

FORT GANSEVOORT

Wallpaper*

Zoya Cherkassky makes sense of American life with rich, diverse paintings in New York

In 'American Cooking', at Fort Gansevoort, New York, Ukrainian artist Zoya Cherkassky captures life around her

Hannah Silver – September 28, 2026



Zoya Cherkassky, Alexander Galper is Reading His Stories, 2026

‘My identity is scattered all over the place,’ says artist Zoya Cherkassky. ‘I was born in Ukraine, grew up in Israel, and lived in Germany for five years.’ A year and a half ago, Cherkassky moved to the United States, and has been attempting to make sense of both her transitory status and the familiar yet unknown American way of life in a new series of paintings and drawings.

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Zoya Cherkassky, The Sandwich Shop, 2026



Zoya Cherkassky, The New American Gothic, 2026

‘I also come from a very mixed family,’ Cherkassky adds. ‘My father was Jewish, my mother is half Ukrainian and half Jewish, my husband is Igbo, and my sister was married to an Arab from Jordan, so I have two nieces who were born there. So adding a new American identity was just a drop in the ocean.’

This heritage is a rich jumping-off point in Cherkassky’s exhibition at Fort Gansevoort, New York, *American Cooking*, which anchors itself in the everyday rituals Cherkassky has noticed around her. Named after a vintage cookbook she found near her Long Island studio, the works in the exhibition translate scenes of ritual – often involving food but also including playgrounds, subways, pavements – into evocative, often playful figurative paintings.



Zoya Cherkassky, Red Shabbos, 2026

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Zoya Cherkassky, Two Papayas, 2026

Throughout her work, themes including Jewish identity, politics and migration are considered through an often humorous lens, lending a poignancy to her scenes which are rooted in reality. Caught going about their day, Cherkassky's subjects are vulnerable in their honesty. 'Humour is what has always helped my people survive – we Jews are stereotypically famous for our sense of humor. It's also, of course, part of my personality, I love to laugh my ass off and I know a lot of jokes,' Cherkassky says.

'I think these moments are what life is really made of, the things that later become our memories,' Cherkassky says. 'I'm also, of course, influenced by the realist and humanist tradition in [painting](#). At the art school in Kyiv, every year began with the same assignment: to make a composition on the theme "How I Spent My Summer." In a way, that's what I've been painting all my life. Small details are very important to me, the things I notice that make these situations recognisable, something that anyone can relate to.'



Zoya Cherkassky, Dinner with a Cat, 2026

'In recent years, any political subject has become extremely explosive, and art is often confused with activism or propaganda. This frustrates me because I see how afraid people are to express their opinions. I think it really damages the broader discourse. Nevertheless, it's important for me to address these subjects. I try to do it through humour, and I just hope that the political content in my work isn't manipulated and taken out of context.'



Zoya Cherkassky, Meat, Fish, Poultry, and Eggs, 2026