

# A.I.R.

## ***In a Vulgar Language: When Your Childhood Wasn't Invited*** **Zazu Swistel**

May 28 - June 26, 2022

Opening reception: Thursday, June 2 from 6-8pm

GALLERY II

From May 28 to sometime in June 2022, A.I.R. Gallery is pleased to present *In a Vulgar Language: When Your Childhood Wasn't Invited*, an exhibition by 2021-22 A.I.R. Fellow Zazu Swistel. Featuring a selection of commissioned waxy pastel "portraits" (among other things), the exhibition UNAPOLOGETICALLY reimagines the spatial contexts of memory.



Zazu Swistel, *Spatial Portrait of Vanessa Thill: Some Slippery Notes* (detail), 2021, Wax pastel on paper, 24 x 27 inches.

In Swistel's so-called *Spatial Portrait* series, the artist asks individuals to use only spoken language to describe a personal memory that triggers interpretation. Through visual translation, Swistel transforms the respondents' psycho-architectural melancholia into new and DANGEROUS formats. Emotions and mental associations to colors, pieces of furniture, and walls are understood within the context of personal issues and relationships, smashing together all this BULLSHIT into STRUCTURED CONTAINERS, i.e. drawings.

Spanning scales from the grandiosity of exterior building elements to the intimacy of the childhood BEDROOM, Swistel traces objects, symbols, and language via some lines and bars of pastel to strip standard imagery of its normative resonance. What results are some queered and conceptualized physical spaces. In the exhibition, some media—digital duplicates, audio, and text—accompany the drawings as ADDICTIVE ADDITIVES that both illuminate and obscure the depicted memory spaces.

The title of the show—*In a Vulgar Language: When Your Childhood Wasn't Invited*—hovers barely attached to the work. Because honestly, who would ever voluntarily invite their childhood to such a party? Yet, coercion dominates and the subject remains a conflicted scar.

**Zazu Swistel** draws inspiration from cultural dichotomies and paradoxes to undermine and conspicuously spark ridicule and hilarity. Taking cues from social taboos, academic sluts, and corporate illnesses, Zazu challenges the hegemonic hetero and rationalistic population through unabashed titles and harsh linear artistic expressions. A New Yorker, currently working and living in it; and graduated stoned with a liberal arts degree from Oberlin College; to later receive a politically-charged Masters in Architecture from the University of Virginia. An ambiguous transdisciplinary artist, architectural designer, and activist, Zazu is a lurking criticism in the built and fake environment.

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

