

F L A U N T

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**MOTHER AND CHILD |
BECAUSE THE UMBILICAL
CORD IS NOT ONLY
DELICIOUS IT'S NUTRITIOUS**

BY NATE RYNASKI

**SAVORING THE GIFT OF LIFE WITH NEW GROUP EXHIBITION,
*MOTHER AND CHILD***

A gift is often thought to be a tangible thing. Perhaps a plaid tie for Christmas. A quinceañera Corvette. An apricot-hued bottle of skin contact for your Echo Park housewarming. All delightful gifts. Yet it could be said the greatest gift we receive is the unmistakably unique journey otherwise known as life. Working back from here, we see Mom, Mother, Mamma. There she is, glorious, hard-bitten, vanished, immaculate, rugged, fair, pious, lost... whatever our connection to maternity, its universality supercedes.

And so, the uncanny experience of birth-giving radiates through new group exhibition, *Mother and Child*, at Friends Indeed Gallery in San Francisco, CA, now showing through December 17. Featuring a handful of artists, including Catherine Opie, Deana Lawson, Sasha Gordon, and more, the exhibition enlists its artists to explore and depict an interpretation of mother-making, of gift-giving and taking away. Herein, artists Jesse Mockrin, Jenna Gribbon, and Omari Douglin interpret this bond and consider this gift of which we've all been humbly bestowed.



Jenna Gribbon. "Pose of an artist's child" (2021). 20" x 16". Courtesy of the artist and Friends Indeed Gallery.

JENNA GRIBBON

BY BREE CASTILLO

Jenna Gribbon approaches the canvas with unwavering sincerity as she captures intimate encounters in her life, displaying how the everyday is merely a medium. The Brooklyn-based artist received her MFA in New York at Hunter College and has been featured in galleries in Berlin and London, as well as Los Angeles and New York. Known for blurring lines, the figurative painter explores point of view as she balances between both intrinsic intimacy and the questionable impertinence of voyeurism.

Gribbon's barely clothed subjects clip their toenails and share subtle touches, as viewed through a slightly ajar bathroom door. The artist's textured bodices renounce objectification and what is known about women through traditional Western art, with female subjects that hold agency both daring and vulnerable. These scenes propose that it may not be about *what* we are perceiving, but *how* we per-

ceive. Here, Gribbon shares on motherly perspective, the art of motherhood, and the tension between pleasure and discomfort.

"Pose of an artist's child," which features in *Mother and Child*, appears to be from the mother's perspective. What made you decide to not depict the mother with the child in this work?

My presence is almost always implied in my work, but often without being physically represented. In this painting, I wanted my gaze—as an artist and a mother—to be the subject, and I thought the most direct way of doing that would be to show you what I see, and show how my child reacts/performs under that gaze.

What is motherhood to you?

Well, I think there are infinite ways to perform motherhood. The maternal impulse is probably in everyone to some extent.

What is the greatest gift a mother can give her child?

What I try to give my child first and foremost is space to grow naturally into himself. In some ways, kids are like plants, and if you provide them with light and nourishment and shield them from the harshest conditions, all the information that's contained in the seed will be able to present itself in the strongest, healthiest way. They're designed to flourish. I also think it's important to live life in a way that models going through the world fully engaged and open—but also, and maybe most importantly—resiliency.

What was creating this work of your son like for you?

My paintings tend to follow my attention, so painting my child is a very natural occurrence.

A lot of your recent works have limbs and appendages taking up large portions of your works, obscuring parts of the body. Is this intentional, and what is the aim in doing this?

Those paintings are of my partner and me. I use my own body to drag the viewer into the frame, and into an entanglement of desire and pleasure. Paint, bodies, and intimacy are all an entanglement of pleasure, desire, and discomfort. My paintings invite the viewer into a place to own their pleasure and sit with their unease.