

In the Studio with SAM Gallery Artist Elizabeth Gahan

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In the Studio highlights the studios and private workspaces of local artists represented by **SAM Gallery**. For nearly fifty years, SAM Gallery has supported artists from across the Pacific Northwest and provided private and corporate clients with a wide range of services, from purchasing their first work of art to building extensive collections. To browse a featured artist's entire catalogue of artwork available for rent or purchase, visit SAM Gallery on the lower level of the Seattle Art Museum.

In the heart of Seattle's Georgetown neighborhood sits artist Elizabeth Gahan's intimate art studio. There, hyper-saturated paintings of layered natural and built environments line the white walls. With translucent and

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fluid colors, crisp architectural lines, and dense textures of organic forms, Gahan's paintings display the delicate relationship between cities and neighborhoods as ecosystems and the balance they need to thrive.

Gahan's works are a puzzle as she develops the foreground and background separately before mashing them together. In the background, each work begins with recognizable urban imagery. To Gahan, these images serve as "a jumping off point for a creative conversation." The images are then edited and manipulated through layers of artistic elements that effortlessly illustrate the intricacies of our natural environments. At this stage, the works look fluid and ephemeral, composed of bubbles that she said, "act as the first domino, impacting the rest of the painting."



From these beautifully imagined atmospheric forms, Gahan adds the foreground: architectural elements drawn from existing environments. In her most recent series, the structural forms are inspired by buildings found in the Bay Area and Seattle. These added elements are familiar with their simplistic

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building block forms and clear lines that emphasize the geometry found in both nature and human-designed architecture. Plants, trees, and organic forms are layered atop these structures in a variety of media and textures, including acrylic gel and enamel.

When we stopped by her Georgetown studio for a visit in June, Gahan was in the process of experimenting with spray paint, an artistic medium new to the artist. This additional layer, she explained, serves to further blur the distinction between the natural and built environments emphasized across all of her paintings. No matter how many layers Gahan chooses to incorporate in a work, the final result always makes clear the interconnected nature of our urban ecosystems.



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View a few of Elizabeth Gahan’s available artworks now on SAM Gallery’s featured sliding wall or [online](#). Stay up to date on the artist’s upcoming projects at SAM Gallery—including an October 2023 exhibition featuring all new works—by following gallery manager Erik Bennion on Instagram at [@atSAMGallery](#).

– *Pamela Jaynes, SAM Gallery Specialist*

Photos: Alborz Kamalizad.

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