

ANNA ZORINA GALLERY

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GABRIELLE DUNAYSKI

Hymen Hysteria

March 5 - April 11, 2026

Opening Reception: Thursday, March 5th, 6-8PM

Anna Zorina Gallery is pleased to announce the Gabrielle Dunayski solo exhibition, *Hymen Hysteria*. Dunayski creates paintings where memories accumulate rather than resolve. Figures are layered repeatedly, building into dense compositions that mirror the obsessive return of emotionally heightened recollections. Each canvas suggests that memory is not a stable archive but an active process shaped by repetition, distortion, and reinterpretation.

The exhibition marks the beginning of Dunayski's three-part interrogation of her personal indoctrination growing up in a cult-like mega church, charting the passage from internalized dogma to critical unraveling. Drawing from journals, biblical annotations, sermon notes, and other memorabilia, the artist deconstructs religious motifs and formative memories. Her satirical and severe titles act as catalysts in the studio, providing the provocative basis for exploring the contradictions and latent perversities embedded within Western Christianity. Works such as *Bad Bitches Must Be Baptized Twice*, *A Neighborhood Slut Stoning* and *All The Pastors Paid Extra For a Front Row Chair*, and *Prayers for Your Hypothetical Hymen* refer to church rhetoric and cultural panic, relying on viewers' preconceptions to unsettle and expose bias. These titles highlight the gendered and moral vocabularies that disproportionately regulate female bodies.

This first chapter centers on pre-pubescent memories. Untouched, fervent, often feral figures emerge to hold eye contact only for a moment before collapsing into conglomerations of exaggerated and often sexually objectified female forms. These unhinged, guttural gestures depict innocence and distortion coexisting in volatile tension. A formative childhood instruction given by her mother anchors the exhibition. Advised that if someone followed her she should turn, stand up straight, and hold eye contact for ten seconds before running, Dunayski recalls the first time she enacted this directive as a psychic threshold between innocence and awareness. This memory prompted a shift in her practice. Faces entered the compositions and male figures disappeared, destabilizing narrative hierarchy and implicating the viewer as watcher, follower, or self-appointed guardian. Each protagonist seems to hold the gaze for a charged interval before dissolving back into the tumult of paint.

The work probes the line between protective and perverse, examining how religious indoctrination shapes perceptions of sex and coming-of-age. The artist highlights how religious frameworks provide the structures through which small violations of autonomy are rationalized. This series offers both confession and critique, resulting in a sustained encounter that asks not only what is remembered, but how belief and fear shape the act of remembering itself.

For further information, please contact Marie Nyquist at +1212-243-2100 or via email at marie@annazorinagallery.com