

Peder

**Ida
Ekblad**

ACTIVATED SLUDGE

Peder Lund

June 1 – August 31, 2024

Lund

ACTIVATED SLUDGE

SILT INTENSITY

GOO RAPT

SLIME FIXITY

GRIME VIGILANCE

MUD DEVOTION

BOG DELIRIUM

SWAMP FLUSH

OOZE RAPTUS

AMPHIDROMIC ECHOES ECHOES ECHOES

I.E. 2024



Sludge is a thick wet substance. So is paint. So is glass. They are soupy materials. Liquid visuals. Color materialized. When in their sludgy state, I handle them. Activate them. Hyper-activate them. Hands-on. Fidget with fingers. Hand over my presence. Give them attention. Inattention. Attention. Inattention. Attentin. I forgot the o. Activation. Waste water. Decomposition. Bleed. All over. Goo. I must handle them before they dry, before they cool down. They cool. They dry. They harden.

— Ida Ekblad, 2024

Peder Lund is delighted to announce the exhibition *ACTIVATED SLUDGE* featuring new works by the Norwegian artist Ida Ekblad (1980-). The exhibition opens on June 1st and continues through August 31, 2024. An opening reception will be held on June 1st from 6-8 pm.

For close to twenty years, Ida Ekblad has been one of the most original and influential artistic voices of her generation. Her prodigious and playful imagination has been rooted in a deep reverence for artists such as Odilon Redon, Paula Modersohn Becker, Paul Thek, Harriet Backer, Edvard Munch, Florine Stettheimer, and Helen Frankenthaler. Her resulting works are exquisitely vibrant, free-associative compositions pairing dissonance with visual inventiveness; in producing electrically vivid paintings, drawings, and sculpture, along with her forays in performance, poetry, and film-making, and now works in glass, Ekblad continually re-invents and re-invigorates her oeuvre, luxuriating in the twenty-first century's hyper-visual and materially oversaturated ethos. She embraces Dionysian excesses and her penchant for overloaded and baroque aesthetics have been critically lauded.





For Ekblad's exhibition, titled *ACTIVATED SLUDGE*, her second at Peder Lund, she has chosen to include a selection of works in diverse media — new large-scale and intimately-sized oil paintings, an example of her recent production of monumental hand-painted bronze sculpture, and two mesmerizing examples of works in glass — produced in collaboration with a famed furnace in Murano, Italy. These wall-mounted glass works are pushing into new territory for the artist, however, maintain a distinctly "Ekblad-ian" take on the material. Ekblad has evolved her signature colorful, glossy aesthetic, which defines her beloved oil paintings; in this latest endeavor, she ventures into the ethereal realm of hand-blown glass, infusing her creations with a captivating interplay of light, form, and texture.

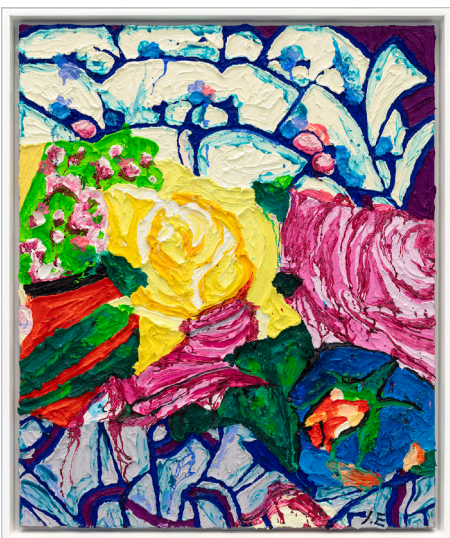
For her glass works, Ekblad has envisioned mandala-like constellations of repeating forms. Although created to explore a repetition of color and shape, the hand-crafted and somewhat unpredictable nature of glass combines to form individual pieces that retain subtle variations between each other. The circular arrangement reminds one of seeing a zoopraxiscope stopped for just a moment, before continuing to endlessly spin, summoning animated flowers blooming or centrifugal paint being flung from its center. As Muybridge invented his clever device in the early days of motion pictures, here Ekblad has frozen a moment, capturing in exquisite detail the forms that make up the whole. Through Ekblad's exploration of the medium of glass, she invites viewers to immerse themselves in a new dimension of her artistic expression, where the boundaries between materiality and imagination blur.



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 with it as it makes me feel so alive.

— Ida Ekblad, 2010

Ekblad's paintings in the exhibition continue her affair with oil paint, a material she has used almost exclusively since 2019. Her production is extremely time- and labor-intensive. She begins by applying layers of thick oil paint as a base, which eventually forms a fantastically thick foundation of rich pigments. Each layer must dry completely before the next layer can be applied. The process of creating a work can take several months to years because the heavy oil paint needs time to settle in. Once Ekblad is satisfied with these base layers, she finishes each piece with thin layers of glaze, consisting of color pigment suspended in walnut oil, which also must dry between each layer. Through her insistence on using thick and thin layers of paint, the final work has a luminous, enamel-like finish that is only achievable through such extreme dedication to the process. After drying on the floor, the pieces' jewel-like kaleidoscope of color subtly exists in a delicate balance with each other, like panes of stained glass set into place, illuminated by an inner glow. As historian Andreas Aubert described Harriet Backer's *Blue Interior* upon viewing it for the first time, so too can we say that in Ekblad's paintings, "Every atom is color."



Ekblad has noted that her work is often inspired by personal memories, however, in the end, the works created provide an explosive sense of retro-future abstract centripetal release. In the 1974 film

"A Woman Under the Influence" by Cassevettes, the character of Mabel particularly resonates with Ekblad; she exemplifies "a sort of domesticity gone bananas" that can be seen in the paintings in the gallery, all finished in 2024. Unapologetically feminine, the paintings tumble through abstracted forms, like rolls of intricately patterned fabrics bundled together, with recognizable petals of roses and pansies or Breton-striped shirt sleeves peeking through. Picasso's Harlequin is present. Whether vertically or horizontally oriented, these paintings provide a dizzying, whirlwind feeling, as if you are stealing a glimpse of one of Ekblad's peripatetic, phantasmagorical nightly dreams.

Finally, the included example of Ekblad's recent production of large-scale hand-painted bronze sculpture succinctly captures many threads of the artist's fascination with material and process. Titled *AMPHIDROMIC ECHOES* the work was assembled by applying the cubist method of a jigsaw-puzzle-like composition of elements that are outlined in flat surfaces, like the cut-out of a collage. Ekblad reinvigorates the technique and creates a multi-perspective synthesis of mind and memory. By summoning the idea of tidal waves through its enigmatic title, the sculpture invites the viewer to explore its intricate textural and compositional moments fully in the round.



Ekblad lives and works in Oslo. She is educated at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts (2007) and the Mountain School of Arts, Los Angeles, USA (2008). She participated in the Venice Biennale (2011, 2017), as well as in numerous solo and group exhibitions. In addition to her most recent solo show in 2021 at Kunstnerens Hus, Oslo, her work has been presented at a variety of institutions in solo exhibitions, among them Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland



(2019) and Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico (2019); Kunstverein Braunschweig, Braunschweig, Germany (2018); Kunsthau Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany (2017); National Museum of Art, Design and Architecture, Oslo, Norway (2013); Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, Norway (2010); Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden (2010).

Together with Matias Faldbakken, Ekblad's work is currently installed at Kunsthau Zürich for the institution's ongoing exhibitions series *ReCollect!* which places newly created works by contemporary artists in dialogue with the museum's permanent collection. *ReCollect!* will continue through the summer.

Ekblad's work is owned by a multitude of important public and private institutions and collections around the world, including the Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, France; Kunsthau Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia; British Museum, London, UK; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; KODE Art Museums and Composer Homes, Bergen, Norway; Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Norway; and the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo, Norway.

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