

# Jasmine Gregory

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Date

**11.02.2022**  
**03.04.2022**

Location

**Milano**

**Istituto Svizzero**

Information

**Mommie dearest**

Category

**Art, Solo exhibition**

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When I think of Jasmine Gregory's work, I think of a dog with human hands and long green and pink, pointy gel nails. A bit snooty, a bit bored, its face turned slightly to the side and almost hidden under the wide brim of a purple hat—this same dog now looks back at us in Jasmine Gregory's exhibition in Milan. *Call Me Ms. Bitch, Because I Don't Miss, Bitch* is what the artist calls the painting. She came across the quote on Instagram, it echoes a line from a song by the rapper Nicki Minaj, while the composition is reminiscent of a baroque portrait.

In early January, I visited Jasmine Gregory in her studio on the northern outskirts of Zurich. An unexpected snowstorm clouds the view of the world. We discuss our views on art, which may not be clouded, but certainly socially determined. The dog portrait leans against the wall, already packed, while we look at the triptych *Self Giving Birth Ever Miscarried*. The two works, both created last year, clearly attest to the range of Jasmine Gregory's painting and her fascination with the *medium*, its cultural and historical connotations and societal impact. Figurative painting holds as much fascination for her as the rapid brushstrokes and colours of more abstract approaches. «Maybe I'm a conceptual painter», the artist muses, and maybe these stylistic labels are not that relevant when considering her work. Let us return to her studio and the triptych—which in its symmetries evokes a Rorschach test, and whose centre canvas shows a tool, representing a moment of disruption for the artist. Meanwhile, the fluorescent green might refer to the “green screen” compositing technique used in film and video to combine a background image (also digitally animated) with a different foreground. In fact, the two large canvases—just like the folding images of the Rorschach test—were created using a transfer process. Their similarities with the Rorschach test—a tool used in psychology to analyse a person's personality, in which the subject interprets pictures associatively—go beyond the visual level. What interests Jasmine Gregory is how images are perceived, how social conditioning impacts how we view and interpret paintings, questions of references and localization, and the tensions between “copy” and “original”. This brings us to the heart, or perhaps the bowels, of the discourses not only of contemporary painting but of contemporary art in general.

Educated at art schools in Europe and the United States, Jasmine Gregory is more than familiar with the Western art discourse. At the same time, she tells me, she also knows the social contexts in which artworks (and, perhaps, copies of famous paintings) serve mainly as decoration and are not part of said discourse, which can sometimes be laborious and theory-laden. Her work *War Diaries: Will to Adorn*, in which the canvas is barely recognizable as such, might well be a nod to this understanding. The same could be said of the rhinestones and glitter that Jasmine Gregory uses, things that are generally excluded or abjected (to hint at her confrontation with the notion of the abject) from the realms of so-called “high” art. The artist plays with references in a manner as virtuosic and precise as it is tongue-in-cheek. And she adds that her works with fabric—*War Diaries: Will to Adorn* and *Struggle Porn* are references to David Hammons and Thornton Dial.

At the same time, Jasmine Gregory's painting also reveals her critical distance. A distance to a western, white, and male art historiography and image production. A distance to a context that is still insanely dominant, which goes hand in hand with a reflection on her own position as a young female painter. Knowing that everything we think, say, or indeed paint is determined by the reality of our lives and that the long-present idea of a (mostly male) creativity that somehow springs from nothing is slowly but surely becoming obsolete, Jasmine Gregory radically expands her horizon of references. She sometimes uses stock images, which she digitally modifies, or photographs she encounters on social media. The detailed Martini glass painting is succinctly titled *A Thing Among Things*, and a (slightly adapted) line from Oscar Wilde's novel about art and self-dramatization, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, serves as the title for the painting made with oil, cellophane, and rhinestones: *Never Trust a Woman Who Wears Mauve, It Always Means That They Have a History*—says the hedonistic, somewhat cynical Lord Henry Wotton.

