

## Trude Viken

### DOUBLE PORTRAITS

18 November 2022 - 07 January 2023

OTP Copenhagen is proud to present 'DOUBLE PORTRAITS,' a solo exhibition of new works by the Oslo-based painter Trude Viken (b. 1969, Lødingen; NO), marking the artist's first solo show in Denmark and debut exhibition with the gallery.

Having worked extensively with single figure compositions over the years, most notably as part of the artist's iconic 'diary note' series which saw her produce daily self-portraits for a period between 2014 and 2021, Viken first began experimenting with double portraiture as a means of examining different matrimonial relationships. What started as a small collection of drawings featuring various hybrid 'bride' and 'groom' figures — three of these original works are included alongside the paintings in this exhibition — quickly gave rise to an uncanny series of oil paintings that offered a potent, enigmatic and somewhat grotesque vision of human partnership.

For this new series of double portraits, Viken abandons the archetypal figures of a married couple and instead explores how one person's subjectivity might be split or dissolved between multiple bodies, representing inevitable changes in terms of emotional disposition, psychological state or physical condition, over time. By collapsing the traditional distinctions between different identities as being individually contained and embodied, Viken offers an increasingly complex account of human subjectivity. What emerges are cumulative psychological impressions, rather than individual experiences, that seem to co-exist between the different paintings to establish a compelling social atmosphere inside the exhibition.

Viken's interest in the figure has consistently been informed by a frank and honest recognition of those feelings and experiences that people are often uncomfortable to share with others. Taboo is of central importance to this work and Viken openly talks about wanting to lean into the discomfort associated with projecting feelings of sadness, anger, jealousy or any other form of discontentment in public. Having previously worked as a psychiatric nurse before becoming a full-time artist, Viken's first-hand understanding of human vulnerability is compounded by an interest in the ways that contemporary culture masks certain feelings and experiences. Whether in relation to feelings of personal anguish or even the signs of physical change, Viken is interested in the ways that people go about hiding aspects of themselves through forced smiling, social media glamorisation and the increasing popularity of plastic surgeries and other cosmetic procedures.

Many of the figures in these portraits share a warped and somewhat abstract appearance and indeed the paintings in this exhibition appeal to an esoteric kind of symbolism above any form of representational likeness. Identifying with a 'colourist' tradition of painting, Viken's works rely upon familiar cultural associations between specific colours and correlating themes such as passion or death and mortality. At the same time, Viken deliberately favours colours that feel slightly irritating, or darker palettes that only reveal themselves more gradually, to encourage attentive looking on behalf of the viewer. This desire to promote active engagement with the material image extends to the surface of these paintings; here Viken often favours a built up impasto surface but endows such fleshy accumulations with vigour - it is important that the paintings avoid feeling over-laboured and instead contain spontaneous and expressive energy.

Just because a painting is expressive, however, does not mean that it can be wholly understood. The paintings in this exhibition are laced with cryptic ambiguities throughout; this extends to the tattoo-like inscriptions of hearts and crosses that several of the figures sport on their arms as well as the pretty bow ribbons that seem artfully placed on many of the figures' heads, undercutting or enhancing the more disquieting aspects of their appearance.

Why do these figures have such radically different eyes? What is it about them that feels so distinctly 'femme' despite the blurring of identifiable garments or bodily features? Titling each of these works only as 'Double Portrait,' it is apparent that whilst Viken aims to capture something of the personality and experience of individuals in these paintings, it is also paramount that they appeal to a broader sense of sociocultural understanding - one that can change, and necessarily will, as our inter-twined experiences continue to unfold.

## Trude Viken

Born 1969, Lødingen; NO  
Lives and works in Oslo; NO

### EDUCATION

2012 - 2015 Rommen Art School, Oslo; NO  
2009 - 2012 DTK Det Tverrfaglige Kunstinstitutt, Oslo; NO

### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2023 [Upcoming] KHÅK Kunsthall, Ålesund; NO  
2022 *DOUBLE PORTRAITS*, OTP Copenhagen, Copenhagen; DK  
*Midnight Activities*, Galleri Belenius, Stockholm; SE  
2021 *Night Eyes*, Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Vestfossen; NO  
*Midnight Theater*, Fortnight Institute, New York (NY); USA  
2019 *Unmasked*, M+B Gallery, Los Angeles (CA); USA  
2018 *Faces and Traces*, Fortnight Institute, New York (NY); USA

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2023 [Upcoming] *Nesten Voksen*, Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Vestfossen; NO  
2022 *Good To See You*, Galleri Golsa, Oslo; NO  
*PERSON(A)*, Venus Over Manhattan, New York (NY); USA  
*Åpningsutstillingen*, Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo; NO  
*Romancing Relevance*, WOAW Gallery, Hong Kong; CN  
2021 *Konstellasjoner*, Buer Gallery, Oslo; NO  
*I Have My Eye on You*, Everyday Gallery, Antwerp; BE  
*Hunters in the Snow*, 303 Gallery, New York (NY); USA  
*Kunstbanken Hedmark Kunstsenter, Buskerud Kunstsenter & Østfold Kunstsenter*, Østlandsutstillingen, Oslo; NO  
2020 *Dialogues With the Past (Trude Viken/Ryszard Warsinski)*, Bærum Kunsthall, Bærum; NO  
*Åpningsutstillingen*, Buer gallery, Oslo; NO  
*Lit Nights Mexico (Oh Brother)*, QB Gallery, Oslo; NO

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Night Eyes*, Ansten Press - Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Vestfossen: 2021  
*Drawings*, Innen, Zurich: 2018