

Galerie Max Hetzler

Flash Art
Schlaegel, Andreas: Ida Ekblad
Flash Art 291 : July-August-September 2013

IDA EKBLAD

Andreas Schlaegel

Flash Art 291 July - August - September 2013

National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo



"Ida Ekblad," 2013. View of the exhibition at The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo. Photo: Børre Høstland

Underrated in her native Oslo, Ida Ekblad's critical reception as the happy-go-lucky-girl of her generation may reveal a surprising level of chauvinism in the more-politically-correct-than-thou Norway. Hers is the latest installment in this local contemporary art museum's pompous Neo- Baroque former bank interior (gilded, stuccoed, you name it) that, since Matias Faldbakken's exhibition five years ago, has become a fixture in the art scene as a venue for up-and-coming artists. And Ekblad is already an international veteran, with a much-noted international appearance at the 2011 Venice Biennale and solo shows with the now sadly defunct but nevertheless legendary Berlin gallerist Giti Nourbakhsh. So one could forgive her for having become cynical. But the contrary is the case: what we see here is a young artist at the height of her powers, whose paintings get better with each year. She has taken the weight of all of art history onto her shoulders, occasionally channeling the brushwork of the missing link between Cobra and Situationism, the incredible Asger Jorn. The centerpiece of the exhibition is funny and easygoing, even if it is composed of an ensemble of paintings and a weighty indoor metal sculpture park made of shopping carts filled with pieces of scrap metal that faintly echo the gilded floral stucco elements of the interior decoration. Not to mention that she carved words into the wheels so that they imprint poetic slogans in expressively garish colored swirls on the large canvasses. Creating her paintings on site, she turned the former bank into a temporary studio, and transformed the pushing around of shopping carts filled with flamboyant junk into an act of both self-referential concrete poetry and near-modernist abstract oil painting. Keeping in mind that it's not only the oil but the shrewd investments that have made this country Europe's wealthiest nation, Ekblad's exhibition rams not a mote but a beam into the eye of the beholder.