



Women at Work (Job Cards), 2002

Photo: The Printer
Center



Women's blueprint for survival (1), 2022

Photo: The Print Center



A bus shelter intervention

Photo: The Print Center

May 02, 2022

Historic Philadelphia gallery hosts Ohio State art professor's work

Carmen Winant's multipart project shines light on domestic violence and substance abuse



Franny Lazarus

Ohio State News

lazarus.34@osu.edu

In her project *A Brand New End: Survival and Its Pictures*, [Carmen Winant](#), associate professor in the Department of Art in the College of Arts and Sciences at The Ohio State University, explores the community that women build for themselves to escape domestic violence and substance abuse.

The exhibition, on view at [The Print Center](#) and various public locations in Philadelphia through July 16 of this year, was made possible through a nearly \$250,000 grant from the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, said curator Ksenia Nouril.

“That is a transformational amount of money for an organization like The Print Center,” she said.

Founded in 1915, the gallery was one of only a few in the country that focused on prints. Since then, The Print Center has expanded its attention to print materials of all kinds, including photography, and has exhibited works from Albrecht Dürer, Pablo Picasso, Louise Bourgeois, Kerry James Marshall and Ohio State’s own [Ann Hamilton](#).

Nouril went on to say that the size of the grant allowed the organization and Winant, the Roy Lichtenstein Endowed Chair of Studio Art, to build a show that wasn’t restricted to a single location. In addition to the physical exhibition, Winant is working on a companion book and The Print Center is making a short film about the construction of the project.



Carmen Winant; photo: Jordan Weitzman



A Clothesline Project T-shirt; photo: The Print Center

Additionally, and perhaps most visibly, Winant created interventions for public bus shelters throughout the city. The shelters feature posters of photographs Winant took of t-shirts from a Clothesline Project event organized in the 1990s by [Women in Transition](#) (WIT), a Philadelphia service provider for those struggling with domestic violence and substance abuse.

Through the Clothesline Project, an international and ongoing endeavor, survivors decorate t-shirts with messages and drawings that reflect their paths to safety and recovery. The title of the exhibition comes from one such shirt. Winant found them to be deeply moving.

“When I saw the shirts, I thought, ‘This is the show. This is the whole show,’” she said. “They are the most expressive instruments that I found in [WIT’s] archive. They are first-person; they are in the present tense. For the most part, they talk about things like being reborn or coming back to themselves, but in some cases, they are just brutal and brutalizing.”

Winant was given access to WIT’s archives as well as those of the [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#) (NCADV) for the project. Research has always been part of her practice as an artist, she said. It wasn’t until she began working at Ohio State, however, that she saw how beneficial formal academic research could be to her work.

“I didn’t realize what sort of opportunities research afforded me,” she said. “I’ve learned how to research at Ohio State in ways that I maybe never would have understood before, by talking to colleagues, by collaborating with folks, by meeting with students, by using our resources.”

This spirit of collaboration has been echoed in The Print Center show, Nouril said.

“It’s built on the generosity of everyone involved,” she said, referring to the “unique synergy” between Winant, WIT, NCADV and the gallery.

Nouril speaks highly of Winant. The subject matter of the show requires a high level of deftness and empathy, she said, and Winant has both.

“I’ve always wanted to do a project with her,” said Nouril. “A project like this, with an artist like Carmen, is very true to our mission at The Print Center.”

Despite the confidence of people like Nouril, Winant struggled with telling these stories. Winant does not consider herself to be a survivor of domestic violence, she said. In fact, she wondered many times if she was an appropriate person to shepherd these stories into the public eye.

“I don’t identify as a survivor,” she said. “From the beginning I’ve asked myself, ‘What is my place here?’ ‘Am I the person to be telling stories like this?’ I do think it’s the charge of art to reach towards experiences that we don’t understand all the way.”

It is this notion, of reaching to understand the unfamiliar, that Winant wants audiences to take from her work.

“One thing I hope folks take away from the show is the ubiquity of gender violence,” she said. “A big part of the project was to demonstrate that this is happening all around us. Women are murdered or lose everything, so often. Bringing visibility to that is enormous.”

<https://news.osu.edu/historic-philadelphia-gallery-hosts-ohio-state-art-professors-work/>