

WVVIDE

CRITICISM & EVENTS

ART

Elaine Reichek: *Back Stitch*

Hoffman Donahue in collaboration with Marinaro, [99 Bowery](#)
[Floor 2](#)

Feb 21 – Apr 4

This exhibition of Elaine Reichek's early work from 1971 to 1979, the majority of which hasn't been seen in fifty years, provides a chapter in feminist art history that simultaneously feels fresh. This is surely because some of the pieces have been revisited and altered. But it also has everything to do with Reichek's intimate, process-oriented, and labor-intensive approach. A sixteen-foot-long vitrine with archival material dating from 1962 to 1980, including spirited letters from her mentor Ad Reinhardt, underscores a sense of dialogue and relationality in her practice.

Along with artists such as with Howardena Pindell, Mary Heilmann, and Louise Fishman, Reichek began challenging the rigidity of the grid in the 1970s by sewing onto canvases. This piercing of the picture plane was (and still is) a form of troublemaking, and a snub to Clement Greenberg, among others. She continued her formal explorations of line-as-thread in the "Parallelograms," 1977, an experiment in the possibilities of layering four gray pieces of organdy that she would eventually stitch together. She noticed that within her various self-made systems there were endless possibilities of arranging the series, and that so-called "women's work" could be geometric and generative, too. In 2024, she updated the "Parallelograms" and added bright new colors—turquoise, pink, and yellow—as if picking back up on a conversation that could seemingly go on forever.

—Lauren O'Neill-Butler