

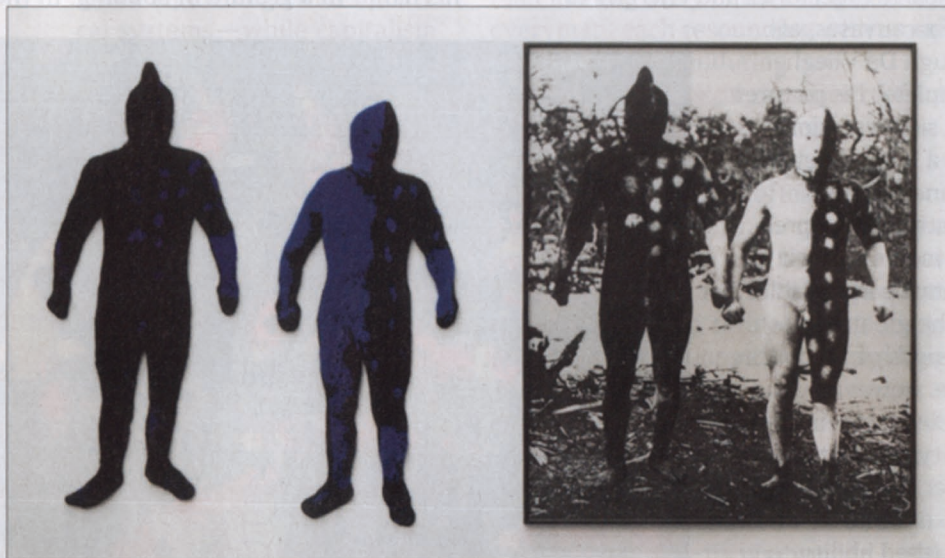
Elaine Reichek

Zach Feuer

Dissonance and disjunction are Elaine Reichek specialties, as she matches up the unlikely and makes oddly askew visual couplings that can be subtle or bold or both. Her recent “non-exhaustive” survey, an absorbing solo exhibition (her first at Zach Feuer), followed her art making from 1972 to ‘95, through fabric and knitted works, samplers, photographs, and installations. Reichek explores questions of gender, race, culture, power, appropriation, and the unreliability and interchangeability of signs through mediums often associated with the domestic and the second class. Her ideas, and they are many, are presented as quick, gleeful detonations that can downshift into impiety.

One striking work here was *The Artist's Bedroom* (1979). It's a re-creation of an airless little room in primary blue and has an overhead light like those used for interrogation. Lined with small replicas of modernist paintings in fabric, including a Mondrian, Reichek translates what was perceived as a privileged male pursuit into women's work. Shelters of all kinds were present in the show, many in the form of photographs of tepees (Native Americans were used throughout to exemplify otherness and marginalization). In *Navaho* (1992), a nearly life-size photo of a man in what seems to be tribal dress is paired with a knitted double next to it on the wall that looks like an extra-large, cold-weather onesie, suggesting, as one option, the infantilization and emasculation of a once fiercely independent people. There was also a sampler—a Reichek mainstay—from the same year that slyly proclaims, “Their manners are decorous,” although surely not always, to the infinite regret of certain colonizers, a fact that Reichek makes us relish as much as she does.

—Lilly Wei



Elaine Reichek, *Blue Men*, 1986, knitted wool yarn and oil on gelatin silver print in three parts, 63" x 96". Zach Feuer.