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Dean Kissick, "Emma Webster Designs Strange New Landscapes," *Cultured*, November 29, 2022.

CULTURED

YOUNG ARTISTS 2022 ART

Emma Webster Designs Strange New Landscapes

With the help of 3-D modeling software, the artist's paintings offer a glimpse beyond the the natural world, and into her own virtual dreamscapes.



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PHOTOGRAPHY

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This August, Frieze opened its art fair for the first time in Seoul, South Korea. Simultaneously, Perrotin gallery opened a new space in the city's Dosan Park, inaugurating it with a solo exhibition by Emma Webster. Titled "Illuminarium," it was a journey into a land of illusions: a land without people but full of strange tall curling trees and transforming slopes, glowing dark forests, and balls of lights in the sky. A mannerist dreamscape melting surreally around us painted in oils.

Webster, 33, grew up in the beach town of Encinitas, Southern California, and lives up the California 1 in Los Angeles now, in a particularly beautiful part of the world. The reason her landscapes are so unique is that she composes them herself, like a symphony. This began while she was studying for her MFA at the Yale School of Art and building countryside dioramas lit by flashlight. In 2020, she taught herself how to do the same with the 3-D modeling software Blender, where she now she builds her new worlds: pulling in sketches, watercolors, photographs, whatever's inspiring her, exploding them into 3-D landscapes in virtual space, illuminating them with virtual lighting and the colors she wants. "Color poses an interesting challenge," she says. "In reality, it's reflected waves, but with sculpture, there's tension between the painted texture and the light cast upon it." When she's happy with the composition—her composition of the landscape and how her image of that landscape is framed—she paints it by hand on canvas, as landscape painters have done for centuries. Each finished work is a window into her virtual world.

<https://www.culturedmag.com/article/2022/11/29/emma-webster-young-artists-2023-virtual-design>