

Nicole Eisenman

23 September – 21 November 2026
17 Savile Row W1S

It is the province of art to contain multitudes that need not (thank god) look precisely like the real world, whatever that is. At Sadie Coles HQ, seven new works (all 2026) by the French-born U.S. artist Nicole Eisenman are most prodigiously united by their incredible variety in form and subject, her singular painterly attention to surface and texture, and a compositional awareness of how many universes (spaces, lives, sensibilities, dimensions) one canvas can hold.

There is the time of the world and there is the time of painting and, in spite of the static seeming nature of oil and pigment on canvas, neither is entirely fixed. For instance: a large work that unfolds over multiple canvases may show a phalanx of bodies writhing and roiling in shared bliss — a toe here, a rounded knee there, a pair of legs spread here, a hand reaching in between there. Or: each canvas might be a freeze-frame, like animated cells, and maybe it is only two bodies folding and unfolding, left to right, but we apprehend each moment at once, which is how ecstasy feels in any case.

Or perhaps painted time, how it moves and travels, is more about style — the *how* of art — and the ways in which form can look backward and forward at once: a fusion of realism and abstraction; a sense of history bearing down on the present, past and future inseparably yoked (as life and art) like Promethean anvils; a figure rooted to the earth but looking out, far out, into space.

Shape-based paintings like *Orgy* and *Togetherers*, with their fleshy colours and Duchampian-descending-nude geometries, may seem to possess a more interior logic than the realist *The Waiter* and *Lissy on a Night Without Cloud*, but Eisenman says she paints her life and how she feels, assigning images to emotions. The ultimate time of an artwork, of course, is the time of making, which includes the time of conceiving, central to which is the time of living — a state both painfully long and short. (To reassure, said emotions are not always so serious: “*Orgy* makes your eyes feel good,” she says, and who could disagree.)

And yet she (we) are not alone. Companions flicker in and out of paintings, like the kaleidoscopic *Me and G under the J* and the seductively amorphous *Walking Through the Wind (with Edie)*. We assume it is Eisenman who is “me,” and doing the walking, but who knows, it could be you (or me). Eisenman grasps, like few other painters, the real truth of the now too-oft used word, *relational*. Not just that everything is connected, but that we have every responsibility to others. So: Lissy beholds the impossibly clear, glittering night firmament — which is also splatters and tiny, painstakingly applied dots of white paint against deep blue — in search of a star (a planet, a visitor from beyond?) that she may or may not be able to make visible with her elaborate technological setup (a frame within a frame, a perspective

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within a perspective to make the invisible visible). But what else is painting, and looking, but waiting to see what might never be?

With Eisenman, we wait with *The Waiter*, who seems to have stumbled through the wrong stage exit, but will remain here (where?), forever, transfixed. We understand that we too are collapsed into one visual plane with Stonehenge and a swirling galaxy, tray in hand like an orb ejected from the sky. In these paintings, temporality exceeds the rules of the earthbound to show how many dazzling, disturbing, sometimes desperate emotions can be felt, and imaged, all at once.

– Emily LaBarge

Nicole Eisenman (b. France, 1965) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Eisenman has exhibited internationally since the early 1990s with recent major exhibitions including *Schloss Lyfe*, Kunstmuseum Schloss Derneburg (2025); *Sadie Coles HQ*, London (2024); *Fixed Crane*, Madison Square Park, New York (2024); *What Happened*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Whitechapel Gallery, London, Museum Brandhorst, Munich (touring, 2023-2024); *Prince*, Print Centre New York, New York (2023); *A Decade of Printing*, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland (2022); *Heads, Kisses, Battles: Nicole Eisenman and the Moderns*, Kunstmuseum Den Haag, Fondation Vincent Van Gogh Arles, Aargauer Kunsthhaus and Kunsthalle Bielefeld (touring, 2021-2022); *Prince*, University Museum of Contemporary Art, Amherst (2021); *Giant Without a Body*, Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (2021); *Nicole Eisenman and Keith Boadwee*, FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2020); *Sturm und Drang*, The Contemporary Austin, Texas (2020); and *Baden Baden Baden*, Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (2019). Recent group exhibitions include *Regift – Swiss Institute New York at 40*, LUMA Westbau, Zurich (2026); *MATERIALS WORLDS*, Lustwarande, Tilburg (2026); *House of Nisaba*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2026); *FLESH FLOWERS, Selections from the Salamé Collection*, Aishti Foundation, Beirut (2025); *Copyists*, Centre Pompidou Metz, Metz (2025); *Woman in a Rowboat*, Olivia Foundation, Mexico City (2025); *360°: Why We Paint?*, BY ART MATTERS, Hangzhou (2025); *Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Photography, Film, Video, Sound - Ringier Collection 1995-2025*, Langen Foundation, Neuss (2025); *My Eyes are Like Funnels, My Ass Is a Hand*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2024); *Day for Night: New American Realism*, National Gallery of Ancient Art, Rome (2024); *The Anxious Eye: German Expressionism and Its Legacy*, The National Gallery of Art, Washington (2024); *Groove: Artists and Intaglio Prints, 1500 to Now*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2023); *Dreaming of Home*, Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, New York (2023) and *50 Paintings*, Milwaukee Art Museum (2023). Her work was included in both the 2019 Venice Biennale and the 2019 Whitney Biennial and is held in numerous public collections internationally. In Autumn 2026, Eisenman's major solo exhibition at Sadie Coles HQ Savile Row will coincide with the unveiling of a monumental sculpture in the courtyard of the Royal Academy of Arts, London.

Emily LaBarge is a Canadian writer living in London. Her essays and criticism have appeared in *Granta*, the *London Review of Books*, *Artforum*, *mousse*, *Bookforum*, *frieze*, and *The Paris Review*, among others. She is a regular contributor to *The New York Times* and *4Columns*. Her first book, *Dog Days*, was published by Peninsula Press in 2025.