

# VEDA

## COUNTERFLOW

EVA LÖFDAHL

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Eva Löfdahl has built a substantial body of work that resists linear narrative. Her practice highlights points of potential within the most ordinary materials, forms, and situations, allowing the artist to reconfigure meaning in unexpected and surprising ways. What may initially register as an impenetrability familiar to contemporary art – a refusal to explain or reveal itself – becomes, in Löfdahl’s hands, a form of precision grounded in her attention to both poetic potentials and material logic.

The exhibition Counterflow, at Veda, highlights this undertaking, which has been at the core of Löfdahl’s artistic career for over 40 years. Most commonly used to describe physical phenomena such as currents, traffic, or movement against a dominant direction, the term “counterflow” suggests here a perceptual resistance: a way of working that moves against habitual readings.

The exhibition brings together three overlapping bodies of work. At its centre is *An Audile Double* (2022–2024), a series of 33 photographs of jellyfish washed up on a beach. Distributed across the gallery, the unframed images extend over eighteen metres along one wall and into a niche, appearing almost incidental at first, yet calibrated so that each jellyfish can be encountered as its own singular form. Stranded on the shore - some still living, most already dead- the photographs show the translucent jellyfish reflecting the light of the sun, turning their gelatinous shapes into temporary lenses. The species, *Aurelia aurita*, is commonly known as the “ear jellyfish,” named after aurita, which translates as “having ears,” in reference to the tiny ear-like structures on its body. The title, *An Audile Double*, thus implies an identification with the jellyfish through the sense of hearing, offering an unexpected point of departure for interpreting the work.

Running through the exhibition as a spatial extension of this photographic work is *Untitled* (2011), a set of seven metal chains that emerge from the gallery walls and rest on the floor like long tails. The decision to include this body of work was inspired by the architecture of the space itself: pipes, cables, and bars that cut across the windows and assert themselves as structural facts. The chains, Löfdahl notes in our correspondence, can “stand such strong elements.” They read as part of the building’s vocabulary: a latent mechanism of connection, a two-way channel between the gallery interior and what lies outside. Here, the chain becomes both an object and an infrastructure. Installed in relation to the photographs, it extends the exhibition’s logic of seriality into physical space. That meaning is further unsettled by the way the chains taper into thinner, almost tentacle-like ends, as if the jellyfish’s oral arms had sprouted through the walls.

Completing the exhibition are two new works, *Untitled* (2025), which introduce another kind of perceptual shift. From a distance, these compact forms, which are constructed from painted mirror glass, broken and reassembled into a three-dimensional, topographical structure, may resemble mineral fragments or geological matter. Up close, they reveal their hand-made facture: fractured planes, joined edges, and a surface that refuses a single, fixed image. Löfdahl describes them as “topographical/cubist,” appearing to change dramatically with small shifts in light, depending on the viewer’s position. Their instability is not an effect layered onto the object, but embedded in its construction: reflection and painting collapse into one another, producing a material that

behaves like an image, and an image that insists on being material.

Altogether, these works propose a system in which temporality feels different: less linear and cumulative, more porous and contingent. The perfect metaphor for this is the jellyfish itself, as it occupies a particularly peculiar position both in the exhibition and in the biological world. It is an organism whose form is maintained by water pressure, and which continuously exchanges matter with its environment. When exposed to stress, physical damage, or starvation, certain types of jellyfish can even shrink inward, reabsorb their tentacles, lose their ability to swim, and settle as a cyst-like mass. In a little while, they can reorganise themselves into a polyp, from which new ones bud off later. This exceedingly rare process allows the organism to rebuild itself according to a different body plan.

The same logic of structural flexibility seems to also be at the heart of Löfdahl's practice. Objects undergo a kind of "cellular reorganisation," surrendering their previous roles and associations in order to become something else entirely. In *Counterflow*, the viewer's familiarity is continuously dissolved and reassembled. As a state of estrangement arises, so too does a sense of renewed possibility. The works develop new frameworks, yet remain committed to their own presence rather than to history or narrative.

*Counterflow* unfolds as a meditation on demise, transformation, and mystery, not by translating these forces into fixed meanings, but by holding them in suspension. Rather than offering resolution, Löfdahl keeps the work's potentiality open; in doing so, she proposes a world in which openness and play are fundamental conditions of both life and art.

Text: Adriana Blidaru

Eva Löfdahl was born in 1953 in Gothenburg, Sweden, and currently lives and works in Stockholm.

In 2024 Marabouparken Konsthall presented a survey exhibition titled *The Flow of Everything*. Her work was featured in a large-scale retrospective exhibition at Moderna Museet, Stockholm in 2011. In 2023 her work was presented as part of *Sleepless Nights* at Moderna Museet. Past solo exhibitions include presentations at Veda, Florence (2022 and 2018), Lunds Konsthall (2009), Krognoshuset Lund (2004), Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2002), Kunstraum Düsseldorf (1998), and at Galerie Nordenhake (most recently in 2025). She has participated in group exhibitions at Marabouparken Konsthall, Sundbyberg, Sweden (2024), Artipelag, Stockholm (2022), Göteborgs Konstmuseum (2019, 2008), Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm (2017, 2006), Malmö konstmuseum, Malmö (2017), Clifford Gallery, Colgate University, New York (2016), Kalmar Konstmuseum, Kalmar (2015), Art in General, New York (2013), Modernautställningen, Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2010), Liljevalchs konsthall, Stockholm (2005) and ARS 95, Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki (1995). In 1995 she represented Sweden at the Venice Biennale. Public commissions include Kalender Stadsparken, Lund (2013), The Entrepreneur Monument, Helsinki (2006) and Kalmar Stortorg (2003). Löfdahl was awarded the Sten A Olssons Art Prize 2019 which included a presentation at Göteborgs Konstmuseum the same year.