

Galería Marta Cervera

Clare Grill

CUTWORK

Galería Marta Cervera is honored to present *Cutwork*, Clare Grill's first solo show in Spain and in Europe. Grill's work draws on a vast vocabulary of shapes, colors, and compositional choices, inspired by antique embroidery samplers, as well as highly decorated birth, baptismal, and marriage certificates from the 18th and 19th centuries. The show is comprised of paintings and various sized works on paper, each of which informs and draws upon the other.

Included are works from Grill's ongoing series of 'Samplers': painted works on paper inspired by embroidery samplers which serve as a stock of shapes, marks, colors, and compositions for her paintings on linen. As she writes, "Samplers, made by little girls as part of their schooling, displayed the alphabet, numbers, little decorative motifs, and often a prayer or a verse about death and getting into heaven. They're complicated artifacts: full of reverence and beauty, obedience and skill, but also hand cramps, pin pricks, boredom, and perhaps rage. They're made by small hands but they're heavy little things. I pull from them for my paintings. I want to keep them, parts of them, the touch of them, the brokenness of them, the sweetness and the melancholy of them, and give them some kind of stage. Dress them up and shine a light."

Grill's newest series of small works on paper are called 'Signets,' a reference to seals used to mark documents and possessions, often impressed into a dab of wax. Signets represent a name, a person, and mark occasions. Of them, Grill writes, "I got my signet ring when I made my First Communion: *CAG*. It fit my middle finger when I got it but at some point I had it sized for my pinky. The letters have faded away, I wear it all the time. *May 9, 1987* it says on the inside. I remember I fell asleep in the lawn that day in my white dress, which was my great-grandmother's communion dress. When my mom took it off me that night, I was covered in chicken pox. The dress was covered in lace, the oldest lace I'd ever seen. My cousin still has it, though she changed it some. I think it has less lace now."

The show's title, *Cutwork*, refers to an antique form of embroidery in which bits of fabric were removed and the remaining hole was embellished with thread. A precursor to lace, cutwork was used by nuns to decorate vestments for priests, and to beautify household garments and textiles. "I like the word cutwork," Grill writes. "I like how it sounds to say it. I like how it looks." As with the marks and shapes that migrate across Grill's works on paper, her 'Samplers,' and her paintings, *Cutwork* evokes the parts removed or extracted; removed but cared for, paid attention to, embellished, touched, given another look. Handed down. Borrowed, mended, reworn.

Clare Grill (born 1979, Chicago, IL) received her MFA from the Pratt Institute in 2005 and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2011. Recent solo exhibitions include *Wich Language and Oyster*, M+B, Los Angeles, CA; *At the Soft Stages*, Derek Eller Gallery, New York, NY; *There's The Air*, Derek Eller Gallery, New York, NY; and *Touch'd Lustre*, Zieher Smith & Horton, New York, NY. Group exhibitions include *Of Flesh and Air*, Marta Cervera Gallery, Madrid, Spain; *The Feminine in Abstract Painting*, Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof Foundation, New York, NY; *Deep! Down! Inside!*, Hales Gallery, NY; and *New Skin*, curated by Jason Stopa, Monica King Gallery, New York, NY. Her work has been reviewed in *Artforum*, *ArtNews*, *Hyperallergic*, *the Brooklyn Rail*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The Boston Globe*. Clare Grill lives and works in Queens, NY.