

Emma WEBSTER

*Hube,*

*hubechoice: Emma Webster*

*October 2024*

EMMA WEBSTER

we animals superior  
by our own nomination  
we with our disappearing  
tail of instincts  
because without them it's easier  
to persist in our stubborn error

our opposition to nature  
makes her itch  
so she scratches herself and shudders  
with a tsunami, for instance

then we die out a little  
and those who remain  
feel very sorry

We  
By Jerzy Ficowski

3.

JERZY  
FICOWSKI

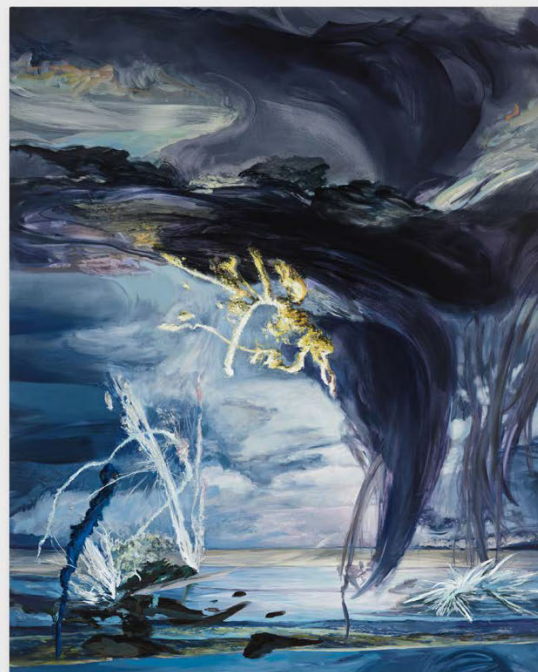
# EMMA WEBSTER

hutechoice

When you look at Emma Webster's paintings, you never know where you are or where you might be transported to. Her work finds form at the edge of reality, in a space where time is suspended. Such hallucinatory properties are unsurprising given her process, which starts with the construction of scenes using virtual reality. Once the desired scene is set, Webster manipulates light and form to create a heightened sense of illusion before translating this virtual world to the physical through painting and installation. Working from within the landscape she renders, rather than from outside of it, allows Webster to imbue the real with qualities of the fantastic. Ahead of her solo exhibition at Perrotin in Paris this October, we met with Webster to discuss how she uses these two distinct, but contiguous, realities in her work, and what a fusion of the two might look like for the future of art.

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EMMA WEBSTER  
Oceq, 2023  
Oil on linen  
238.6 x 182.9 x 3.8 cm

All works:  
Photography by MARTIN ELDER  
Courtesy of EMMA WEBSTER and PERROTIN





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EMMA WEBSTER  
*Hube*, 2024  
Oil on linen  
210.4 x 304.8 cm

**hube: A reality that combines the physical and virtual will undoubtedly be part of our future. Do you look at such a future with curiosity or irony?**

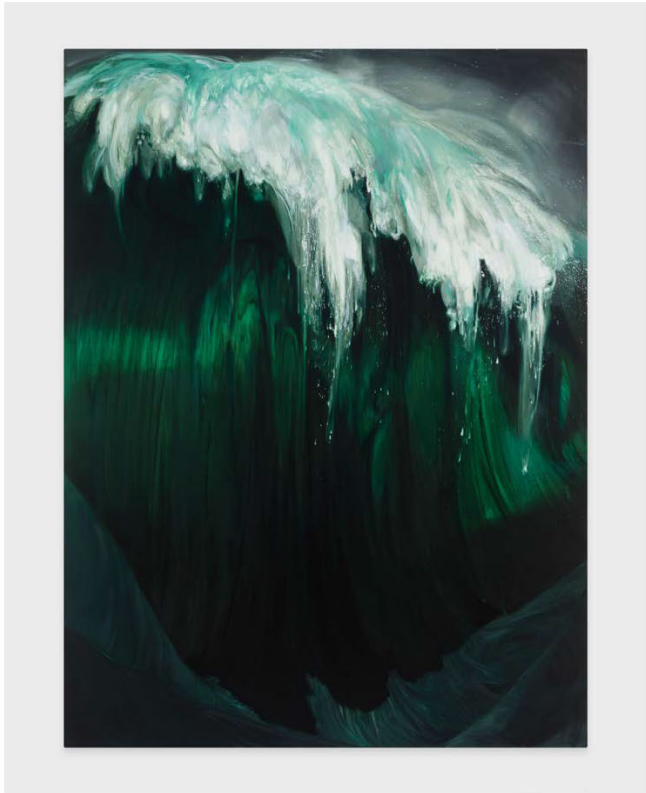
Emma Webster: Curiosity is key. There is a stealthy quality to this combined reality. The stealth object defies recognition and is undetected by the eye. This is the same seamlessness that most of our technology aspires to. Tech wants to make our lives easier (more productive) by being invisible, on-demand, and instant. So I'm curious, but without irony. Irony implies misdirection. Irony says one thing and signifies the opposite. In my work, I'm sincerely enveloped in the rip tide interplay of real

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EMMA WEBSTER  
*Shadowed*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
243.8 x 182.9 x 5.1 cm

and unreal. I couldn't possibly have enough assurance of the boundaries between the two to be ironic.

**h: Scenography is an important element of theatre, but constructing visual worlds in theatre often relies on text. How do images and text relate in your practice?**

EW: Often my ideas come to me in language. Text is a means of description. Sketching helps me define what form that description could take, and from there, I sculpt. The final paintings come from these (digital) sculptures. In that way, the paintings are an incarnation of thought, gaining resolution with each transmutation.





**h: How do you envision your audience evolving over the next hundred years?**

EW: I think there will be a new plurality; every situation has the potential to be grounded in context and tailored information. I fear what will happen to spectatorship when the unknown can be vanquished. Perhaps there will be added importance to images that are not easily recognised, categorised, and defined.

**h: In your recent projects, you work closely with virtual reality, establishing a dialogue with digital algorithms to create physical artworks. Are you preparing us for an inevitable future?**

EW: Not at all. My work does not divine the future. I don't know what this "inevitable" future is or how to prepare for it. I'm making proxy worlds, and though they are simulations, they would be weak learning models as they don't abide by the same issues, pitfalls, and concerns of today.

**h: Philosophers and artists often exchange ideas, inspiring one another in the search for new insights and perspectives. What ideas are you currently interested in?**

EW: Enticement. I keep circling back to how intelligence becomes embodied and how divinity enters the real. It's a scientific, technological, theological, and deeply creative question: How does spirit animate material? How do parts of a sculpture enter the living realm?

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EMMA WEBSTER  
From the Darker Soul, 2021  
Oil on linen / 181x114 cm  
152.4 x 213.4 cm



