I want more young people to see Dan's books (in addition to *Rock My Religion* he has been published many books). But unfortunately, many of the bookshops don't carry it: MoMA doesn't have it, the Met doesn't have it. A big part of my work is pushing for the memory to live on through exhibitions and projects. I also need to publish Dan's catalogue raisonnée. And I also wanted to think about Dan's good days with me.

KB Dan had a passion for astrology. You illustrated a beautiful book of his writing on astrology and architecture. Can you say something about collaborating with your husband?

MM When Dan asked me to draw for his book I was surprised and it was a great honor. I had never thought about that. I enjoyed it a lot and I was happy to do that. He took astrology pretty seriously. I asked Dan, "Why do you know astrology so well?" And he said that when he was teaching he didn't know how to communicate with a student. So then he started asking about astrology to find out more about them, to understand people. He had such a facility for it. Like he could remember everybody's birthday. He didn't write it down, he memorized in his brain.

KB Do you feel your own work was influenced by Dan's work? And if so, which body of his work in particular?

MM I am an old-fashioned artist, and make objects and paintings. Dan was an avant-garde artist with such a gigantic brain. So I think we are completely different kinds of artists, but um, I love every part of him. And his entire existence was an influence on me. I hope I can be a better person like him, be kind, smart, funny. He was very funny and a loyal friend. He was awesome. If Dan was with me, I didn't want anything. I was so happy just the two of us and I love every part of Dan with all my heart.