

CAMILLE HENROT EGYPTOMANIA

11 March - 25 April 2009

"My method of working envisages art as a form of personal anthropology in which the relationship between the general and the particular - and through it the question of the relationship with time - is central." Camille Henrot.

In the manner of a geologist or archaeologist, Camille Henrot excavates culture - her raw material - in successive strata and layers. Far from wishing to rationalise things, Camille Henrot intensifies the complexity of our relationship to the world, working by means of extending, superimposing and recycling, as if to ward off the anguish of obliteration. So it is that the series *Room Movies*, as well as *Courage mon amour*, reveals a desire to resist time, whereas *King Kong Addition* survives visual interference and the announcement of its own disappearance. Her most recent project, *Film Spatial*, created around the personality of Yona Friedman, seeks to deny space and its temporalities. For her first solo exhibition at galerie Kamel Mennour, Camille Henrot is showing a collection of new works combining drawing, film, and sculpture. Installed in the depths of the gallery, the *Tevau* - a ritualistic object from New Caledonia - is here revisited by means of a contemporary talisman: a fire hose. If the form of this rolled-up object evokes exchange and reciprocity, the torsion between the two coils indicates that the two volumes are indeed of equal value. With the metamorphosing of this fire hose into a *Tevau*, the artist reminds us of the ritualistic nature of certain modern objects, as well as the resurgence of the primitive in Western cultures.

On the ground floor, the installation *Hauts Reliefs* and the showing of *Cynopolis* transport us to Egypt and the site of the first pyramid at Sakkarah. Made up of 13 sculptures in plaster and sandstone, *Hauts Reliefs* initiates an original dialogue between sculpture and plastic bag, history and anecdote, perpetuity and everyday life, whilst the film *Cynopolis* shows images of this historic site in operation. Concentrating on a group of stray dogs, the camera in *Cynopolis* films, in turn, workers, tourists and animals. The dog, considered in Egyptian mythology to be the boatman between the world of the living and that of the dead, here embodies the return to a savage state of a creature humans have tried to domesticate - in other words nostalgia for an anterior state, reflecting this decomposing landscape where the pyramid is turning back into a mountain. Thus, in between the will to remember and to forget, the real and the imaginary, matter and abstraction, this exhibition establishes the foundations of a problem dealt with frequently in Camille Henrot's work: that of the elasticity of cultural products, or indeed the tendency inherent in everything to return of its own accord to shapelessness.

Born in Paris in 1978, Camille Henrot first came to public attention during the exhibition "J'en rêve" at the Fondation Cartier in 2005. Since then, she has developed a national and international career. Her work has been shown by, among other institutions, the Atelier of the Jeu de Paume and the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, as well as at the Hara Museum in Tokyo. She recently took part in the tenth edition of the Paul Ricard prize at the Fondation d'Entreprise Ricard, *La Consistance du visible*, on the invitation of Nicolas Bourriaud.

Camille Henrot "Egyptomania" is on show at galerie kamel mennour
Saturdays, 9am to 7pm.

For further information, please contact Marie-Sophie Eiché,
Jessy Mansuy-Leydier and Emma-Charlotte Gobry-Laurencin.

Claire Staebler, January 2009