In the middle of the exhibition space, Jasmine Gregory has installed her sculpture *Copy Me: Bad Clone*. The sofa, which was mass-produced and ordered online, is covered with plastic foil and pieces of painted linen. The work refers to Rosemarie Trockel's *Copy Me* from 2010. It is a bad clone of it, its title suggests. With *Copy Me*, Rosemarie Trockel addresses the reproduction possibilities of a design classic by Florence Knoll from the 1950s and the traditional attribution of the domestic sphere to women. Jasmine Gregory takes up notions of the original, copy, and clone here, with questions about legibility and a still very present Western-influenced design tradition resonating as well. Jars of dried paint are placed around *Copy Me: Bad Clone* on the floor. In recent months, Jasmine Gregory has been rereading works by the philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva and exploring her concept of abjection. Julia Kristeva describes the abject as anything that can evoke disgust and aversion in us (for example, corpses, spit, or pus). While the abject is always part of us and cannot be objectified, it rattles our sense of self. It represents a process of detachment and dislocation that is simultaneously essential and impossible.

*Mommie dearest* is the exhibition title chosen by Jasmine Gregory, referring to the 1981 film that tells the story of Christina Crawford's painful separation from her adoptive mother, actress Joan Crawford, who is played in the film by Faye Dunaway. The jars with dried paint can perhaps be seen as the abject of Western art history and painting and, as such, an indication of the critical distancing adopted by Jasmine Gregory. An attitude that the artist illuminates dramatically in her Milan exhibition—and to which she might add a LOL. Yet, she is serious about it.

Gioia Dal Molin, February 2022

Events organized within the exhibition:

