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Elaine Reichek: 'Ariadne's Thread'

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Ariadne, the clever heroine of Greek myth whose ball of thread helped Theseus escape from the Minotaur's labyrinth, makes an ideal subject for [Elaine Reichek](#). Ms. Reichek has been working with thread since the 1970s, most recently in canvases embroidered with the help of sophisticated digital machinery. (She has a large-scale tapestry in the [Whitney Biennial](#), which opens on Thursday.)

In a bookish but appealing series begun in 2008 Ms. Reichek uses digital and hand embroidery and silk-screen to reproduce a wide range of images and literary quotations relating to the Ariadne myth. She begins with a sample from the third century B.C. epic poem "The Argonautica," which is paired with Giovanni Crosato's "Bacchus Crowning Ariadne With a Diadem of Stars." Later we see Warhol's "Italian Square With Ariadne (After de Chirico)" and a Theseus motif from an Attic black-figure amphora.

Keeping this exercise from becoming pedantic, Ms. Reichek finds elements of the myth where we least expect them: in "The Shining," for instance (an image of the hotel's patterned carpeting appears below a poem about the Minotaur going mad). Comic books and other unexpected sources pop up in the photo archive "Minotaur/Labyrinth," on view in the gallery's front window.

The series is most insightful, though, when it focuses on Ariadne. We tend to think of her as a crafty gal Friday, but Guido Reni's "Bacchus and Ariadne" shows her as helpless nude, deserted by Theseus and about to enter a pity marriage with the wine god. Accompanying this image is a quotation from Nietzsche's "Ecce Homo." It reads, "Who besides me knows who Ariadne is?," and the words seem to come directly from Ms. Reichek.