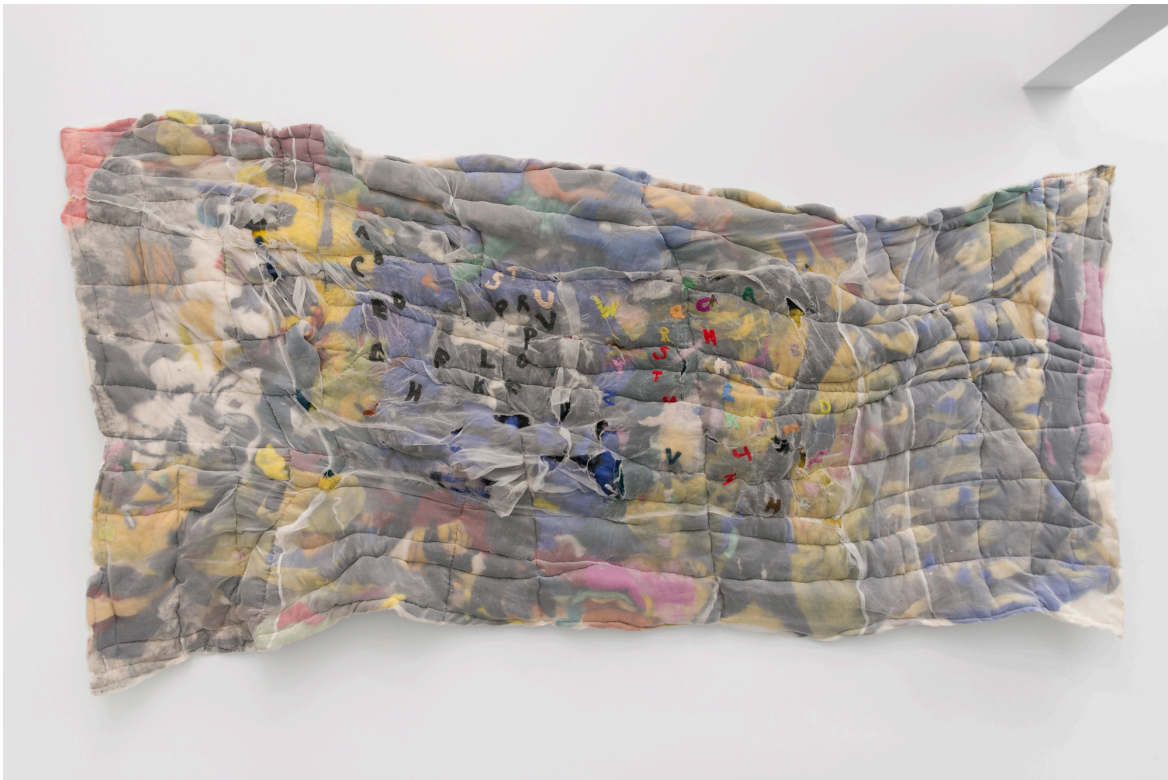


Joeun Kim Aatchim
Justin Chance
Elizabeth Jaeger
SaraNoa Mark
Maia Ruth Lee
Anna Zoria

And still no rain

July 16 - August 27, 2022



Justin Chance, *Cruelty*, 2018-2021, Quilted wet and needle felted wool, embroidered silk, cotton, dye, 90 x 48 in.

Daniel Faria Gallery is pleased to present *And still no rain*, a group exhibition with works by Joeun Kim Aatchim, Justin Chance, Elizabeth Jaeger, Maia Ruth Lee, SaraNoa Mark, and Anna Zoria, organized by Madeleine Taurins and Melanie Scheiner.

The exhibition's title comes from Kate Briggs' book on translation, *This Little Art*. In one chapter, Briggs has in her hands Roland Barthes' French translation of a Haiku, from an English translation of the original Japanese. In an attempt to find the English poem in the anthology that Barthes would have

referenced, Briggs has to work backwards, unweaving the French back to English. Sure that the poem must contain the word “rain,” she leafs through the book multiple times without finding it. “And still no rain—not even any rain” she writes, defeated. When she does eventually locate the poem, it begins instead with the phrase, “The summer shower.”

Looping forwards and backwards in this chain of translation leads Briggs right into the gap that exists between all words—the desire we have for them to be fixed, when, really, they are always moving. Moving under, above, and through us, slipping through our sweaty palms.

