FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PER KIRKEBY
SHADOWS TO THE FEAST
11 NOVEMBER 2026 – 20 FEBRUARY 2027
Opening Reception – Wednesday 11 November 6-8PM

VeneKlasen, New York is pleased to present *Per Kirkeby: Shadows to the Feast*, an exhibition bringing together major late paintings from the career of Per Kirkeby (b. 1938, d. 2018), alongside bronze sculptures.

The exhibition takes its title from Kirkeby's 1981 essay *The Continued Text*, in which the artist reflects on Anselm Feuerbach's painting of Plato's *Symposium*. Imagining the ancient banquet illuminated by oil lamps, Kirkeby writes, "The oil lamps are lit, the light flickers and licks over the marbled walls. Shadows to the feast."

Kirkeby returns to this relationship between light and shadow in the essay, describing the European pictorial tradition as "a clair-obscur painting, with the light decided by shadows." The interplay between illumination and darkness became an increasingly important concern for Kirkeby in the early 1980s, shaping his approach to painting for the remainder of his career.

His emphasis on the role of shadow is particularly evident in the late paintings presented in the exhibition. Forms emerge from dense passages of color and shadow only to recede again, as still-life elements, fragments of trees, geological formations, and other traces of landscape appear and dissolve within their layered surfaces. Never resolving fully into either landscape or abstraction, the paintings remain suspended between the two, a tension that finds a three-dimensional counterpart in the bronze sculptures.

For Kirkeby, darkness was essential to bringing color and light forward, but shadow also held a broader, existential significance within his painterly philosophy. His fascination with shadow and darkness finds parallels in a Northern European landscape tradition in which darkness is as essential as light, particularly in the work of predecessors he admired, such as Caspar David Friedrich and August Strindberg. In Kirkeby's paintings, the boundary between light and shadow ultimately becomes a boundary between what can be known and what remains unknowable.

Born in Copenhagen in 1938, Kirkeby studied geology at the University of Copenhagen before attending the city's Experimental Art School. An internationally celebrated painter, sculptor, filmmaker, poet, and author, Kirkeby's works are found in major museum collections worldwide, including Tate, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and Museum of Modern Art, New York, among many others. Important solo museum exhibitions include Kunsthalle Bern (1979); Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (1982); Whitechapel Gallery, London (1985); IVAM Centre del Carme, Valencia (1989); Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2002); Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk (2008); Zendai Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai (2007); Tate Modern, London (2009); The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC (2012); BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels (2012); Museum Jorn, Silkeborg (2015); Beaux-Arts de Paris (2017);

Château La Coste, Le Puy-Sainte-Réparade (2018); Schloss Gottorf, Landesmuseen Schleswig-Holstein, Schleswig (2018); Kunsthalle Krems, Krems (2018); Stiftung Insel Hombroich, Neuss (2019); Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk (2020); Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2023); ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, Ishøj (2023); HE Art Museum, Shunde (2026); and Museum Jorn, Silkeborg (2026).

Per Kirkeby: Shadows to the Feast opens with a reception on Wednesday 11 November 2026 from 6-8PM and will remain on view until Saturday 20 February 2027. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10AM-6PM.

For more information, please contact the gallery at press@veneklasengallery.com, visit www.veneklasengallery.com, or contact Sarah Goulet Communications at sarah@sarahgoulet.com.