

ARTFORUM

David Everitt Howe: Ida Ekblad

24 June 2019



Ida Ekblad, *Filles Interdites (Gate)*, 2017, bronze, 84 x 78 x 12".
MEXICO CITY

Ida Ekblad

MUSEO TAMAYO

Paseo de la Reforma No. 51

May 2–August 4

Ida Ekblad makes curious bedfellows of the most random things. For this exhibition, she scoured the streets of Mexico City for debris—such as a beat-up, yellow metal chair; a piece of wall framing; a porcelain bowl—and mashed them together in slabs of wet concrete, letting the assemblage dry poetically ad hoc. That motley assortment, *Gold Bug Drift Sculpture (Tepito and Ecatepec)*, *Amor*, 2019, alongside other “drift” jumbles, is perhaps the highlight of “Blood Optics,” Ekblad’s first institutional solo show in Mexico City. Arrayed like an obstacle course in an open-air gallery, Ekblad’s blocky junk traps meld perfectly with the museum’s Brutalist concrete architecture. They diligently lower high culture and heighten the low. Careful where you step: Less observant visitors might get a goalpost to the groin or a tennis racket to the face. A sequined purse resembling a Goodwill find circa 1987 dangles off one sculpture, as if dropped there accidentally.

Ekblad takes gleeful aim at painting, too; the only thing “fine art” about her canvases’ construction is their stretched fabric surface. Otherwise, they’re made with textile paint, which Ekblad heats in her studio until it puffs up. Dried that way, her heroically scaled, puffy paint-technique depictions of brightly colored fish, broken dinnerware, and unfinished crochet—all redolent in texture and color to the work of someone like

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Rachel Harrison—look more like goopy Play-Doh than painting. For a long time, craft and fiber art were dirty words in the fine arts. Here, they're a prized motif, as are ostensible design objects like *Filles Interdites (Gate)*, 2017, a gloriously tacky driveway entrance dropped out of nowhere and decked with a cartoonish bow. Is this the entrance to Snow White's South Beach estate? The thing would better befit a Disney resort than a museum proper—though, if anything, knocking “proper” onto its face is the head-spinning joy of Ekblad's work.

—David Everitt Howe

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