

CARMEN WINANT

Togethering

September 23 - October 23, 2020

FORTNIGHT INSTITUTE NYC

by appointment only

This body of work began before the pandemic. I had no idea that the ground that held it together – togetherness, bodies physically touching other bodies – would shift beneath us. As the isolation set in, I continued to collect material and attend to the studio every day, listening to the news as I cut image after image and drew for the first time in many years.

At the heart of everything is the promise of communion: the merging of multiple bodies into one body. I am a secular, atheistic Jew for whom that word, and its ritual, takes shape outside of religiosity. Communion is unfolded here for its spiritual, sensual and political capabilities (realms that have always intermingled), unfolding: how do we find affinity? How – the work of aliveness – do we consume each other? And how to make art about physical contact in a world that disallows it?

At its outset, this was a way of memorizing physical closeness in all of its forms. Then the ground shifted again: thousands of bodies began to move together – to become one body, as with any fortified political movement– across the streets of America and our world protesting the poison of white supremacy. Its communion surprised me but shouldn't have: togetherness is never apolitical, never unhitched from power and self-realization, never without agitation and joy.

The works' shape and framing is derived from mandala designs recovered from books of feminism, healing, and New Age. The spontaneous, diagrammatic forms are meant to represent an entire cosmos, made up of infinite constituencies: a cosmic model for wholeness through interwoven, and often parallel, parts.

- Carmen Winant

Carmen Winant (b. 1983) is an artist and writer based in Columbus, OH; her work utilizes installation and collage strategies to examine feminist modes of survival and revolt. Winant's recent projects have been shown at the Museum of Modern Art, Sculpture Center, The Columbus Museum of Art, The Wexner Center of the Arts, and through CONTACT Photography festival, which mounted twenty-six of her billboards across Canada. Winant's recent artist books, *My Birth* and *Notes on fundamental Joy*, were published by SPBH Editions, ITI press, and Printed Matter Inc. Winant is the mother of two sons, Carlo and Rafa, whom she shares with her partner Luke Stettner; she is a 2019 Guggenheim Fellow in photography. Her work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art (NYC), Henie Onstad Art Center (Norway), and the Worcester Museum of Art (MA).