



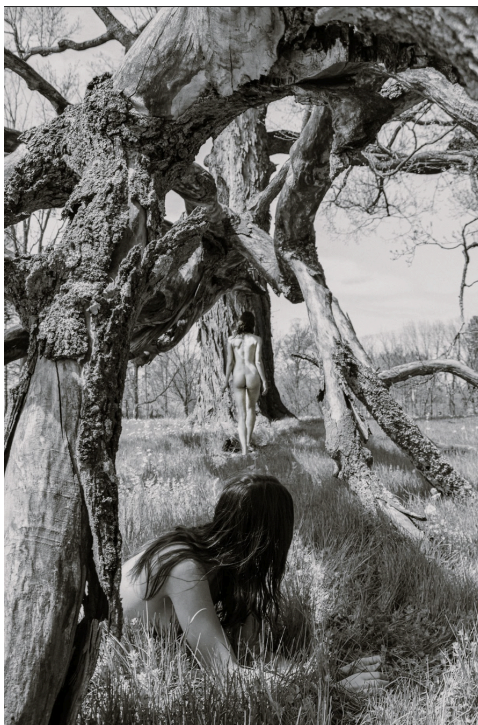
Palo Gallery

Lily Burgess: Beginning of the Birth Pangs

21 East 3rd Street, New York, NY 10003

10 July – 8 August 2026

Opening Reception: Friday, 10 July 2026 | 6 – 8 PM



Lily Burgess, *Creatio Ex Nihilo (Creation Out of Nothing)*, 2026. Image Courtesy of the Artist.

Palo Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of **Lily Burgess's** debut exhibition ***Beginning of the Birth Pangs***, featuring thirteen new prints all taken within the past year. Drawing inspiration from Francesca Woodman and David Lynch, Burgess's ongoing series, beginning nearly five years ago, captures the isolation of trauma alongside an overwhelming desire to be cleansed of its weight.

Lily Burgess's newest series illuminates the many ways the human spirit searches for sanctity amid pain. Driven by ritual, iconography, and religious forms, Burgess grapples with salvation as something both desired and potentially withheld. Her portraits present the body as a vessel for prayer – "hands clasped, bodies writhing, seclusion, cleansings, grief, sex," as Burgess describes. Working with film, she creates raw and intimate compositions that evoke curiosity and experimentation, questioning how we represent struggle and the longing for deliverance.

Raised in a Christian household, religion has remained a pervasive force in Burgess's life, both positively and negatively. Its influence is evident not only conceptually but also aesthetically



throughout her work: gothic typography, cross-like formations, and garments reminiscent of church attire in the American South. Central to the series is a reckoning with the body itself, its vulnerability, mortality, and capacity to bear both suffering and desire. This tension recalls the story of the Garden of Eden, where Eve's consumption of the forbidden fruit reveals the flesh as a site of shame, sexuality, and self-consciousness. For Burgess, the body becomes a similarly charged terrain, carrying the weight of spiritual longing while exposing the fragility of human existence. In her early twenties, Burgess has already confronted profound experiences of trauma. Her artistic practice serves as a space of refuge and inquiry, where she searches for answers that may never come, attempting to understand what often feels incomprehensible.

The uncomfortable and strained positions of her subjects reflect the often invisible toll trauma takes on both body and mind. These figures represent the exhaustion of enduring pain that cannot be fully understood, yet must be faced each day. Within this suffering, however, Burgess uncovers the possibility of discovery. Pain becomes a site of vulnerability and revelation, something we can either turn away from or confront directly, a process she describes as "knowing thy nakedness." The phrase evokes both spiritual exposure and the biblical awareness of the body that follows the Fall, linking personal trauma to broader questions of shame, embodiment, and redemption. These vignettes reach toward something greater, calling upon a force beyond self to illuminate a path forward, whether that path is marked by further suffering or not.

Beginning of the Birth Pangs opens with a celebratory reception with the artist on Friday, 10 July, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at Palo Gallery, located at 21 East 3rd Street, New York City.



About the Artist



Lily Burgess (B. 2003) is a photographer and mixed-media artist inspired by the human relationship with identity, nature, and the esoteric. Her work is primarily with polaroid film photography, digital photography, and collage of found objects and writings. Through these mediums she pulls from all aspects of perception, both the 2 and 3 dimensional- emphasizing the relation of people to their surroundings, and the energy that exists in their codependence.

Inspired by the self-inflicted chaos of New York City and London, one that is vulgar, seductive and unscripted. Her practice reflects a troubled and misunderstood generation, one that encapsulates that of Lily's lived experience. She is able to reveal the truth or a lifestyle that is often fetishized by outsiders. Her polaroids are often marked with burns, scratches and other imprints as she sees this as a cathartic

process that personalizes the work.

About Palo Gallery

Palo Gallery was established in 2018 in New York City by third-generation art collector Paul Henkel with a focus on academic and historically contextualized contemporary art. Scholarship and historical canon are at the forefront in the consideration of each group, solo or duo exhibition. The gallery program's curatorial focus aims to frame contemporary art within the context of art and social history, and are committed to offering artists unique opportunities to elaborate on these concerns.

Originating as a pop-up, the gallery opened its flagship location, designed by Selldorf Architects, on Bond Street in NoHo in September 2022, offering 3,400 square feet of exhibition space, giving artists the opportunity to work on a large scale. In June 2024, Palo's second location in New York City opened in the East Village, serving as a more intimate space for emerging artists and experimental exhibitions to have their own spotlight. Today, the gallery continues to showcase thematic presentations, offering artists a unique opportunity to explore pivotal, intersecting cultural and historical topics.



Current & Upcoming Exhibitions

Lily Burgess: Beginning of the Birth Pangs

21 East 3rd Street

10 July to 8 August 2026

Caleb Stein: Down by the Hudson

21 East 3rd Street

10 September to 3 October 2026

Media Contacts

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