

MEDIA CONTACT

Su Byron; 941-955-8103; SuByron@HermitageArtistRetreat.org

The Hermitage Artist Retreat announces the 2020 Greenfield Prize Winner: Visual Artist Jennifer Packer

Packer's portraits address the privilege of viewership and the ways the body has been represented and looked at throughout history.

“Jennifer Packer’s lyrical paintings challenge the divisions between realism and abstraction. As her figures are broken down, foreground merges into background and figures merge into space, forcing the viewer to acknowledge the multitudes of meanings and contradictions not only within her works, but within society as a whole.” –*The Wall Street Journal*

(Sarasota County) The Hermitage Artist Retreat, in collaboration with the Greenfield Foundation, has selected New York-based artist Jennifer Packer as the winner of the 2020 Greenfield Prize, given this year in the field of visual art. Packer will receive a six-week residency at the Hermitage and a \$30,000 commission for a new work, which will premiere in Sarasota in 2022 with the Hermitage’s presenting partner, The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

Andy Sandberg, the Hermitage’s artistic director and chief executive officer, notes that Packer was selected by a prestigious jury that included Valerie Cassel-Oliver, the Sydney and Frances Lewis Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; Daniel Byers, director of the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University; and Veronica Roberts, curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin.

Three additional finalists included Guggenheim Fellow Patty Chang; 2019 McArthur Fellowship recipient Mel Chin; and the inaugural recipient of the Ellsworth Kelly Award, Cauleen Smith. All three will receive a Hermitage residency, in addition to a prize of \$1,000.

“Amidst an extraordinary and competitive selection of finalists, Jennifer Packer stood out as an innovative, forward-thinking visual artist who impressed the jury with her thoughtful and inspired vision,” says Sandberg. “She embodies the mission of the Hermitage Greenfield Prize—to bring into the world works of art that have a significant impact on the broad as well as the artistic culture of our society. We thank our distinguished jurors for their care and leadership, and we congratulate all of our finalists. We look forward to recognizing Jennifer in Sarasota at the Greenfield Prize Award Dinner, and subsequently welcoming her as a Hermitage fellow and seeing the premiere of her newest work in collaboration with The Ringling in 2022.”

Jennifer Packer creates expressionist portraits, interior scenes, and still lifes that suggest a casual intimacy. Packer views her works as the result of an authentic encounter and exchange. The models for her portraits—commonly friends or family members—are relaxed and seemingly unaware of the artist’s or viewer’s gaze. Packer’s paintings are rendered in loose line and brush stroke using a limited color palette, often to the extent that her subject merges with or retreats into the background. Suggesting an emotional and psychological depth, her work is enigmatic, avoiding a straightforward reading. “I think about images that resist, that attempt to retain their secrets or maintain their composure, that put you to work,” she explains. “I hope to make works that suggest how dynamic and complex our lives and relationships really are.”

Born in 1984 in Philadelphia, Packer received her BFA from the Tyler University School of Art at Temple University in 2007, and her MFA from Yale University School of Art in 2012. She was the 2012-2013 Artist-in-Residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem, and a Visual Arts Fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, MA, from 2014-2016. Her most recent solo show, "Tenderheaded," exhibited at the Renaissance Society, Chicago, in the fall of 2017 before travelling to the Rose Museum at Brandeis University in March of 2018. Packer currently lives and works in New York and is an assistant professor in the painting department at RISD.

Packer will receive her award at the **Greenfield Prize Award Dinner** on **Sunday, April 19, 6 p.m.**, at Michael's On East, 1212 East Avenue South, in Sarasota. The dinner will be co-chaired by **Ellen Berman** and **Flora Major**, with honorary co-chairs, **Steven High**, executive director of The Ringling, and **Anne-Marie Russell**, executive director of Sarasota Art Museum. *Tickets begin at \$175 with benefactor and sponsorship levels available; reservations can be made online at www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org.*

Further details about the Hermitage Greenfield Prize Weekend, including the world premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winner **Martyna Mayok's** new play, in partnership with the Asolo Rep, will be announced at a later date. The Hermitage Greenfield Weekend is presented in partnership with the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

About the Greenfield Prize:

The Greenfield Prize, presented by the Hermitage Artist Retreat, is a groundbreaking partnership between the Hermitage Artist Retreat and the Greenfield Foundation. Rotating between the fields of music, theater, and visual art, this prestigious national prize seeks to "bring into the world works of art that will have a significant impact on the broader or artistic

culture." The Greenfield Prize is awarded annually and includes a Hermitage fellowship, as well as a \$30,000 commission for a new piece of work to be created within a two-year time frame. A residency at the Hermitage Artist Retreat on Manasota Key in Englewood, Florida, ensures time and space in which to do the work. Former Greenfield Prize winners include Helga Davis, Music (2019); Martyna Majok, Drama (2018); David Burnett, Visual Photography (2017); Coco Fusco, Visual Art (2016); Bobby Previte, Music (2015); Nilo Cruz, Drama (2014); Trenton Doyle Hancock, Visual Art (2013); Vijay Iyer, Music (2012); John Guare, Drama (2011); Sanford Biggers, Visual Art (2010); Craig Lucas, Drama (2009) and Eve Beglarian, Music (2009).

About the Hermitage Artist Retreat:

The Hermitage is a nonprofit artist retreat located in Manasota Key, Florida, inviting accomplished artists across multiple disciplines for residencies on its beachfront campus, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Hermitage artists are invited to interact with the local community, touching thousands of Gulf Coast residents and visitors each year with unique and inspiring programs. Hermitage fellows have included nine Pulitzer Prize winners, along with multiple Tony, Emmy, Grammy and MacArthur Fellowship award winners. Works created at this beachside retreat by a diverse group of Hermitage alumni have gone on to renowned theatres, concert halls, and galleries throughout the world. The Hermitage awards the \$30,000 Greenfield Prize for a new work of art, and the Aspen Music Festival awards the annual Hermitage Prize in Composition. For more information about The Hermitage Artist Retreat, visit HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

Support for the Hermitage:

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