

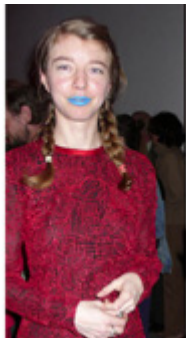


Print Article



Emily Sundblad

Albus Greenspon gallery. May. Emily Sundblad *que barbara*. 212-255-7872. Opening hours: Tues-Sat 10-6. AlbusGreenspon.com 2011 \$37,500 Phillips de Pury & Co. New York May 13, 2011



Emily Sundblad



Emily Sundblad in performance at Albus Greenspon

Emily Sundblad SUNDAY PAINTER by Elisabeth Kley

A canny young artist with a gambler's sense of humor, **Emily Sundblad** made her auction debut last week with the very painting she used for the announcement for her first solo show in New York, "*Que Bárbara!*," which opened at Albus Greenspon in the far West Village on May 9, 2011. The painting, consigned to Phillips de Pury for its day sale of contemporary art on May 13, 2011, sold for \$37,500 (with the auction house premium), more than double its \$15,000 presale high estimate. It was Sundblad's first appearance at auction, and certainly a promising start. As Sundblad says in the press release for her show at Albus Greenspon, "let's cut to the chase."

Sundblad knows the art business -- she's the co-founder of Reena Spaulings, among the most experimental galleries of the latest East Village revival. Originally located in a storefront way down on Grand Street on the Lower East Side, near Kossar's Bialys and some public housing, it began as a nameless business that would give her a visa to stay in New York after she finished school. For one of the more memorable shows, fellow Swede Klara Liden (who's since done a project for the Museum of Modern Art) built a sleeping loft hideaway out of abandoned lumber in the gallery.

Sundblad has described herself as a Sunday painter -- perhaps because in addition to being a dealer, she is also a singer, collaborative video artist and actress. Her appropriately insouciant painting style suffuses her announcement self-portrait with a stylish sense of effortless leisure. A slender young woman with a blue net mask covering her face sits demurely in on a straight-backed chair, in front of what could be a theater curtain. Her hair is in a classical bun; she wears a vaguely Greek-styled sleeveless shift; and a copy of the *New York Times* is dangling from her hand.

The rest of the works in the exhibition give the impression of a pleasure in painting unfettered by any pre-conceptions of subject matter or style. One is a picture of a flowering branch, another features a yellow New York taxi, and still another is a simple rendition of a metal exit door, done in a range of grays reminiscent of works by **Jasper Johns**.

"As a painter," commented Mitchell Albus, the gallery operator who has more typically been known for brilliant art historical re-presentations, "Emily could be described as a precocious ingénue version of **Florine Stettheimer**." And it's possible to see Sundblad's canvases -- especially the reds and pinks, as well as her interest in flowers, the art world and New York everyday life -- as amped up punk versions of Stettheimer's enchanting reconstructions of her environment, family and friends.

On the announcement self-portrait, which was also an invitation to a musical performance at the exhibition opening, an eclectic list of



Emily Sundblad, *Untitled*, 2011, Albus Greenspon



Artist K8 Hardy



Amy Greenspon and Mitchell Albus



Nate Lowman

musical and cinematic influences is lettered over her body, ranging from Bach and Purcell to Kanye West and **Yoko Ono**. The slinky backless floor-length gown she wore to sing, a machine-age computer-generated pattern of red lace tulle over black, is credited to Proenza Schouler -- the design team of Lazaro Fernandez and Jack McCollough (both of whom attended).

As a singer, Sundblad is the real thing -- imagine a cross between Klaus Nomi and Edith Piaf in the form of an elegant young woman so unassuming onstage that she seems to be living out a fantasy in dress-up, passionately belting out soulful tunes that also bring Kurt Weill and Cole Porter to mind. A series of wonderful mash-ups combining classical and punk, including a combination of Syd Barrett's "If It's In You" and Bach's Goldberg variations, were arranged by pianist Pete Drungle on the computer.

The gallery floor was covered with a hotel-style brown carpet and folding chairs in rows, and the band (pianist, drummer, guitarist and string quartet) performed in a corner in front of a floor to ceiling blue velvet curtain. The place was packed with art world notables including Jay Sanders (co-curator of the next Whitney Biennial), Artists Space director Stefan Kalmár, and artists K8 Hardy, **Ellen Cantor**, **Charline von Heyl**, **Rob Pruitt** and **Nate Lowman**. Dealers Margaret Lee (147 Canal Street), Melissa Bent (former director of Rivington Arms) and Fernando Mesta (owner and director of House of Gaga, Sundblad's Mexico City Gallery) were also on hand.

Afterwards, a jubilant Sundblad met guests at Julius, the legendary West Village gay bar, famous for its encyclopedic jukebox and its menu of hamburgers on paper plates. Two boxes of fried chicken and cornbread from Dirty Bird were also ready to eat. Mitchell Albus and his partner Amy Greenspon spent a long time choosing music and finally started things off with a late Elvis song. People were ready to dance.

"Emily Sundblad: Que Bárbara!," May 9-June 18, 2011, Albus Greenspon, 71 Morton Street, New York, N.Y., 10014.

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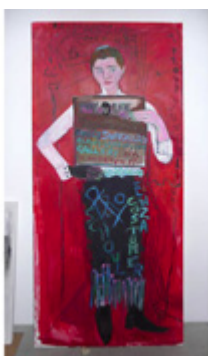
Emily Sundblad, *Untitled*, 2011, Albus Greenspon



Designer Jack McCollough of Proenza Schouler



Artist and 47 Canal Street director Margaret Lee and dealer Fernando Mesta from House of Gaga in Mexico City



Emily Sundblad, *Self-Portrait*, 2011, Albus Greenspon