"I?m thinking of a backstage. Of models and actors mentally preparing themselves for presentation. Doing facial exercises and breathing routines. Of producers looking past the lights to the response of the audience. At the bored expressions of indifference. I?m imagining Band-Aids, stretcher bars, cosmetics, all sorts of metaphorical clichés for the unconscious. Thinking about what it means to have your back to someone. to spend hours in analysis. How someone?s ass looks in this or that. Worried we?ll never learn. Trying to remember what it was I was trying to say. Counting drinks and not calories." – Matthew Brannon, 10/9/08

"However, we will never be sure where the centre stage is in these works, indeed, what is central and what peripheral, what is on view and what puts to view." – Philip Monk, "More Than You Know" on Matthew Brannon.

On Thursday, the 12th of November, Gió Marconi Gallery is pleased to present Matthew Brannon?s first solo exhibition in Italy, "Grandmothers," a show of all new work featuring a wall painting of a painting, a sculpture of a back stage, two new tapestries, and ten of his signature letterpress prints. After early, frustrated attempts at painting Brannon began to self-consciously test the limits of art and graphic design by creating prints that mimicked advertising in order to more directly address contemporary cosmopolitan lifestyle. In "Grandmothers" Brannon continues this exploration, humoring himself specifically with issues of ambition and compromise.

If one could identify the subjective core of Brannon?s somewhat oblique practice it would be the letterpress prints. Each painstakingly crafted print (an edition of one) follows a fairly straightforward formula, pairing images with text. Whereas normally the role of the text in such a composition would be to clarify the meaning of the imagery, with Brannon?s prints this is not the case – the text instead complicates, perverts and obstructs intuitive interpretation. Our evaluation of the print?s meaning is lead toward a more psychological reading, concerned with subject such as career anxiety, alcoholism, sexual misadventure and denial. Our analytical ruminations are presented with images of passports, chewing gum, cosmetics, shoes, and Band- Aids.

A separate ongoing body of work continues this blurred border between decoration and fine art in the form of tapestries. The tapestries consist of silkscreen printing and embroidery thread on canvas, hung on specially designed rigs made of wood and brass.

Included is a wall drawing made using acrylic household paint. With a confident visual economy the abstraction is made to wittily suggest the back of a painting. The painting is not only not removable from the wall but literally has it?s back to us. Brannon, with tongue in cheek, addresses the

understandable vulnerability that artists encounter when presenting work in public, while simultaneously drawing our attention to our own expectations when viewing art.

Completing the exhibition is an artwork of similarly ambiguous intent, a sculptural representation of a backstage area. By creating a lattice-like structure directly on the far wall Brannon transforms the gallery from a viewing space to a "behind-the-scenes" space, suggesting that the crux of what is happening is inaccessible to us. Where we are is both a space of privilege and a space removed from actuality.

Matthew Brannon was born in St.Maries, Idaho, in 1971, lives and works in New York. His work can currently be seen in the, 2008 Triennale di Torino and was recently included in the 2008 Whitney Biennal. Past exhibitions : Where Were We, Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria, New York; Try & be Grateful, AGYU, Art Gallery at York University, Toronto; Hyena, Jan Winkelmann/Berlin, Berlin; 2005 Meat Eating Plants, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles; 2004 Exhausted Blood & Imitation Salt, Johmn Conelly Presents, NeBirthday Party, Kevin Bruk Gallery, Miami; 2000 Soft Rock, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin.

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