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## Vinylmania's Paolo Campana: For the Record

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The seed for the music documentary [Vinylmania](#) sprouted not long after Paolo Campana finished college. A budding filmmaker, he set out to write a fiction feature based on his second career as a DJ. What he discovered, he says now, is that the reality of a life immersed in records was much more interesting than any fictional story.

Campana began toting his camera to record fairs and record shops, and interviewing other DJs when they came to his hometown of Turin, Italy. From this modest start came a music film that's both deeply personal and broadly expansive. A decade in the making, *Vinylmania* takes its director/protagonist from London to San Francisco to Tokyo to

Prague, exploring the allure of analog and talking to people whose relationship to grooved music takes many forms, from DJs and collectors to record pressers and great album cover artists like Winston Smith (Dead Kennedys) and Peter Savile (Joy Division/New Order).

Not long after the documentary's world premiere at the Goteborg International Film Festival in Sweden and its anointment as the official film of April's [International Record Store Day 2012](#), we chatted with Campana about what's next for the movie and what vinyl means to him.

**MFW: What kind of response did you get in Goteborg?**

Paolo Campana: We had very, very good feedback in Sweden. We had three screenings and they were sold out. People were very enthusiastic about the film.

**Did you find a lot of people there shared your passion for vinyl?**

Yes. There were a couple of guys that came to the screening because in Goteborg, by chance, is the only [record] pressing plant in Sweden. That was really cool. And a lot of old collectors, and young people also. I was invited also as a DJ, for the opening party of the festival. It was so cool because I played a lot of old, old, records. And there was another interesting story: at the festival I met Gina Belafonte, the daughter of Harry Belafonte. She was there as a producer, presenting a film about her father [Sing Your Song]. We met at the hotel during breakfast, and there was a very good feeling between us. And in my flight case was a record by Harry Belafonte! Vinyl is a link between people. [Laughs]

**You were also just named the official film of International Record Store Day 2012. What will that involve?**

I am so happy for that. This was a dream. When I began this project many, many years ago, the first version of the project we put on a MySpace page, the year when Record Store Day began. I discovered there was Record Store Day on the internet and it was possible to download the logo, and I put it on my MySpace page. I never imagined that one day the film would be the Record Store Day film. They proposed to us to show the film in more than 100 colleges in America, and we are planning a special night in Paris with Record Store Day. We'll try to involve the DJs in the film – screen the film and have a DJ set with pure vinyl.

**How did your own relationship with vinyl begin?**

For me it began when I was 3 or 4 years old. The first memories I have – my mother would wake me up with an old Mozart record. I remember this old turntable, and this tune, "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik." I started off watching from above the record spinning around, and I was completely mesmerized by the spiral. I stayed there for long, long, long minutes, completely stoned. When you are a child you are very clueless and you want to discover things. For me, the record, this strange object that had music inside – it was like traveling in a galaxy in space.

**What's the first record you ever bought?**

The 7-inch of "Video Killed the Radio Star." I was 8, 9 years old when it was released. I was really thrilled when I went to the record shop, because for me a record shop was something for adults. If you want to know the first LP that I bought – I don't feel so proud about this – it was Flash Gordon, the soundtrack, by Queen. Not because I was a fan of Queen; I was a fan of soundtracks in general. I began to listen to soundtracks with the 007 themes.

**Album art seems like it's really an important part to you of the whole appeal of vinyl, of LP records.**

The first image you have when you are young to be connected with pop culture, before fashion, before you get involved with personal style or whatever – the first thing that was in front of your face when you were young was the record cover.

**That was the case for you? A lot of people would say TV is that first influence. But for you it was the records?**

TV was important. But a still image connected with music in this way, it's like reading a book and imagining the story in your mind. The record cover is something that [puts] you in another universe, another dimension, that goes with the music that is inside.

**It's clear when you talk to Winston Smith and Peter Savile about what they do that it's all wrapped up for you – the object, the piece of art, along with the way of listening to the music.**

For me, Winston Smith was really important. The first T-shirt that I bought, when I was 14, was the t-shirt with the cross from the Dead Kennedys [album] In God We Trust. A record cover on a t-shirt is the first fetish thing that you have in your life. The second was the cover of Joy Division's Unknown Pleasures. It was so mysterious.

**Do you ever download music? Do you use digital music as a tool in any way?**

I don't think mp3s are bad. It's another way to know music. But if you want to understand music today I think that it's important to know the roots of the music. For me vinyl is the roots of recorded music. And it's the best format that I want to play in my DJ sets. I play CDs sometimes, but if I can choose between a CD and a record to play something, I prefer the record.

**Is that choice for you because of the sound quality, or because of something about the album as a physical object?**

I think both. The first thing is the sound. But the other thing is that it's a real object that you can keep at home forever. A CD, yes, I can buy a CD. I'm not a purist, but I try to be a purist. I think people have to know there is another, different way to appreciate music. It's not just press a button, or stand in a DJ set with a fucking laptop.