



## GLENN KAINO: CATALYZED NOSTALGIA

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Glenn Kaino is a weird kind of creature. Like the legendary Chimera, he is an amalgam of many different parts. While this may seem an obvious thing to say about any young hyphenated American living in the postmodern climes of twentieth-century Los Angeles, it is truer for Glenn than for any other person I have met. The reason for this is that he relishes wearing different hats: street artist, former gang member, political-intellectual ideologue, computer wiz, Angelino *flâneur*, business entrepreneur *par excellence*, and hip-hop maven. Furthermore, while many of his generation revel in swapping identities to suit the pursuit of the moment, Glenn, I feel, is never able to change his stripes. He keeps each of them in rhythmic juxtaposition, enjoying the abrasion of one grinding against the next. All of his personas emerge when he speaks with his rapturous rapid-fire delivery, which is at times brilliantly articulate and at other times coy street palaver. What might this all mean to an artist of his depth and introspection, to someone who is constantly observant yet can then almost simultaneously produce an artistic riff on what he sees? This is the modern way of a computer-age “Mr. Two Thumbs,” but with a difference!

When offered the opportunity to choose an artist to create a signature artwork to celebrate the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the city of Pittsburgh’s founding in 1758, I almost immediately thought of Glenn. I remembered my first meeting with him at a conference devoted to public art, identity, and civic dialogue almost eight years ago. In discussing the

FIG. 1 Detail of *Untitled*, 2004; plastic, steel pins, wood, glue, and white paint; 48 x 36 in. (121.9 x 91.4 cm); courtesy of the artist and The Project, New York