

TRUDE VIKEN

Night Crawlers

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FORTNIGHT INSTITUTE

21 East 3rd St. NYC

Fortnight Institute is proud to announce Trude Viken's third solo exhibition at the gallery. In an exchange between the artist and Fortnight Institute, Viken discusses the ideas behind her exhibition titled *Night Crawlers*.

Tell us about your exhibition title, *Night Crawlers*. A crawler implies a slow-moving animal or creature. The figures in some of your paintings are hybrids of human, animal, and mythical beings.

My exhibition *Night Crawlers* is about creatures crawling around and hiding in the dark, trying not to be revealed for what they are. I often think back to when I was young and fearless. Rules were meant to be broken, and it was necessary to feel free. We were socially active animals at night, using our energy to seek forbidden fruits. Adult life is similar: you learn the rules but can still break them. Most of us are well-behaved, but sometimes, we feel ashamed about small or big things we can't handle or control. We live in a world where everyone is expected to be perfect. We hide behind our facade when we fail, don't have enough strength, or feel unsuccessful. Growing old is one of the most challenging battles in life. It is hard to face it when everything is about youth and beauty. The happy aspects of life are familiar, but I want to express the sides of life that are rarely discussed through my scenes. I use human, demon, or animal hybrids to describe an inner world of emotions and feelings. I often depict black scenes to show the inside out, the sides of life we are not so fond of. We all have to face it but seldom want to talk about it. That is why I make these paintings. My *Diarynotes* portraits inspire the creatures in my night scenes. It is essential to show that no one is perfect.

Night is a recurrent theme in your paintings. Moons are often present in your compositions, while hybrid figures engage in various activities against all-consuming black backgrounds. Why is Night a repeated theme for you? What does night symbolize to you?

Night is a continuous theme in my paintings because I am enthralled by the idea of darkness, especially the moon, with its timeless allure. When I look at it, with its beautiful shape and glowing light, many thoughts are stirred within me. Throughout time, humans have been enchanted and drawn to the moon. The moon was their guide for centuries. We are intrigued by what we know is there but is invisible to the eye. Night can be frightening, and I find it interesting to think about why we fear darkness, even when we know it hides good things too. Much storytelling is about the night, a perfect hiding place since it is difficult to see through it. When the light is turned off, people deal with their struggles more than they usually would out in the light. Many also think feeling anger, hate, love, sorrow, or shame when unseen is easier. It is hard to face the light if you feel bad for what you are not or for what you are. Sometimes in life, we all behave like lugubrious people. I use night and its darkness to reveal the hidden actions or sentiments people prefer to keep to themselves.

Disembodied eyes are often visible in your paintings, such as *Night Queen*, *Midnight Play II*, and *Midnight Activity 5*. Eyes are a symbol that retains a magical and esoteric aura. They receive, emanate light, reveal, and conceal. The inner eye is a portal into the darker realms of dreams and the unconscious. Can you tell us more about these all-seeing eyes in your paintings?

I like to use symbols in my work. Eyes are mirrors of the most astonishing colors. The eyes signify that the creatures in my paintings are being seen. The eyes can be good or evil, a blessing or a curse. The eye is also all-seeing and always watching. Who is watching? That's part of the mysterious appeal. They see you for what you are. Eyes are symbols that lead to dreams, auras, or directions to follow. The colors, shapes, and sizes of the eyes describe so much. Where the look ends can reveal magnitudes.

Trude Viken (b. 1969) in Lødingen, Norway, lives and works in Oslo. Viken has exhibited globally in solo exhibitions and a number of group exhibitions, including: Fortnight Institute, New York, Venus Over Manhattan, New York, Belenius, Stockholm, OTP Copenhagen, M + B Gallery, Los Angeles, Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Oslo, and, The Norwegian National Museum in Oslo.



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