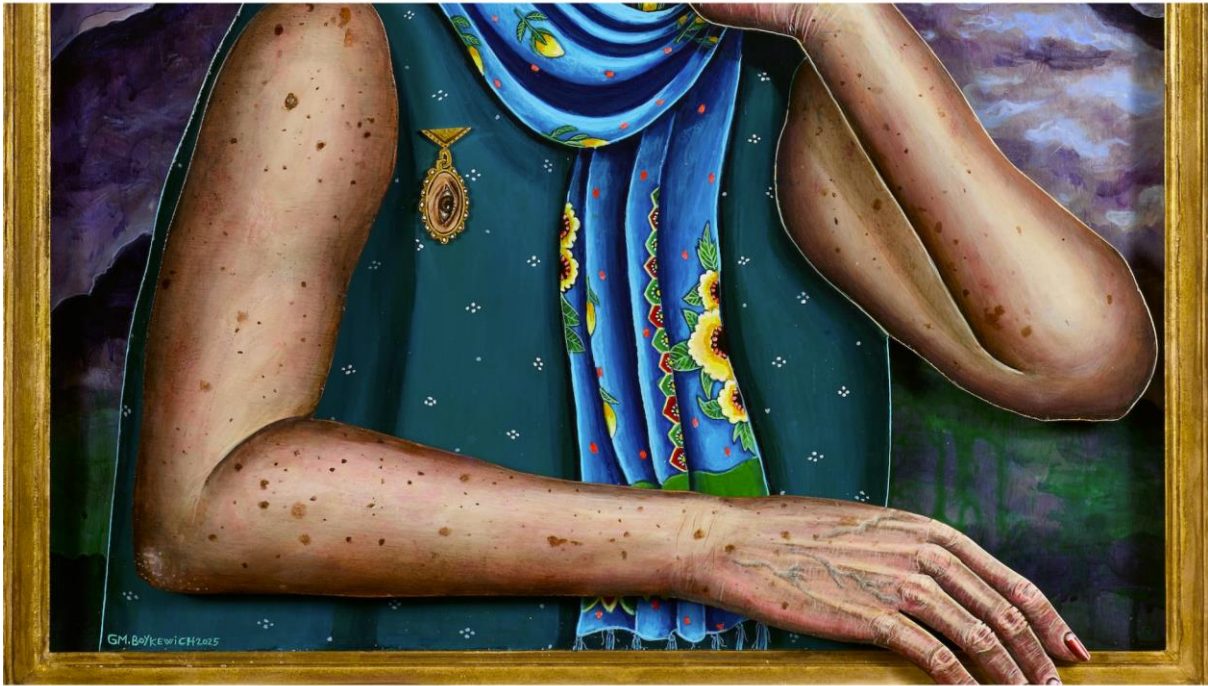


ART SPIEL



JULY 1, 2026 BY SHERLY FAN

The Luckiest Show You Will See This Summer

What would you do if you wanted to bring more luck into your life? Drawing from her observations of how people across cultures use rituals and superstitions to summon luck, Gail M Boykewich's show *Into the Wolf's Mouth* feels almost like a field guide to how we pray, wish for good fortune, and stay hopeful enough to keep moving forward. Rather than treating luck as simple optimism, Gail presents it as a language of survival — a way people negotiate uncertainty, longing, heartbreak, and the desire for a better future. The title is inspired by the Italian idiom “in bocca al lupo”, a phrase used to wish someone luck as they enter danger. It beautifully implies a universal experience: the desire for more, for solutions, for security, or simply for a way to feel better, especially within our current turbulent and unstable political status quo.

Debuting her solo exhibition at SLAG&RX New York, Gail presents a carefully constructed world rooted in folklore and imagination. Her paintings are filled with meticulous details: flowing hair, veins and freckles on skin, delicate patterns on flowers. She draws you into her imaginary folk world through intricate craftsmanship, as if she is not just making paintings, but building magical portals. Gail includes so many small details that you have to lean in and begin putting the whole story together.

