

# Jenna Gribbon

## Rainbows in Shadows

05.06.2025  
06.09.2025

**MASSIMODECARLO is pleased to present**  
***Rainbows in Shadows*, Jenna Gribbon's first solo**  
**show in Milan.**

"You kissed your wife this morning. Did you look at her? How intently? Tonight when you see her again she won't be the same. Same as what? As your memory of her or as the way she really is? What is the way she really is? Is it the way she looked through the lens of your camera yesterday afternoon, or the way her reflection bounced sideways at you in the bathroom mirror before bed last night? Is it the way the sunlight through the window illuminated her from behind like an archangel this morning or the way an incandescent bulb cast a shadow over half her face in the soft light of the bar yesterday evening? She's different every day, every hour, every minute, every second, from every angle, in every light. We never see ourselves the way other people see us. What do you see when you look at a painting of me, bare-chested in my home and in my element? Is it the neon of my nipples your focus? My lop-sided breasts? I've been self-conscious about those since a neighborhood boy made me aware of them when I was twelve. Are you drawn in by my bodily womanliness when you look at the paint? The morning that image was captured I remember I felt like a man. Did you catch the thirst for justice in my eyes?

As above, so below. Macrocosm reflects microcosm. Does it? Sitting at the top of the pops you've got all the monstrosities and destruction of our natural world one can bear, volume set to an excruciating level ten. The systematic pulverization of anything good and recognizable to us sets an all-consuming tone so dominant that one forgets, temporarily, there is other music, another angle, a different station. Spin the dial a few notches. Whereas on the previous channel the powers that be are calling forth violence, greed, and callousness, on my family's frequency you will find us reveling in our power and our joy, our call to arms a self-enforced bliss, the revelation in our existence our only mandate. Our heaven is the home we've made together—my wife, my stepson, our dog, and me. The splendor is in the prisms the 4:00 PM sunlight throws and and splashes against the living room wall, the way the dog's fur is lit throughout by that same light so that at certain times of day she

seems to glow. It's in the way my stepson is cloaked in coziness, safety, and basking in the warmth of candlelight and a robe as we all play a post-supper tabletop game together. It's in the way I am stirred every time I watch my wife work her magic in our garden, as if she were the sun herself. Our home reflects our ability to co-create ecstasy within our domestic symbiosis, our refusal to kowtow to any punitive agent of chaos, and our mission to extrapolate every drop of honeyed possibility from end to end of this life which asks nothing of us but to delight in it.

The human eye is only capable of perceiving a sliver of what we call reality—that is, 400-750 THz is the entirety of the electromagnetic spectrum of light that is available to us. That means that, for our species, only .0035% of what exists falls within the visible light frequency. To speak further of improbable magic, a rainbow is illusory in the sense that it can only be perceived under specific conditions, depending namely on two factors: there must droplets of water in the air to refract the light into the observer's eyes and the observer must be at a vantage point from whence it can be perceived. The observer must be positioned with their back to the sun and their shadow before them—only then can they see a rainbow."

- Text by Mackenzie Scott - Gribbon's wife and primary subject.

### **Jenna Gribbon**

Jenna Gribbon was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1978. She currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York, US.

Gribbon's paintings explore the feelings and implications of seeing and being seen. Her paintings are intimate portraits of her friends, wife, family and fellow painters, which encourage the viewer to reflect on their role as a consumer of beauty, and intimacy and as voyeurs of the narratives of others.

A focus on vision permeates every layer of Gribbon's work, with titles such as 'Ritualized Looking', 'Deck Peek' and 'When I looked at you, the light changed'. The scenes are painted from Gribbon's first point perspective, making the artist's presence felt by emphasising her particular viewpoint. The viewer directly replaces the artist, seeing Gribbon's subject from the exact position that she occupied in the scene, not only looking at the subject but invited to view Gribbon's own experience of looking at them.

Jenna Gribbon's work is included in the collections of the Brooklyn Museum, New York, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA Museum of Modern, and Contemporary Art (MAMCO), Geneva, Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Hague and Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia.