

The Kunsthau Hamburg is hosting Ida Ekblad's first institutional solo-exhibition in Germany. The artist is showing large-format paintings created specifically for the exhibition. New sculptures will be presented in the context of a performance by the singer Nils Bech at the opening reception.

Ida Ekblad's paintings and sculptures are like vehement acts of liberation. Gestural brushstrokes, dolphins, airbrush technique, aliens, junk, icons of Expressionism, puff effects recalling 3-D prints on sweatshirts of the eighties – Ida Ekblad's process-oriented art production embodies an anarchic spirit that does not hesitate to appropriate styles, subjects, and materials of western culture that are deemed outdated or tasteless. This non-hierarchical aesthetic approach to the visual repertory of the recent past – often derived from contexts of popular culture and everyday life – may be understood in the sense of an 'open source' mentality which is devoid of the intention of consciously seeking to quote or to comment.

Teetering on the edge of good taste, the artist's works have a strongly affective impact. While, on the one hand, ambivalent materials and aesthetic concepts are obviously being celebrated, on the other hand, a struggle with and between these very materials and concepts also clearly manifests itself. This also applies to Ida Ekblad's latest large-format paintings, which she has assembled into a wall frieze of 20 meters length at the Kunsthau Hamburg. Here, pubertal graffiti tags and Murano vases formed by the artist with puff paste are conflated on a two-dimensional surface. Relief-like surface structures as well as Ida Ekblad's visibly obsessive delight in pure materiality reveal a sculptural spirit that does not call painting itself into question. The artist claims: „Painting to me combines expressions of rhythm, poetry, scent, emotion... It offers ways to articulate the spaces between words, and I cannot be concerned with its death, when working at it makes me feel so alive. Canvas can be attacked, copulated with and played like an instrument. I believe in painting like I believe in music. Gore grind music has been invented and can be reinvented forever, and no two raindrops are alike... no two gobs of paint, etc. etc.“ (Ida Ekblad, *Mousse Magazine*, Issue 22, 2010)

Ida Ekblad not only often refers to music and poetry, but the latter also concretely play a major role in many of her energetic, rhythmical works. In some of the paintings she has incorporated words or short sentences, while her exhibitions are generally accompanied by entire poems. Among other things, the titles of her works and presentations play with ambiguity: *Diary of a Madam*, the title of her presentation at the Kunsthau Hamburg, not only makes reference to a biographical context – which, incidentally, is only pseudo-biographical since the multiply recurring portraits of a small Scandinavian-looking girl only appear to represent the young Ida Ekblad. It also phonetically alludes to 'madman' – a further recurring theme in the artist's work: "Writing poetry becomes part

of the struggle to stay sane, or the struggle to stay insane, I forget!”

In cooperation with Ida Ekblad, a performance by the Norwegian singer Nils Bech will take place at the opening reception. The performance will also be presented at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, and the ICA Institute for Contemporary Art in London.

Ida Ekblad (*1980 in Oslo) has shown her works in numerous international art institutions, among these the FRAC Basse-Normandie, Caen in 2016, the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (solo) and the Kunsthalle Bern in 2015, the National Museum of Norway – Museum of Contemporary Art, Oslo (solo) and the Palais de Tokyo, Paris in 2013, the Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm (solo) and the Bergen Kunsthall (solo) in 2010. In 2011, Ida Ekblad was invited to participate in the 54th Venice Biennale.

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