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"Georgia Gardner Gray's Chrysalis Reminds Us That Transformation Demands Confrontation." Autre (March 11, 2025) [ill.] [online]

AUTRE

GEORGIA GARDNER GRAY'S CHRYSALIS REMINDS US THAT TRANSFORMATION DEMANDS CONFRONTATION



Georgia Gardner Gray
Walk-In, 2025
Oil on canvas
75 x 63 inches (190.5 x 160 cm)

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Georgia Gardner Gray's exhibition *CHRYSLIS*, currently on view at Regen Projects in Los Angeles, marks a defining moment in her career as her first large-scale solo presentation in the United States. Expansive in both scope and ambition, the exhibition encompasses new paintings, sculptures, and an original theatrical production, all bound by an intricate exploration of transformation, ritual, and cyclical processes.

At the heart of *CHRYSLIS* lies the chrysalis itself—a potent emblem of metamorphosis and renewal. Gray draws inspiration from Salvador Dalí's 1958 pharmaceutical pavilion, a surreal structure that fused art and alchemical symbolism, to probe the nature of ritualistic reenactment, the repetition of history, and the evolving language of artistic expression. Her work reframes transformation not as a singular event but as an ongoing process shaped by cultural, historical, and personal forces.

Gray's paintings interrogate the paradox of historical reenactment, specifically through the lens of Civil War pageantry. In *Belles* (2025), figures adorned in antebellum costumes evoke a distorted vision of Scarlett O'Hara, where the romanticization of the past collides with its inescapable weight. Through this juxtaposition, Gray exposes the absurdity of attempting to relive or aestheticize historical trauma, inviting viewers to confront the cyclical nature of cultural mythmaking and the complexities of inherited identity.

The exhibition also engages with contemporary notions of femininity and self-construction. Gray's depictions of women in transitional spaces—trying on clothes, gazing from windows—resist passive voyeurism. Instead, these figures assert their agency, shaping their own narratives within the liminal spaces of modern life. Here, transformation is not merely biological or historical but psychological and performative, implicating the viewer in the act of perception.

Further deepening the exhibition's conceptual rigor, Gray presents *CHRYSLIS* as a theatrical production. Performed by Los Angeles-based actors, the play unfolds as a meditation on modernity's contradictions, drawing upon archetypal characters and fragmented narratives to interrogate the tension between progress and nostalgia, innovation and repetition.

Through *CHRYSLIS*, Georgia Gardner Gray's deft synthesis of painting, sculpture, and performance constructs a multilayered inquiry into the nature of change—whether historical, social, or personal. The exhibition is a powerful reminder that transformation is not an endpoint but an enduring process, one that demands both confrontation and reinvention.

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Performance documentation of *CHRYSLIS* by Georgia Gardner Gray. Regen Projects, Los Angeles. March 1, 2025

Photo: Evan Bedford