

*'In a way nature is always the starting point. It acts as a mirror on the soul; a reflex. In nature I find something that triggers a kind of personal state of mind.'*<sup>1</sup>

Ice. Rock. River. Stream. The fall of light. The drift of oceans. Echoes. Fragments. Cracks. Shards.  
Immense Arctic landscapes or the smallest detail plucked from a river's frosty edge.

Within the undulating veils of Agneta Ekholm's paintings an intensely active world is discernible. Resonant forms ebb through the central plane of her canvases, submerging our field of vision in their folds. As we follow each cascading contour, an increased sense of depth is revealed. Pure white works against jet black to create a series of translucent, cumulative mid-tones. Clean monochrome edges help define an evolving mass of energy and flux. Coalescent and sensual, these forms suggest the existence of some eternal space, at once cosmic and subjective.

Ekholm is taking us into the tidal stream of nature, to a site of restless creation. Observations of the natural world are central to the logic of these works. From the smooth surface of a rock, worn down by the erosive power of wind or wave, to the dancing light of the aurora borealis, the same elemental values, the same geometric principles, are present. This larger, organic design system can be witnessed within core of the artist's language, transformed into a series of human, painterly gestures.

Located somewhere between hard-edged and action painting, Ekholm maintains a subtle balance between the premeditated and immediately experienced. This approach involves the viewer in a way that is different from many other forms of minimalist painting. That is, while there is something distinctly formalistic about her images – they operate inside a series of systematic rules of production, are meticulously executed and highly considered – they also reveal the material trace of the artist's fluid and intuitive movements. Possessing a sense of control not often associated with true action painting, her execution could be more easily read as being choreographic – a sequence of directed, yet felt, movements.

It is within these contradictory visual shifts that the eye is invited to linger, to explore the lucidity and depth found in the space between the ordered and arbitrary. Like some icy chasm, these works hover at the edge of the known, revealing a desire to communicate with a still, internal, immaterial other. They echo with the clarity and shadow of human consciousness and promise an endless, expansive journey.

Held within the inky darkness, the delicate opacity of each meticulous wash, in the swirling pools and voids, is a reminder that the landscape, nature and its elements are mysterious, ancient and powerful sites in which such deep, quiet contemplation can take place. Ekholm's painstakingly beautiful images trigger such still moments of observation, of fluid and calm introspection. Perhaps they are not so much asking us to find meaning in their forms but to find meaning in our experience of looking into them.

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<sup>1</sup>'Elements' catalogue Essay by Phe Luxford, July 2013