

TRUDE VIKEN

***Faces and Traces***

May 16 – June 17, 2018

Opening reception: Wednesday, May 16th, 6–8 pm

Fortnight Institute is pleased to present *Faces and Traces*, a solo exhibition by Norwegian artist Trude Viken. For her solo American debut, Viken presents a collection of 100 small A4-format portraits titled *Diary Notes*, alongside larger paintings of *Couples* and *Double Portraits*.

Viken's *Diary Notes*, started in 2014, were intended as self-portraits but this impulsion evolved into a body of work that turned her process to looking inward. She turned her gaze towards symbol and fervor, creating portraits that seduce the viewer through their psychological penetration. With Viken's hand, layers of oil paint become whirling eyes, nose, mouth, ecstatic grimaces or smirks, finished when she decides so. Rows of twisted, kneaded faces hung together like a ghoulish family album of passing moods and impulse. The final marks different from the original swaths. Shapes are dissolved as the layers of paint can be repainted many times; almost anything is allowed.

Viken calls herself a 'colorist' without restrictions. She works in swirls of fleshtones, ashy grey and witchy green coupled with bright red, orange, yellow, and pink. The smell of oil paint lingers on and tones, both earthy and unnatural, elicit both eroticism and repulsion. There is sometimes an uncanny X-ray effect, as if the underlying skeleton is showing through: sockets, holes and slashes. Viken's work requires an audience for its physicality, a terrain of oil paint. In this way, they are landscapes of weather as unpredictable as mood. A face becomes a hairy green mass with bubble gum pink base, white strokes like the edges of clouds or wings. A serene wedding portrait morphs into a pale pink veil bleeding into the bride's unsure phantom face, half pretty blue-eyed and red bow lip.

Portraits from everyday life develop into fantasies expressing our interior lives and our most palpable feelings. "When I have bad days, I know that most people also have them. Those days, hours or minutes are part of our life. We keep smiling happily and seem untouched to those around us. In the end we only fool ourselves. The difficulty of showing those tough sides of life makes me curious. This gives me a desire to continue..." -Trude Viken

Trude Viken (born 1969 in Lødingen, Norway) lives and works in Oslo, Norway. This will be her first solo show in New York.