

Carolyn Lazard: *Two-way* is on view at Artists Space from February 28 – May 10, 2025.

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ARTISTS SPACE

Carolyn Lazard
Two-way

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Two films were shot in the same location: a simulation center.

A simulation center is a controlled environment in which hospital professionals engage in a form of roleplay-based procedural enactment with one another and with medical mannequins. The practice of simulation is pedagogical in focus and centers on improving patient care. Both films presented in the exhibition, *Two-way*, were shot at Elmhurst Hospital, New York City Health + Hospitals (NYC H+H). This simulation center is an administrative arm of the hospital with its own wing, located within the larger hospital building. For the purposes of observation and review, simulation centers often employ tools of surveillance. Two-way mirrors aid in live synchronous supervision of sessions. Security cameras capture the practice for subsequent playback in debriefings with simulation participants and their supervisors.

Fiction Contract documents a childbirth simulation facilitated by The Maternal Mortality Reduction Program (MMRP). Across all five boroughs of New York City, this team trains medical professionals through complex childbirth simulations. NYC H+H selected an all-black team of administrators, midwives, doctors, and nurses for this simulation. It was performed with and by Jayda, a black birthing mannequin who can simulate different complex childbirth scenarios. In 2020, as part of a comprehensive plan to “eliminate disparities in maternal mortality between Black and White women,” the Deblasio administration earmarked funds to incentivize medical mannequin manufacturers to produce mannequins with brown skin. Prior to 2020, all medical mannequins were white.

The term “fiction contract” refers to the mutual agreement among simulation participants. In this enactment—which itself may constitute a social contract for performance—the simulation scenario is established as a constructed, but immersive environment. Participants agree to engage with the scenario as if it were real, while remaining aware that it is not.

Vital is a work of fiction. It depicts a black birthing person’s first prenatal visit. Both *Vital* and *Fiction Contract* were filmed in adjoining rooms of the same simulation center; the two films thus share the same props, or tools.



Still from *Fiction Contract*, 2025. [Close-up of an upright black birthing mannequin reclined on a hospital bed in a blue patient room. A newborn mannequin swaddled in a hospital receiving blanket lays on the birthing mannequin’s chest.]

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