

## Carrie Moyer & Sheila Pepe: *Tabernacles for Trying Times*

By Margaret Ewing  
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Carrie Moyer and Sheila Pepe, *Carries a Soft Stick*, 2016. Oil paint, wood, cut plastic bag, and glitter on canvas, 47 x 44 x 3 inches. © the artists. Courtesy Alan Weiner.

An artist couple for some 25 years, Carrie Moyer and Sheila Pepe are best known for their queer and feminist strategies in the realms of abstract painting and fiber sculpture. Moyer's shimmering paintings of poured acrylic and Pepe's immersive environments of crochet and related methods occupy most of their working time. But as the Museum of Arts and Design's *Carrie Moyer and Sheila Pepe: Tabernacles for Trying Times* puts forth, three jointly-held residencies, at Yaddo, Saratoga Springs (2011), the Joan Mitchell Center, New Orleans (2016), and the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, Umbria (2019), have been the germination grounds for a series of collaborative undertakings that reveal new aspects of their creative work. While Moyer's solo practice is rooted in meticulous attention to composition, and Pepe's in history and politics, the 10 works on view made jointly and mostly while on residencies reflect the centering of experimentation and play that can happen when removed from daily responsibility and routine.



Carrie Moyer, *Intergalactic Emoji Factory*, 2015. Acrylic and glitter on canvas, 72 x 96 inches. Courtesy DC Moore Gallery, New York. © Carrie Moyer.

*Tabernacles for Trying Times* first opened at the Portland Museum of Art in Maine in February 2020. Now heavily scaled back, most of the institutional and private loans have been replaced with similar pieces, including many from the artists' collections. Moyer's *Intergalactic Emoji Factory* (2015) and *Curtains* (2016) offer a strong capsule of her work of recent years, featuring the luminous overlapping veils of colorful acrylic—in places mixed with glitter—that characterize the best of her painting. For her part, Pepe shows intricate fiber constellations that hang from the ceiling and across walls, as well as a group of small abstract sculptures combining found and handmade parts. *Common Sense: MAD* (2021) revises a site-responsive participatory work in which viewers unravel long, draping strands of purple and mauve crochet to refashion into new forms. Representing an alternative application of her materials, Pepe's *Just This Corner* (for 2020) (2021) is a two-dimensional wall hanging in direct dialogue with painting, with strips of color panels arranged as thick horizontal stripes that feature various types of stitches.

Carrie Moyer and Sheila Pepe, *New Blue* (Antecou, 2016). Oil and acrylic paint, wood, lamp shade, fabric, aluminum, and flashing on pre-painted canvas, 50 x 21 x inches. Courtesy and the artists. Photo: Luc Demers.