

REGEN PROJECTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

GEORGIA GARDNER GRAY

CHRYSALIS

March 1 – 29, 2025

Press preview with the artist: Saturday, March 1, 11 am

**Opening reception: Saturday, March 1, 6 – 8 pm with
performance at 7 pm**

Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm

Regen Projects is pleased to present *CHRYSALIS*, New York-based artist **Georgia Gardner Gray**'s first exhibition with the gallery and her first large-scale solo presentation in the United States. The exhibition will feature new paintings, sculptures, and a theatrical play staged within the gallery. Using the chrysalis as a metaphoric and structural framework, **Gray** examines how perceptions of history, painting, originality, and figuration evolve over time.



Image: Georgia Gardner Gray, *Belles*, 2025, oil on canvas, 66 x 66 inches (167.6 x 167.6 cm)

The chrysalis is a universal symbol of transformation—a dark, unconscious place, akin to a black box. Inside, hidden from view, a pulsing, primordial goop dissolves and reorganizes into something new; a baroque exoskeleton shields this mysterious, autonomous process. While the butterfly that emerges is typically celebrated as the product of this metamorphosis, **Gray** focuses instead on the chrysalis itself—not the outcome, but the process. She draws inspiration from Salvador Dalí, who used the chrysalis as a motif when he was commissioned to design a pavilion in 1958 for a pharmaceutical company to promote a sedative preferred by his wife Gala. For **Gray**, the chrysalis is a point of departure to explore themes of ritual reenactment, cyclical processes, the meaning of modernity, and her own painterly influences.

One group of these new paintings explores the significance of reenactment, as **Gray** depicts Civil War reenactors recreating a relatively recent chapter of American history. The theme of reenactment raises broader questions about rituals—whether political, religious, symbolic, or artistic—and their cyclical nature. In these works, spectators sit on hillsides watching staged battles unfold—complete with fake explosions, puffs of smoke from mock guns, and simulated deaths. In *Belles* (2025), a group of costumed Scarlett O'Haras mill about with red Solo cups, like off-duty actors on the set of a period piece. The women are pushed into theater, drag versions of themselves. While the paintings depict a dark chapter of American tragedy, their inherent artifice tilts the mood toward comedy, highlighting the absurdity of the spectacle. In *Watchers* (2024), a confederate effigy hangs from a tree, connecting the painting to modernist figures such as Francis Picabia's *Pierrot Pendu* (1941). Picabia's use of the sad clown—a longstanding artistic trope—symbolizes the cliché of the painter. Similarly, **Gray** employs the Confederate strawman as a metaphor, inviting reflection on cultural archetypes and historical cycles, probing how reenactment serves as both a critique of history and a means of understanding its repetition.

Gray continues this exploration of cycles in her paintings of women occupying transitional moments and spaces, offering a more intimate, self-reflective view of modernity. In these paintings, women try on clothing, as though the painting itself were a changing room. Rather than being passive or voyeuristic objects, these women actively observe themselves, conscious of their poses and searching for a perfect angle. Like Picabia's nudes, **Gray**'s female figures are more archetypes than individuals—they become conduits for the present. Their interiority cocoons them, their inner thoughts and experiences more significant than the outside world. Although their nude bodies are laid bare, their eroticism is secondary. Instead, they craft a fantasy to project onto an imagined

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audience. In *Midtown* (2025), a modern woman in yoga pants gazes down from her midtown apartment; in *Amish* (2025), another modern woman—an Amish farmer—harvests potatoes in dirty sneakers. **Gray** presents the concept of the Modern not as a fixed historical moment, but as a flexible choice of subject matter, where diverse elements coexist and transform.

As well as an accomplished painter, **Gray** is an active playwright whose work has been shown at the Schinkel Pavilion and the Volksbuhne in Berlin. For *CHRYSLIS*, she has written an eponymous original play that will be presented on a chrysalis-shaped stage within the exhibition itself, performed by local Los Angeles actors. The play follows archetypes like the religious anti-modern American, the modern American, and the libertine comedian through a series of scenes interconnected by the daily route of an Amazon delivery man. Drawing partly from Ionesco's *How to Get Rid of It*, **Gray** invokes the Theater of the Absurd to reflect the absurdities of contemporary life.

Gray's paintings feature impulsive, fractured, ruptured color planes and other visible disruptions, such as underpainting and random occurrences left exposed. These elements challenge traditional compositions as the works move toward the classical, only to be interrupted by a questioning flatness. The colors, intense and counterintuitive, create a dynamic where the picture plane and the figures seem to both push forward and recede. Through her engagement with central figures in Modernist painting and theater, contemporary figuration, and revealing juxtapositions, **Gray** presents the slippage in the modern world—its instability and contradictions. Unifying these themes is the potent figure of the chrysalis, which serves as both a vessel and a stage for the cycles and paradoxes of history and representation.

Georgia Gardner Gray (b. 1988, New York, NY) graduated with a BFA from Cooper Union, New York, in 2011. She will be the subject of forthcoming solo exhibitions at the Longlati Foundation, Shanghai (2025) and Museum der Moderne, Salzburg (2026). Recent solo exhibitions include *Works 2015 – 2018*, Kunsthalle Lingen (2018); *Concorde*, UKS/Kunstneres Hus, Oslo (2017); and *Precious Provincials*, Kunstverein Hamburg (2017). Her work has been included in group exhibitions such as *Before Tomorrow*, Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo (2023); *Lose Enden*, Kunsthalle Bern (2021); *Mercury*, Tallinn Art Hall (2019); and *HERE HERE – DAS ICH UND ALLES ANDERE*, Braunsfelder Family Collection, Cologne (2018).

Her plays have been shown at the Schinkel Pavillion, Berlin (2019) and Volksbuehne, Berlin (2018). She was awarded the *Lingen Art Prize* by the Kunsthalle Lingen in Germany which was accompanied by a monograph published by Kunsthalle Lingen / Mousse Publishing (2018). Her work is part of the permanent collection of major institutions including Astrup Fearnley Museet in Oslo, Norway and the Kunstsammlung der Stadt Lingen, Germany. She lives and works in New York, NY.

The first performance of *CHRYSLIS* will take place during the opening on Saturday, March 1 at 7 pm, with further performances over the course of the exhibition.

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