

ARTFORUM

Los Angeles

Matthew Brannon

DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY
5130 West Edgewood Place
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Americans born in 1971, such as Matthew Brannon, have a range of astrological signs, but share a political one: Richard Nixon. Thus the artist has given himself license to base a body of work on that retrograde subject, the Vietnam War. The screen prints in the ongoing series "Concerning Vietnam" imagine symbolic centers of command and control, from the Oval Office set up for a presser (*Concerning Cambodia: Oval Office, April 1970*, 2017) to a Huey cockpit littered with pilots' trinkets (*Concerning Vietnam: Bell UH-1D Iroquois, Cockpit*, 2016–17). Comprising dozens of intricate layers, at the scale of classical history painting, each is a full-bleed tour de force. *Concerning Vietnam: Air Force One, November 1963*, 2017, depicts the plane's interior sometime during John F. Kennedy's last days. Spread across swaths of dust blue and army gold are articles of ladies' clothing; on the table, a cascade of vintage memos recounts the runaway war, and a half-tone rendering of a self-immolating monk pops into sudden focus.



Matthew Brannon, *Concerning Vietnam: Bell AH-1S Cobra, Pilot's Seat*, 2016–2017, silk-screen with hand painting on paper, 66 1/2 x 52".

As with Brannon's previous works, his loose, graphic statements seem charged with narrative, like the polished outline of a fantasy studded with uncanny facts. Here, the human scale and first-person perspective are enough to lend the impression of control to those searching for meaning in their own horrorscope. *Concerning Vietnam: Bell AH-1S Cobra, Pilot's Seat*, 2016–17, sets the viewer at the gauges and switches. FIRE 1 PULL, FIRE 2 PULL; screen 29, ink 50; the colors would flake apart like meat from hot bone.

— Travis Diehl