

**THE OTHER SIDE OF BOREDOM**  
**ADAM EKBERG**  
**EXHIBITION & ARTIST TALK**  
**MARCH 6-27, 2020**  
**AURORA PHOTOCENTER AT TUBE FACTORY**

Gertrude Stein once remarked that to make creative genius happen, “You have to sit around so much, doing nothing, really doing nothing.” Adam Ekberg makes this stillness the starting point to his delightful, and often explosive, photographs. “Boredom is where my work begins. It comes before anything else and is what makes a kind of open thinking possible,” says Ekberg. “To put it simply, boredom is what allows ideas to happen.” He encourages us to give boredom a chance in these harried times, saying, “I often feel that we think we’re accomplishing things when we’re constantly doing, but an abundance of unstructured time creates the possibility for meaningful discoveries.”

Ekberg creates a space in which the mind can devise a logic of its own, and ordinary objects are liberated from the drudgery of daily life. In his images, chairs fly through the air, unexpectedly propelled by an ad-hoc board and bucket catapult, and roller skates drag race across an empty field. Ekberg has made many of his best-known images right here in the Hoosier State. He explains, “My wife’s family has a farm in northeastern Indiana, and they’ve been extremely generous in letting me photograph there, lending a hand when the set-up is really complicated.”

Ekberg’s photographs often include a split-second moment that perfects the picture. The images are made only with a camera, with no Photoshop or other digital manipulation involved. As such, each image takes meticulous planning, and often many, many attempts to capture perfectly. For example, when making the image *Lawn Chair Catapult*, Ekberg states, “I remember that we shot it about twenty times. I also remember how fun it was. We were all alone in that field in the middle of nowhere, taking turns dropping the cinderblock and operating the shutter. Sometimes the chair flew in the wrong direction, sometimes it all went wrong, but at the end of each effort, we were belly laughing every time at the precision required to make something absurd and joyous.”

Ekberg’s translation of boredom reveals the poignant beauty that can take shape, however fleetingly, when the glint of possibility leaps out from the mundane. “A lot of what we call the creative spark or energy is just that moment when you move past boredom,” says Aurora co-founder and co-curator Mary Goodwin. “Adam’s images beckon to the other side.”

Adam Ekberg received his MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He has recently had solo exhibitions at ClampArt, New York; DeSoto Gallery, Los Angeles; and Fotografiska, Stockholm, Sweden. His work has been included in recent group exhibitions at venues including Aperture, New York; Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockland, ME; Aran Cravey Gallery, Los Angeles CA; DePaul Art Museum, Chicago; RayKo Photo Center, San Francisco; and Crawford Art Gallery, Cork Ireland. Ekberg has been awarded residencies at Yaddo and Playa. He is the recipient of both the Society for Photographic Education’s Imagemaker and Tanne Foundation Awards. His work is in the collections of The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, and The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, among others. His first monograph, titled *The Life of Small Things*, was published by Waltz Books. Ekberg teaches in Philadelphia and lives in New Jersey.

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1. *Arrangement #1*, 2009, archival pigment print, 30 x 40
2. *An Aerosol Container in an Abandoned Peach Orchard*, 2012, archival pigment print, 30 x 40
3. *Transferring a Gallon of Milk From One Container to Another*, 2014, archival pigment print, 40 x 30
4. *Lawn Chair Catapult*, 2017, archival pigment print, 20 x 24
5. *Burning Skull*, 2014, archival pigment print, 40 x 50
6. *Untitled*, 2016, archival pigment print, 20 x 24
7. *Arrangement #2*, 2010, archival pigment print, 40 x 30
8. *A Disco Ball on the Mountain*, 2005, archival pigment print, 30 x 40
9. *Bic Lighter, Banana and Cocktail Umbrellas*, 2017, archival pigment print, 24 x 20



10. *Roller Skates and Aerosol Containers*, 2017, archival pigment print, 30 x 40
11. *Beach Umbrella and Cocktail Umbrellas*, 2018, archival pigment print, 40 x 50
12. *A Half Gallon of Milk Skateboarding Across the Midwest*, 2019, archival pigment print, 20 x 24
13. *Dominoes*, 2015, archival pigment print, 20 x 24

14. Specialty Publication: Published in conjunction with the 2020 exhibition, *The Other Side of Boredom*, Adam Ekberg discusses the creative value of boredom in conversation with artist and writer Dave Snyder. Published by Aurora PhotoCenter, Indianapolis, Indiana. A limited number of the publication will be available at the exhibition opening; it is also available for purchase on MagCloud.