

ICA London Exhibition Announcement

Autumn Knight: I Can't Complain

29 September – 29 November 2026

Institute of Contemporary Arts, London



Autumn Knight, *Nothing #59: Biennales*, 2022. Photo: Laylah Amatullah Barryn.

The Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) London is proud to present a new commission and recent work by New York-based artist Autumn Knight, marking the first major presentation of her work in the UK.

Knight's interdisciplinary practice draws on theatre, psychology, improvisation and social exchange. Titled *I Can't Complain*, her solo exhibition at the ICA presents a new installation and performance work about the act of complaining: its pleasures, its frustrations, and its political potential. At a moment when questions of voice, authority, and participation are increasingly contested, *I Can't Complain* opens a dialogue with audiences about how power is negotiated in everyday life, asking not how we can stop complaining, but what complaints make visible.

Across an audio and spatial installation and a selection of recent video works, Autumn Knight transforms the Lower Galleries into a space where complaint is given sustained attention. The main gallery is dominated by a canopy of balloons, which are a recurring motif in Knight's work, alongside architectural elements that frame the artist's sound installation. For the latter, Knight recorded conversations with participants about their everyday irritations and grievances, revealing how seemingly minor dissatisfactions can expose larger social and systemic failings.

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Trivial gripes about food quality or an uncomfortable social exchange, for example, connect to cultural and class-based inequities. Characteristic of Knight's practice, these works embrace humour, discomfort, and intimacy – inviting visitors to consider how complaints are judged and what they reveal about systems of authority.

I Can't Complain offers a disruption of the taboo surrounding the act of complaining. Knight takes an active interest in people's relationship to expressing discontent, acknowledging the relief in voicing disappointment and the satisfaction of naming an irritation. Considering complaint in this way also prompts the questions: who has the right to complain? What value judgements are taking place when we classify something as complaint? Where can you speak up, where is it welcomed or dismissed? In this way, rather than discredit complaint as an unimportant nuisance, Knight positions it as information which can then be understood as a tool to unearth injustice.

Knight studied drama therapy and theatre arts before pursuing performance practices within a contemporary art context. Working across performance, installation, video and text, she examines authority and group dynamics by creating situations that expose structures of power and participation in everyday encounters. The artist is both observer and instigator. Her work often begins with a prompt or proposal that allows space for conflict and exchange. The video works in the back gallery present earlier iterations of her investigations into complaint that involved objects, collaboration with participants, and the prompt to share their annoyances. For *I Can't Complain*, Knight extends this logic into new performance work that will punctuate the gallery space on dates throughout the exhibition's run, and include multiple solo performances by Knight (1, 12 and 15 October), as well as performances developed in collaboration with London-based artist Samra Mayanja (mid-November) and the Brussels-based artistic duo Michelangelo Miccolis and nick von kleist (late-November).

Priority booking for the exhibition and Autumn Knight's solo performance on 1 October will be available to ICA Members on 8 September. General booking will be on sale from 15 September.

For information about tickets and membership, please visit ica.art or contact: sales@ica.art / +44 (0)20 7930 3647

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Andrea Nitsche-Krupp, Exhibitions Curator, says:

‘Autumn Knight has a remarkable ability to approach uncomfortable questions with humour and sincerity. She scrutinises seemingly trivial complaints (we all have them) not because they are exceptional, but for their ability to reveal values and power structures we are otherwise in the habit of overlooking. Her exhibitions and performances then function as a form of collective inquiry. The result is work that feels immediate, provocative, and deeply humane.’

Bengi Ünsal, Director of the Institute of Contemporary Arts says:

‘Autumn’s practice speaks directly to what the ICA can uniquely support: work that moves between exhibition, performance, sound and social exchange, and that asks audiences to become active participants in how meaning is produced. *I Can’t Complain* could only take shape in an institution willing to hold humour, discomfort, intimacy and critique in the same space, and to treat the gallery not as a fixed container but as a live site of encounter. Having followed the evolution of Autumn’s remarkable practice, we are proud to support this important new commission and honoured that she has placed her trust in the ICA.’

