

GALERIE DA-END  
17.09 – 31.10.2020



ÅKESSON  
STRANGE DAYS

PRESS KIT

17 RUE GUÉNÉGAUD 75006 PARIS

EXHIBITION FROM SEPTEMBER 17 TO OCTOBER 31, 2020  
OPENING ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 FROM 6 TO 9 PM

How strange is the world, how strange are those days, unceasingly eluding us and yet or constantly striking us with their absolute necessity.

A human form stands out against a background of toile de Jouy. It stands out and refuses to be seen. We can barely catch a glimpse of it, but finally guess, rather than dream it. It is entirely covered with a cloth overflowing from its torso to wrap its face, and drooping sleeves hide hands and wrists. Not a single hair protrudes from this richly decorated shroud. There is something strange about these ghostly portraits. Covered with the very motif that lines the background, they melt into it and fade away, without disappearing altogether.

We are close to the classical portrait, in bust or mid-leg, face in profile or three-quarters, and haughty portrayal. One feels a strong attraction for Flemish painting and its virtuously sober portraits, on neutral backgrounds, measured colours and exalted materials. And yet you can't see anything of their faces. A fabric with printed patterns covers them, which remind us of the famous *indianneries* of Jouy-en-Josas, of the scenes of Jean-Baptiste Huet. This veil covers them and hides their features from us, tirelessly, canvas after canvas, a succession of prevented encounters.

Markus Åkesson draws arcane and mystical journeys on the printed cloth. It is through its patterns - all rooted in the history of art and ideas - that his language is articulated and his symbolic research is deployed, in an in-between world bathed in disturbing strangeness, conducive to poetic escape.

There is the dance of death, directly inspired by the engravings of Holbein the Younger, a saraband where the dead and the living dance together in the heart of a period ravaged by the Black Death, vanity par excellence, a reaction to the anguish of death. There is the witch riding a leaping goat upside down, originating from a famous print by Albrecht Dürer, with a muscular body, breasts plumped up, hair in the wind, face howling; she symbolizes occult powers, ritual and magic. There is the moth, a symbol that Markus has been painting for many years. As the dying sun reaches the horizon and floods the sky with orange light, breaking the thin membrane that separates the real world from the spiritual world, the winged animal comes out of its torpor.

Markus Åkesson is interested in esoteric spaces, meeting points, vanishing gaps between the hidden and the shown, dream and reality, life and death. It is a quest that unfolds before our eyes, a quest for meaning and a search for spiritualities. Then you can't help but think about those faces, that are always hidden from us. Faces that carry the greatest mysteries of mankind, and its most absolute thoughts. Wouldn't they be the object of this research? A painting by Magritte comes to mind, a magnificent kiss from two veiled lovers, an impersonal embrace, universal love. In all these works, hidden behind a succession of mythical motifs, lies human nature and all its secrets. But Markus, by drawing the contours of it, little by little, will end up painting its portrait. And then, through the veil will rise a voice: *Now You See Me*.

Grégoire Prangé

# MARKUS ÅKESSON

Born in 1975 in Kalmar. Lives and works in Nybro, Sweden.

## EXHIBITIONS (SÉLECTION)

2019

Cabinet Da-End 09, Galerie Da-End, Paris, FR  
Solliden Royal Palace (sculpture exhibition), curated by Galleri Kamras, Öland, SE  
Galeristes #4, Galerie Da-End, Carreau du Temple, Paris, FR

2018

Insomnia, Vida Museum, Borgholm, SE  
Loup y es-tu ? Bestiaire et métamorphoses, Château de Maisons, Maisons-Laffitte, FR  
Cabinet Da-End 08, Galerie Da-End, Paris, FR  
Sleeping Beauty, retrospective, Kalmar Konstmuseum, Kalmar, SE  
Let me sleep through the night, solo show, Galerie Da-End, Paris, FR

2017

Less is more, Kirk Gallery, Aalborg, DK  
Krapperrups Konsthall, Höganäs, SE  
Cabinet Da-End 07, Galerie Da-End, Paris, FR

