KIRSTIN LAMB STATEMENT

I make labor-intensive images of labor-intensive textiles and patterns.

I call the gridded high-detail paintings on transparent acetate embroidery paintings. In order to paint the images that are not already patterns set on a grid, I generate a digitized grid and paint each gridded stitch by hand with acrylic and acrylic gouache on a wet media acetate. This is a simple process of re-painting a textile or pattern, sometimes an invented image-generated textile, sometimes an actual knit or textile pattern (cross stitch or embroidery). The brush creates a one-to-one relationship of mark to stitch, each mark stands in for a move of the needle.

Many of the embroidery paintings I make are images of floral wallpaper cropped from French wallpaper of the 17th, 18th and 19th century. Much of the other embroidery paintings were made using vintage embroidery patterns from the ‘50s, ‘60s and ‘70s or generated from my own photography, primarily of interiors, landscapes and portraits.

Parts of this series are generated from images of French wall decoration made following the discovery of the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum in the late 1700s. These works were deliberately cropped from texts discussing the shift in pattern before and after the discovery of those ruins, and the elaborate color and design shifts that occurred after the unearthing of the frescos. I am particularly interested in the political moment that created this shift and its need for this decoration and the need for the classical power invested in this kind of antiquity at that moment. I transfer this documentation to a deliberately cropped and somewhat modern space that reads as both woven and pixelated, primarily to reframe our gaze as contemporary (with the sheen of the acetate adding an extra screen-like feeling). The re-presenting of this particular decorative moment is for me an echoing of the darker uses of antiquity as a stand in for beauty and power.

