

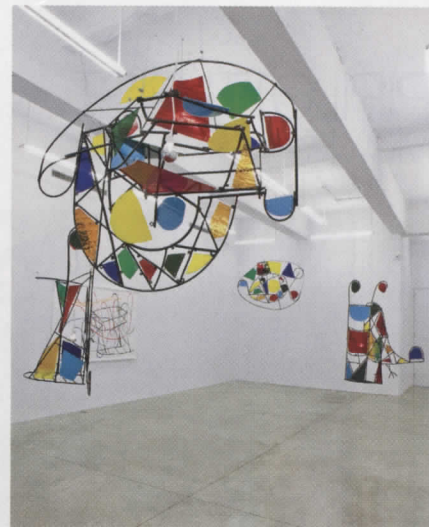
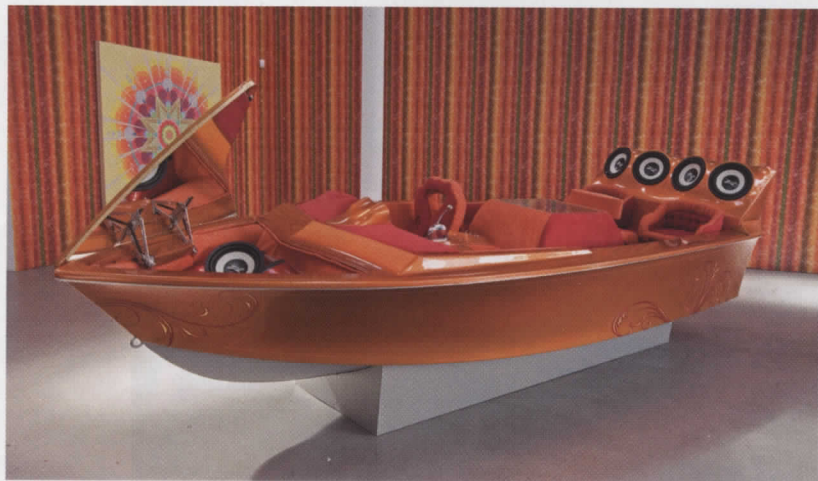
NATHAN CARTER

CASEY KAPLAN

One of the most formally buoyant gallery exhibitions of this season's opening round, Nathan Carter's "Radio Transmission Contraptions" had wit to spare and energy to burn. Visually rambunctious sculpture was predominant among the 21 works in this megawatt show, which, in thrall to mid-20th-century rhythms, channeled Calder's playfulness, Miró's tethered violence and the jazzy muscle of Stuart Davis. Underlying Carter's central conceit of the art object as jury-rigged device for strategic communication is a furious nostalgia for a forward-looking past in which creative means and the dissemination of information seemed limitless.

The retro stylings began in the first of the gallery's three spaces, which housed a dozen or so bristling, jaunty sculptures (all 2008). Around 3 or 4 feet high, these are caricatures of the transceiver/antenna paradigm of ham and shortwave radio equipment. Carter's riffs on "wireless" are made largely of wires: typically, three slender steel rods blooming mutant antennae sprout from eccentrically shaped ceramic bases. Most employ swank two-color schemes, such as black and salmon (*Radio Berlin Inactive Under Repair*) or vermilion and mint green (*Radio Halifax Music and Weather*). The works' placement

View of Dzine's "The Beautiful Struggle," showing *La Perla*, 2008, fiberglass and mixed mediums; at Deitch Studios.



View of Nathan Carter's exhibition "Radio Transmission Contraptions," 2008; at Casey Kaplan.

on plain white pedestals of various heights, which in turn rested on low platforms, alluded to the conventions of design exhibitions, underscoring the sculpture's utilitarian source.

Carter has reined in his humorous facility with funny, run-on titles, but a few still resemble unhinged haiku. *Atmospheric Disturbance Barents Sea Where Did All These Birds Come From?* (2007) is an 8-by-18-foot relief of innumerable discrete plywood segments screwed to the wall. Vaguely piscine or avian shapes, primarily in black and blue, are barely contained by the ribs of a vessel or trough. The jittery image doesn't quite cohere, like a distant radio station you can't quite pull in. The piece relates strongly to two large works on paper that feature a broader palette and even greater retinal frenzy. The 9-by-20-foot *Calling Four Towers Signal Drifting With No Fixed Purpose* (2008), a thicket of blue-painted steel-wire squiggles, topped with economical suggestions of loudspeakers, Tesla coils and satellite dishes, seems on the verge of spelling out . . . who knows what.

Things got really weird in the gallery's back space, with a quartet of suspended constructions in welded rebar strung with shards of brightly colored glass. One armature includes a simplified, blank-eyed bird, another a leaping fish; each is lit, more or less from within, by a bare bulb dangling from a cable. Their apparently

improvisational fabrication conveys urgency, while their titles channel Paul Revere, domestic ritual and the open road: *One if by Land, Two if by Sea, Three for Tea and Four on the Floor*.

With his fourth solo show at Kaplan, Carter has pruned back some of his work's erstwhile excess; paradoxically, that allows him more efficiently to convey a sense of overload. While the artist's signal-to-noise ratio is greater than ever, his work runs no risk of staying "on message." Carter's affection for scattershot sculptural form and ad hoc language comes through loud and clear.

—Stephen Maine

DZINE DEITCH STUDIOS

For "The Beautiful Struggle," Dzine transformed the industrial space of Deitch Studios into a showroom for customized vehicles, complete with the voluptuous shapes and glitzy trimmings of Vegas showgirls. The self-taught Puerto Rican-American artist, born Carlos Rolon, gained renown writing graffiti in his hometown of Chicago before launching a painting career. Recent acrylics on panel, based on Buddhist mandalas, were included here but receded to become just a graphic backdrop for the vehicles on view.

Dzine (pronounced de-sign) collaborated with lowrider experts from

Chicago's Pura Familia Car Club to customize a fully operating car, two bicycles and a motorboat, resulting in hybrid cultural artifacts and art objects. Form trumps function in vehicles detailed with rows of Swarovski crystals, gold leaf and delicately forged tangles of metal. For the boat *La Perla* (2008), an orange fiberglass hull is fitted with red and orange suede seats, and the bow opens like the lid of a baby grand to reveal deep-set speakers on an undulating surface. In *Throne to the Last Emperor of the Forbidden City* (2008), a Schwinn Sting-Ray bicycle is modified with a Bondo mold of red-orange spirals and gold leaf, a reference to the gilded Dragon Throne of Imperial China.

Though outlandish, these vehicles are loyal to the esthetic of a masculine hobby steeped in over a half-century of tradition in Mexican-American communities of California, Chicago and the Southwest. Dzine's '93 Cadillac Fleetwood, *Pimp Juice*, first displayed in the Deitch booth at Miami Art Basel 2007 and on view here, was adapted from an earlier work of the same name by Pura Familia Car Club founder Rene Espinoza. An underlay of marbled red paint on the car's exterior is detailed with calligraphic flourishes and airbrushed portraits. Espinoza's original sported an airbrushed illustration of a smirking Rene surrounded by three fleshy females in thongs and stilettos. In Dzine's adap-