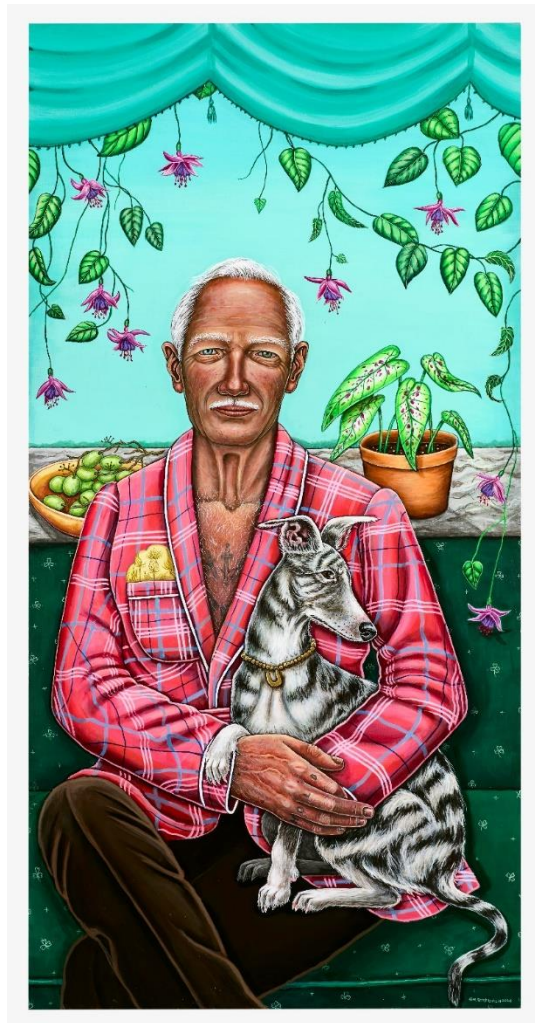
In *Lover's Eye*, she portrays a blonde, curly-haired woman sitting beneath a tree of mandarins, which represent prosperity and luck in many Asian cultures. Her styling — the red half-moon manicure, pinned curls, green dress, and silky royal blue scarf patterned with sunflowers — suggests a woman performing elegance as a kind of ritual, as if beauty itself might help her summon love, attention, or control. One hand rests at the edge of the frame, while the other rests by her chin. She seems to be quietly contemplating, or perhaps eagerly anticipating what is to come.



Gail M Boykewich, *Lover's Eye*, 2025. Image courtesy of SLAG&RX New York – Paris and the artist

Maybe the puzzle can be solved through the eye brooch she wears, inspired by the “lover’s eye,” a highly intimate piece of historical jewelry featuring a miniature painting of a single human eye. The complicated feelings surrounding romantic relationships, and the rituals we perform to feel some control in being loved and seen, are woven into this imaginary world through Gail’s precise depiction of line and paint.

Harry and Lucky, on the other hand, depicts an elderly white-haired gentleman with a soft yet steady gaze, holding a gray dog wearing a horseshoe necklace. The plate of grapes behind him suggests that he is ready for the twelve-grapes-at-midnight ritual, performed to wish for a lucky new year. Beneath the lapel of his plaid blazer, Harry has the Three of Swords tattooed on his chest, implying heartbreak, resilience, and the overcoming of hardship. This is reinforced by the “hold fast” knuckle tattoo, which speaks to his determination to weather life’s storms.



Gail M Boykewich, *Harry and Lucky*, 2026. Image courtesy of
SLAG&RX – New York – Paris and the artist

Tarot is an element Gail returns to repeatedly. In *Eight of Cups*, she depicts a woman with her back turned toward us. She appears to be walking away from a poppy field and toward a rainbow, with ten birds celebrating ultimate happiness and harmony. However, one tiny detail completely shifts the image: her hand is still holding onto one of the poppy leaves, or perhaps the leaf is trying to latch onto her. She turns back to look at us, as if asking: are you going to walk toward the perfect future, or remain sleepy in the poppy field?



Gail M Boykewich, *Eight of Cups*, 2026. Image courtesy of SLAG&RX – New York – Paris and the artist

Looking at the show, you feel as if you are lost in the woods with these imaginary characters, being pulled into their worlds, decoding their life stories, and experiencing their hopes and dreams with them. Despite the lucky elements that appear throughout the paintings, none of the characters look truly happy or fully assured. Gail seems to ask whether these rituals can really take them to the places they are longing for, or whether they are simply ways of surviving the uncertainty around and within them. Their faces hold the emotional residue of wishing: anxious, stoic, and quietly suspended between faith and doubt.

Gail highlights the subtle parts of our psyche that are universal, yet often overlooked: the private bargains we make with fate, the small objects we trust, and the rituals we repeat when life feels beyond our control. Luck, in this show, becomes less a promise than a coping mechanism. It may appear through witchcraft, tarot, astrology, religion, a horseshoe necklace, or a four-leaf clover brooch, but at its core, it reveals the same desire: to feel that something might change.

Most of the paintings in this show contain three-dimensional elements, either built on top of the paintings, extending beyond the frame, or inside boxes. In *Arcadia*, the heroine hangs ivy around the frame. In *Caliandra*, the open-backed frame creates a window-like effect, as if the image continues beyond what we can see and we are invited to imagine the whole world around her. In *New Year's Eve*, three-dimensional tree branches seem to grow around the frame, while in *Carnations*, butterflies fly off the surface, escaping the boundaries of the image. By breaking the traditional flat structure of painting, Gail invites us to think outside the box, and perhaps to rethink luck for ourselves. Like the characters inside them, the paintings are also reaching beyond the boundaries they were given.



Gail M Boykewich, *Arcadia*, 2026. Image courtesy of SLAG&RX – New York – Paris and the artist

Her show feels like a great wish for anyone who feels lost and wants a tangible way to process, move forward, and keep hoping. *Into the Wolf's Mouth* feels like a magical forest that invites the audience to come in, pray together, and collectively move through the storm toward the other side of the rainbow. The show does not promise that luck will save us. Instead, it suggests that the act of wishing itself — fragile, irrational, and deeply human — may be one way we continue moving forward.