

**Emma WEBSTER**

*Artforum,*

*(Los Angeles) Emma Webster - Diane Rosenstein*

*February 2019*

# ARTFORUM



**Emma Webster, *Forest Vigil*, 2018**, oil on canvas, 108 x 84".

mythic *locus amoenus*. These canvases feature 2-D oil renderings of 3-D dioramas that she cobbles together in her studio. The maquettes juxtapose surreal bucolic scenery with clay animal figurines, plastic foliage, and art-historical iconography evoking everything from work by Albert Bierstadt to Francis Bacon, Hieronymus Bosch to John Martin, and Western film backdrops to elementary school arts and crafts.

Although the exhibited works are not collages themselves, that patchwork sensibility remains even after Webster has translated the imagery of her modeled tableaux in paint. These Frankensteinian idylls, with their filmic set design, betray the underlying truth of all landscape painting: Every image of nature is a product of human handiwork. The history of art is a history of artifice, of painters rendering landscapes from their points of view and thereby shaping them, tainting them. Representations of nature are always already spoiled.

Yet the postlapsarian world of Webster's pastoral dreamscapes somehow retains an Edenic sublimity through its foregrounded artificiality—these locales, while uncannily familiar, are like no place on earth, each so perfect a model of a model of some heavenly dwellings.

— *Tyler Malone*

LOS ANGELES

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Webster**

DIANE  
ROSENSTEIN  
831 North Highland  
Avenue  
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