

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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**Paul Feeley
Peter Cain**

*Matthew Marks Gallery
522 West 22nd Street, Chelsea*

Paul Feeley

*Lawrence Markey Gallery
42 East 76th Street, Manhattan
Both through Nov. 23*

Like his better-known colleagues Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland, Paul Feeley, who died in 1966 at 55, infused liquefied paint into raw canvas. Rather than creating expansive fields, however, Feeley arranged his idiosyncratic vocabulary of loopy shapes like abstracted butterflies, bowling pins and light-bulbs into spare, gridded compositions. In muted primary colors, these pictures have graphic pop but also a certain understated intimacy.

In the middle of the gallery is a group of painted plywood sculptures — intersecting butterfly-shaped panels and a single vertical piece shaped like an armless cactus — that are like kindergarten furnishings. The show was organized in collaboration with Lawrence Markey Gallery, which also has some fine canvases on view, along with small works on paper. Feeley's combination of childlike hedonism and transcendentalist formalism still feels peculiarly alive.

In a flat-footed representational style reminiscent of René Magritte, James Rosenquist and Gerhard Richter, Peter Cain, who died in 1997 at 37, painted images of weirdly transformed cars. He would eliminate sections and reassemble the remaining pieces, seamlessly joining, for example, the front and rear sections of a sleek red car (a Honda, maybe) into an absurd, vaguely menacing two-wheeled pod.

With their satiny metal skins, muscular black tires and speedy profiles, these coolly sexy machines distill automotive designs into deadpan icons of phallic urgency.

Is there a connection to be made between these two differently off-beat painters? Maybe, maybe not. But somehow their dissonant convergence feels just right for the moment.

KEN JOHNSON