

# CAMILLE HENROT GROSSE FATIGUE

5 February - 8 March 2014

Kamel Mennour is pleased to present "Grosse Fatigue" by Camille Henrot - Silver Lion at the 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale.

*In the beginning there was no earth, no water - nothing. There was a single hill called Nunne Chaha.*

*In the beginning everything was dead.*

*In the beginning there was nothing, nothing at all. No light, no life, no movement, no breath.*

*In the beginning there was an immense unit of energy.*

*In the beginning there was nothing but shadow and only darkness and water and the great god Bumba.*

*In the beginning were quantum fluctuations.*

Excerpt from "Grosse Fatigue"

*"Our question thus becomes clearly the question of the impossible experience or the experience of the impossible: an experience removed from the conditions of possibility of a finite knowledge, and which is nevertheless an experience."*

Excerpt from "The Creation of the World, Or, Globalization" (2002) by Jean-Luc Nancy

With *Grosse Fatigue*, Camille Henrot set herself the challenge of telling the story of the universe's creation. Indeed, the fatigue is *grosse*, or hugely weighty, she who has condemned herself to carrying the weight of the world on her shoulders like the Titan Atlas. But aren't such dark and lonely burdens meant to become as light, as beautiful and fragile as soap bubbles in the hands of an artist? Holding the world in the palm of her hand... it floats effortlessly at the palm's surface as though, imbued with magical powers, the artist has truly resurrected the youth of humanity from the depths of the ages - bringing to life the magisterial dawn we had thought too far off to ever be seen again, yet which captivates us as easily as a magic lantern does a child.

The backbone of *Grosse Fatigue* is a long poem delivered in the style of spoken word, the form of expression used to great effect in the '70s by the New York musicians *The Last Poets*. It mixes scientific history with Creation stories belonging to religious (Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Islamic, etc), hermetic (Kabbalah, Freemasonry, etc), and oral (Dogon, Inuit, Navajo, etc) traditions in a joyous syncretism. In the visual background of this impassioned oration, Camille Henrot performs what she calls an "intuitive unfolding of knowledge" through a series of shots unveiling the treasures hidden away in the prestigious collections of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC<sup>1</sup> - shots that have been reworked with images found on the Internet and scenes filmed in locations as diverse as a pet store and a domestic interior that appear like pop-ups at the screen's surface.

Of course, *Grosse Fatigue* doesn't purport to produce any objective truth. Trying to *com-prehend* (*to comprehend = to grasp*) an infinite mass of information that, by definition, will forever remain *in excess* in the span of thirteen minutes is an exercise that falls within the bounds of what Walter Benjamin, using psychiatric terms, called a "cataloguing psychosis". The artist explains: "In my video, the desire to universalize knowledge is accompanied by the conscience I have of this act. As soon as you think you have laid out and circumscribed the entirety of your universe within a single, selfsame landscape, isn't the only question of any worth, and which relentlessly nags and torments the mind, inevitably the same as that with which Jonas Cohn ends his *History of the Infinite* (1896): "But what is there beyond the limit?"<sup>2</sup>

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**Camille Henrot's exhibition** is on show from Tuesday to Saturday, 11am to 7pm, at the 47 rue Saint-André des Arts - 75006 Paris.

For further information, please contact Marie-Sophie Eichè, Jessy Mansuy-Leydier and Emma-Charlotte Gobry-Laurencin, by phone: +33 1 56 24 03 63 or by email: [galerie@kamelmennour.com](mailto:galerie@kamelmennour.com).

<sup>1</sup> The Smithsonian Institution is the biggest scientific and museum complex in the world. As part of the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, Camille Henrot was granted permission to film the collections belonging to the following departments: the Smithsonian Archives of American Art, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, and the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum.

<sup>2</sup> History of speculative thought, 1896 Jonas Cohn. (*my translation*)

Born in 1978, Camille Henrot lives and works in New York.  
Her work has been shown in numerous group and solo exhibitions in France: at the Louvre, the Centre Pompidou, the Palais de Tokyo, the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Espace culturel Louis Vuitton, the Jeu de Paume, the Fondation Cartier, the [mac] - Musée d'Art Contemporain in Marseille; as well as abroad: at the Emily Harvey Foundation in New York, the NOMA - New Orleans Museum of Art, the Slought Foundation in Philadelphia, The Kitchen, the SculptureCenter in New York, the Kunsthalle in Mainz, the Stedelijk Museum and the Frankendael Foundation in Amsterdam, the Bielefelder Kunstverein, the Signal - Center for Contemporary Art in Malmo, the LAMAG - Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, as part as the Benin Biennale, the MOCAD in Detroit, Bold Tendencies in London, the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Seoul, the Centre pour l'Image Contemporaine in Geneva, the Hara Museum and the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo.  
Her films have been presented in different festivals such as the 55th Venice Biennale (Silver Lion for her film « Grosse Fatigue »), the Moving Images Biennale ICA in Londres, the International Film Festival in Rotterdam, the International Film Festival in Clermont-Ferrand, the Quinzaine des réalisateurs at the Festival de Cannes and the Hors Pistes Festival at the Centre Pompidou.  
Many solo exhibitions will take place during the year: at the Chisenhale Gallery in London, the Schinkel Pavillon in Berlin, the New Museum and the Horticultural Society in New York, the Kunsthalle Charlottenborg in Copenhagen and Bêtonsalon in Paris.  
Next fall, Camille Henrot will co-curate an exhibition with Ruba Katrib at the SculptureCenter in New York.  
Camille Henrot is nominated for the 2014 Hugo Boss Prize.