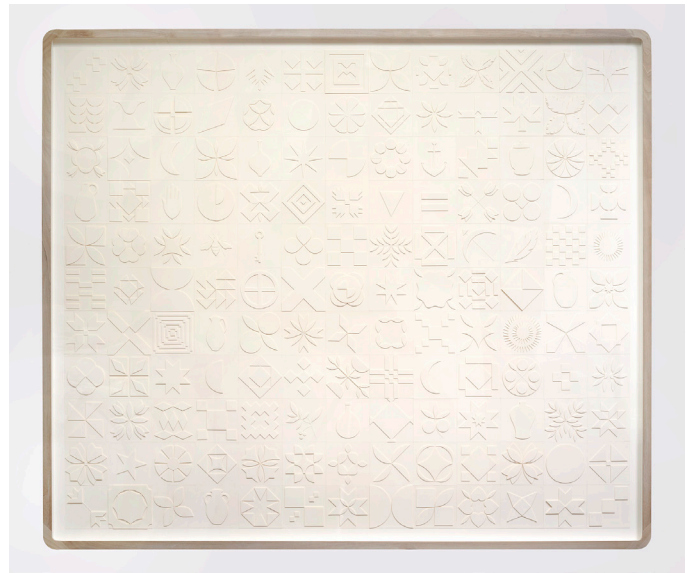


SARAH SHEPARD

GALLERY & ART ADVISORY

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Lena Wolff

A Language For The Commons

October 30 - December 7, 2021

Opening: Saturday, October 30th, 1-4pm

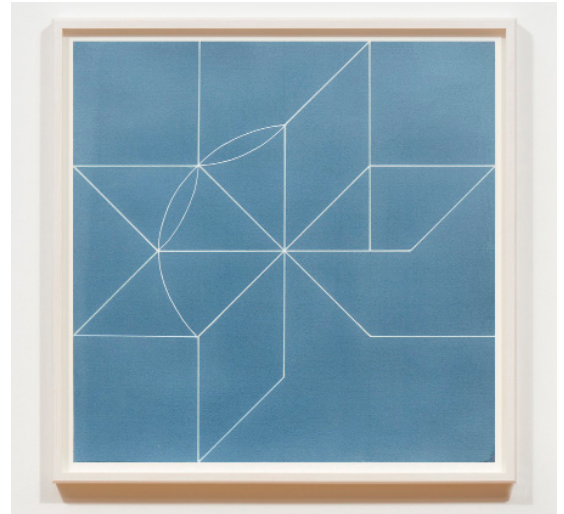
In her second solo exhibition at the gallery, *A Language for the Commons*, Lena Wolff presents new work that links the iconography of American quilts with symbols for democracy, motifs from nature, and the universe at large. In keeping with her practice of the last two decades, Lena re-contextualizes lyrical and geometric quilt patterns in a wide range of unexpected mediums with attention to craftsmanship equal to that of a traditional quiltmaker, employing slow, labor-intensive processes to create pen drawings, intricate collages made with hand-cut paper, and wood wall sculptures assembled using the age-old techniques of marquetry and inlay. In this show, she continues to interpret the geometric eight-pointed star in new intuitive ways with more literal representations of the natural world. These patterns she experiments with, both known and obscure, have been adapted across communities in our country for centuries, representing collective imagination as much as individual ingenuity. Exploring the theme of the commons, this work upholds the shared and democratic vocabulary of the quilt while also expressing an underlying reverence for the life forms that connect us all.

The centerpiece of the show, *A Language for the Commons*, is a 6 x 7 foot paper collage made over a 14-month period during the pandemic. As a seminal piece in Lena's creative output and loosely based on the Jane Sickle Quilt made in Vermont in 1863 during the Civil War, the collage is composed of one hundred and forty-three 5-inch squares, each depicting a unique image built with hand-cut paper, including historic quilt patterns interspersed with plant forms, cosmic images and symbols that represent a vision of a more just future. This monumental collage is presented alongside new wood star sculptures, richly colored abstract collages, and a collection of related drawings that form an interplay of poetically related images. On the whole, this body of new work draws associations across time and between disciplines of creative activity, linking the past and the future, the intimate and the spectacular.

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Lena Wolff was born in Larkspur in 1972, grew up living semi-communally with her family at the Zen Center of Los Angeles and then went to live in Paris and outside of Amsterdam as a young person before returning to the U.S. in the late 1980's. Based now in the San Francisco Bay Area since 1991, she works in a range of interdisciplinary approaches including drawing, collage, sculpture, murals, text-based pieces, and public art in addition to frequently collaborating with other artists. Wolff received a BA in English and Creative Writing from Mills College (1995) and an MFA in Printmaking from San Francisco State University (2003). Her work has been presented in galleries and museums across the US and collected by ONE National Lesbian and Gay Archives, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Oakland Museum of California, the San Francisco History Collection at San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco Arts Commission, Alameda County Arts Commission, Cleveland Clinic, University of Iowa Museum and the Zuckerman Museum of Art among others. Currently, she is an Artist Fellow 2021-2022 awardee at Kala Art Institute.

Images: Page 1, © Lena Wolff, *A Language for the Commons*, 2021, hand-cut paper 60 x 70 in. All rights reserved.

Page 2, © Lena Wolff, *Drawings for Morning #1*, 2021, watercolor and pen on paper, 17 x 17 in. All rights reserved.

For more information or press images, please contact sarah@sarahshepardgallery.com or 917-375-2720.