

# CAMILLE HENROT GROSSE FATIGUE

5 février - 22 mars 2014

Kamel Mennour est heureux de présenter "Grosse Fatigue" de Camille Henrot - Lion d'Argent à la 55e Biennale de Venise.

*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*

Extrait de « Grosse fatigue »

« Notre question devient ainsi clairement la question de l'expérience impossible ou de l'expérience de l'impossible : une expérience soustraite aux conditions de possibilité d'une connaissance finie, et qui soit pourtant une expérience. »

Citation extraite de « La Création du monde Ou la Mondialisation » (2002) de Jean-Luc Nancy

Raconter l'histoire de la création de l'univers, tel est le défi que Camille Henrot s'est donné avec *Grosse Fatigue*. Grosse en effet est la fatigue de celle qui, à l'image du titan Atlas, s'est elle-même condamnée à devoir porter tout le poids du monde sur ses seules épaules. Mais les sombres fardeaux solitaires ne sont-ils pas destinés lorsqu'ils sont manipulés par un artiste à devenir aussi légers, beaux et fragiles qu'une bulle de savon ? Tenir le monde dans le creux de sa main... flottant sans effort à la surface de la paume comme si, par l'entremise de discrets pouvoirs magiques, l'artiste avait réellement pu ressusciter du fond des âges la jeunesse de l'humanité, aube magistrale que l'on croyait trop lointaine pour pouvoir être encore aperçue mais captivant néanmoins toute notre attention aussi facilement qu'une lanterne magique le regard d'un enfant.

La colonne vertébrale de *Grosse Fatigue* est un long poème déclamé en *spoken word*, ce mode d'expression typique utilisé à bon escient dans les années 70 par le groupe musical new-yorkais *The Last Poets*. Il mélange dans un joyeux syncrétisme l'histoire scientifique avec des récits de la Création appartenant aussi bien aux traditions religieuses (hindou, bouddhiste, juif, chrétien, islamique...), hermétiques (Cabbale, Franc Maçonnerie...) qu'orales (celles des peuples Dogons, Inuit, Navajo...). A l'arrière plan visuel de cette oraison enflammée, Camille Henrot opère ce qu'elle appelle un « dépliement intuitif du savoir » à travers une série de plans dévoilant les trésors renfermés dans les prestigieuses collections du *Smithsonian Institute* de Washington<sup>1</sup>, plans eux-mêmes travaillés de l'intérieur par des images capturées sur Internet et des scènes tournées dans des lieux aussi différents qu'une animalerie ou un intérieur domestique et qui apparaissent comme des *pop up* à la surface de l'écran.

*Grosse Fatigue* ne prétend pas bien sûr produire une quelconque vérité objective. Tenter de *com* - prendre (*to grasp = to comprehend*) en treize minutes une masse infinie d'informations qui demeureront par définition toujours *en excès* est un exercice relevant plutôt de ce que Walter Benjamin appelait en termes psychiatriques « un délire du groupement ». « Dans ma vidéo, explique l'artiste, la volonté d'universaliser les savoirs s'accompagne de la conscience que j'ai de cet acte. C'est-à-dire qu'au moment même où j'aspire à rendre le monde habitable par le biais d'une totalisation subjective, je sais en même temps la folie de cette tentative ainsi que ses limites intrinsèques. Dès lors que l'on pense avoir déployé et circonscrit tout son univers à l'intérieur d'un seul et unique paysage, la seule question, inévitablement, qui vaille, travaille et tenaille sans relâche l'esprit n'est-elle pas en effet celle-là même par laquelle Jonas Cohn conclut son *Histoire de l'infini* (1896) : « Mais au-delà, qu'y-a-t-il ? »<sup>2</sup>.

© Jonathan Chauveau

L'exposition de Camille Henrot est présentée du mardi au samedi, de 11 h à 19 h, au 47 rue Saint-André des Arts - 75006 Paris.

Pour toute information complémentaire, vous pouvez contacter Marie-Sophie Eiché, Jessy Mansuy-Leydier et Emma-Charlotte Gobry-Laurencin, par tél : +33 1 56 24 03 63 ou par email : galerie@kamelmennour.com.

