

JERRELL GIBBS BIOGRAPHY

Jerrell Gibbs' figurative portraits depict the multilayered experience of the African American diaspora, making the ordinary extraordinary. Gibbs opposes deceptive perceptions of Black men by questioning master narratives and their connection to a muted visual history. Gibbs' paintings are acts of resistance, asserting power over visual stereotypes. He paints the Black male figure with adornments, such as flowers, and contextualizes them in moments of peace, rest, and solitude. These gestures function to dismantle the visual misrepresentation of violence, trauma, and pain.

Gibbs is committed to creating paintings that are both authentic and truthful, and he reveals Black men as God-fearing, husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons. His paintings highlight joy, beauty and the mundane, all components within the vastness of Black life. The compositions, which are often taken from his family archive, focus on placement, size, proportion, as much as they do on mark-making and painterly gestures. His assertions of legacy highlight the performative nature of heritage and displaces an audience unaccustomed to more extensive and wide-ranging portrayals of Black life.

Employing predominantly oil paint, Gibbs applies loose brushstrokes and harmonic color palettes to conjure moments and memories of his childhood experience. Using the subjects in his paintings as an extension of himself, the artist guides the viewer into his past, gently revealing parts of his life. The artist renders his subjects and their backgrounds — which range from intimate domestic settings to lush natural landscapes — with an equal sense of care. He imbues every brushstroke with a sense of emotional and personal specificity. Gibbs often works from Polaroids, transforming specific, banal moments into scenes of powerful emotional resonance.

"My paintings act as a voice for the stories that haven't been told. My goal is to have people see and hear what I see and hear — our truths."

– Jerrell Gibbs

Jerrell Gibbs (b. in 1988 in Baltimore, MD, US) received his MFA from the LeRoy E. Hoffberger School of Painting, Baltimore, MD. Gibbs' work has been featured in solo exhibitions at James Cohan Gallery, NY, Mariane Ibrahim Gallery, Paris, FR, at Dovecote Café, Baltimore, MD, US, and at The Galleries at CCBC, Dundalk, MD, US. Gibbs participated in group shows at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Columbus Museum of Art, Baltimore Museum of Art, Banneker-Douglas Museum, among others. For 2025 a solo show at the Brandywine Museum of Art, Chadds Ford, Pa is scheduled. The artist was granted the Pew Arts and Heritage Grant, the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award in Art, Leslie King-Hammond Award, and Roberta Polevoy Award, as well as participated at Mare Residency program, Baltimore, MD, US. Jerrell Gibbs' works are in the permanent collection of the Brandywine Museum of Art, US Capitol, Washington, DC, Baltimore Museum of Art, Columbus Museum of Art, Los Angeles Museum of Art, CC Foundation, and X Museum Beijing. Jerrell Gibbs lives and works in Baltimore, MD, US.