



Sarah Gamble
Peacock Cape, 2021
Oil on canvas
16 × 20 in
(40.6 × 50.8 cm)
SGAM 180

Sarah Gamble: *Theory of Everything*

January 27–March 12, 2022

In her third solo exhibition at Fleisher/Ollman, Sarah Gamble unites the spiritual and cosmic possibilities of abstraction with representation's alliance with realism to create hybrid works that evoke a range of histories and mindsets, from Victorian fairy painting to Surrealism and psychedelia. Employing a similar use of dots, dashes and interconnected lines of her last body of work from 2018–19, she also introduces thickets of leafy vegetation from which characters, eyes, and bursts of abstract forms emerge. Gamble continues to explore how depth of field through layering and variances of matte and gloss sheens can convey different notions of reality and the vastness of the universe. A recent decision to change her medium of choice from acrylic to chiefly oil paint enables Gamble to achieve a striking luminosity in her work. This switch to oil also allows for a slower, more meditative approach to painting in which the artist inhabits the worlds she proposes on the picture plane.

Eight years ago, Gamble showed several paintings in the group exhibition *Reprefantasion* where she presented images of flying carpets or tapestries in which eyes peer out from elaborately decorated backgrounds. In her current exhibition, both textiles and eyes reappear but in different contexts. The painting, *Theory of Everything*, is a fantastical interpretation of Elvis Presley's late-career propensity for over-the-top sequined and feathered stage attire, in this instance, a suit resembling a peacock. The peacock suit is a symbol for Gamble's belief in alternate realities; here, the garment serves as a transcendental necessity to enter other worlds. In a smaller painting, a red peacock cape is splayed across the surface of the canvas while a pyramidal crystal hovers above emitting beams of light conveying the magical possibilities when crystals (or sequins in the case of Elvis) are crossed with a likeness of a peacock. In other paintings, eyes hide behind lush foliage or stare through her trademark constellations of white dots.

Gamble's depictions of beings from Greek and Roman mythology in several paintings further reveal her interest in other belief systems. Her lurid painting of Pan having intercourse with a female goat is based on a statue discovered in Herculaneum from the first century CE. What role did such images like this one, so alien to us now, play in daily life at the time? How did ordinary people on the ground inhabit mythology? These are the kinds of questions Gamble seeks to raise in her art as she explores the deep well of conceptual frameworks that we as humans use to make meaning in our lives and comprehend the world around us.

Sarah Gamble lives and works in Philadelphia. She has exhibited at Philadelphia venues such as Philadelphia Art Alliance, Fleisher Art Memorial, and Fleisher/Ollman. Gamble has shown elsewhere including One Mile Gallery, Kingston, NY; Edward Thorp Gallery, New York; Abington Art Center, Abington, PA; John H. Baker Gallery, Kutztown University, Kutztown, PA; Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art, Roswell, NM; and Adams and Ollman, Portland, OR. She received a BFA from the Corcoran School of Art and an MFA from the University of Pennsylvania. In 2009, Gamble was awarded a Pew Fellowship in the Arts. Residencies include Millay Colony for the Arts, Austerlitz, NY; Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha, NE; Atlantic Center for the Arts, New Smyrna Beach, FL; Ucross Foundation, Clearmont, WY; Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT; and Roswell Artist in Residence Program, Roswell, NM.