<sup>1</sup> The Smithsonian Institution est le plus grand complexe muséal et scientifiques au monde. Dans le cadre du Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, Camille Henrot a été autorisée à filmer les collections des départements suivants : 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*)

Née en 1978, Camille Henrot vit et travaille à New York.

Son travail a été présenté au sein de nombreuses expositions personnelles et collectives en France : au musée du Louvre, au Centre Pompidou, au Palais de Tokyo, au Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, à l'Espace culturel Louis Vuitton, au Jeu de Paume, à la Fondation Cartier, au Musée d'Art Contemporain de Marseille ; ainsi qu'à l'étranger : à la Emily Harvey Foundation à New York, au NOMA - New Orleans Museum of Art, à la Slought Foundation à Philadelphie, à The Kitchen et au SculptureCenter à New York, à la Kunsthalle Mainz, au Stedelijk Museum et à la Frankendael Foundation à Amsterdam, à la Bielefelder Kunstverein, au Signal - Center for Contemporary Art à Malmo, au LAMAG - Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, dans le cadre de la Biennale du Bénin, au MOCAD de Detroit, à Bold Tendencies à Londres, au National Museum of Contemporary Art de Séoul, au Centre pour l'Image Contemporaine de Genève, au Hara Museum et au Mori Art Museum à Tokyo.

Plusieurs de ses films ont également été montrés et primés dans le cadre de festivals tels que la 55<sup>e</sup> biennale de Venise (Lion d'Argent pour son film « Grosse Fatigue »), la biennale Moving Images à ICA à Londres, le Festival international du film de Rotterdam, le Festival international du film de Clermont-Ferrand, la Quinzaine des réalisateurs à Cannes ou encore le festival Hors Piste au Centre Pompidou.

Différentes expositions personnelles lui seront consacrées prochainement à la Chisenhale Gallery à Londres, au Schinkel Pavillon à Berlin, au New Museum à New York, à l'Horticultural Society, à la Kunsthalle Charlottenborg à Copenhague et à Bétonsalon à Paris.

Cet automne, Camille Henrot est sera la co-commissaire, avec Ruba Katrib, d'une exposition au SculptureCenter à New York.

Elle est nommée pour le Prix Hugo Boss 2014.

# CAMILLE HENROT GROSSE FATIGUE

5 February - 22 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.

<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.

Camille Henrot

Grosse Fatigue, 2013

Vidéo (couleur, sonore) / Video (color, sound)

13 min

Musique originale de / Original music by Joakim

Voix / Voice by Akwetey Orraca-Tetteh

Texte écrit en collaboration avec / Text written in collaboration with Jacob Bromberg

Producteur / Producer : kamel mennour, Paris ; avec le soutien du / with the additional support of : Fonds de dotation Famille Moulin, Paris

Production: Silex Films

Lion d'argent - 55e Biennale de Venise / Silver Lion - 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, 2014

Vue de l'exposition / Exhibition view « Grosse Fatigue », kamel mennour, Paris

Projet développé dans le cadre du / Project conducted as part of the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship Program, Washington, D.C.

Remerciements particuliers aux / Special thanks to: the Smithsonian Archives of American Art, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, and the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum

