



Mia Graham  
*Remains*

18 September - 1 October 2024

General Assembly is pleased to present *Remains*, a solo presentation of new works by Mia Graham. Through three totemic bodies: rabbit, human and bird, Graham invites us to explore an understanding of physical decay and regeneration that she has manifested through painting.

The exhibition is anchored prominently by *Shroud*, Graham's largest painting to date. Completed recently, at General Assembly's Loire Valley summer residency, Graham's painting took on a life of its own, with Graham surrendering her own will, tapping into a deeper, more intuitive creative space. In this environment Graham submitted to her own corporeal presence, using her hands to mark the canvas; and to that of the surrounding nature, embracing leaf traces on the work. The result rejects sterility, and celebrates a deeper freedom, where the work encompasses a materiality of disintegration.

In *Shroud*, the artist renders a woman with delicate physicality and lightness of body, her left hand seems to clasp a bird which lies, unmoving, next to her. Marked with prints of the artist's own hand, the work is simultaneously monumental and intimate. Graham depicts the female figure in an ambiguous state of repose. She leads us to question - Is she sleeping? Daydreaming? Or perhaps the form we are viewing is merely a remnant of her existence. The figure exists within this tension, and Graham invites the viewers to draw their own conclusions.

This tension is also found in the *Remains* series of rabbits. Where Graham takes inspiration from British folklore, and a personal connection to the physicality of the animals. The rabbits are depicted as creatures that occupy both the terrestrial world and a deeper netherworld. They can frolic in the grass and burrow into the earth deep beneath it as if moving through levels of consciousness. Similarly to Graham's human figures, the rabbits are able to traverse multiple planes of existence with ease. Unlike the figure in *Shroud*, however, the rabbits in the *Remains* series are dead. For Graham, the question is what becomes of the twitching energy that once pulsed through them? What Remains of them?

Unlike a perished rabbit, a dead pigeon is a presence of death one might happen upon in day to day city life. These chance encounters Graham uses to observe real-life manifestations of her thoughts and ideas, out of which her ongoing bird series is born.

The artist studies the birds and their bodies as they begin to decompose; she is fascinated by their unceremonious state of burial, laying exposed on street corners and roadsides. In these moments Graham seeks to exalt the discarded birds, and absorb a visual essence of the material regeneration that has begun.

Despite Graham's curiosity surrounding death, the works do not have a morbid quality. They are imbued not with a fear of death, but with an understanding that it is part of life's cyclical nature; a point within a larger continuum. Taken together, the works in *Remains* depict a series of transitional moments, a woman sliding into a dream state, the flesh of a rabbit returning to the earth, the fragile body of a bird in its final resting place. It is these moments between physical or psychological states, where Graham seeks truth.