

# photograph



Gijs Bakker, Waterman, 1991. Photo by Thomas von der Heiden, courtesy Museum of Arts and

## REVIEWS

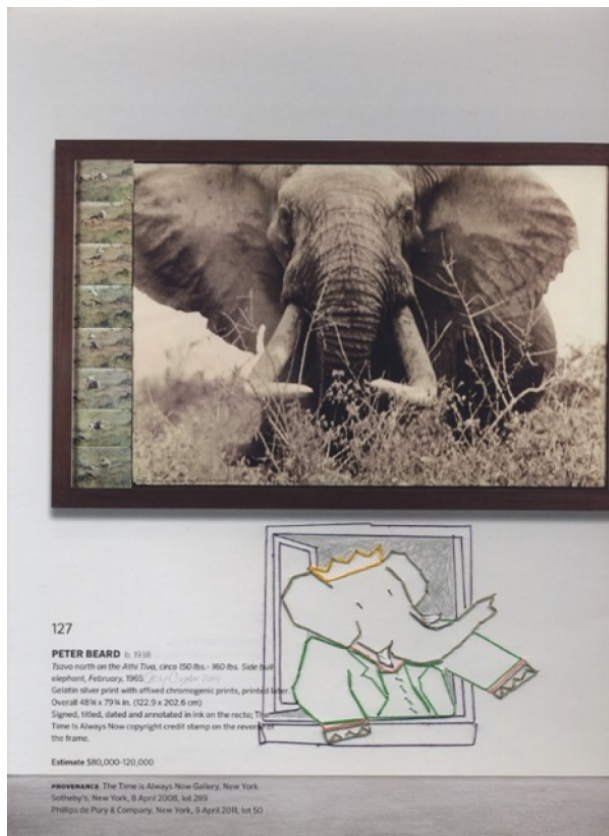
### Multiple Exposures: Jewelry and Photography / The Embroidered Image

BY JEAN DYKSTRA, JUNE 3, 2014

The steady stream of images that comes our way electronically every day can make any single picture feel intangible, endlessly reproducible, and easy to dismiss. But two current exhibitions are emphasizing the materiality of the photograph – its object-ness and uniqueness. *The Embroidered Image* at [Robert Mann Gallery](#) through August 15 includes 11 artists who transform photographs using the humble domestic tools of needle and thread. *Multiple Exposures: Jewelry and Photography*, on view at the [Museum of Arts and Design](#) (MAD) through September 14, features a remarkably wide range of works that combine photography and jewelry, in the most generous definition of those terms. Thematically, the work ranges from the political to the poignant, including acts of memorialization and commentaries on beauty and cultural conventions.

With work by more than 80 international artists, the show at MAD includes bracelets, brooches, and necklaces as well as videos and sculptural objects. Many of the pieces are stunning; none are merely pretty. Gijs Bakker transformed a sensual black-and-white photograph by Bruce Weber of a naked man pouring water over himself into a brooch, in which the water glimmers with diamonds. Sally von Bargen's elegiac necklace is made up of 70 strands holding a total of 4,200 digital photographs that resemble dog tags, each framing a photo of a soldier who died in the Iraq war. The piece recalled Jane Hammond's installation *Fallen* (2004 -), a field of handmade leaves, each inscribed with the name of a soldier who died in Iraq. A number of pieces were contemporary takes on the historical tradition of jewelry keepsakes, like cameos or locket: Suska Mackert updates 18th century

painted eye miniatures, for example, appropriating the eyes in found newspaper photographs in her miniatures. Among the video works on view, *Tongue Gilding*, a video by Lauren Kalman, is uncomfortably clear in its message about the pain and perils of body modification. Wafaa Bilal, an Iraqi American artist who had a camera temporarily implanted in back of his head that transmitted an image every minute to a website, was the only artist who seemed out of place, even within the broad parameters of the exhibition. Bilal's project, a response to the people and places he lost during his journey from Iraq to Saudi Arabia to the United States, was aimed at capturing images of his own life by removing his hand and eye from the photographic process. But the artist's hand — and the artist's direct engagement with the photographic object — was the primary focus of the majority of works in the eye-opening show.



Orly Cogan, *Arriere Grand-Pere*, 2014. ©Orly Cogan, courtesy Robert Mann Gallery

Handiwork is the subject of *The Embroidered Image* as well, in terms of its decorative and its transformative properties. In a show that could have tilted toward the sentimental, curator Orly Cogan instead chose works that were pleasantly odd and humorously unsettling. The most successful images went beyond altering the surface of the image and engaged with the medium on a deeper level. The sneaky needlework in Diane Meyer's photographs of barren Berlin streetscapes, for example, mimicked photography's pixelization. Jane Waggoner Deschner quilted black and white photographs together in a contemporary twist on family photo albums, quilts, and keepsakes, but she punctuated them with playful symbols or existential questions ("What can I hope?"). Orly Cogan's works involved pages from auction catalogues that she embellished with wry needlework doodles. A Babar-like embroidered elephant pops out of a window on a page documenting a Peter

Beard elephant, for example. The Cat in the Hat and Lyle the Crocodile make appearances in other works – all pages from auction catalogues, all featuring artworks by men (Saul Steinberg, Robert Indiana, Adam Fuss), complete with pricing information and provenance. Cogan playfully undercuts both the art market and the prevalence of the male artist in that market with her pointed play on traditional women's work.