

Mineral Immersion

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What if the vitreous changes the equilibrium and intensifies the foundational disturbance of it all? A certain mixture of clarity and of non-obscure. A barrage of cleansing emanations and radiations of pyre, of pebbles from the beach washed beyond recognition, of pulverized particles of igneous minerals, heat, eventual outpourings of frost, petrification, salt. Situated intensities swaying away from their own object, source, or destination.

The application of pigment, color, oil, turpentine, lines, outlines, tonalities, chromatic pulsions, all by way of real feather dusters, large brushes, and through silk stockings filled with thick slabs of oil paint, is a process that necessitates a base horizontality. The lower surfaces, a material vortex of de-sublimation that instantiates the vertical vitreosity of heretic enlightenment. Closer to the terrestrial core of the world, its fossil archives, concretized, encrusted color, the mineral transparency of crystal—crystal inhalation-exhalation—closer to the sky (the abyss beneath our feet as we are walking on our heads.)

These are halos of refracted figures—and those would include figures and tropes of the human, of the abject saint, and emphatically, a world kept unbeknown to the former chimera—refracted figures of wounds kept open, lingering affects, abiding desires, reverberating longings. The painting is lonely and leaned up against the wall; its winds carry its truths. This is Mallarmé's shipwreck and star, mathematically and pathetically outlining a non-site beyond the limits of the empirical. Alien materiality as its material aggregate exists, composites—existed and composited—under a horizon wholly different from that of our own. Human form is just a plug to make imaginable, interiorizable, the cognitive void from which it emerges. And from under which horizon the future now disappears. No wonder the chimeric, alien, human-like forms in Ida Ekblad's paintings appear to be dancing superimposed on a washed out, burnt out, mineral void of sorts. These paintings are, very literally, "out there." A technogenesis of the in-human, the non-human, the post-human. In a different time than ours, and in a different context, a melancholic passage from de Man throws forth remote missiles and envois, still ahead of us in its pathos-laden posteriority. A subsided impulse, "an incandescent point in time" turned "into a reproducible cliché," "fashion is like the ashes left behind by the uniquely shaped flames of the fire, the trace alone revealing that a fire actually took place."

Strip this of its phenomenological and temporal scaffolding and immerse it in a broader, spatial paradigm and there operates a halo of the line. Not a trace of the (circular) concept.

Ida Ekblad's new paintings hypostatize the miniscule timbre, the point of a felt tip. To a large scale, they are, in many ways, torsions turned images—torsions-turning-images. Not images of thought, but image-thoughts. Torsions of the sensible, departing from the concept, departing from the thought, departing from the divine. The disfigured shades and lines of what could resemble graffiti's throw-ups, the collapsed grammar of what could have been Egyptian hieroglyphics situate both the pain and the *jouissance* that these paintings vectorize. If the Greek alphabet made meaning imaginable through code, the Egyptians made meaning visible through line. Ekblad's paintings oscillate in a middle ground: affective states and affective movements, which are kept both invisible and visible.

Out there layers of composition, virtuality, and actuality.

If anything resembles anything, one can infer that these paintings, with their crystalline wash, is a wash that more than anything is a kind of burning out, a wash that is more like a burnout. A counter-intuition to the thickness of paint, a fluid timbre that emits porous porphyry of light, invected inscriptions on the verso and recto of the panes of something that could be the windows of a church or of a cathedral. Michel Henry's chilling assertion comes to mind as it pulverizes the very mind understood in opposition to its putative Other: "At bottom, one must cease to believe in God in order to perceive the beauty of cathedrals." Flexion before re-flection. Fraction before re-fraction.

If there are image-thoughts at work in these paintings, they are contorted cathedrals containing truths that are not there, and which do not take place anywhere else but here. Actualizations of the pathemes of the void. What one cannot attain nor free oneself from: pictoriality invested and divested of the divine. The impossible.

Ida Ekblad was born in Oslo, Norway in 1980. She has had solo exhibitions at Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo (2013); Kunstmuseum, Luzern (2013); and De Vleeshal, Middleburg, The Netherlands (2013). Recent group exhibitions include Nouvelles Vagues, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2013) and To Be with Art Is All We Ask, Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo (2012). She was also featured in ILLUMInations at the 54th Biennale di Venezia (2011) and the 5th Prague Biennale (2011).

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