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# ELAINE REICHEK

## AFTER BABEL

### ALPHA BETA

**MAY 14 – JUNE 25, 2004**

OPENING RECEPTION: MAY 14, 6–8PM



*Gallery of the Louvre*, 2004  
embroidery on linen  
34.25 x 46.25 inches  
87 x 117.5 centimeters

Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery is pleased to present a new exhibition featuring new work by Elaine Reichek opening on Friday, May 14 from 6 – 8pm. The exhibition continues through June 25, 2004.

Reichek's first solo exhibition with the gallery, *After Babel Alpha Beta*, will feature her most technically complex embroidered works to date focusing on visual representations of communication, language, and modern technology. As part of her working process, the artist scans printed reproductions of her source material then uses a computer program to map the pictures as coded embroidery charts. Thus, the computer's zeroes and ones translate the painting's pigments as gridded points of color allowing Reichek to create her pictures through an assemblage of stitches.

Using Bruegel's *Tower of Babel* (1563) as a conceptual starting point, the viewer is presented with an intricate rendition in thread of this biblical story. According to Genesis, "The whole earth was of one language" until, at Babel, the Lord decided that men "may not understand one another's speech." The fall of that doomed tower marked the birth of translation and language as a system of secondhand signs. To Reichek, the Babel parable can be used to explain the diversity of the world's countless languages; symbolically implying the impossibility of true, unimpeded communication.

Another work uses an image of Samuel Morse's *Gallery of the Louvre* (1831–33). Morse who is more famous as the inventor of the telegraph, was also an accomplished painter. Reichek's embroidered version of the Morse painting depicts Morse's "re-hanging" of his favorite works from the Louvre's vast collection. As an artist, Morse's prescient conceptualism mimics Reichek's own curation of art historical imagery. As an inventor, Morse brought the world the first medium of instant long-distance communication, marking the beginning of the global age. He also invented the code on which the telegraph relies—a code that finesses language as dashes and dots, a rudimentary binary code not unlike that of the modern day computer. As part of her installation, Reichek has created a gossamer curtain with Morse's first telegraph message sewn into its body. Reichek's work has been the subject of several solo museum exhibitions in the past several years most notably at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, and the Tel Aviv Museum. She also recently completed an interactive project with the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, which will be presented in the gallery.