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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

PEONIA VÁZQUEZ-D'AMICO

My druthers

*prayer cards of and for the body*

September 21 – October 20, 2024

Opening reception: Saturday, September 21, 6 – 9 PM

Tomato Mouse is pleased to present the first solo exhibition by Peonia Vázquez-D'Amico in New York City, *My druthers: prayer cards of and for the body*, a suite of eight votary-sized watercolors hovering at the edge of visibility. The show will open Saturday, September 21, 2024, and run through October 20.

Working entirely from observation, Vázquez-D'Amico uses still life to convey processes interior to her body and to record her acute awareness of its fragility and failures. Recognition is neither immediate nor essential. Her translucent brushstrokes depict everyday objects — fabric, flowers, vegetables, string — that read as tissues, bones, frayed tendons, and muscles half-submerged in milk.

Like the body, Vázquez-D'Amico's paintings are continually in flux. Her arrangement of still life is a meditative practice, selecting objects that correlate to specific sensations and then carefully building those things into structures. Strings from pastry boxes may signal veins or nerves, but they also recall familiar phrases like "tying up loose ends" or "the ties that bind." When the proxy is a flower or vegetable, it will wither over the course of the painting process. Once transformed into diaphanous yet eerily compact images — a wash of Naples yellow envelopes each arrangement with an irregular aura or halo — her lovingly rendered flora will fade into nonexistence.

Compare Vázquez-D'Amico's approach to the analytical methods of natural history that seek knowledge through dissection — in her paintings there is both close study at work and sympathetic magic at play. The body is not sliced open to reveal its secrets; they are instead drawn out by a subtle art of substitution, of which these watercolors are the remnants. She writes: "*I'm interested in the ways we come to know and express our bodies from within: the voices we give our ecstasies, pains, and in-betweens.*" Vázquez-D'Amico's works exemplify the power of painting to bring the desired or imagined into existence through sheer volition. They are not representations of the thing; they have become that thing, a second body created according to one's own druthers.

Peonia Vázquez-D'Amico was born in Guadalajara, Mexico, and grew up in Mexico, the U.S. and Ecuador. She received a BFA from the Cooper Union and currently lives and works in New York City.

Tomato Mouse is an artist-run gallery in Brooklyn. Gallery hours are Friday and Saturday from 1 to 7 PM and by appointment. For more information, please contact Rebecca Bird at 347-365-6741 or [tomatomousetomatomouse@gmail.com](mailto:tomatomousetomatomouse@gmail.com).