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Press Enquiries

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To download press images, visit [ICA's Dropbox](#)

Visitor Information

Exhibition tickets: from £6.00

Pay What You Can (Tue to Sun: 12 – 1pm): £3.00

Members go free

Exhibition opening times:

Monday: Closed

Tue to Sun: 12 – 8pm

Institute of Contemporary Arts, The Mall, London SW1Y 5AH

About the artist

Autumn Knight is a New York-based interdisciplinary artist who works with performance, installation, video, and text. Drawing from her training in theatre and the psychology of group dynamics, Knight makes performances that reshape perceptions of race, gender, and authority.

Knight's performance works have been presented by major museums, galleries, and performance venues including Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2025); Shedhalle, Zürich (2025); Performance Space New York, New York (2023); Museum Ostwall, Dortmund, Germany (2023); Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (MCA Chicago), Chicago (2022); Western Front, Vancouver (2021); The Kitchen, New York (2020); Performa, New York (2019); the Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2019); Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA), Portland (2024, 2018); Akademie der Künste, Berlin (2018); and The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2017), among many others. Knight's work *WALL* (2014–16) is the first live performance work to enter the permanent collection of The Studio Museum in Harlem.

Knight's solo exhibitions include *Nothing #26: The Potential of Nothing Is Everything* at Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, New York, New York (2023); and *In Rehearsal* at Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, Illinois (2017).

Knight is the recipient of numerous awards, grants, honours, and fellowships, including the Artadia Award, Art Matters Grant, Rema Hort Mann Grant,

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Anonymous Was A Woman Award, Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grant, Nancy B. Negley Rome Prize in Visual Art, Guggenheim Fellowship, and most recently the Trellis Art Fund Grant. She attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2016) and holds a B.A. in Theater Arts from Dillard University and an M.A. in Drama Therapy from New York University.

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About the Institute of Contemporary Arts

The Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) is London's leading space for contemporary culture. We commission, produce and present new work in film, music, performance and the visual arts by today's most progressive artists. In our landmark home on The Mall in central London, we invite artists and audiences to interrogate what it means to live in our world today, with a genre-fluid programme that challenges the past, questions the present and confronts the future.

The ICA platforms the daring and the curious, supporting artists and ideas that challenge perceptions, inspire social change, and connect with diverse audiences locally and globally. As a space for bold, boundary-pushing creativity, we cultivate connections across disciplines, communities, and cultures. Our cross-disciplinary programming invites audiences to explore beyond the boundaries of individual art forms, fostering experimentation and the discovery of new perspectives. Open to all voices and ideas, we embrace interplay and interaction across club nights, film festivals, gigs, exhibitions, talks, and digital art. With inclusivity and collaboration at the heart of our work, we remain fearless in shaping contemporary creativity, connecting diverse voices, and making unexpected connections that define the future of arts and culture.

Our history of presenting and promoting visionary new art is unrivalled in London: from Kenneth Anger to Kathy Acker, Kano to Klein, Jackson Pollock to Jean-Michel Basquiat, Gay Sweatshop to Forensic Architecture, David Bowie to Stormzy, Pop Art to queer techno. Today, as ever, our inclusive programme reflects and represents who we are as a disparate and diverse collection of cultures and identities.

Exactly 79 years after a group of artists and poets founded the ICA as an alternative to the mainstream, we are committed more than ever to pave the way for the next generation and to platform creative voices. The ICA continues to celebrate risk and champion innovation, and experimentation across the arts – a playground and a home for today's most vital artists.

Central to the ICA's vision and mission is a commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusion at all levels of the organisation. We want to create and maintain an ICA that is a positive environment where similarities and differences of people are valued – a space where everyone belongs and feels welcome. We hold ourselves accountable through our regularly reviewed Anti-Racism Strategic Plan; Equality and Diversity Policy and Action Plan; and Safety Policy.

Since its inception, the ICA has been the home of future-thinking ideas and urgent cultural discourse. We are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment that encourages dialogue and debate, recognising that differing viewpoints are essential to the advancement of contemporary arts and culture.

The ICA is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.