

Myles Gable,  
*Seven Hills*

THE MEETING

SEPT. 6 – NOV. 1, 2025

The title of Myles Gable's debut solo exhibition *Seven Hills* at The Meeting, refers to the seven hills that Seattle is built on and around, yet there is no indication as to which hills this term refers to. Several of Gable's works in *Seven Hills* depict Seattle, the city where he grew up, while others depict landscapes and scenes that would be impossible to identify as Seattle with any certainty. The ambiguous nature of imagery in Gable's paintings, coupled with the uncertainties associated with the title of the exhibition, presents Seattle as Arcadia. Arcadia is a mountainous Greek province dating to antiquity, which in mythology is home to both Hermes and Pan. In his 1502 poem "Arcadia," the Neapolitan poet Jacopo Sannazaro referred to it as a lost world of unattainable pastoral perfection, populated by shepherds who exist in harmony with nature, uncorrupted by the world. Sannazaro remembers Arcadia with regret and lamentation; it is a dirge of paradise lost. For poets and artists alike, Arcadia has become the term for utopian wilderness, for paradise.

In his 1637 painting *The Arcadian Shepherds*, Nicolas Poussin depicts four Arcadian shepherds gathered at a tomb with the words "Et In Arcadia Ego," which translates roughly to "Even in Arcadia, there am I." For this message to be inscribed onto a tomb is to communicate that even in Arcadia, death exists. This message is more explicitly communicated in Giovanni Francesco Barbieri's 1618 version of *The Arcadian Shepherds*, which depicts a skull sitting on a stone bearing the same inscription, in this instance being viewed by two shepherds instead of Poussin's four. Paradise becomes paradise lost through the succession of death upon death. This is how Arcadia became extinct; mortality is the great inhibitor of paradise. If Arcadia is heaven, death may also be the inflection point.

The mythological connotations of Arcadia are attendant in Gable's *Seven Hills*, as is death. In one painting, we see four figures, presumably nuns, gathered at a railing overlooking a body of water. This grouping recalls the shepherds of Poussin, while the composition is reminiscent of Cezanne's great Arcadian painting *The Large Bathers* (1900-1906), replete with a church steeple on the shore in the distance. In *Untitled*, 2025, a massive hot and blue sky hangs above a terracotta field, a graveyard full of tombstones that have been rubbed away from the surface of the painting, with several crucifixes still rendered ghostly on a white wall at the edge of the pink ground. This violent removal, a gesture that is recurring in the paintings on view, is a reminder that death exists in paradise, Et in Arcadia Ego.

Gauguin painted his vision of Arcadia in 1898, in a painting titled *Where Do We Come From?* For Gable, perhaps the answer to Gauguin's titular question is Seattle. Seattle, like most of America, got messed up. Tech geeks and fentanyl zombies are the presiding polarities that define the

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spectrum of contemporary urban life. Trying to identify one's place in the oscillation between the two is depressing and frustrating, not to mention very expensive. To witness the transformation from the Arcadian shepherds of the past to the finance bros of the present is to witness the demise of a place. Shuttered storefronts, tent cities, glass towers, and Sweetgreens have replaced its idyllic urban landscape, now only accessible through imagery and memory. The city whose end we lament was murdered by a juggernauting procession of capitalism that seems as preoccupied with decimating the city's unique character as it does with making its desecrated corpse slightly more profitable. The destruction and subsequent reconstruction of our American cities is the production of Arcadia. "The Seven Hills" is already a mythical concept because no one knows which hills they are. Gable's paintings, like Sannazaro's poem, are a lamentation of the lost paradise of his youth. Arcadia is a false memory, and we cannot escape death. Even in Seattle, there am I.

Ned Vena

**Myles Gable** (b. 1996 Seattle, WA); **Solo Exhibition:** *Seven Hills*, The Meeting, New York, NY, 2025; **Group Exhibitions:** *Sensory Archive*, curated by Grayson Ritcher, 2025; Common Ground, Seattle, WA, 2025; ***Small Format Painting Show*, curated by Leo Fitzpatrick & Josh Smith, 105 Henry, New York NY, 2025;** *Garvey Flag "An Art Show"*, curated by Donyel Nicholas & Ivy-Royal, St Marks Open Curatorial Exchange, New York, NY, 2025; Group Show, curated by Grayson Ritcher, Common Ground, Seattle WA, 2025; *Collegial Currents*, curated by Eduardo Medrano Jr. & Chris Scott, New York, NY, 2024; *Melt*, curated by CHITO, Hometeam Gallery, Seattle WA, 2024; ***Jamais Vu*, curated by KO Nnamdie, Anonymous Gallery, New York NY, 2024;** Bullet Symphony, Television Gallery, Chiang Mai TH, 2024; *Can I just Chill?* curated by Lilypad Magazine, Montreal Qc., 2024.