

PAUL KASMIN GALLERY

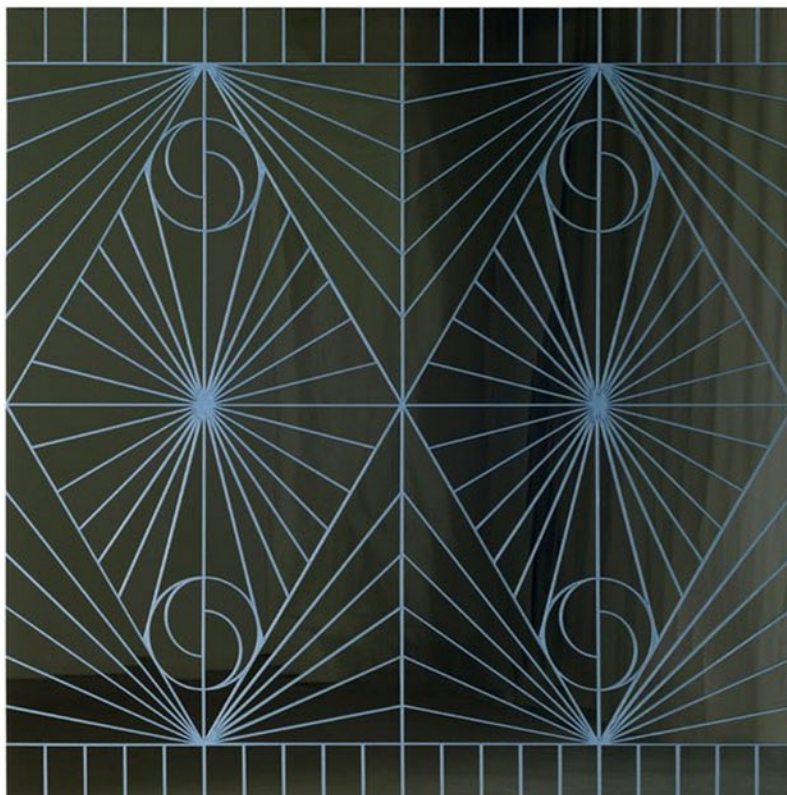
ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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DAILY AD

ARTIST CARLOS ROLON, A.K.A. DZINE INVOKES PUERTO RICAN CULTURE IN TWO NEW SHOWS

Text by Michael Slenske | January 30, 2014

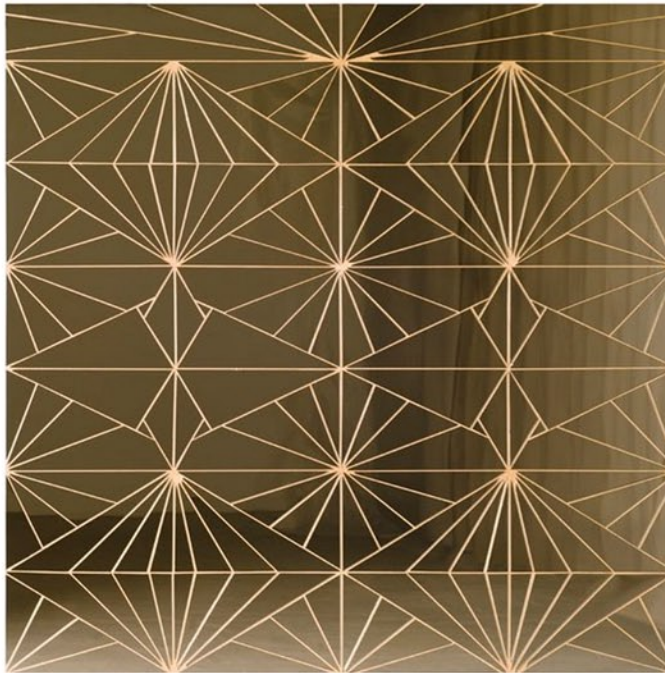


Untitled (yin-yang fence), Carlos Rolon, 2014. Photo courtesy of the artist and Salon 94

For more than a decade, Chicago-based artist Carlos Rolon, a.k.a. Dzine, has mined his Puerto Rican heritage via such spectacles as gold-plated lowrider bicycles or a nail salon kitted out with chairs upholstered in Gucci monogrammed fabric. "For me it's about cultural identity," says Rolon, who brings two shows to New York this week—one at [Salon 94](#)'s Bowery location, the other at [Paul Kasmin](#)'s 27th Street gallery in Chelsea—both under the autobiographical title "Dzine: Born, Carlos Rolon, 1970."

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Untitled (double diamond fence), 2014. Photo courtesy of the artist and Salon 94

In Salon 94's lower-level space, Rolon presents a suite of mirrors made from bronze, silver, and smoked glass. Several are embellished with quartz-crystal patterns that mimic the intricate designs found on security gates of houses in Puerto Rico (a custom subsequently brought to America). "They are meant to keep people away, but they have these beautiful layouts and designs, so it's a total contradiction. It's like, 'I'm going to paint it hot pink, but do not enter my house at all,'" says Rolon, who has also installed a palm tree illuminated with Christmas lights that are reflected in the mirrors. Upstairs, he set up a bicycle with a fold-down domino table and a customized sound system playing salsa hits from the 1960s and '70s that is meant to evoke the Caribbean karaoke parties he attends in Chicago's Latin American neighborhoods. "There's this whole idea of taking one culture and implementing it in another," the artist says.



Cockfight (Club Gallístico), 2014. Photo: Jeff Elstone; artwork courtesy of the artist and Paul Kasmin Gallery

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At the Paul Kasmin Gallery, Rolon taps into memories of the boxing matches he watched with his father when he was younger. He references the garish robes and trunks of Héctor Macho Camacho and Danny Garcia via panels made from flamboyant sequin-and-tassel designs and canvases layered with crystals, animal patterns, and fluorescent gradients that pulse and blur depending on the viewer's perspective. "People have used boxing as a metaphor in art, but nobody has done work that is based solely on the fabric and the textiles of the boxer," argues Rolon, whose book *BOXED: A Visual History of the Art of Boxing* (Damiani, \$60), will be released next month.



Untitled (Trophy Jacket No. 2), 2014. Photo: Jeff Elstone; artwork courtesy of the artist and Paul Kasmin Gallery

Meanwhile, the back of the gallery has been transformed into a wood-paneled rumpus room, an evocation of the Rolon family basement, with a vintage television playing an old Roberto Duran fight, handmade trophies that read *EMIGRANTS* and *IMMIGRANTS*, and a boxing robe turned into a prayer frock that invokes the secret society of diaspora Jews in the Caribbean. For Rolon, mingling these cultural references perfectly encapsulates the divergent worlds of both art and boxing. "You just never know what's going to happen," he says. "It can go ten seconds . . . or ten rounds."

"Dzine: Born, Carlos Rolon, 1970" runs through March 1 at Salon 94 and at Paul Kasmin Gallery, both in New York; salon94.com, paulkasmingallery.com