During the process of organizing this show, Melanie wrote me a letter, saying “What is the most terrifying aspect really about these psycho-emotional experiences you and I keep coming back to—the bewilderment, grief, or déjà-vu? Is it not the feeling of being misunderstood or unheard? Of being incapable of bridging the gap between myself and the reality around me, the fear of being unable to connect?” This reminded me of something a friend said to me once, describing my grief as a chasm. “I can come visit you on your side of the chasm,” she said, “and you can come visit me on mine, but ultimately we reside on our sides as neighbours.”

And still no rain explores themes related to language and loss: all the losses inherent in the moving and shifting of words, but also the experience of loss itself as something that occurs outside of language, forcing us to look for new tools to make sense of it.

“A word is elegy to what it signifies.” This line, borrowed from a Robert Hass poem, appears against the grainy footage of a pregnant belly in Anna Zoria’s video *Still and Moving*. Filmed in the last weeks of Zoria’s pregnancy and edited immediately following the birth of her daughter, Marianne, the work stitches together lines from 23 different poets into one continuous text—a compendium of words that the artist would want to leave behind for her. “In those weeks it hit me that Marianne was real, and that my own mortality was illuminated against her realness.” writes Zoria. In the video, Zoria appears to be reciting the text to her belly, collapsing the temporal states of pregnancy and post-partum, anticipation and mourning.

SaraNoa Mark’s *Unknown Hours* and תהו ובהו feature hand-carved markings on clay tablets that beg to be read, resembling ancient Talmudic texts. תהו ובהו is a Hebrew phrase from the creation story, meaning “unformed and void,” a translation which Mark points out, does little to evoke the imagery it contains of continuous crawling waters across the Earth’s surface in a time of chaos before order. Over the years, Mark has developed a personal language system using a limited alphabet of shapes dictated by her tools. This subtractive process is inspired by other carved languages drawn by time, such as canyons hollowed by water or aerial views of excavations. What emerges is a visual language of absence, an attempt to give form to the formless.

Maia Ruth Lee’s *Language of Grief* similarly features asemic writing—a visual text that has no semantic content. However, unlike Mark’s symbols of extraction, Lee’s language of grief is one of protection. Abstract shapes based on sewing patterns for clothing are painted in India ink on canvas. Glyph-like, these forms suggest legibility, letters from a language we have yet to learn, or have forgotten, evading interpretation as soon as they invite it. At the same time, they hint at bodies, and the barriers between bodies and the outside world, all the fabrics and bandages that cover, heal, blanket, and warm us.

In Justin Chance's *Cruelty*, embroidered letters lay atop an abstract field of colour made of felted, hand-dyed fibres. When you name a thing, is that not a form of cruelty, he asks? Much of Chance's work considers the power of language and how it is dispersed, passed down, or thrust upon groups of people. The structures of language are reflected in the structures of the quilts themselves, built up in a process combining different felting techniques. In some layers, the viewer can find recognizable objects, while others obscure those scenes. Held together by horizontal lines of stitching, they offer a visual unfolding not dissimilar to the act of reading.

Language and all its failures—typos, mispronunciations, and neologisms—plays an important role in Joeun Kim Aatchim's practice as both a writer and visual artist. The translucent surfaces of her drawings hold layered scenes rendered from memory, caught in a state of becoming. In *As a Fool Receive Me*, a microphone picks up the ambient noise from the gallery which is looped back and mixed with a recording of her writing. Who is speaking and who is listening becomes confused, while the sounds of a pencil scratching on paper allude to an unseen text. A text piece (perhaps the one we hear being formed?) titled, *In Praise of Cry Breaks*, accompanies the installation.

Elsewhere, Elizabeth's Jaeger's miniature *Screaming Women* silently cry out into their tiny, individual abysses. They perform the act of proclaiming, alerting, and shrieking, but are ultimately disconnected from their surroundings, inaudible. The blown-glass fish in Jaeger's *Fish Stand with Fish* reference lachrymatories, small vessels found in ancient Greek and Roman tombs that were said to hold the tears of mourners. Once filled, these tear-catchers would be capped with a cork, starting a timer on the mourning period that would end once the liquid had evaporated. Jaeger's fish, inspired by Roman vases from the 2nd century BC, are gutted, hollowed, mouths agape. Unable to contain anything, they remind us that, sometimes, empty vessels make the most sound.

- Madeleine Taurins and Melanie Scheiner

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