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Around the Galleries
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A View Through Peripheral Vision
By David Pagel
Special to The Times

Jeff Gambill's new paintings give concrete form to elusive experiences. But unlike a lot of abstract art, his quietly captivating works are subdued and cool. For the inaugural exhibition of the Sam Lee Gallery, titled ". . . and out of the corner of my eye . . .," Gambill sticks to the facts, translating the physical aspects of visual perception to 14 variously scaled oils on canvas.

Peripheral vision is better equipped to discern motion than texture, color and shape, so Gambill has minimized the latter and emphasized the former. Light flickers across his surfaces. Blurs occur frequently, and to significantly different effects.

Sometimes it seems as if you are peering into the dark. Other paintings have the presence of overexposed photographs, of sunlight bleaching a landscape, flattening objects and making depth perception difficult.

To get viewers to start looking more attentively out of the corner of their eyes, Gambill has painted over large sections of many canvases, so only snippets can be glimpsed, replacing the blink-and-you-miss-it urgency of modern culture's image glut with a more serene sensibility. Abstract painting rarely looks so ghostly, gentle, meditative.

Sam Lee Gallery, 990 N. Hill St., No. 190, L.A., (323) 227-0275, through June 30. Closed Sundays through Tuesdays. www.samleegallery.com