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Trappings of Arcadia

Jason DeMarte

May 6 – June 19, 2021

(Denver, CO) RULE Gallery is pleased to present *Trappings of Arcadia*, Jason DeMarte's fifth solo exhibition at the gallery. The show will be held at our Denver location at 808 Santa Fe Drive. A timed-entry reception will be held Thursday, May 6, from 5-9p, and will be on view to the public from May 6 - June 19, 2021. Gallery hours are Tues - Friday 12-6p, Sat 12-5p with CDC COVID-19 guidelines in place.

Arcadia is an idyllic and pastoral vision of the landscape as an unspoiled wilderness. This image of natural perfection first gained popularity in the 18th century during the rise of Romanticism, where artists, poets, and musicians sought to transport us there. Additionally, American painter Martin Johnson Heade followed his own explorations by creating romantically inspired paintings of tropical birds and fauna from Central and South America. Heade's expressions of unspoiled wilderness along with the Romantics are the inspiration for Jason DeMarte's new series *Arcadia*. In this series, DeMarte transports us to a lush landscape, but one where our modern consumer lifestyle has infiltrated, leading to a homogenized reality of artificial ecstasy.

To create his works, DeMarte traveled to Costa Rica and photographed a multitude of subjects, including the birds, flora, and misty landscapes he found there. DeMarte's signature process of highlighting each separate element under exactly controlled lighting allows him to capture incredible detail, resulting in hyper-real lifelike images. The complete tableaux imagine hummingbirds, flowers, and gummy candy living simultaneously in the same landscape as an expression of contemporary arcadia.

Trappings of Arcadia highlights the utopic impulses at play in modern life and the ways we idealize nature by further combining the artificial with the natural. Through his images, DeMarte asks the viewer to confront our relationship to nature and how we frame these experiences through the lens of modern consumer culture.

Jason DeMarte (b. 1973) is currently a tenured professor of photography at Eastern Michigan University. He received his B.F.A. in Photography from Colorado State University and then his M.F.A. in Photography from the University of Oregon. DeMarte's work has been exhibited in galleries and museums, both nationally and internationally including, the Denver Botanic Gardens; Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder; University of Michigan Museum of Art; Wessell Synman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa; and the Detroit Center for Contemporary Photography, Detroit. His work has appeared in journals, textbooks, and publications, including; The Huffington Post, Feature Shoot, A Short Course in Digital Photography, The Elements of Photography, Six Years Later, Photo Review, Manifest, British Journal of Photography, the Black Warrior Review, and The Oxford American. Jason DeMarte is a two-time recipient of PhotoLucida's *Critical Mass Top 50 Photographers* in the world.

RULE Gallery, founded in 1991, has locations in Denver, CO, and Marfa, TX. RULE represents emerging and mid-career contemporary artists and artist estates, with a focus on fostering investigative art practices while developing artists' long-term careers. Outside their robust in-house exhibition schedule, RULE coordinates programming in prominent institutions and non-traditional settings, expanding community engagement with the work. In addition, the gallery actively endeavors to bring greater recognition of the region's historic art movements to a broader audience. For more information, [visitwww.rulegallery.com](http://www.rulegallery.com)