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## ART IN REVIEW

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### Elaine Reichek

*Nicole Klagsbrun  
526 West 26th Street, Chelsea  
Through June 19*

Elaine Reichek's show, titled "After Babel Alpha Beta," is a multimedia installation like few others, combining as it does embroidery, digital technology, old master images, Jorge Luis Borges and shrewd socio-political commentary couched in ice-dry humor.

Her subject is language, with its many forms and infinite confusions. The stage is set with a computer-plotted version of Pieter Bruegel's painting "The Tower of Babel" (1536), which Ms. Reichek has embroidered, annotating it with quotations from the Bible and Borges's "Library of Babel." From there she leaps to 19th-century America and Samuel F. B. Morse, whose telegraphic code helped open up global communication — or miscommunication, as the case may be: Ms. Reichek has embroidered his first message, sent from Washington to

Baltimore, on curtains covering the gallery windows.

Then it's on to the future, represented in the pictographic language devised by the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute in the 1970's. The idea was to place information about life on earth into spacecraft for the edification of whatever light-years distant readers might find it. Ms. Reichek stitches an elaborate sampler from this material, including not only arcane diagrams but also the figures of a nude man and woman, a kind of intergalactic Adam and Eve.

She further elaborates on such Edenic emblems in an interactive CD titled "Madam I'm Adam," made during a residency at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. As that digital piece makes clear, art itself is a post-Babel language, as corrupting as it is enlightening, and Ms. Reichek continues to both produce and scrutinize it with multitasking intelligence and flair.

HOLLAND COTTER

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