

When I met Deric Carner, everyone still had Myspace pages; it was a fleeting moment, open to indiscriminate exchange of personal information and narratives. Type in a cultural referent: Psychic TV or, as per Carner's page, Paul Bowles, and there you had a slew of likeminded profiles, aligned for the prying. But Carner's site made this variety of voyeurism close to impossible. Interjecting the same kind of disruptive graphic elements that fracture the scenes displayed in "Range Rover," the background image to "Box of Light's" profile was a jagged digital pattern, which alternated from a serpentine green to large triangles of black. The design sporadically swallowed up the text, also black, in fits and starts, leaving readers with only a fraction of the information offered.

It's an approach that Carner sets to work throughout his diverse array of projects. For years now, the assemblage newspaper, "Report on the Meaning of the Moment," has been self-published and distributed. Extracting incongruent sound bytes from newspapers, blogs, radio and other forms of urban white noise, the paper strings together not news but the elocution of the new, fastening those words onto divergent, prescient images. The product, which is delivered individually by the artist, is an intimate cacophony, an invitation to pastiche these systems of formalized meaning.

"Range Rover" evolved from Carner's constant preoccupation with news stories that tended to transgress the staid format of their dissemination. Two series from 2008-2009 explored the visual presentation of these narratives in sensationalistic journalism. Fraction reduced photo reportage of protestors into aesthetic tableaux. This activist imagery was drawn from both liberal and conservative conflict, but here leveled in their graphic trespass of social docility. Another project, "Feral Children," worked to similarly dismantle the frequently Romantic associations that belie these real-life instances of great cruelty or neglect. From the films of Robert Flaherty, François Truffaut and Werner Herzog to the tabloid accounts of Ivan Mishukov and Genie (whose image still haunts "Range Rover"), these actual events of abuse accrued escapist overtones in their reports. These figures of the outside were fussed over for their seeming "purity." "The loss of language," Carner recounted at the time, which is frequently writ as some utopian ideal, is itself an erroneous construct of society as, "there can be no natural language outside of civilization."

Both of these projects come to a head in the "Range Rover" series, invading these life-size posters with imagery that conflates into this larger struggle for ideas of representation and sociality. Taking an aesthetic lead from outmoded advertising imagery, Carner confronts charged icons of affluence and high-society (the Swiss Alps, pearls and interior decor samples) with figures and settings that threaten the parameters of civilization. Most of the references are obscure, démodé or otherwise dependent upon intimate knowledge of the imagery involved. The graphic whorl on "Hounds of Love" shares the most similarities with Carner's semiotic paintings (from recent shows like "Double Heading" and "None of the Above"), while the text references the seminal album by Kate Bush. A mysterious enigma in pop music, Bush is

known for her quintessentially pastoral British sensibility. The title lingers in dialogue with the looming cloud. "The hounds of love are hunting me... I see it coming through the trees." Of course, such lyrical associations are limited to viewers with external knowledge of the song; any intertextual activation of this graphic element by the coursing musical movement is only of benefit to those in-the-know. Bush also proves an interesting counterpoint to the series title, "Range Rover," since her music, like the vehicle, signifies a nostalgic return to "the countryside." Bush's personal narrative at the time found her leaving the London music scene and building a high tech studio in her rural manor. The "Hounds of Love" album is promoted and commoditized as a Romantic return to origins, spun through a technological and market driven system of popular music sales and production. The wily loner, Bush, found her career peak in this move. A key phrase of the single sounds true for "Range Rover," at large: "take my shoes off, throw them in the lake."

"Fritzl on Holiday" pulls its frame from a family photograph of Josef Fritzl, the convicted felon who forced his daughter into sex-slavery for 24 years in the family basement. The bleeding silhouette lays prostrate over le Mirail, a modern Parisian council development. An architectural project designed for mass living, once confounded with Fritzl's leisurely recline, this tidy management solution for fringe classes takes on harrowing repercussions. Though Carner's interpolations are seldom literal or direct, instead generating a kind of dialectical discord. But his adept juxtapositions work to open up a chasm where ideals go sour, how organized living offers respites, but can so easily lead to feelings of estrangement, neglect and exploitation.

Just as much as the ideas they convey, the artist reminds that these intentionally loaded images are overt signs which convey their visual value through the long history of collage practice. "The cut is what's most important." The process for creating "Range Rover" is still indexical, created through repeated scans of cut paper and overlays. The modernist tendencies latent in cut-and-paste collage tactics wed well with this imagery that Carner selects. In assembling these divergent messages, Carner creates a visual muddle, a problematic site of investigation. The image size and open-edition print tactic further loads the ideological nature of these icons of the periphery. In this process, those formal collage characteristics are given a fresh, yet still anachronistic jolt, through the photographic use of scanners and photocopying. Recently, Carner has generated his art objects with traditionally "artistic" media: high quality paper, acrylic paints, ink and pencil. The shift into the Xerox serves him well. The Xerox gesture empties out the consumer levels to which the advertising imagery aspires, rendering the poster a lucidly defiant and furtive object. Mashing-up ideologically problematic companions like pearls and protestors, wild children and tablewares, Carner creates sites of legible confusion, disruption and dissemination; forcing the question as to how we define or give voice to the seemingly sacrosanct space called society and how we manage those grey areas in between.

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