

The Approach is pleased to present Matthew Brannon's debut solo show in London. *Nevertheless* consists of a large sculpture representing a theatre set in a roped-off section of the gallery, a small sculpture of a bookshelf and book, and four of his signature letterpress prints. The show departs from his recent New York trilogy of exhibitions concerning urban malaise by entertaining both the idea and the image of a transatlantic sea voyage. The outdated—once preferred—way to travel to London, now but a literary backdrop or an obnoxious tourist getaway. The irresolvable tension between text and image in Brannon's prints is here rendered in a sculptural context where form fails to function and meaning humorously flirts with its metaphorical link.

The show's central large sculpture, *I know now no one won*, is of a stage for a play that is ostensibly set aboard a cruise ship. The stage is divided into three parts: a state room, a ship's bar, and the deck of a ship. The colour of the artwork remains consistently white or aqua. The props are minimal and range from an upholstered headboard to hand carved bottles and a faux railing out of enamelled steel and oak to a melted ice sculpture presented as a glass of water upon a nightstand. Brannon's artwork humorously explores and resists the metaphoric significance of a ship at sea and incorporates themes of drifting and drowning. But the ultimate construction of a narrative is left to the viewer.

The counter to this large-scale work is a smaller sculpture of a bookshelf titled IGUANA, which is the fourth of such sculptures to date. The artwork consists of a custom-designed bookshelf set high beyond reach on the gallery's wall. On it rests a hand carved sculpture of an espresso cup (Brannon's continued ribbing of the artist cum "bohemian") and 25 copies of his latest novella, *Iguana*. The book is without exposed title and appears as a prop. We are told that its subject matter involves an unfinished screenplay and a murder in an airport but viewing of the book is prohibited thus negating its possible meaning and plot. A consistent theme in Brannon's work is one of access to and between artwork, artist, and audience.

The show also features four new letterpress prints. Over the course of the last seven years Brannon has used this medium initially pioneered by Gutenberg as a vehicle for his ideas. Neither posters, nor pages from a book, and definitely not paintings, these works exist in a boundary between object and illustration. The literal impression of the text into the paper lends an ineffable sense of permanence to text that is seemingly colloquial and carefree. Colours of vintage blue and images of table games suggest themes of leisure aboard the London-bound ship while the text is rife with Brannon's trademark acerbic humour. The prints suggest that all is not well; that whatever it was we thought we were doing...nevertheless we will have to do something else.

Matthew Brannon was born in 1971 and lives and works in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include: *The Question is a Compliment*, Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York (2008); *Grandmothers*, Galleria Gió Marconi, Milan (2008); *Where Were We*, Whitney Museum of Art at Altria, New York (2007); *Meat Eating Plants*, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles (2005). Recent group exhibitions include: *Embrace*, Denver Art Museum, Denver (2009); *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse.*, ICA, London (2009); *Whitney Biennial*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2008); *50 Moons of Saturn*, T2 Torino Triennale, curated by Daniel Birnbaum, Turin (2008); *Acquisitions, Gifts, and Works from Various Exhibitions 1985-2008*, curated by Bob Nickas, White Columns, New York (2008); *Multiplex: Directions in Art, 1970 to Now*, curated by Deborah Wye, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2007).

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