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Jennifer Guidi: Star Material

This young artist is digging deep and stirring things up.

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Guidi's *Untitled (Field #10 Black & White)*, 2014. Courtesy of artist.

For years, Jennifer Guidi was making realist paintings—of flowers or palm trees set against the skyline—that, in retrospect, she says, “were not very satisfying.” Then, a few years ago, she began to experiment with sand, eventually swirling it into oil paint to create the intricate abstractions that have now become her calling card. “I wanted to make the surface a little rough,” says the artist, who lives in Los Angeles with her husband, the painter Mark Grotjahn. “It was really a textural thing.” Guidi, 42, grew up somewhat nomadically: Her father’s country club jobs took the family all over Southern California, including to the then-sleepy inland city of Palm Desert, now associated with Coachella cool. But it was recent vacations to Kauai and Morocco—not wandering the desert as a child—that inspired Guidi to deploy sand in the studio. “Everyone who really responds to the work talks about playing with sand at the beach,” she says. “Everyone understands what that feels like.”