

CASEY KAPLAN

121 WEST 27TH STREET

NEW YORK NY 10001

TEL +1 212 645 7335

WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Nathan Carter

Drawings 1996 - 2024

September 5 - October 26, 2024

Casey Kaplan is pleased to announce Nathan Carter: *Drawings 1996 - 2024*, the artist's ninth solo exhibition with the gallery, spanning a 25-year collaboration. Surveying Carter's drawing practice over the last three decades, this exhibition brings together depictions of imagined metropolises and multicolored abstractions in a variety of media – colored pencil, ink, collage, gouache, graphite, acrylic, and enamel. Cityscapes are populated by lightning bolts, twisting power lines, and precarious structures, while in other abstract works, looping lines and gestural marks interlock with biomorphic forms and fields of color. Beginning with a work created during Carter's art school years, the exhibition features works on paper through present day, offering a durational view into the artist's fantastical worlds.

In the artist's own words:

I was twenty-two when I flew overseas on a heavy jet for the first time.

The year was 1992 and it was during the last years of an unrepeatable, pre-internet, pre-digital moment. Personal connections, discoveries and togetherness in real life meant so much to us. We physically searched for each other, often unintentionally finding others along the way. We sorted amongst mountains of used clothing at Dollar-a-Pound and sifted through records & cassettes, all by hand.

While the jet pilots were focused on aviating and navigating at 30,000 feet, I was too excited to sleep aboard the short overnight flight into London's Heathrow Airport. From my window seat my eyes were riveted to the scene unfolding below as our 747 approached the Northwest coast of England.

I saw how the shipping docks along the River Mersey connected to roads and rail lines that snaked southeast towards Birmingham in the Midlands and finally into London as our airplane made a controlled landing on runway 2-A-Right.

Before disembarking I reached into the seat-back pocket and tore the British Airways global route map out of the in-flight magazine to be carefully studied for future reference.

During that trip and for years after I obsessively collected ephemera and printed matter while traveling. Band fliers, sound system posters, adverts, fragments of press & packaging, way-finding maps & transit ticket stubs, all machine-printed evidence of international travel.

I scoured the cargo & freight logistics zones near airports for fragments of metal, preferably aluminum that had fallen off packing crates, the kind that are specially shaped to fit inside the belly of cargo planes. Cast aside, discarded remnants of shipping cargo containers beautifully marred by thousands of miles of intercontinental travel.

This collection of ephemera and assemblage, combined with my early travel experiences, allowed me to slip into a day-dream about unregulated, felonious transport of contraband and people flowing undetected to and thru a labyrinthian system.

Visually all of the lines, shapes and forms I found became an abstract glimpse into a fictional world I was building with my drawings and sculptures.

At the same time I became fascinated by forms of non-verbal communication. I made my own coded languages using letters, numbers, semaphore signals, light beacons, and colorful geometric flag forms with this in mind.

I was especially interested in analog radio transmissions, apparatus and antennae used for covert communication. I loved the way numbers stations, morse code and short-burst radio exchanges sounded and I tried to visualize how these sounds looked in drawings and sculpture.

When I rode the subway I wrote about these ideas and scenarios while listening to music with headphones on. The writing took the form of long run-on sentences and vignettes containing linguistic elements of Jamaican music selectors and dub MCs, parodies of masculine pilot jargon and references to locations, situations, musicians, drugs, weather, cosmic events, animal sounds and varied modes of transportation. These punctuation-free, all-caps texts became the titles of my artworks.

Around this time I began to ask myself questions; Why was I so interested in covert hidden scenarios and subversive characters who were shrouded, sub-rosa?

Looking far back into my past; When I was a teenager, I had a secret yearning to be in a band with a group of angry, sweaty punk rock women. My desire was to be one of them. At the time, my fear of violent, intolerant Northeast Corridor localism made this ambition feel impossible.

In 2014 I started making a 27-minute film about a group of women who start a punk band called the Dramastics.

I composed and recorded all of the music for the film and performed it live, accompanied by screenings of the film, always situated amongst my painted paper actor figures and diorama sets.

During the production of the film the space within my studio seemed to explode with color and abstract form. I made drawings and life-size collages of party dresses and sculptures of bat-wing eyeliner fascinators, lipstick fang t-shirts and panic attack midnight flight kites.

In the past few years I've felt more free and able to think about the essence of why I wanted to make a film about the adventures of a group of women playing music together and how this emerged as a strong desire to create queer fictional worlds of my own invention.

Places and situations I was once afraid to visit have started showing up on paper as intersexual botanical beings, curious proliferations, petals, stamen and ovule tentatively intertwining and coupling in a self-stimulating dance.

My most recent drawings have revisited the form of map-making as a way for me to envision visiting and inhabiting these abstract fictional worlds to see what happens if I stay and hang out for a while...

Nathan Carter (B. 1970, Dallas, TX) received his BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 1995 and MFA from Yale University School of Art, New Haven in 1999. Carter has exhibited internationally, at institutions such as the MCA Detroit, MI (2018); the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, TX (2010); the MCA Denver, CO (solo) (2016); the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, Bristol, UK (2016); Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Middlesbrough, UK (2015); Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow, UK (2014); Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO (2013); Blaffer Art Museum, University of Houston, TX (solo) (2012); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL (2012); Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach, FL (2011); Museo de Arte Raul Anguiano, Guadalajara, Mexico (solo) (2010); and ArtPace, San Antonio, TX (solo) (2008). The artist's work is included in the public collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Art Gallery of Toronto, Ontario; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; Miami Art Museum, FL; Tate Modern, London; DA2 Centre of Contemporary Art, Salamanca; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; and CU Art Museum, Boulder, CO.