

WOMEN'S (LIBERATION) WORK

**The Print Center presents *A Brand New End: Survival and its Pictures***

Pamela J. Forsythe | Jun 28, 2022 | In **Exhibitions** | 5 minute read



*A canyon of trouble: Carmen Winant's 'Newspaper clippings, 1972–2004, from the collections of Women in Transition, NCADV, and the artist (2022).'* (Courtesy of the artist; photo by Jaime Alvarez.)

Visual artist Carmen Winant dives deep into feminism's second wave in *A Brand New End: Survival and its Pictures* at the Print Center. She revisits the era through the archives of organizations founded in the 1970s to serve women emerging from divorce, domestic violence, and substance abuse into a society that largely dismissed their problems and underestimated their potential.

Winant (b. 1983), an associate professor at the Ohio State University, explored decades of visual and print material from [Women In Transition](#) (WIT) founded in Philadelphia in 1971, and the [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#) (NCADV), founded in Denver in 1978. Sifting through the material, she created a series of works for the

Print Center that reveal how survivors and advocates viewed themselves and pressed for change.

## Combing a radical history

“I’m particularly interested in books and printed material for the ... role they’ve played in radical histories and radical coalition-building ... for the way they disseminate information cheaply and reach people where they are,” she said in a [virtual talk](#) with the Print Center’s Ksenia Nouril, who curated the exhibition. Over two years, Winant combed through boxes, files, and storage containers of manuals, newsletters, pamphlets, games, and legal paperwork, as well as staged instructional photographs, 16mm films, VHS tapes, and other ephemera.

The task was formidable. “There was so much material on being in communion with one another, and teaching and learning sessions,” the artist said, “What it looks like to be in a safe space, and to move through a transition, and to come into self-actualization, because of course that’s what women and vulnerable people need.”

## Brutality, subtlety, and hope

Works on the Print Center’s first floor establish why WIT and NCADV were founded. *Moon faces demons (2022)* is a collage of brutalized women. Whether real or staged, the pictures are arresting. From an emergency room doorway, we see a woman sitting on an examination table, looking small and alone, her right arm in a sling. Another sits at a table, head propped on her hand with an unreadable expression, as ugly bruises bloom along her jaw and around one eye. A third image depicts a sheet-covered figure sprawled at the bottom of a staircase, one red sandal off to the side. Even the subtlest picture is disturbing: a pair of aged hands, wedding ring gleaming, are clasped too tightly in the owner’s lap, perhaps expressing more than she can say.

*Women at Work (Job Cards) (2022)* is a hopeful contrast. A core collage of women doing non-traditional jobs is framed by pictures of workshop participants. The women in the center trade stock, check the oil in a car, sit on the judicial bench, tend zoo animals, staff an airport control tower, create floral arrangements, perform judo, work construction, run equipment, and serve as military police. The women around the perimeter figure out how to similarly thrive, to rise in a job market that limited women’s choices, earnings, advancement, and authority.



*The work to end domestic violence continues: Carmen Winant's 'Untitled (pin boxes),' 2022. (Courtesy of the artist; photo by Jaime Alvarez.)*

## Women in the news

An airy second-floor gallery is given over to *Newspaper clippings, 1972-2004, from the collections of Women in Transition, NCADV, and the artist (2022)*. Neatly mounted news clips paper the east and west walls, forming a canyon of trouble well known to both organizations. The trove is organized only by Winant's sensibility. Scan anywhere for a representative sample ...

In 1982, a woman imprisoned for a 1976 murder petitioned the court for psychiatric treatment, having twice attempted suicide in prison. She was serving time for killing her husband, a member of the Philadelphia Eagles, in his sleep because, she said, he'd been cruel to her ...

A 1995 *Denver Post* item reported a murder trial's sudden conclusion. The male defendant died by suicide while in custody. He'd been charged with the deaths of his girlfriend and one of their 2 1/2-year-old twins ...

An undated Maryland study of gender inequality in federal laws and benefit programs found that existing policy made it more difficult for separated and divorced women to establish financial independence, build equity, and obtain health care ...

Also here is the 1995 headline that inspired Winant's *Moon faces demons*, a *USA Today* article about Minnesota Viking quarterback Warren Moon and his wife Felicia, taking up the cause of domestic abuse. It came after Moon had admitted fault and sought counseling for choking and slapping Felicia. Though the police charged him in the incident, she refused to press charges ...

## Starting now

The back gallery on the Print Center's second floor has been transformed into a darkened cocoon for *Healing from trauma is a process that involves joy and coalition (2022)*. Seven slide projectors on tall stands softly click through archival scenes, covering the walls with women talking, training, confiding in, and supporting one another. It's the embodiment of Winant's desire to bring the archives to life around viewers. Interspersed are images of narrative t-shirts made by WIT clients, including one that gave the exhibit its title: "Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new end."

It's the essence of the organizations' missions. WIT empowers people to move forward free of domestic violence and substance abuse, NCADV works to change conditions leading to domestic violence, hold offenders accountable, and support survivors and advocates.

## The power of photographs

Starting their collaboration just before the pandemic, Winant and Nouril ultimately developed a multi-part photographic project of new work. In addition to the exhibit, there are public programs, bus shelter displays across Philadelphia, a documentary film by Philadelphia's Itinerant Pictures, and a forthcoming book.

"I believe in the power of photographs to come close to something that's illustrative, demonstrative, and not quite documentary, something else," Winant mused. In *A Brand New End*, that *something else* transports observers into the shoes of vulnerable people who became survivors, enabling viewers to understand in a way surpassing mere words and images.

## WHAT, WHEN, WHERE

*A Brand New End: Survival and its Pictures*. Through July 16, 2022, at the Print Center, 1614 Latimer St., Philadelphia. (215) 735-6090 or [printcenter.org](http://printcenter.org)

Visitors to the Print Center are required to wear masks, and proof of Covid-19 vaccination is required.

## ACCESSIBILITY

The Print Center building is a 19th-century carriage house with a historically certified façade. There is a small step at the entrance, leading to the first-floor gallery and gallery store. The second floor is only accessible by a flight of stairs. For more information, call (215) 735-6090.

<https://www.broadstreetreview.com/reviews/the-print-center-presents-a-brand-new-end-survival-and-its-pictures>