

A.I.R.

SOCIAL PORTRAIT

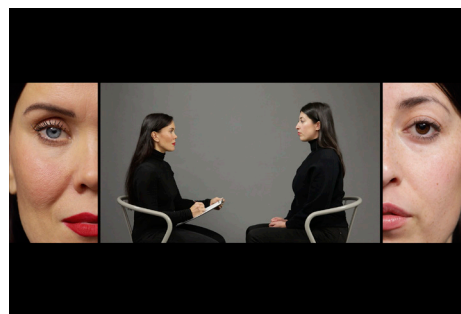
Katriina Haikala

October 15–November 13, 2022

Opening reception: Saturday, October 15 from 6–8pm

GALLERY III

A.I.R. Gallery is pleased to announce *SOCIAL PORTRAIT*, an exhibition of a socially engaged art project by artist Katriina Haikala. This is Haikala’s first solo exhibition in New York City.



Katriina Haikala, “*We Are The Daughters Of History*,” 2021, Three-channel video work, HD, color, stereo, 5 minutes, 30 seconds.

The exhibition is the latest iteration of the artist’s ongoing “Social Portrait” project, in which she aims to equalize the art canon by drawing one-thousand portraits of everyday women around the world. It is also the first presentation of the project in the United States. The exhibition presents approximately one-thousand of Haikala’s drawings, dated 2017–2022, as well as new portraits drawn during performances that will occur throughout the course of the exhibition.

Haikala says: “I developed a strong need to work with portraits after realizing that the history of art is the history of power. Historically, portraits have been mostly painted of people who have had a high status in society. If we look at the history of Europe, or any other continent, we all know what the faces of power have typically looked like—they have been men. With this project, I counterbalance art history by drawing a thousand portraits of people who identify as women.”

The exhibition includes five durational drawing performances in which women visiting the gallery may model for one of Haikala’s portraits. Haikala observes her model carefully and draws what she sees, without taking her eyes off the sitter. “When I draw, I don’t look at the paper at all, but instead look intensely at the sitter in front of me. With this method, I want to emphasize the experiences of being seen and acknowledged,” she says.

Haikala began her project at Amos Anderson Art Museum in Helsinki, Finland, in 2017. Since then, she has drawn in numerous Finnish art museums, as well as in Spiral Art Center in Tokyo, Japan, Thyssen-Bornemisza National Gallery in Madrid, Spain, and Fondazione Volume! in Rome, Italy.

Katriina Haikala (b. 1977) lives and works in Helsinki, Finland, and has worked as an independent artist since 2007. Haikala’s art practice is socially engaged, collaborative, participatory, and involves people in collaboration and social interaction. The body of her work is intertwined with activism and often deals with political issues such as human rights and equality. Haikala’s practice is interdisciplinary, involving performance, photography, visual art, and film. However, Haikala produces her work together with communities, with a passion for the visual and high quality of artistic work. Her best-known projects from recent years are “Social Portrait - Women Only,” where her aim is to draw one-thousand portraits of women from around the world, “Monokini 2.0 - Who Says You Need Two?,” a socially engaged art project which empowered single-breasted women who had survived breast cancer, and “Lupta Femeilor - Women’s Fight,” a community art project where she was an artist and a facilitator in the Eastern European Romani community.

Haikala has held solo exhibitions and participated in group exhibitions since 2007 in New York, Madrid, Berlin, London, Helsinki, Stockholm, Oslo, St. Petersburg, Tokyo, Rome, and elsewhere. She has received several national and regional grants and her work has been featured frequently in international media outlets (including *Al Jazeera*, the *New York Daily News*, *Upworthy*, *Huffington Post*, *The Indian Times*, and *El Pais*). Haikala is a member of MUU ry, Kuvasto, and AV-Ark.

A.I.R. Gallery is wheelchair accessible via ramp. There are accessible toilets in the venue. There is comfortable seating with backs. Free tap water is available. The venue is nearest to the F train at York St (0.2 miles) and the A train at High St (0.5 miles). The nearest wheelchair accessible trains is the B, Q, R at Dekalb Av (1.1 miles) and the 2, 3 at Borough Hall (0.8 miles). The roads immediately surrounding the gallery are cobblestone. The nearest accessible parking garage (for an hourly fee) is two blocks away at 100 Jay St. No ID necessary for entry. Please contact info@airgallery.org for more information.

