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Stephen Sollins, *Elegy (Tulips)*, 2003–2004, embroidery and removed embroidery, 49 1/2 x 53 1/4".

NEW ORLEANS

Stephen Sollins

ARTHUR ROGER GALLERY
432 Julia Street & 434 Julia Street
March 7–March 28, 2009

This exhibition offers exceptional pieces by Stephen Sollins from the past six years. His recent works integrate found printed paper and acetate from the interiors of envelopes. While obsessive and methodical, these constructions transform the envelopes' often strange and beautiful prints into elaborate geometric patterns and an all-over tapestried field. With titles like *Jack's House* and *Grandfather's Garden* (both works 2008), Sollins's quiltlike pieces nearly domesticate any conceptual climax, yet they retain a truly kinetic space

punctuated with the multitude of narratives that might exist within each found envelope.

The most engaging pieces that emerge within the show, "Letters Home," are earlier works like *Elegy (Tulips)*, 2003–2004, wherein the artist reinvents found embroidery panels by removing the original design (tulips) and generating his own geometric patterning. The reworked fibers form an uneven grid of variously sized solid squares and use the basic set of seven colors from its original floral design. The nostalgic is forcibly yet painstakingly replaced with near-mathematical abstractions that reference the semiotic structures of Peter Halley. Yet through a careful and thorough reduction of kitsch into its fundamentals of color and texture, Sollins demands reflection on the most transmutable aspects of aesthetics and even emotions.

— Natalie Sciortino-Rinehart

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