

Combining observation, memory, and improvisation, Jennifer Packer’s intimate renderings of friends and family along with her floral tableaux recast the genres of portraiture and still life. Packer (b. 1984), who is based in New York, often works on her compositions for months or even years as she strives to achieve a visual complexity that mirrors the emotional experience of the individuals she depicts and the spaces they inhabit. She takes a vibrant approach to color, plays with scale to powerful effect, and layers and obscures details to create constant shifts between foreground and background. By freely dissolving figurative elements into near-abstraction, the artist establishes a deliberate distance between sitter and viewer that serves to emphasize both the strength and the vulnerability of her subjects.

The exhibition’s title, *The Eye Is Not Satisfied With Seeing* (a reference to Ecclesiastes 1:8), points to the idea of an insatiable desire for knowledge through sensory experience as well as the significance of bearing witness in an exhausting cycle of familiar traumas. Drawing connections between the politics of representation, intimacy, and personal grief in response to tragedies of state and institutional violence against Black people, Packer underscores what is—and is not—made visible in American culture. As she has explained, “My inclination to paint, especially from life, is a completely political one. We belong here. We deserve to be seen and acknowledged in real time. We deserve to be heard and to be imaged with shameless generosity and accuracy.”

Hear from the artist and others at whitney.org/Guide.

800 Introduction

Jennifer Packer: The Eye Is Not Satisfied With Seeing was initiated by Serpentine, London.

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This exhibition is also sponsored by

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