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# MURIEL GALLERY GUÉPIN

## “Past and Present” Featuring artworks from Iviva Olenick and Melissa Zexter



Opening Thursday May 18 from 6:30 – 8 pm

Muriel Guépin Gallery is pleased to present a new show of two women artists working with concepts of femininity, family, and memories. Iviva Olenick recreates old family photos through embroidery, tracing her matriarchal lineage. By doing this, she can piece together lost familial practices, and memories. Melissa Zexter works by directly embroidering onto her photographs, combining a traditional practical skill, embroidery with a modern and mass reproducible process, photography. Both find inspiration through personal stories and accounts of their lives, and the traditional feminine practice of embroidery.

**Melissa Zexter's** work couples embroidery with photography. The artist's fundamental concern is to explore the photograph's material status as three-dimensional object as well as to examine issues of identity, memory and technology. Her interest in the creation of hand-crafted, unique photographic objects is related to the proliferation of images in the modern age, one where images – and specifically photographic images – have lost their own object status altogether. Through their manipulations of the image's surface with embroidery or the partial removal of the emulsion, the photographs become unique, no-longer reproducible objects. Concerned with the interaction between hand and eye in relation to the photographic image, Zexter's complex works explore memory and personal experience while manipulating the generic qualities of the photographic print.

**Iviva Olenick** forgoes the photograph completely, embroidering, instead, a tangible remembrance of her ancestors. To create her images, she cuts and pastes old photographs to include female, Jewish ancestors from different decades and families, honoring a shared history of having worked with textiles and sewing. By splicing together unrelated photographs, Olenick threads a personal narrative that feels unknowable as part of a larger European Jewish history laced with flight and migration. She then embroiders versions of these interwoven photographs, imagining herself part of a matriarchal tradition through her mother's and father's deceased parents and grandparents.

This exhibition will be on view until June 24, 2017