

# ARTFORUM



Jamie Gray Williams, *Frick and Frack*, 2018, oil on canvas, 48 x 50".

NEW YORK

## Jamie Gray Williams

SELENAS MOUNTAIN

63 Woodward Avenue #6321, Queens

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Citing classic slapstick, the figures in Jamie Gray Williams's paintings and drawings loom in tragicomic disarray. Squirring, tripping, poking, tumbling—their bodies are both unmoored from any discernible surroundings and completely at the mercy of unseen obstacles. These genderless, guileless creatures, their noses squishy and upturned, limbs scribbled like markings on craft-store pen-tester pads, are loopily fatalistic.

The show encompasses paintings, drawings, and sculpture. The drawings are caricatures of movement, evincing every jiggle and sway in anticipation of toppling over. They are also studies without final products, exercises in making for the sake of making, falling for the

sake of falling. Williams's paintings offer a less articulated—but no less nuanced—account of dynamism; her figures are often doubled, shown contemplating a perversion of their reflection, a slippage between selves. In the canvas *Eye Poke 2* (all works 2018), a ghostly double of the titular stunt's perpetrator bears witness to it, complicit. In *Frick and Frack*, a nude, wiggling creature on all fours gazes up at its dressed counterpart, their bodies coalescing at the point of contact.

Williams's floor sculptures reverse Ad Reinhardt's quip, "Sculpture is something you bump into when you back up to look at a painting." Williams's two makeshift "tripping devices"—*Double Crossed*, which is fashioned out of cloth and stuffed like a scarecrow, and *Hellzapop*, a piece of fired Sculpey passing as a higher-brow ceramic—make it dangerous to transgress the invisible border between viewer and work. Her tripping devices threaten to mete out farcical punishment to those who dare look too closely. Observers laughing at Williams's lurching figures find themselves to be both in on and the object of the joke.

— Sophia Larigakis