

EMMA WEBSTER: *ARCADIA*

February 9 – March 23, 2019

Opening reception: Saturday, February 9, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Diane Rosenstein is happy to announce *Arcadia*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by British-American artist, Emma Webster. The artist will present fifteen oil paintings completed during a recent residency at the Anderson Ranch Arts Center in Aspen. For her first solo show with the gallery, Webster transforms idyllic landscapes into theatrical still lifes.

Emma Webster first constructs intricate dioramas of collaged samples from historic paintings (from Bosch to Bierstadt). These maquettes evoke set design with backdrops staged and lit for each work. Scale shifts conflate the panoramic with the miniature, and the dioramas are a pastiche of idylls. In these operatic and thrilling paintings, nature is fraught with artifice. The animals are clay figurines. The foliage is plastic. Lighting comes from a flashlight. The entire view is straightforward, giving a clear vantage point. The artist's hand is evident, fabricating an idealized scene that speaks to her desire to build one's own world: an Arcadia.

The show's title *Arcadia* alludes to recycled and reassembled notions of nature and art passed down from antiquity. These fake bucolics, where each tree is as much a reflection of its maker's hands as it is a symbol, point to the ways humanity manipulates nature, seeing nature only as it relates to mankind itself. As in garden design, man contrives his own aesthetic of "natural" beauty despite the existence of another untamed and unpredictable reality. Considering climate change and deforestation, Emma Webster's landscape as still life rings a warning.

This is the artist's first solo show in Los Angeles. She was previously included in our 2018 Yale MFA group show, *Way Out Now*. The opening reception for *Arcadia* is on Saturday, February 9th from 6 pm to 8pm.

Emma Webster (USA/UK, b. 1989) is a Californian painter with an MFA in Painting from Yale School of Art (2018) and BA in Art Practice from Stanford University (2011). She was an artist-in-residence at the Anderson Ranch Art Center (2018), and the Dumfries Royal Drawing School, Scotland (2017); among others. Her work was in *Spirited Densities*, Thomas Erben Gallery, New York City (2018) and is included in the collection of the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA. Emma Webster lives and works in Los Angeles.