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Ida Ekblad

FRA ÅRE TIL OVN

June 8 to August 18, 2019

Media Conference: Friday, June 7, 2019, 11 am

Opening Reception: Friday, June 7, 2019, 6 pm

Media Release

Ida Ekblad lives in Oslo. She is a painter, sculptor, publisher, music producer, curator, and designer. She also writes. Her sources of inspiration include folk art, fashion, garbage, Samuel Beckett, youth culture, the natural forces of the elements, Gena Rowlands, traditional crafts, and so on. Everyday life is central to her work—as an imposition, but also conveying grace; as a voracious monster and a source of happiness; as a disaster and a glimmer of hope—for in Ekblad's view, everything is full of promise, including art.

FRA ÅRE TIL OVN, the title of the exhibition, derives from the book *Norsk Jernskulptur. Norske Minnesmerker* published in 1944. *From Vein to Furnace* is a short description of how metal is extracted from ore and cast into sculptures. *FRA ÅRE TIL OVN* thus stands for transformation—the kind of which takes place billions of times a day. Transformation is located at the center of Ida Ekblad's art—as it is for all art, of course. Because ultimately, all an artist does is, through his or her thoughts and actions, to convert material, images, color, or politics into a new state or form. When this succeeds, it results in substantial added value, that is, knowledge, joy, or anger.

Transformation may seem like an expression of creativity, but it is, above all, hard work and also entails destruction. Ekblad struggles with the existing, wrestles with context, and rubs up against the resistance of material, history, and expectations. Transformation is both emancipatory and conditional, and this renders it as interesting as it is controversial. Because every act of transformation, however transgressive and queer, in turn leads to a consolidation; it is contingent on that moment when it establishes itself as a work of art, as an identity, or as a social order. All of this carries great excitement, and Ida Ekblad rehearses it joyously and at breakneck speed, over and over again.

The exhibition at Kunsthalle Zürich is divided into three chapters. It starts with a shop where one can buy merchandise, carpets, albums, and shirts. Here, visitors mutate into consumers, accomplices, or critics. Adjacent to the store is a sculpture hall, presenting the artist's most recent works: iron and bronze casts. On the upper floor one finds oneself in a salon evocative of an *haute-bourgeois* underwater world on LSD. *FRA ÅRE TIL OVN* thus unfolds within a triangle of commercial store, public education center (Kunsthalle), and private villa. Accordingly, the exhibition plays with the art institution as a place where very different ideas and expectations come together, balance each other out, or contradict one another: as entertainment, education, and shopping experience—as well as (self-) critical reflection. It is these competing aspects that open up a space that creates impact and, ultimately, change.

FRA ÅRE TIL OVN is Ida Ekblad's largest solo exhibition to date and presents her most recent works specially created for Kunsthalle Zürich.

Ida Ekblad (1980) lives and works in Oslo. She studied at Central Saints Martins in London, the National Academy of Art in Oslo, and at the Mountain School of Arts in Los Angeles. She participated in the Venice Biennale (2011, 2017) as well as in numerous international group exhibitions. Ekblad has presented solo exhibitions at Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2019); Kunstverein Braunschweig (2018); Kunsthaus Hamburg (2017); Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm (2010); and Bergen Kunsthall (2010), among others.

The opening reception will feature, at the invitation of Ida Ekblad, the British DJ Joy Orbison (Hinge Finger / Meandyou | UK) and the Norwegian-Algerian DJ Karima F (Schloss Records | NO).

Ida Ekblad's exhibition is generously supported by Lafayette Anticipations, Herald St (London), Karma International (Zürich), and Galerie Max Hetzler (Berlin, Paris, London).

Kunsthalle
Zürich

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