

Press Release

Camille Henrot. A Number of Things

30 January – 12 April 2025
Hauser & Wirth New York, 22nd Street



New York... This January, Camille Henrot will present 'A Number of Things,' her first major exhibition with Hauser & Wirth in New York City. Evoking children's developmental tools, shoes, distorted graphs and counting devices, new large-scale bronze sculptures from the artist's 'Abacus' series (2024)—presented alongside recent smaller-scaled works—address the friction between a nascent sense of imagination and society's systems of signs. The exhibition will also feature vibrant new paintings from Henrot's ongoing 'Dos and Don'ts' series. Initiated in 2021, this series combines printing, painting and collage techniques with excerpts from etiquette books and computer desktop screenshots to serve as palimpsests for play with color, gesture, texture and trompe l'oeil. The artworks on view will emerge from a site-specific flooring intervention conceived and designed by Henrot in collaboration with Charlap Hyman & Herrero. 'A Number of Things' vivaciously sets the stage for the arbitrary nature of human behavior to circulate freely between rule and exception.

As viewers enter the gallery, they will be greeted by a pack of dog sculptures tied to a pole, as if left unattended by their walker. Shaped from steel wool, aluminum sheets, carved wood, wax, chain and other unexpected materials, Henrot's creatures speak to the ever-unfolding effects of human design and domestication. As an extension of Henrot's ongoing interest in relationships of dependency, the dogs stand in as the ultimate image of attachment.



A few steps away, Henrot's latest 'Abacus' sculptures unite the utilitarianism of the ancient calculating tool with the arches and spirals of a children's bead maze—a toy popularized in the 1980s as a heuristic diversion in pediatric waiting rooms and nursery schools. Through these formal associations, an instinctive sense of play collides with the learned impulse to search out patterns and impose order. The soaring lines of '347 / 743 (Abacus)' (2023–2024) appear blown off their center, as if the towering figure is bending to the circumstances of its environment. The stacked rubber beads and subtly shoe-like form of '1263 / 3612 (Abacus)' (2023–2024) suggest a compulsion for step counting amidst the relentless pursuit of self-optimization. Meanwhile, the waves and ridges of '73 / 37 (Abacus)' (2023–2024) recall the infinitely cyclical nature of human development and learning. With their biomorphic contours, opaline patinas and quadruped or biped anatomies, these works seem charged with a life force of their own. Hovering between pure abstraction and their multivalent referents, Henrot's bronzes invite our unfettered, sensuous engagement, even as they allude to the symbolic systems that tyrannize our imaginations.

Behavioral conditioning is a central concern of Henrot's 'Dos and Don'ts' series. These richly layered paintings consider the idea of 'etiquette' as it relates to society at large: its codes of conduct, laws and notions of authority, civility and conformity. The works feature collaged fragments of invoices from an embryology lab; a note conjugating the German verb 'to be;' dental X-rays; digital error messages; children's school homework; and to-do lists, among other things. Together, they build on Henrot's interest in making sense of the urge to organize and categorize information—a theme that has been prevalent in her practice since her groundbreaking film 'Grosse Fatigue' (2013). The 'Dos and Don'ts' series distorts its source material to reveal the constructed, performative nature of any social identity, while acknowledging the emotional security that behavioral mimicry and groupthink can provide.

As the exhibition's almost childlike title suggests, 'A Number of Things' brings together a disparate but related group of works that collectively address the enormously difficult task that is living, learning and growing in society. With tenderness for the most banal traces of our existences, Henrot offers a meditation on the competing impulses to both integrate and resist the unquestioned structures of society in our everyday lives.

About the Artist

Born in 1978 in Paris, France, Camille Henrot lives and works in New York City. Her practice moves seamlessly between film, painting, drawing, bronze, sculpture and installation. Henrot draws upon references from literature, psychoanalysis, social media, cultural anthropology, self-help and the banality of everyday life in order to question what it means to be both a private individual and a global subject.

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A 2013 fellowship at the Smithsonian Institute resulted in Henrot's film 'Grosse Fatigue,' for which she was awarded the Silver Lion at the 55th Venice Biennale. She elaborated ideas from 'Grosse Fatigue' to conceive her acclaimed 2014 installation, 'The Pale Fox,' at Chisenhale Gallery in London. The exhibition, which displayed the breadth of her diverse output, went on to travel to institutions including Kunsthall Charlottenburg, Copenhagen; Bétonsalon – Centre for art and research, Paris; Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster, Germany; and Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Japan. In 2017, Henrot was given carte blanche at Palais de Tokyo in Paris, where she presented the major exhibition 'Days are Dogs.' She is the recipient of the 2014 Nam June Paik Award and the 2015 Edvard Munch Award, and has participated in the Lyon, Berlin, Sydney and Liverpool Biennials, among others.

Henrot has had numerous solo exhibitions worldwide, including the Middelheim Museum, Belgium; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; New Museum, New York; Schinkel Pavilion, Berlin; New Orleans Museum of Art; Fondazione Memmo, Rome; Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Japan, among others.

Carbon savings: Many of the artworks in this exhibition was shipped by sea from the France. Transporting by sea versus air resulted in a carbon saving equivalent to 57 economy flights between Paris and New York.

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Caption and courtesy information:

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1263 / 3612 (Abacus)
2024
Bronze, resin, rubber
251 x 79.6 x 392.2 cm / 98 7/8 x 31 3/8
x 154 3/8 in
Photo: Stefan Altenburger

Richelieu
2023
Steel wool, wood, textile
Unique
99 x 184 x 47 cm / 39 x 72 1/2 x 18 1/2 in
Photo: Jon Etter

Herbert
2023
Acryl, fiberglass, aluminum, dog collar
67 x 75 x 47 cm / 26 3/8 x 29 1/2 x 18 1/2 in
Photo: Nicolas Brasseur

73 / 37 (Abacus)
2024
Bronze, resin, rubber
210 x 272 x 100 cm / 82 5/8 x 107 1/8 x 39 3/8 in
Photo: Nicolas Brasseur

Tomber pour toujours
2023
Bronze
20 x 92 x 90 cm / 7 7/8 x 36 1/4 x 35 3/8 in
Photo: Nicolas Brasseur