

## Hunting the Wren

Lily Ludlow

June 12, 2026 – September 25, 2026

Opening hours: Fridays from 11 - 18 h and  
upon appointment.

The wren is a paradoxical creature. Despite its diminutive size, folklore crowned it the king of birds. Yet it was also hunted, captured, and ceremonially displayed during winter rituals throughout Britain and Ireland. Elusive and revered, sovereign and sacrificial, the wren occupies a space between visibility and disappearance.

Lily Ludlow's paintings unfold within a similar tension. Her works begin with drawing. Figures, animals, landscapes, and gestures are sketched directly onto the canvas, only to be partially removed again through a process of sanding. Layers accumulate and disappear. Surfaces are built through acts of making and undoing. At times entire passages vanish. What remains is not simply an image but the record of its transformation. The painting arrives through erosion as much as through construction.

This process produces a distinctive visual language in which forms seem caught between emergence and dissolution. Animals recur throughout the exhibition, yet rarely as identifiable species. Human figures drift toward animal forms; flowers become bodies; bodies become landscapes. The paintings resist stable categories and instead propose a world of continuous metamorphosis.

In this sense, Ludlow's paintings belong to a lineage that extends from Goethe's theory of metamorphosis to more contemporary understandings of ecological interdependence. Human, animal, and vegetal forms are not treated as separate categories but as temporary states within a larger continuum of transformation. Figures emerge, hybridize, and dissolve, suggesting a world understood less through fixed identities than through relationships, correspondences, and processes of becoming. One might think here of Michel Serres' writings, in which humans, animals, plants, objects, and environments are bound together in networks of exchange rather than divided into discrete realms.

The small paintings included in the exhibition are particularly revealing in this regard. Flowers unfold into female presences, while female figures seem to return to vegetal states. Elsewhere, animal pairs appear simultaneously intimate and unfamiliar, suspended between portrait, symbol, and myth. Throughout the exhibition, identity remains fluid and provisional.

To hunt the wren is ultimately not to capture it. It is to follow something that repeatedly escapes definition. Ludlow's paintings invite a similar form of attention. They approach recognition only to move beyond it again, inhabiting a space where meaning remains open and where the boundaries between human, animal, and plant life become unexpectedly porous. What persists is not a fixed image but a continuous process of transformation—an image forever arriving, and forever slipping away.

**Lily Ludlow** (b. 1970, Los Angeles, CA) lives and works in Port Chester, New York. makes paintings that are a mixture of figuration and machine-like curvilinear shapes that either fit together comfortably or jostle against each other and the confines of the painting's boundaries.

The arabesques and tender grace notes allude to dance; the isolation of a moment in time or a focus on specific gesture signify Ludlow's deeply felt reality. Heavily worked, each piece becomes a tool for insight and understanding as the painter refines the position of a leg or stylized torso, gradually moving towards a sense of activated stasis.

Recent solo exhibitions include *New Paintings* at CANADA, East Hampton (2023); *New Paintings* at CANADA, New York (2019); *Lily Ludlow* at CANADA, New York (2017); *Pareidolia* at CANADA, New York (2014); *Lily Ludlow* at Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago (2012); *Ten for Aidas* at CANADA, New York (2011); *Lily Ludlow* at Rebecca Camhi Gallery, Athens (2009); *Sowing Circle* at CANADA, New York (2008); and *Every Flinching Atom of Flesh Must Be Flayed* at CANADA, New York (2007).

Selected group exhibitions include *Paper Tigers, Hubba Hideout, and Couch Paintings* at CANADA, New York (2025); *A Study in Form (Chapter Two)* at James Fuentes, New York (2024); *Joan Snyder, Lily Ludlow, Mimi Lauter & Xylor Jane* at CANADA, New York (2024); *Canada on Paper* at CANADA, East Hampton (2023); *Safe Space* at Rebecca Camhi Gallery, Athens (2023); *The Thick Stream* at CANADA, New York (2021); *BUTTERFLY'S NAUTILUS* at Condo CDMX with K. Krueger, Mexico City (2018); *Faces / People* at Rebecca Camhi Gallery, Athens (2018); *NADA Miami* with CANADA Gallery (2017); *CANADA b/w Drag City* at Soccer Club Club, Chicago (2019); and presentations with CANADA Gallery at Art Basel (2025).

**The exhibition can be visited every Friday from 11 am to 6 pm and by appointment. For further information and images, please contact Petra Tomljanovic at [info@grieder-contemporary.com](mailto:info@grieder-contemporary.com) or call +41 43 818 56 07.**