

# MONYA ROWE GALLERY

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**For Immediate Release**

## J. CARINO

*Emparadise*

February 22 – March 30, 2024

Opening reception: Thursday, February 22, 6-8 PM

**Monya Rowe Gallery** is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of paintings by **J. Carino** titled *Emparadise*. The opening reception for the artist will be held on Thursday, February 22, 6-8 PM.

The title of the exhibition, *Emparadise*, is defined as “turning a place into a paradise or bringing into absolute happiness”. In this suite of new paintings Carino explores how the concept of paradise within the natural world relates to Queerness, identity, and sensuality.

The protagonists in Carino’s paintings are arranged blissfully within a bucolic California landscape. They appear alone in reverie or intimately in pairs. Carino is interested in the transmogrification of the natural landscape into an idealized environment, or *paradise*. In *oranges* (2024) two men serenely bask in dapples of sunlight among a garden bursting with orange trees. Throughout the exhibition, natural cliffs, hills, and wildflowers contrast with traditional fertility symbols such as pomegranates, oranges, date palms, and roses. This apparent Arcadian atmosphere is a metaphor for finding oneself within nature, but also explores the duality queer people are confronted with. There is an unwritten heteronormative obligation to adapt to society by chasing masculinity and conforming to ideals of marriage and children, but there is also an urge to challenge accepted societal expectations by embracing difference, beautification, and transgression. Transforming ones’ environment suggests personal change and growth. By exploring the plurality of nature, Carino examines how our surroundings can define and shape us.

**J. Carino** (b.1988, Littleton, Colorado) received a BFA from *Parson School of Design*, New York, NY. His work has recently been exhibited at *James Cohan Gallery*, New York, NY; *Auxier/Kline*, New York, NY; *Sow & Tailor*, Los Angeles, CA; *Beers London*, London, U.K; Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles, CA; and *Monya Rowe Gallery*, New York, NY. In 2023 Carino was awarded a residency at *The Art House of San Clemente*, San Clemente, CA, and in 2024 will complete a residency at *PM/AM*, London, U.K. The artist lives and works in Riverside, CA.

### Gallery hours

Tuesday – Saturday, 12–6 PM