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Birds of a Tacky Feather

By [Andy Wright](#)

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Erik von Markovic has given peacocks a bad name. Better known to television audiences as Mystery, the pickup artist who teaches inept gentlemen how to more effectively pester female bar patrons, he encourages his students to “peacock,” or dress outlandishly in the interests of attracting a mate. Necks are strewn with oversized goggles, nails are painted, eyes are ringed with kohl, and plumed hats are donned. Artist (the regular kind,

not the pickup kind) Laurel Kroth has taken steps to repair the damage inflicted by Markovic. Also playing with the ways the animal kingdom has influenced our own mating rituals, Kroth constructs images of animals from traditional mediums, like wood and tapestry, as well as less traditional ones, like fake fingernails. Her animalistic work, along with paintings by Mary Anne Kluth, appears as part of the show “**Theory of the Unforeseen.**” The fake nails comprise part of a pair of stunning peacocks, one albino and one colorful. Shellacked and solid looking, the nails bristle from the sculpture, which appears bejeweled with items that usually point to a certain tackiness: The bird’s wings are made of hair clippies, and the legendary tail drips with chains and earrings. This gamut of gaudiness is finished off with a sprinkling of Swarovski crystals, commingling beauty parlor detritus with a less affordable kind of bling.

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