

# Road Runners: In the Driver's Seat

VOX/NORMAN MCLAREN GALLERY, MONTREAL MAR 7 TO MAY 30 2009



Michel de Broin *L'épreuve du danger* from the series *Matière dangereuse* 1999 Courtesy of Galerie Donald Browne

## Close Move

Car culture is so deeply embedded within the North American psyche—not to mention the continental economy—it's hard to believe the Detroit-based automotive industry is teetering on the brink of total collapse. Not that there's any real fear of a sudden vehicular extinction, especially with governments on both sides of the Canada-US border investing billions of dollars in corporation-saving stimulus monies. But the impending failure of the automotive sector as we know it does present a perfect moment to get some perspective on our fundamental cultural romance with four wheels.



Hans-Peter Feldmann *Pictures of car radios taken while good music was playing* 2004 Detail Courtesy of 303 Gallery New York

For the exhibition "Road Runners," currently on view at [VOX](#) and the [Norman McLaren Gallery](#) in Montreal, curator [Marie-Josée Jean](#) has gathered works by an A-list crew of 20 Canadian and international artists to examine the myth and mystery of cars and the open road. Taking off from the notion of a rambling quest for identity best described in Jack Kerouac's seminal novel *On the Road* or perhaps Dennis Hopper's classic 1969 counterculture film *Easy Rider*, Jean maps a

physical and more often psychological journey mediated by endless highway landscapes and roads less taken. It's a survey that covers a lot of ground, or kilometres, if you like. On the one hand you have the metaphysical underpinnings of deadpan conceptual-autobiographical works by the likes of Hans-Peter Feldmann and Stephen Shore. On the other, the accidental humour and philosophical deconstruction of staged journeys by [Roman Signer](#) (in a kayak towed along a dirt road) and [Michel de Broin](#) (in a vintage gas-guzzler topped with a huge black cube). In all, as Jean writes in the exhibition text, "what matters isn't so much the final destination as the 'getting there'—a constant progression toward an ideal place." (1211 boul St-Laurent/335 boul de Maisonneuve E, Montreal QC)

- [www.voxphoto.com](http://www.voxphoto.com)
- [www.cinematheque.qc.ca/affiche/expositions\\_roadrunner.html](http://www.cinematheque.qc.ca/affiche/expositions_roadrunner.html)



Roman Signer *Kayak* 2000 Video still Courtesy of Videart.ch Zofingen

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