2016

Galeristes, Galerie Da-End, Carreau du Temple, Paris, FR  
Vinterutställning, Vida Museum, Borgholm, SE  
START Art Fair, Galerie Da-End, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK  
YIA Art Fair, Galerie Da-End, Le Louise 186, Bruxelles, BE  
Art Paris Art Fair, Galerie Da-End, Grand Palais, Paris, FR  
Cabinet Da-End 06, Galerie Da-End, Paris, FR  
Monster, Galleri Svalan, Borgholm, Öland, SE  
The milk of human kindness, duo show w/ Lucy Glendinning, Galerie Da-End, Paris, FR

2015

Dédicaces et déclarations, Musée Cognacq-Jay, Paris, FR  
YIA Art Fair, Galerie Da-End, Carreau du Temple, Paris, FR  
Above the line / Below the line, Fondation Francès, Senlis, FR  
Under Realism, Galerie Da-End & Studio TOZF, Paris, FR  
Vida Museum, solo show, Borgholm, SE  
Cabinet Da-End 05, Galerie Da-End, Paris, FR  
Art Paris Art Fair, Galerie Da-End, Grand Palais, Paris, FR

2014

Cabinet Da-End 04, Galerie Da-End, Paris, FR  
Art Paris Art Fair, Galerie Da-End, Grand Palais, Paris  
Pense-bête - Collection 1, Galerie de Roussan, Paris, FR

2013

The Woods, solo show, Galerie Da-End, Paris, FR  
Cabinet Da-End 03, Galerie Da-End, Paris, FR  
Art Paris Art Fair, Galerie Da-End, Grand Palais, Paris, FR

2012

Vida Museum, solo show, Borgholm, SE

2011

Smålands Museum, National Museum of Glass, SE  
Pelle Unger Gallery, solo exhibition, Stockholm, SE  
Galleri Monica Strandberg, solo exhibition, Kalmar, SE

2010

The National Museum of Glass, solo exhibition, Växjö, SE  
Bergdala Konstgalleri, solo exhibition, Växjö, SE

2009

Galleri Monica Strandberg, Kalmar, SE  
Handwerkform, «Floral Magic», Hannover, DE  
Sydosten, The Design Archive, Pukeberg, SE

## AWARDS & GRANTS

2018-2019

The Swedish Arts Grants Committee, two-years fellowship

2014

Barometern, Gota Media – Golden Feather  
The Swedish Arts Grants Committee, one-year fellowship

2009

Sydostens scholarship  
Regional Council in Kalmar, bourse de travail

2008

Fellowship for culture, Nybro Kommun

## COLLECTIONS

Walton Family Foundation, US - James Palumbo Collection, UK  
- Fondation Francès, FR - Collection Granjon, FR - The National Museum of Glass, SE - The National Public Art Council, SE  
- Panevezys Municipality, Lithuania - Nybro Municipality, SE - Emmaboda Municipality, SE - Kalmar Municipality, SE - Linköping Municipality, SE - Annette & Peder Bonnier Collection, US - Jonas & Helena Bonnier Collection, SE



**Markus Åkesson - The Grove**  
Oil on canvas, 180 x 140 cm, 2020  
Courtesy of the artiste and the Galerie Da-End



**Markus Åkesson**  
**Witch riding backwards on a goat**  
Oil on canvas, 145 x 100 cm, 2020  
Courtesy of the artiste and the  
Galerie Da-End



**Markus Åkesson**  
**Witch riding backwards on a goat**  
**(turquoise portrait)**  
Oil on canvas, 50 x 60 cm, 2020  
Courtesy of the artiste and the  
Galerie Da-End

AVAILABLE FOR THE PRESS



Markus Åkesson - In the Quiet Morning  
Oil on canvas, 145 x 100 cm, 2020  
Courtesy of the artiste and the Galerie Da-End



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Tuesday - Thursday : 14h-19h. Friday - Saturday : 11h-19h