

Inside Sarah Gamble's Wild, Radiant World at Derek Eller Gallery

 Mary Elaine Lasley 07/28/2026



Installation view, Sarah Gamble: *Trip the Light Fantastic* at Derek Eller Gallery, New York, 2026. Photo credit: Adam Reich.

Sarah Gamble: *Trip the Light Fantastic* at Derek Eller Gallery

July 15 – August 28, 2026

Images courtesy of the artist, Derek Eller Gallery, and Adam Reich

At Derek Eller Gallery, Sarah Gamble is turning up flowerbeds and peering through trees. *Trip the Light Fantastic*, a new exhibition running through August 28th, delves into the space between the stylized and the familiar, infusing the natural world with surreal and mesmerizing light.

Anything that feeds on Gamble's light grows in strange directions. The majority of the pieces are massive—60 x 50 inches—and all of them are crowded to the edges with life. Leaves, vines, and flowers unfurl in outrageous color, a William Morris print left to germinate at will; glowing beads of light rest like snake eggs in shaded, leafy beds. This jungle-world is overwhelming to navigate, and you can sense that Gamble is engaged in an ongoing conversation with it: digging through layers of growth, returning to the same dark thicket again and again to pull the sky out from behind the trees.



(L-R) Sarah Gamble, *A Supreme All Knowing Being*, 2026, oil on canvas, 60 x 50 inches. Sarah Gamble, *The Pass*, 2026, oil on canvas, 60 x 50 inches. Photo credit: Adam Reich.

This naturalistic energy is present even in the occasional non-plant painting. With *A Supreme All Knowing Being*, a lush assemblage of gemstones blooming in pink and red-orange, Gamble posits the existence of life within static forms. Her gems appear wobbly and asymmetrical, curling away from the lines of perspective as if strained by the very effort of holding light. In another painting, fresh grass twines around a cluster of swollen, gleaming gems, bringing Gamble's two favorite motifs into direct conversation. Gemstones reflect light, plants eat it; here, they feed off of one another, forming the undeniable heart of the exhibition. (This piece, fittingly, is entitled *Amplifier*.)



Sarah Gamble, *Amplifier*, 2026, oil on canvas, 60 x 50 inches. Photo credit: Adam Reich.

Looking at *Amplifier*, it's difficult to orient oneself in relation to the forms on the canvas. The perspective does little to clarify whether the gemstones are piled on top of each other or lying flat on the ground; the patch of blue at the edge of the canvas could be either the sky or a body of water rising against a bank. Many pieces in the exhibition have a similarly contentious relationship with the material world. Vines unfurl in colorful voids, having transcended any need for roots or soil. A lopsided ramble of gemstones holds itself together in open defiance of the laws of physics. Gamble zooms in and abstracts, bringing the viewer so deep into the action that it's impossible to see a way out.



Sarah Gamble, *The Back View*, 2026, oil on canvas, 60 x 50 inches. Photo credit: Adam Reich.

In *The Back View*, though, Gamble introduces a rare glimpse of the manmade. This piece features a typical wild tangle of vines and berries, but this time it appears at an angle, contextualized through the familiar frame of a window. At long last, we understand where we are in relation to Gamble's fantastical forest—but if we exist in its world, that means it must exist in ours. By confirming the viewer's position relative to the fantasy, Gamble is confirming that this fantasy does have a physical location; it may hover at the edge of reality, visible only through the back window, but now we know where to find it.