7. *Tish's Baby Shower*, 2008

While Lixenberg returned to Imperial Courts several times following her initial visit in 1993, she did not make a new body of photographic work until 2008, the year that she made *Tish's Baby Shower*, a view of party preparation that is at once festive and disquieting.

The repetition of form adds dynamism to the scene: chairs, tables, balloons, and windows all repeat across the photograph. So too do the security grills on the windows. These windows are also in poor condition, and somewhat dirty at that. The black and white film that Lixenberg uses for *Imperial Courts* brings focus to these key details, which might otherwise not occupy center stage.

The photograph is not an idealized picture of the projects, but neither is it catastrophizing. There is a palpable tension in this work between the hopefulness for new life and the knowledge of the grim circumstances that exist for many already living. This conflict

enhances the composition and makes it hauntingly memorable.

Dana Lixenberg American Images

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