

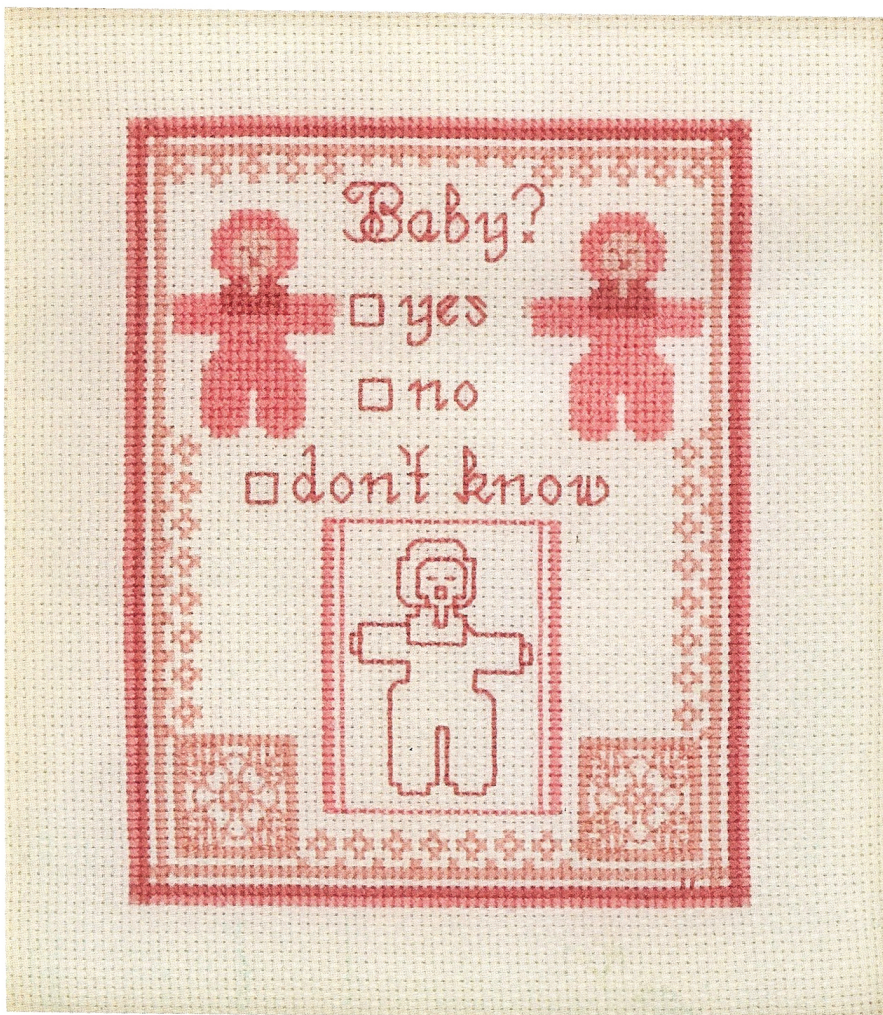
**SILKE RAETZE (1975-)**

There is no danger of Silke Raetze becoming one of those artists who doggedly churns out variations on the same idea for their whole career. Because Raetze postpones choosing her medium until she has fixed on her concept, she ensures that her work is constantly evolving and never repetitive. With a practice spanning drawing, sculpture, painting, even embroidery, and several art prize finals to her name, Raetze's is an exciting career to follow.

After a degree in fine arts at Sydney's National Art School, Raetze took up an artist's residency at Arthur Boyd's Bundanon where she developed the skilful paint and paper techniques exemplified by her 2007 investigation of love, lust, hope and disappointment: *Sweet Nothings* is a series of glass museum display cases housing delicate paper sculptures of flimsy underwear on which Raetze, using pen, ink, paint and pencil, painstakingly recreates every detail of fabric and design.

This romanticism and eroticism was followed by a contrasting series of works based on the tightly prescribed craft of embroidery. Over the centuries samplers have generally been used to demonstrate stitchery with a piece of moral advice thrown in for good measure. *Home Sweet Home* taps into the contradiction between the controlled form of the sampler and the desperation that sometimes lay behind its creation. Raetze highlights this rage by using traditional designs and stylized domestic images accompanied by neatly cross-stitched, brutally direct statements about the pressure on women to conform to social stereotypes.

In *Baby* (pictured, \$750) the sampler, instead of commemorating a baby's name and date of birth, is transformed into a magazine-style quiz question with stitched tick boxes.



*Baby* 2008  
Cross-stitch fabric with cottons  
15.5 x 12.5 cm

Courtesy of the artist