

# A.I.R.

## *That Moon Language* Susan Stainman

April 23 - May 23, 2021

GALLERY I

A.I.R. Gallery is pleased to present *That Moon Language*, an exhibition of new work by Susan Stainman. Her third solo exhibition with the gallery, *That Moon Language* is a multi-sensorial, participatory exhibition of wearable fabric sculptures and canopy-like sound installations that explore ideas of connection and interdependence.



Susan Stainman, *Cuffs for Contained Touch (Blue Jersey)*, 2020, fabric, beads, 6 x 4.5 x 6 inches.

For the artist, creating a holistic participatory exhibition means encompassing different learning methodologies (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic), as well as individuals' varying comfort levels, especially during the ongoing pandemic. Wearable sculptures meant for interaction between two or more people and sound installations intended for multiple users drive the kinesthetic experience. For those who might want to look but not touch, an audio guided visualization exercise offers an imagination-driven experience, while dancers provide another layer of access by activating the wearables during periodic performances.

Stainman's sculptural works draw on her desire for us to engage with the world first through our senses rather than our intellect. Her fabric choices (velvets, wools, ribbons), colors (saturated blues, purples, and greens), and pleating techniques are a means of drawing the eye and body in, inviting touch. In the exhibition, hand muff-like works, belts, and harnesses hang from the wall, waiting to be put on. When worn, these works guide participants' bodies toward different configurations, from close proximity, to six feet apart, to opposite ends of the gallery. While the artist created each work with a specific gesture in mind, they welcome experimentation and play. On weekend afternoons over the course of the exhibition, dancers will arrive at the gallery unannounced and begin performing with Stainman's sculptures. Visitors are welcome to watch, interact with the works alongside the dancers, or carry on as before.

While Stainman's wearable works prompt movement and play, her new audio installations call for stillness and attention. Three awning-like structures, with widths meant to accommodate one, two, and four people, cantilever out from the gallery wall. These shelters are draped in blue velvets that swoop across the front and grey-scale cottons that fall down the sides to the floor. When entered, the structures conjure both the comfort and claustrophobia of our recent shelter-in-place. Softly playing within each structure are audio excerpts of recorded interviews in which people share their everyday experiences of interdependence. A cumulative project, built over the course of the exhibition, the interviews are open to interested visitors who are invited to book an appointment with the artist via the A.I.R. website.

This past year, our interdependence has been made apparent in ways that might not have been so obvious before. Our individual actions—whether or not we wash our hands, stay socially distant, wear masks—affect our own health as much as that of our loved ones and those we might never meet, reverberating outward. On both the scales of the individual and the collective, Stainman's work asks us to be curious about the ways in which interdependence, our inextricable connectedness, plays out in the quotidian moments of our lives.

The title of the exhibition is drawn from the poem *With That Moon Language* by Hafez, the 14th century Persian poet:

Admit something: Everyone you see, you say to  
them, "Love me."

Of course you do not do this out loud, otherwise  
someone would call the cops.

Still, though, think about this, this great pull in us  
to connect.

Why not become the one who lives with a full  
moon in each eye that is always saying,

with that sweet moon language, what every other  
eye in this world is dying to hear?

**Susan Stainman** is a Brooklyn-based interdisciplinary artist, focusing in sculpture, installation, and social practice. She is a graduate of Brown University with a degree in American Studies and the Slade School of Fine Art in London for Sculpture. She has had solo exhibitions at A.I.R. Gallery, Point of Contact, Lock Haven University and Black and Graze in New York City. Her group exhibition history ranges from Smack Mellon in Brooklyn to SUNY Potsdam and Studio 44 in Stockholm, Sweden. She received a fellowship from A.I.R. Gallery in 2013 and has been a New York Artist with the gallery since 2014. She has attended residencies at Atlantic Center for the Arts, Jentel Foundation, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, CAC at Woodside, and Vermont Studio Center. Her work is held in universities and private collections nationally and internationally. Stainman has been a student of Buddhist meditation for over a decade, studying in the Tibetan tradition for the past five years.

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 are 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](mailto:info@airgallery.org) for more information.

