

CAMILLE HENROT

Paintings

June 22nd – July 5th, 2020

kamel mennour is pleased to present the first exhibition of paintings by Camille Henrot, an artist already distinguished by her diverse output: she was awarded the Silver Lion at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013 for her film *Grosse Fatigue*; her ongoing series of floral arrangements grounded in the Sogetsu school's tradition of ikebana has been included in one-person shows from the New Museum in New York (2014) to the Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery (2019); and her interactive telephones, wall frescoes, bronze sculptures, and watercolor drawings were all featured in her sweeping carte-blanche exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris in 2017. In this special two-part online exhibit between kamel mennour and Metro Pictures, she debuts paintings from three recently conceived series.

Henrot's practice reflects the wide-ranging interests that inform her work. Fittingly, as *Grosse Fatigue* is a film about her impossible wish to know everything, her modes of expression are not bound to any fixed set of mediums. Over the last several months she has begun to work with acrylic, oil, and watercolor on canvas and other surfaces. Henrot makes her drawings with skillful speed, producing several versions of the same motif in a single day, but the nature of paint requires the artist to slow down, to walk away from and return to her canvas another day. Thus, in contrast to the drawings, the paintings represent a condensation of time and feelings. Made while experiencing a range of emotions, they are pictures of a more complete subjectivity. They contain traces of the many psychic states that define our humanity.

"Is Today Tomorrow?" is a series of small paintings Henrot made on a daily basis while practicing social distancing at home. Done spontaneously at the end of each day, the paintings have the quality of diary entries as they reflect the specific moments in which they were made. The only unifying thread between them is their square format, which recalls the look of an Instagram post. Like the social media platform's interface, this series is an equally random collection of images that, much like this series, serves as a portrait of an individual subjectivity. "Inside Out" is another series started since social distancing. The imagery underscores a heightened awareness of our bodies' internal fragility and complexity and combines it with scenes of the mundane activities that fill our days, as seen in the repeated images of figures stretching to reach their toes.

Henrot is expanding her ongoing "Systems of Attachment" series of bronze sculptures and drawings to include paintings, as well. These works consider human attachment—from the infant's earliest bond with its mother to its developmental need to separate — and the myriad ways this dynamic tension between attachment and separation continues to play out in relationships throughout our lives. A number of

The exhibition "Paintings" is accessible online: <https://viewingroom.kamelmennour.com>

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the paintings in this series use the familiar art historical trope of the Mother and Child. The motif's ubiquity has made it banal, precisely the reason she incorporates it into her work—insidiousness can be found beneath the surface of its banality. In Henrot's paintings we see a plump, rosy-cheeked baby with all the signs of well-being held in the deflated arms of a figure whose body, in contrast, shows wear. It is neither a serene representation of tenderness nor is it one of callousness; it is instead a picture of ambivalence.