

DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY

David Kordansky Gallery is pleased to present Like Looking in a Mirror, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Jenna Gribbon. The exhibition will be on view in Los Angeles at 5130 W. Edgewood Pl. from September 13 through October 19, 2024. An opening reception will be held on Friday, September 13 from 6 to 8 PM.

Over the past two decades, Gribbon has maintained a consistent engagement with portraiture and the ways in which—through the incorporation of props, and the positioning and gaze of her subjects—she can alter the viewer’s experience of looking. In a departure from recent work, which predominantly featured her wife Mackenzie Scott, the artist returns to a familiar subject—her son—in an effort to explore the replication of traits, appearance, and mannerisms between parent and child that create a sameness which extends beyond the physical into the experiential.

The artist’s past work has depicted sweeping scenes—created with props such as clamp lights, projectors, mirrors, and backdrops—that initially appear intimate, but reveal themselves to be constructed upon closer looking. However, these paintings offer a counterpoint by utilizing the large canvases to portray tighter crops of figures’ heads and shoulders, shifting the focus away from narrative towards more psychological, close-up readings. The paintings become examinations of the tensions and anxieties that arise when an artist confronts an image that closely mirrors their own. The works on view also offer a rare glimpse into the dynamics between a parent and child, where the child lives as a double or a projection of a parent, mirroring aspects of their internal self and therefore, heightening the sense of confusion around selfhood and prompting questions about perception.

Reflective surfaces and mirrors play a central role in this body of work conceptually, as a device that can aid in the act of seeing and representing doubles or doppelgangers. While doubles and doppelgangers have existed throughout time and are often perceived as a bad omen or threatening force, which the artist alludes to through the use of predominantly darker tones, Gribbon’s impressionistic brushstrokes and

empathetic and collaborative approach to figural painting reframe the traditionally disturbing or eerie connotation of doubles to create tender portraits imbued with care. In one example, Gribbon and her son are seen with their arms entangled around one another as their eyes look back at the viewer. The artist's own presence in the painting, along with her stern gaze, reinforces her role as the child's protector, as her arm lightly shields him from behind. This is one of several instances in which Gribbon distinguishes herself by her position as a secondary yet omnipresent figure, simultaneously watching after her son and after the viewers looking at the two of them.

The artist explores ideas of the uncanny and projection—both literally and metaphorically—by utilizing projectors as a tool to further distort an image and blur the lines between her face and her son's. In one work, we see a close-up of her son with an image of Gribbon projected onto—and partially obscuring—his cheek. The eyes, nose, and lips appear in duplicate. Though this could be a result of image manipulation, it is, in fact, the result of the physical layering of Gribbon's image atop her son's. The projected image of Gribbon's face originated from a photo taken by her which appears in several works on view, further emphasizing the artist's commitment to collaboration and a multifaceted engagement with her subjects.

While the larger paintings in the exhibition offer a physical manifestation of replication, the smaller paintings represent the physical passing on of a shared understanding. In the two instances where her son is seen cooking, it's implied that he'll also experience the same tastes and textures that Gribbon herself experiences. In the instance where her son is seen reading, it's implied that his thoughts may also be shaped through the same language that shaped Gribbon's thinking. Even though Gribbon isn't visible in the smaller works on view, her presence looms largely in other, and arguably more significant, ways. In Looking at a painting of Florine Stettheimer's mother with M (2024), Gribbon's son is seen with Scott in front of a painting by Stettheimer titled Portrait of My Mother (1925). In Gribbon's painting, as in Stettheimer's example, the artist's presence exists beyond the canvas in an attempt to represent themselves in the other.

DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY

Taken together, the paintings in Like Looking in a Mirror connect to Gribbon's larger project, in which she utilizes a cinematic approach to create scenes that appear private, but touch on universal themes; in this case, parenthood, identity, and the transfer of thought and experience between generations. While the artist often pulls from art historical references and techniques, this show exemplifies her commitment to radicalizing—and personalizing—these traditional modes to incorporate the surreal, the psychedelic, and the uncanny.

The Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University is planning a major solo exhibition of Jenna Gribbon's work, tentatively scheduled for Fall 2026. The planned show will be a comprehensive survey of 25 years of painting. Gribbon was the subject of a solo exhibition at Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy (2022–2023). Recent group exhibitions include Day for Night: New American Realism, Palazzo Barberini, organized by the Aishti Foundation, Rome (2024); Living Histories: Queer Views and Old Masters, The Frick Collection, New York (2022); and I will wear you in my heart of heart, FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2021); and Paint, also known as Blood: Women, Affect and Desire in Contemporary Painting, Warsaw Museum of Modern Art, Poland (2019). Her work is in the permanent collections of institutions including Kunstmuseum The Hague, the Netherlands; Dallas Museum of Art; Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art, Las Vegas, Nevada; New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana; Kurpfälzisches Museum, Heidelberg, Germany; Rubell Museum, Miami; and FLAG Art Foundation, New York. Gribbon lives and works in New York.