

# Matthew Craven

## “Rendezvous with Rama”

May 31 - July 3, 2024



**Asya Geisberg Gallery** is pleased to present “Rendezvous with Rama,” an exhibition of drawings by **Matthew Craven**. Each work is titled after a classic work of science fiction, with the show’s title being an homage to Arthur C. Clarke, best known for “2001: A Space Odyssey.” Craven’s style rests on a pleasing fusion of drawing with a fine point marker girded onto a grid of cells, resembling an early digital interface. It is one of many ways Craven finds parallels from antiquity to the present, as his work posits that all geometric abstraction, no matter the time or origin, plucks from a universality of forms and patterns. Craven’s central insight is that the unfamiliar must always be couched in the understood, just as science fiction can dream up a futuristic or alien world only by relating back to what we can easily observe.

Adept at the call and response to printed material, Craven now plumbs dusty paperbacks whose patinas mirror the faded, ripped, and taped up ‘60s and ‘70s B-movie posters he uses, long the substrate to his feverish drawing. The graphic boldness of book covers of the era meets its match - in Craven’s series, their minimalism refracted into baroque variations. A glowing orb floats in *Chapterhouse*, suggesting an unknown planet or distant sun, or perhaps a flying saucer. Pictographs abound, a hint of intra-universe communication.

In the development of the exhibition, Craven was re-reading “Rendezvous,” a story told from the point of view of a group of human explorers who intercept an abandoned extraterrestrial spaceship in an attempt to unlock its mysteries. The ship’s crew attempts to describe the strange landscape inside the alien vessel, and so Craven finds an apt metaphor for the viewer’s experience of his work. The crew attempt to articulate something seemingly familiar at first, but whose ultimate purpose of discovery remains unknown. In *Neverwhere*, *Palace of Eternity and Foundation*, a quasi-alphabet emerges from the striated blocky letters. Elsewhere, glyphs suggest an Aztec tale, and fragments of dense drawing could be a torii gate, pagoda, or ziggurat. In *Ringworld* parallel lines suggest a circuit, in other works, saguaros, flowers, or pixelated plants conjure a landscape, as the flatness of the design gets interrupted by moments of symbolic intent. Indeed, interpreting Craven’s work feels like squinting at an eye chart, or perhaps a frustrating attempt to decipher the Rosetta Stone. It is in that failure that the artist charts his series, akin to the explorers and human-alien encounters of the future as envisioned 50 years ago.

Matthew Craven was born in Michigan. He earned a BFA from Michigan State University, and received his MFA from the School of Visual Arts, NY. He has exhibited widely in the United States and abroad, including solo and two-person exhibitions at Hashimoto Contemporary, San Francisco; Ampersand Gallery, Portland; David Shelton Gallery, Houston; Bass and Reiner, San Francisco; Volery Gallery, Dubai, UAE; DCKT Contemporary, NY; Allegra LaViola Gallery, NY; Marvelli Gallery, NY; Gallery Hijinks, San Francisco; Packing, Detroit; 101/Exhibit, Los Angeles; and Get This! Gallery, Atlanta. Group exhibitions include Guerrero Gallery, San Francisco; Mini Galerie, Amsterdam, NL; Essex Flowers, NY; Danese/Corey, NY; Hashimoto Contemporary, Los Angeles; SPRING/BREAK, NY; Muster-Meier, Switzerland; Richard Heller Gallery, Los Angeles; Perry Rubenstein, NY; and The Hole, NY; among others. He has participated in residencies with Marfa Myths Festival, TX; Tilleard Projects, Lamu Island, Kenya; The Jaunt, Bali, Indonesia; and The Watermill Center, NY. Craven has been reviewed in Juxtapoz Magazine, The Brooklyn Rail, Art Critical, The Huffington Post, Art F City, Glasstire, Widewalls, Artnet News, Art Observed, Musee Magazine, and Burnaway, and has curated exhibitions at DCKT, Asya Geisberg Gallery, and Nudashank.



Matthew Craven  
NEUROMANCER., 2024  
Pencil and ink on found paper  
24h x 18w in



Matthew Craven  
FOUNDATION., 2024  
Pencil and ink on found paper  
40h x 30w in