

FRIEZE

Five Up-and-Coming Painters to Keep a Close Eye On

Our critics drum up an international list of their favourite promising artists



Jenna Gribbon

An encounter with the loose, sensual canvases of New York-based painter Jenna Gribbon feels like venturing into heady memory. We glimpse intimate moments – hands clutching fleshy thighs, a sleeping boy with his thumb pressed between his lips – and our eyes act as surrogates for the artist's own. But, as Gribbon beckons us in, she also pushes us away: the truncated compositions, the titles (*Wholesome Sunday Fuck*, 2020) and the fervent gaze of her subjects define us as mere intruders.

Gribbon's spontaneous licks of paint recall masters such as Édouard Manet. Her brush lingers on areas of acute observation before collapsing into eddying, gestural impressionism. This diversity in mark echoes the selective nature of memory, which crystallizes certain moments to allow others to dissolve. Gribbon's vision teeters on the edge of fantasy: whilst her attention to tone and light lends her world a gravity, her perspective buckles and wobbles, and her palette can leap from muted and earthy to rousingly vivid. Brilliant pink nipples decorate her figures' naked chests – a device employed to jolt the viewer and emphasize our voyeurism.

Ideas of looking and being looked at pervade Gribbon's work. In *Mackenzie's Lack of Interest in Gallery 827* (2019), the artist's girlfriend glances at weighty oil paintings, while in *Midday Watch* (2020), her son lies spellbound and bare-bottomed before a scene from the US cartoon *Family Guy* (1999–ongoing). The series 'Agnès V. par Jenna G' (2020) depicts close female friends watching the work of new wave filmmaker Agnès Varda, her subjects both spectator and spectacle. Gribbon's paintings allow for the multiplicity of the female experience: in her world, the women are at once queer, friends, lovers, voyeurs, mothers. She picks up where Varda left off: contemplating the objectification of women through a contemporary lens, reminding us that this conversation is far from over. – *Sophie Ruigrok*