

## **Artistic thrills abound in Dallas-Fort Worth Galleries in October**

By Kendall Morgan

Kustom Kulture (the art, vehicles, and fashion inspired by candy-colored hot rods) is at the heart of the incredible, inflated sculptures by William Cannings at Cris Worley Fine Arts this month.

Raised in England but ending up in Lubbock (where he heads up the sculpture department at Texas Tech University), Cannings' background working with auto materials led him to keep a hands-on approach to his work. Where other artists may send out their pieces to be fabricated, he hand-hammers flat sheets of steel, welds them together, heats them, then literally blows them up with air in a process that is decidedly volatile.

"The trickery of it is, it looks like it's one thing but it's actually another," says Worley. "I think that excites people — they walk in and think, 'Why has she got all these pool toys in here?' They have slick surfaces that are almost kitschy, but the reflective shimmer is just sexy — it makes you want to touch and squish."

The popsicles, knots, and abstract shapes (one of which, "Air-MESS," plays with the idea of the winged Greek god) may look like fun-loving inflatables, but there's a darker side to Canning's sculpture. A snub-nosed pistol modeled after the gun used by radical feminist Valerie Solanas to shoot the artist Andy Warhol is spookily prescient in its social commentary.

"What may have had an influence (on the show) is that in the last year he worked on getting his U.S. citizenship," explains Worley. "The gun is an obvious thing, and the Popsicle recalls the heat of Texas and raising children in America. He did a raft, which plays with the idea of immigration. They're interesting things for you to question."