

A.I.R.

In The Family of Things **Susan Stainman**

May 25–June 23, 2024

Opening reception: Saturday, May 25, from 6–8pm

Parent's Hotline: 347-343-4662

GALLERY I

A.I.R. Gallery is pleased to announce New York Member Susan Stainman's new exhibition, *In The Family of Things*, which draws its title from the Mary Oliver poem *Wild Geese*. Stainman uses the poem's themes of finding connection and one's place in the world as a guidepost for exploring the inevitable challenges, shared experiences, and joys that parenthood creates. Unfolding over several distinct stages, *In the Family of Things* contains large embroidered fabric works, a communal seating area, and a workstation for the artist to continue the project throughout the exhibition period.



Susan Stainman, *Untitled (Mother and Child)*, 2024,
Photograph and thread, 9 1/2 x 8 inches.

The multifaceted piece starts with a hotline for parents to anonymously share in the high and low moments of parenting. They can leave voicemails or texts as a method of catharsis, solidarity, or encouragement for themselves and other parents. Alternatively, they can listen to messages left by other participants. As messages come in, Stainman begins translating them into embroidery patterns based on the contents of what each caller conveys. Taking cues from encoding techniques as well as antique cross stitch and embroidery patterns, these patterns vary by design depending upon topic and by color depending on emotional content. Topics covered often by participants—such as feeding, sleeping, and labor—create the edge designs, while topics covered less often are embroidered as flowers and plants in the center of each work. Though some of the embroidery will be done prior to the exhibition opening, much of the work will be done during gallery hours throughout the exhibition run, allowing the installation to grow and evolve. The embroidered fabric will be hung high on the walls of the gallery and drape over a seating arrangement—a communal upholstered piece of furniture—so that visitors can recline under the thoughts and feelings of this community of parents.

In The Family of Things is a natural extension of Stainman's interdisciplinary practice centering embodied moments of intimacy, connection, and interdependence. Her ideas stem from her mindfulness practice; she is interested in the small gestures and sensorial moments of life that manifest our interconnectedness: holding someone's hand, a touch on the arm, a hug, or a conversation. Her soft sculptures, photography, installations, and events make physically tangible these often overlooked or forgotten moments.

As Stainman states about one of the primary sources of inspiration for the work:

While my art practice has focused on intimacy and connection for the last several years, the birth of my son this past December has given me a new perspective. To be a new parent is to be full of intense and often contradictory emotions almost all the time. This project and body of work is inspired by this period in my life and my desire for connection with other parents in similar situations. It is through this project that I am coming to better understand myself and the individual nuances and universal quality of this experience.

The artist hopes that the public will enjoy engaging in the process as well as seeing the outcome of this unique work.

To participate: Call the Parent's Hotline: 347-343-4662

Susan Stainman is an interdisciplinary artist, focusing in sculpture, installation, and performance. Her artistic practice stems from her decade-long Buddhist meditation practice and work as a meditation teacher merging with her sculptural education and artistic interests. 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., Point of Contact, Lock Haven University, and Black and Graze in New York City. Her group exhibition history ranges from Smack Mellon and Public Swim to SUNY Potsdam and lokal_30 in Warsaw, Poland. 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 lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

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.



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