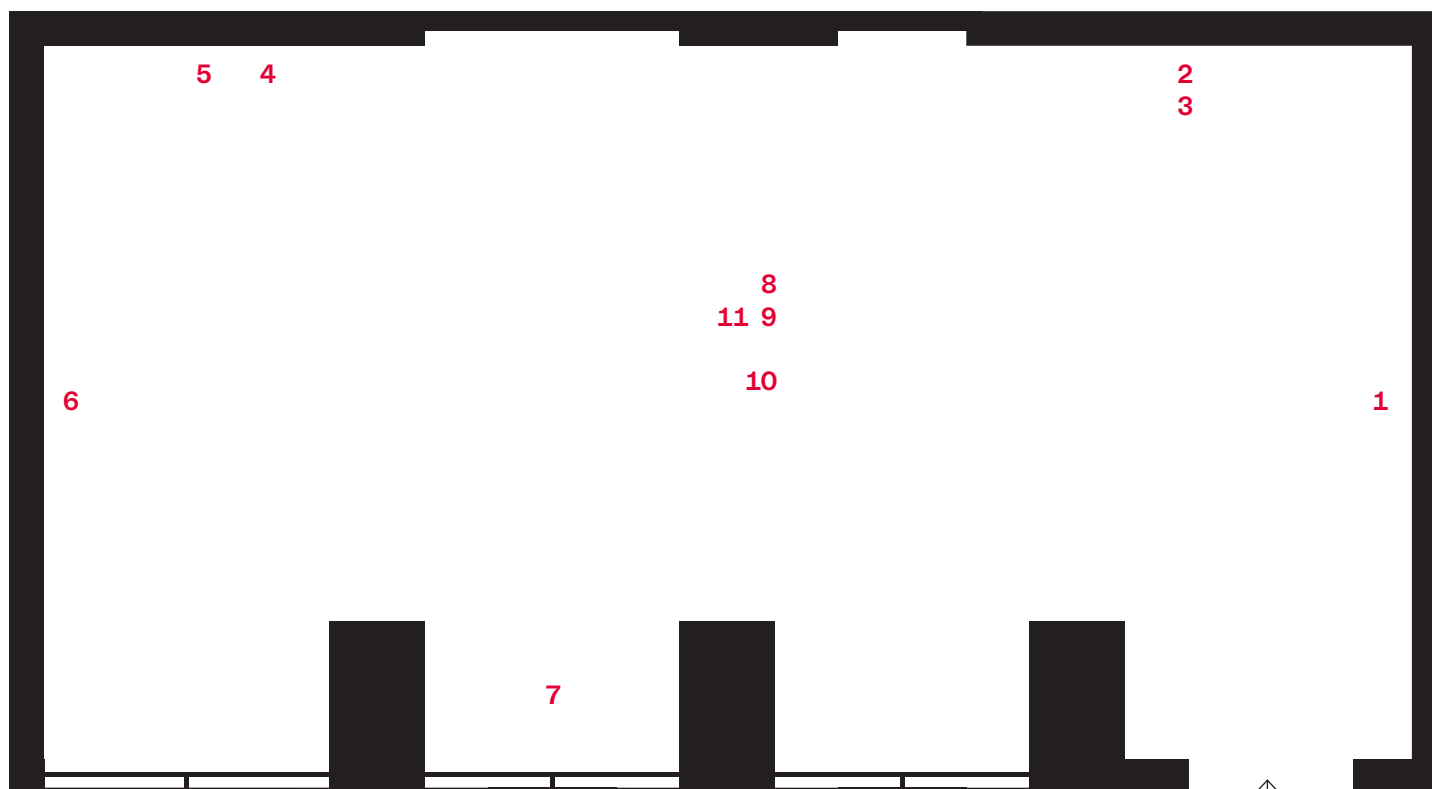
**01.03.2022:**

Artist talk with **Jasmine Gregory, Barbara Casavecchia** (writer, independent curator and educator) and **Gioia Dal Molin** (Head Curator Istituto Svizzero).

**02.04.2022:**

*Mototeatro. A motorized performance for objects by artist Anna Franceschini.*

More information on our website.



**1**  
*Call Me Ms. Bitch, Because I Don't Miss, Bitch*  
 2021  
 Oil on linen  
 200 x 170 cm

**2**  
*Never Trust a Woman Who Wears Mauve, It Always Means That They Have a History*  
 2022  
 Oil, cellophane, rhinestones on linen  
 120 x 130 cm

**3**  
*A Thing Among Things*  
 2021  
 Oil and glitter on linen  
 110 x 90 cm

**4**  
*Struggle Porn*  
 2021  
 Resin, rhinestones, glitter, oil, metal on silk  
 90 x 160 cm

**5**  
*Sissi*  
 2021  
 Oil, pizza, glitter, napkin, ink, plastic on linen  
 13 x 20 cm

**6**  
*Self Giving Birth Ever Miscarried*  
 2021  
 Oil and glitter on linen  
 400 x 220 cm

**7**  
*War Diaries: Will to Adorn*  
 2021  
 Oil on linen, silk, resin, glitter, rhinestones  
 210 x 170 cm

**8**  
*Copy Me: Bad Clone*  
 2022  
 White 5 seater U-Shaped modular faux leather sofa, jars, oil on cotton, plastic  
 348 x 168 x 83 cm

**9**  
*Conditions of Emergence*  
 2021  
 Oil on linen, glitter and plastic  
 110 x 40 cm

**10**  
*Boy Leftovers*  
 2022  
 Oil on canvas  
 13 x 20 cm

**11**  
*Paint Abortions*  
 2022  
 6 jars with oil paint covered with fabric  
 19 x 7 cm

## Biography

Jasmine Gregory (b.1987 in Washington D.C.) is an artist living and working in Zurich. Jasmine Gregory's work develops various sets of motifs, artistic gestures as well as assemblages to explore the tensions of artistic production, history of painting as well as subjectivity in how it circulates in institutional and commercial contexts. Recent group shows include *Werkschau Kanton Zürich 2021* at Haus Konstruktiv (Zurich), *Art For Black Lives, Round 4* (Online Exhibition), *FOTOROMANZA* at Le Commun (Geneva), *Sommer des Zögerns* at Kunsthalle Zürich (Zurich). Recent solo exhibitions include *Home Improvements, Park View* with Paul Soto (Brussels) and *Trouble at Casa Amor*, Karma International (Zurich).