

**STANDARD (OSLO)
PRESS RELEASE**

TUDA MUDA

“BELLA”

15.03.-20.04.2024 / PREVIEW: FRIDAY 15.03.2024 / 19.00 - 21.00

STANDARD (OSLO) is proud to present the second solo exhibition at the gallery by Trondheim-based Tuda Muda, focused on a new series of oil-pastel works on paper.

“Bella” originated at sea. More precisely, on a journey back to Trondheim from Bergen, via Ålesund. The trip had shortly followed the artist’s first exhibition with the gallery in early 2022, and she had settled to return by the Hurtigruten coastal route, having previously not taken advantage of such a travel option during her time in Norway.

A choice to go by boat, on one’s own, is admittedly a bold move - you are limited to yourself as your most trusted travel companion, bound to your own thoughts. Even with the most diligent preparation of distractions, books can evade interest, wifi turns patchy and inevitably the question of how to pass time arises. Travelling alone was not a circumstantial or reactionary decision, rather a deliberate choice made by the artist for the first time to solely dedicate time in her own company. In the cruise cafeteria, she mastered the act of public solo dining, enjoyed drinks at the bar, took time out on the deck and explored Ålesund on foot when the ship made a quick port stop. After investigating the offers of the ship and back in the confines of her cabin, Tuda Muda would draw. She drew what she was previously apprehensive of - her own likeness, nude, whilst looking in the mirror. By beginning to map her body, she proceeded to give into long-held vulnerabilities. There have been previous attempts - often from imagination, and once back in her native home, a try which left her mother (by the artist’s own words) slightly “scandalized”, concerned her daughter’s body could be recognised in the drawings.

In the cabin, a makeshift setup allowed direct proximity to a mirror for observation. Mirrors are tricky things - unreliable agents masquerading as household essentials. A reflection is ultimately dependent on its subject’s reading, it’s rarely ever (if ever) impartial. If “Bella”’s predecessors, such as “Be gone, bygones” and “I do. Do I?”, addressed the internal judgement and, at times, distorted views held by the artist of her body, “Bella” acknowledges the changing nature of how one can see themselves. The works that comprise the series show solitary moments, but resolutely not ones marred with loneliness or discontent in any way - on the contrary, they contain intimate familiarity and allowance of the protagonist’s form, in the pure comfort of being with oneself.

The series migrated from sea to land. There, she used a variation of mirrors for her studies, in different settings over the span of two years. At times, she drew by looking downwards directly at her body and at times looking directly at the mirror. A tiled background appears across several works, hinting at a domestic bathroom where the artist could have sketched herself. Elsewhere, a render of a left foot with a bunion (primped with cherry red toenails) is given celebratory treatment, as the only image of its kind in the grouping of drawings. A steadfast female perspective dominates the imagery, one which charts the gradual changing of an appearance, free of a standardized, preconceived remit of femininity. Originally initiated in charcoal, much like past works by the artist, a palette of primary colours was later introduced, paralleling the primal state of a human body (and in a knowing contrast to the excess of pastel and subdued tones we are besieged by up here north, in the lands of discreet taste). The colours can be seen to echo the confidence of the subjects, the many “Bellas” in their different stages, guises and poses. The word primary can also correspond rather literally to the idea of ‘self’, as well as take on the meaning of caregiver. In the context of this body of work, Tuda Muda sees the two as inseparable. By assuming the role and responsibility of caring for oneself, it speaks to the importance of the foundational relationship we make with ourselves. Criticism espewed by others thankfully has an expiration date of its impact. Our own self-views, although, are far more permanent and far more lasting. Within that lies the need to be one’s own ultimate caregiver.

The title choice can suggest a name, or a term to describe beauty - it can’t be helped, cries of “che bella!”, “ciao, Bella!” come to mind. But Tuda Muda’s “Bellas” are unconcerned with how they are seen. Sure, they can be a reflection - a mirror- of our own notions of this ideal, what preconceptions we have - ingrained or not. Yet for themselves? They’re quite busy having a good time in their sole company, unbothered by anyone’s gaze but their own.

STANDARD (OSLO) / Waldemar Thranes gate 86C / +47 22 60 13 10 / info@standardoslo.no
/ N-0175 Oslo / +47 22 60 13 11 / www.standardoslo.no

Tuda Muda (named Samrridhi Kukreja, b.1991, Delhi, India) lives and works in Trondheim, Norway. She received her BFA in Printmaking at the College of Fine Art, Delhi University, and received her MFA from Kunstakademiet in Trondheim. "Bella" marks the artist's second solo exhibition with STANDARD (OSLO), following "Be gone, Bygones" in 2022. Tuda Muda's work is currently on view as part two institutional exhibitions in Norway: "Composition for the left hand: Work from the Erling Kagge Collection" curated by Marta Kuzma, KODE; Bergen, Norway and "Tongues of Fire", Kunsthall Trondheim, Trondheim.

Recent exhibitions include: "Embrace/Compassion", Emanuele Catellani Contemporary, Turin, Italy (solo, 2024); "Item Number", Rajiv Menon Contemporary, Los Angeles (group, 2023); "Carroll Dunham. Where am I? Prints 1985-2022", Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo (two-person, 2023), amongst others. Tuda Muda's works are held in the collection of Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo, Norway.

For further information please visit our webpage: www.standardoslo.no or contact Eivind Furnesvik at eivind@standardoslo.no or +47 917 07 429 / +47 22 60 13 10. STANDARD (OSLO) is open Tuesday-Friday: 12.00-17.00/ Saturday: 12.00-16.00. Sunday and Monday: Closed.

Current & Upcoming

*Peter Opsvik
15.03.-20.04.2024*

*STANDARD (OSLO) / Onsen Confidential / XYZ Collective / Tokyo
06.04.-04.05.2024*

*Ben Sakoguchi
26.04.-25.05.2024*

STANDARD (OSLO) / Waldemar Thranes gate 86C / +47 22 60 13 10 / info@standardoslo.no
/ N-0175 Oslo / +47 22 60 13 11 / www.standardoslo.no