

A.I.R.

Dream Bird, Hatching The Egg

Susan Stainman

November 16 – December 17, 2017

Opening Reception: Friday, November 17, 6-8PM

First Thursday Gallery Walk: December 7, 6-8PM

Guided meditation every Saturday, from 12:30 - 1 PM, throughout the course of the exhibition

A.I.R. Gallery is pleased to announce *Dream Bird, Hatching the Egg*, a solo exhibition by New York Artist Susan Stainman. Stainman's second solo exhibition at A.I.R. presents an immersive installation of soft sculptures that explores the interconnection between Buddhist philosophy, meditation, and the creative process.



Detail of *Dream Bird, Hatching The Egg*

The title, drawn from Walter Benjamin's essay *The Storyteller*, describes boredom as a necessary part of creating. "This process of assimilation, which takes place in depth, requires a state of relaxation, which is becoming rarer and rarer. If sleep is the apogee of physical relaxation, boredom is the apogee of mental relaxation. Boredom is the dream bird that hatches the egg of experience." The dream bird evokes the boundless experience possible beyond the irritation commonly associated with boredom. Benjamin's conception is akin to the Buddhist idea of natural mind, or buddhanature, the inherent enlightened nature of all beings, often exemplified as a diamond covered in mud. It is said that buddhanature is undefinable, that the closest language can come is to point at the idea. Creativity is born out of this empty space of natural mind and boredom. Scientific studies confirm that people become more prolific and creative through boredom. On the Buddhist path of liberation having a direct experience of natural mind is an essential hallmark. So, it is through boredom and natural mind that we realize authenticity and a sense of freedom, making personal and social liberation possible.

Utilizing her sculptural language of sensuality and color, Stainman creates a visual metaphor of her personal experience of these states. Her objects made of fabric and other quotidian materials connect the walls to the felt-covered floor. Low-lying back rests dot the space, inviting viewers to recline and contemplate their own experience, alone and in intimate conversation. Seemingly incongruous to boredom, the colors and tactility of Stainman's work are a lure, drawing the viewer in through the body as a means of manipulation, lulling them into mental relaxation and an experience of natural mind.

Susan Stainman is an interdisciplinary artist, focusing in sculpture, installation, and social practice. She received a fellowship from A.I.R. Gallery in 2013 and has been a New York Artist with the gallery since 2014. She is a graduate of Brown University and the Slade School of Fine Art in London. She has attended residencies at Jentel Foundation, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, CAC at Woodside, and Vermont Studio Center. Stainman is a meditation teacher with a decade-long personal Buddhist meditation practice. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

The gallery is wheelchair accessible.

