

MATTHEW CRAVEN

UPPERPLAYGROUND NEWS

AMERICAN HISTORY BY MATTHEW CRAVEN

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by Ariadna Zierold

Matthew Craven challenges the sweeping narratives of American history textbooks, appropriating images of historical figures and sites and defacing or reconfiguring them within new aesthetic compositions. With his surreal mash-ups of historical references composed on antiquated paper, Craven creates his own pared-down symbols and mythologies. In combinations of illustration, collage, and painting, a march of tribal chieftains, Masonic leaders, and American generals and presidents appears in his images, their faces blotted out or colonized by Craven's trademark geometric patterns.



Many of Craven's images are ambiguous, resisting cohesive narratives or easy interpretation; the artist has said that his compositions are not dictated by any political agenda but are based solely on aesthetic consideration.