

Elena Monzo Solo Exhibition: Dear Comrade,
March 10, 2021 - April 10, 2021

The Contemporary Art Modern Project is pleased to present *Dear Comrade*, an exhibitory love letter to those we find connection with along our life journeys, one that is even more relevant in our socially distanced world, featuring the works of Italian artist **Elena Monzo**. Isolation has been a major theme as we navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic; it is no longer just a feeling, but something we must actively engage with as a way of protecting ourselves, our neighbors, and those we love. While being the root of much collective distress, being forced apart from each other has given us an intimate experience with disconnection, and though unwanted, it has consequently brought to light the value of relationship and camaraderie. Though we are individuals, our greatest strengths and joys lie in our intersections, in the moments where we lose sight of ourselves and dissolve into a larger whole. This gift of unity helps us transcend, even if just for the moment, the brutality of reality; we need each other. This fact has never been more felt than now, marking **Monzo's** work paramount in relevance.

Monzo effectively illustrates the transcendental force of connection not just through her subject matter, but its form. In every work featured in *Dear Comrade* the figures are joined in some way, be it they stand shoulder to shoulder, or they are holding each other by the hand. If they are not physically touching, **Monzo** links her figures with the extension of a line from the body of one figure to the other. Her figures never stand alone and rarely do they stand with any space between them. **Monzo** has made camaraderie intrinsic to her works, unity is inseparable from the image she is presenting to us.

At first glance, **Monzo's** piece *Fabula* seems to feature 2 figures, but a closer look reveals 5 individuals whose bodies seem to have morphed into something greater. These figures are simply existing in relation to the other: sitting on one's shoulder, massaging another's neck, faces turned and covered, not one competing for attention but finding solace in anonymity afforded by the group. It's as if their collective being-ness shields them from the need to acknowledge the viewer; they're in a world of their own. Pieces like *Texas* and *Just Married* feature mimicked poses unique to each pair of individuals, offering a visual for the synergy felt when one is dissolved into a larger whole. In both works, at least one figure is looking at the viewer, communicating their choice to be there, to be synchronized with their counterpart, and their desire for us to bear witness to it. It's as if we are being offered a glance at something holy, and shown the way to reach it.

It's very easy to get lost in our own problems, to feel stuck in our own heads, and become isolated from the people around us, especially with the individualistic nature of modern American culture. As we approach a year of social distancing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this exhibition aims to elevate with gentle reverence moments of human connection, moments we've been deprived of. Whether highlighting a platonic or romantic connection, **Monzo** grounds us in the truth that the way through

all that life throws our way is together. When we connect with those around us, we are offered strength through resonance. A chance to recognize ourselves in another and lose our fears of isolation in that reflection. ***Dear Comrade***, thank you for reminding us we're not alone.

Brianna Luz Fernandez