



International
Center of
Photography

***The International Center of Photography Presents
Naima Green: Instead, I spin fantasies***

The International Center of Photography | 84 Ludlow Street, New York
On View October 16, 2025-January 12, 2026v
Public Opening October 16, 5–8PM



Naima Green, Half on a baby (DonChristian), 2025. © Naima Green

The International Center of Photography (ICP) is proud to present *Instead, I spin fantasies*, an exhibition of new work by Naima Green that grapples with the concept of pregnancy through constructed self-portraits, landscapes and still-lives—blurring the line between documentary and performance. Green probes the conventional expectations and representational tropes of motherhood, while also creating an expanded space for considering the experience of pregnancy in America.

Curated by Guest Curator Elisabeth Sherman, *Instead, I spin fantasies* brings together dozens of new works, including photographs printed using the historical technologies of albumen and lumen printing processes, along with a site-specific vinyl installation that utilizes the architecture of ICP's third floor galleries. Sherman states, "*Instead, I spin fantasies* is a remarkable new body of work by Naima Green, pushing her practice forward and meaningfully challenging the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction. Rather than reflecting on an experience already had, she is imaging the future possibilities of using photography in a way that all of us can put into practice in our own lives."

The consideration of pregnancy as an identity—one that is both personal and social in equal measure—is cumulatively expressed through Green's photographs, which take a fragmentary and fictive approach, choosing to imagine different potential trajectories for any one person rather than a single outcome. By creating a 'prosthetic' life—an aggregate of scenes and moments, of psychological states and subjective positions—Green is able to examine a variety of archetypes and anti-archetypes across a range of settings, from the suburban to the urban and in spaces both interior and exterior.

Green's emphasis is as much on the commonplace and quotidian as it is on moments that seem urgent or dramatic. Her images dramatize everyday moments like taking out the recycling, sitting on the toilet and even injecting medication that, together, provide an unvarnished representation of pregnancy while also constructing the interior worlds of each character. In other scenes, Green challenges the boundaries of 'respectability' with regard to what is deemed acceptable—or responsible—behavior from someone pregnant. Her characters openly smoke and drink, acts which question the social expectations placed on pregnant bodies just as they reflect on what kinds of pregnancies are most commonly depicted in media and art.

An understanding of pregnancy as a communal experience is woven into these photographs through the friends, biological and chosen family, that she includes. Though Green utilizes recurring characters and dramatizes familiar relationships, the imaginative and non-linear quality in these images pushes against narrative unity or completion. Instead, these brief glimpses into fictional and overlapping narratives allow viewers to imbue the scenes with their own meanings, stories and Experiences.

Alongside the beauty and lyricism of Green's representation of pregnancy are the larger societal contexts and forces that exert influence and shape those experiences. References to the medical industrial complex, family planning interventions and more generally to the ways that identities and life choices are conditioned by institutional forces recur throughout the exhibition. Though Green reflects upon the gravity of her subject matter, she also recognizes the exuberance and sense of possibility inherent in the process of creating and living with family. The moments of levity and traces of humor that she creates throughout the exhibition reflect the many emotional registers, intertwined storylines and possibilities that are contained within a single life.

About Naima Green

Naima Green is an artist and educator who pictures individuals and communities to document their vibrant relationships to place and pleasure. She engages with various photographic forms, sound, and experimental film. Throughout her collaborative practice, Green accesses and prioritizes the nature of intimacy, safety, and self-recognition. Often working in lush and watery environments, she presents windows into multidimensional experiences of seawater and its pathways: beauty, buoyancy, overwhelm, and submersion. Oral and written histories are critical to her process; by synthesizing archival research with outreach and conversation with current sitters, she frames picture-making as a continuum and her still images as kinetic, living histories.

Green has had solo exhibitions at Astor Weeks, Baxter St at CCNY, and Fotografiska, all NY, and the Institute of Contemporary Art at VCU, Richmond, VA. She has exhibited in group shows at the Getty Research Institute, University of Texas at Austin, Mass MoCA, BRIC, Studio Museum in Harlem, Bronx Museum of the Arts, and Houston Center for Photography, among others. She has been an artist-in-residence at Fountainhead Arts, Baxter St at CCNY, Bronx Museum, Center for Photography at Woodstock, MASS MoCA, Penumbra Foundation, Pocoapoco, and Vermont Studio Center. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Barnard College Library, Decker Library at MICA, Flaten Art Museum, Fleet Library at RISD, The Getty Research Institute, Hessel Museum of Art, High Museum of Art, International Center of Photography Library, Museum of Modern Art Library, Hirsch Library at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, National Gallery of Art, Smart Museum of Art, Smith College Museum of Art, and Teachers College, Columbia University. Green holds a BA from Barnard College, Columbia University, an MA from Teachers College, Columbia University, and an MFA from ICP-Bard.

About Elisabeth Sherman

Elisabeth Sherman is the Chief Curator and Deputy Director at the Museum of the City of New York. She most recently served as Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions and Collections at ICP where she curated numerous exhibitions including *Sheida Soleimani: Panjereh*, *Yto Barrada: Part-Time Abstractionist*, *David Seidner: Fragments, 1977–99*, and *Muriel Hasbun: Tracing Terruño*. Previously, Elisabeth held curatorial roles at the Whitney Museum of American Art, where she organized and co-organized many critically acclaimed exhibitions, including *Dawoud Bey: An American Project*, *Making Knowing: Craft in Art, 1950–2019*, and *Zoe Leonard: Survey*, among others.

Exhibition Support

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About The International Center of Photography

The International Center of Photography (ICP) is the world's leading institution dedicated to photography and visual culture. Cornell Capa founded ICP in 1974 to champion "concerned photography"—socially and politically minded images that can educate and change the world. Through exhibitions, education programs, community outreach, and public programs, ICP offers an open forum for dialogue about the power of the image. Since its inception, ICP has presented more than 700 exhibitions, provided thousands of classes, and hosted a wide variety of public programs. ICP launched its new integrated center at 84 Ludlow Street on Manhattan's Lower East Side in January 2020. ICP pays respect to the original stewards of this land, the Lenape people, and other Indigenous communities. Visit icp.org to learn more about the museum and its programs

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