

# DENNY DIMIN GALLERY

CLARITY HAYNES | *Altar-ed Bodies*

**DATES:**

January 3 - 25, 2020

**RECEPTION:**

Friday, January 3, 6-8 pm

**TALK:**

Kay Turner and Clarity Haynes  
Saturday, January 18, 2 pm

Denny Dimin Gallery is pleased to present *Altar-ed Bodies*, a solo exhibition of paintings by Clarity Haynes presented by New Discretions (Benjamin Tischer of INVISIBLE-EXPORTS.)

An altar is a such a heavy thing, thick with intentions. It exists in every culture, sometimes simply, but more often rich with offerings. An altar holds a lingering connection with the divine feminine, often serving as a strategy for resistance and a space of empowerment outside of major patriarchal religions. It is a valuable tool.

According to author and folklorist Kay Turner, “In the 1970s, artists involved in the radically revisionist spirit of the growing Feminist Art Movement defiantly elected to ignore the conventional distinction between ‘fine’ art and women’s ‘domestic’ art. They discovered altar-making as part of a reinvigoration of the domestic sphere, reclaiming it as a determining frame for practices that inscribe women’s creativity and subjectivity.” She quotes art historian Arlene Raven, who explains that these artists came to “underline the artistic nature of all forms of altar-making by women. The altar viewed as aesthetic model, performance genre, artistic object, and women’s art – the very acknowledgement of the existence of the altar – begins to change our traditional white, male, Western-bound ideas concerning who the artist is, and how and to what purpose, she creates.”

Raven also says, “The altar, by definition of its form and use, is an artistic implement for getting and giving power. By acknowledging the legitimacy of the altar as a woman’s art form we further legitimize and encourage a feminist understanding of art: that for us the assembly of images is not mere representation but a potent means towards realization of a new culture which both criticizes patriarchy and transforms it.”

Clarity Haynes is known for her long-standing explorations of the torso as a site for painted portraiture. Works in her Breast Portrait Project, always painted from life and usually monumental in scale, have focused on themes of healing, trauma, and self-determination. The new works continue this practice, but also reveal creative and colorful strategies her portrait subjects use for claiming, re-claiming, and altering the body. Surgeries, tattoos, scarification, piercings and hand-made jewelry adornments feature in these paintings. The exhibition debuts Haynes’ recent large-scale portrait of the pioneering body-centric artist Genesis Breyer P-Orridge.

In addition to the torso portraits, Haynes will premiere a new series of trompe l'oeil altars. While the bodies tell the intimate stories of other people, the altars are self-portraits of sorts, made up of mementos and power objects collected by the artist over decades. Art and inspiration are a theme. A photograph of an ancient Medusa sculpture and a painting of a dinner plate from Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party" appear depicted in the same space. (The Dinner Party is arguably contemporary art's penultimate feminist altar.)

Feminist and queer craft practices are honored in this celebratory body of work. Bright colors, lively compositions and multiple narratives conjoin in the depictions of both bodies and altars, while realist techniques playfully gesture to the surface of the painting through the mimetic description of surfaces shown.

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Clarity Haynes (b. McAllen, TX, 1971) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY and Bearsville, NY. She holds an MFA from Brooklyn College and a CFA from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Her work has been widely exhibited, including at INVISIBLE-EXPORTS, Brandeis University's Kniznick Gallery, the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, the Ackland Art Museum in Chapel Hill, and the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC. She is the recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in Painting, a Pollock-Krasner Award, a Community Arts Regrant Award from the Brooklyn Arts Council and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and residency fellowships from the MacDowell Colony and the Corporation of Yaddo. Her work has been discussed in *Art in America*, *Hyperallergic*, *The Washington Post*, *The Huffington Post*, *Juxtapoz Magazine* and *Beautiful/Decay Magazine*, amongst others, and can be found in the permanent collections of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts; the Leslie Lohman Museum; the Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art; Wilson College; the Rena Rowan Breast Center of the University of Pennsylvania Hospital; and the Brooklyn Museum Feminist Art Base.

She has also written extensively about art, for publications including *ArtNews*, *Hyperallergic*, and the *Brooklyn Rail*.

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New Discretions is a nomadic curatorial and art advisory project by Benjamin Tischer of INVISIBLE-EXPORTS. For more information, contact: [benjamin@newdiscretions.com](mailto:benjamin@newdiscretions.com)

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Denny Dimin Gallery is located at 39 Lispenard Street in New York City. Hours are Tuesday to Saturday, 11am to 6pm.