



Becky Suss, *Jim's Book (With Rocks, Shells, and Feather)*, 2025, Oil on canvas, 22 x 30 in (55.9 x 76.2 cm)

## The Present

### Becky Suss and Carmen Winant

March 20 – May 22, 2025

Opening reception: Thursday, March 20, 6–8 PM

*The Present* brings together work by two artists who explore how images, books, and objects are repositories of memory and kinship histories. Suss, a painter, is best known for her large scale works of domestic interiors, but small paintings, featured here, are also a significant aspect of her practice. In this exhibition, Suss focuses on books, artworks, and material culture that comprise touchstones in her family history or present-day life. In past exhibitions, Suss has drawn from the domestic spaces of family and family friends; the fictional spaces of a mansion in Ann Patchett's novel, *The Dutch House*; Wharton Esherick's home and studio; and recollections of visits to the Philadelphia Museum of Art as a child.

Carmen Winant is recognized for photographic collages exploring feminist care networks. Her collages incorporate photographs sourced from a range of books and magazines, as well as those she takes herself. Subjects she has explored in the recent past include childbirth and the quotidian aspects of Midwestern abortion clinic work. For the latter, entitled *The last safe abortion*, Winant assembled over 2,500 archival photographs documenting clinic office labor alongside her own photographs taken since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. The images document the answering of phones, training sessions, the scheduling of appointments, and office birthday parties, among other daily activities.

For both artists, origin stories—how family histories and more expanded notions of kinship—play a significant part in their artistic practices. The photographs in Winant's collages featured in *The Present* were sourced from a collection of books that her late grandmother gave to her several years ago, knowing Winant's interest in discovering, researching, and juxtaposing photographic images. Some of Winant's most formative art experiences were with her grandmother, who took Winant on visits to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art when she was a child. The images culled from this gifted trove of books from the 1960s–90s feature women teaching infants how to swim, women exercising and dancing, and women crafting and

woodworking. Other images included in the collages have been sourced from books on feminine beautification and posture. Here, as in past projects, Winant explores how kinship and lineage can transcend notions of family and biological inheritance and encompass gender, political, and creative affiliations. Acknowledging the domestic sphere, Winant dyed both the paper supports and the images themselves with food coloring, creating a series of works that read both as gridded abstractions and image archives.

Suss creates paintings of objects and domestic spaces filtered through memory. References to both past and present family narratives are woven throughout the paintings on view. Like Winant, books play a crucial role in Suss's practice as objects that embody symbolic narratives. A painting of *D'Aulaires Book of Greek Myths* harkens back to Suss's memory of her parents reading this book to her as a child while resonating also in the current moment in which she reads the same book to her son, Sid. A painting of a book of marbled papers made by family friend Jim Harris and gifted to Suss's parents reflects the ultimate origin story: Harris introduced Suss's parents and without his matchmaking, Suss would not exist. In other instances, a painting might not have a direct family connection serving instead as a means to celebrate an object that enthalls the artist. *Mirror (Embroidered Frame)* is based on an object in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection that attracted Suss because of its beauty and detail, but also because the embroidery (a historically domestic and female activity) was likely fabricated by an unknown and unrecognized 17th century woman. Mirrors interest Suss as they convey a distorted reality that is at the heart of how her paintings operate: my "paintings are less about re-creating a snapshot and more about remembered/imagined spaces."

Becky Suss (b. 1980, lives and works in Philadelphia) was the subject of a recent solo museum exhibition, *The Dutch House*, which originated at the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, TN and traveled to the Baker Museum, Naples, FL; and the Cheekwood Estate and Gardens, Nashville, TN (2024–25). Suss has had solo exhibitions at Massimo de Carlo, London, UK; the Dayton Contemporary, OH; Jack Shainman Gallery, NY; Fleisher/Ollman, Philadelphia, PA; and the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, among others. Suss had been featured in group exhibitions at venues including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; the Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, NY; Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, Virginia Beach, VA; Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, NE; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA; the Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, among others. Her work is in public collections such as the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; and Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, NJ.

Carmen Winant's (b. 1983, lives and works in Columbus, OH) *The last safe abortion*, first developed with the Minneapolis Institute of Art and featured in the 2024 Whitney Biennial, is currently on view at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, NE. She has had solo exhibitions at the Dayton Contemporary, OH; Gävle Konstcentrum, Gävle, Sweden; the Print Center, Philadelphia, PA; PATRON Gallery, Chicago, IL; Fortnight Institute, New York, NY; and Printed Matter, New York, NY, among others. Winant has been included in group exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY (2024 Whitney Biennial); Photo Museum, Antwerp, Belgium; Photo Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland; Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY; Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, Mexico; Cleveland Museum of Art, OH; the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Sculpture Center, Queens, New York; and Wexner Art Center, Columbus, OH, among others. Winant's work is in public collections such as the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, Mexico; Minneapolis Institute of Art, MN; and the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, IL. Winant is also a writer who has authored several books including *My Birth* and *Notes on Fundamental Joy*. An opinion essay "I photographed abortion clinics. What caught my eye hung on the walls," was published in *The Washington Post* this past January. She is the Roy Lichtenstein Endowed Chair of Studio Art at Ohio State University.