© ADAGP Camille Henrot

Photo: Fabrice Seixas

Courtesy the artist, Silex Films and kamel mennour, Paris



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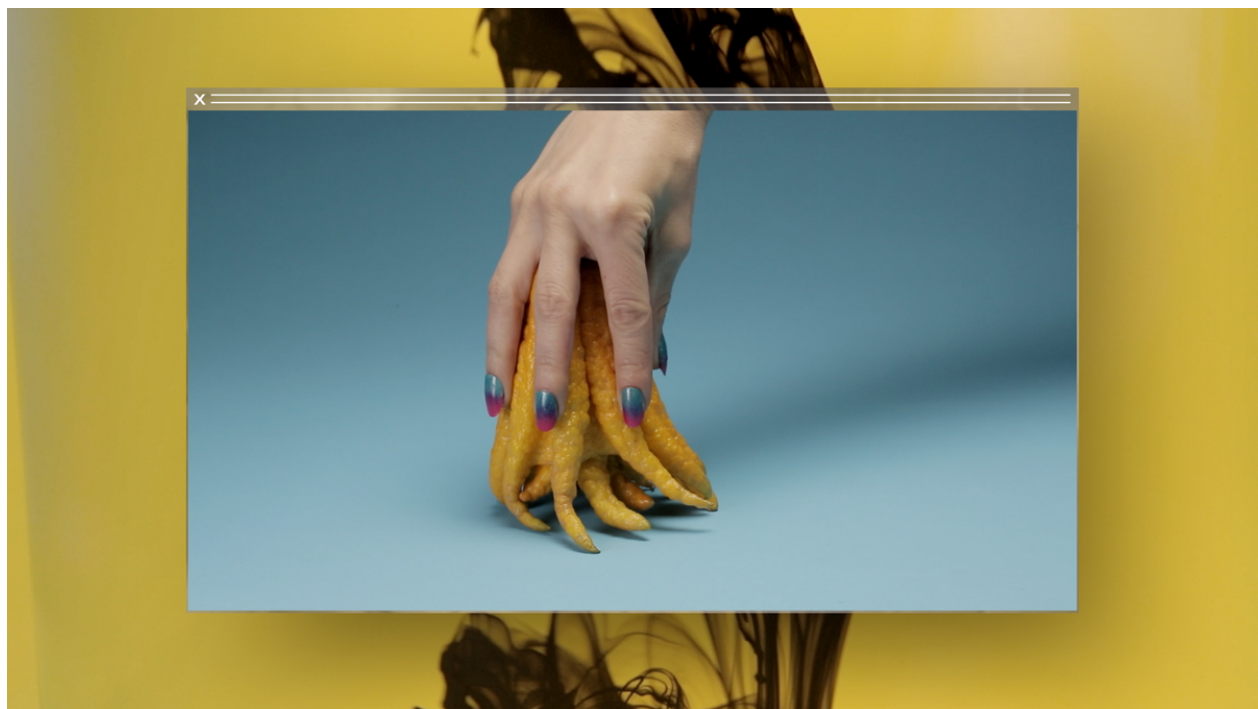
Lion d'argent - 55<sup>e</sup> Biennale de Venise / Silver Lion - 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, 2014

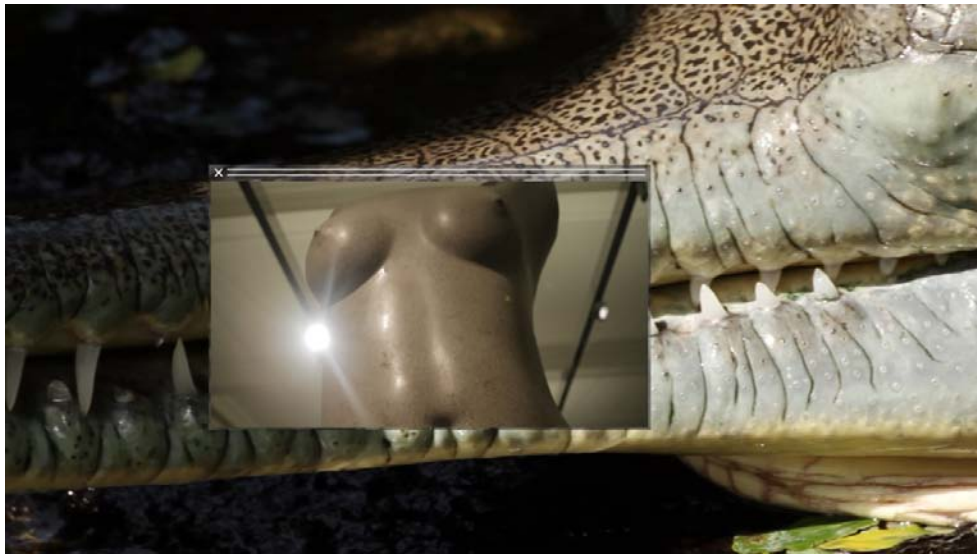
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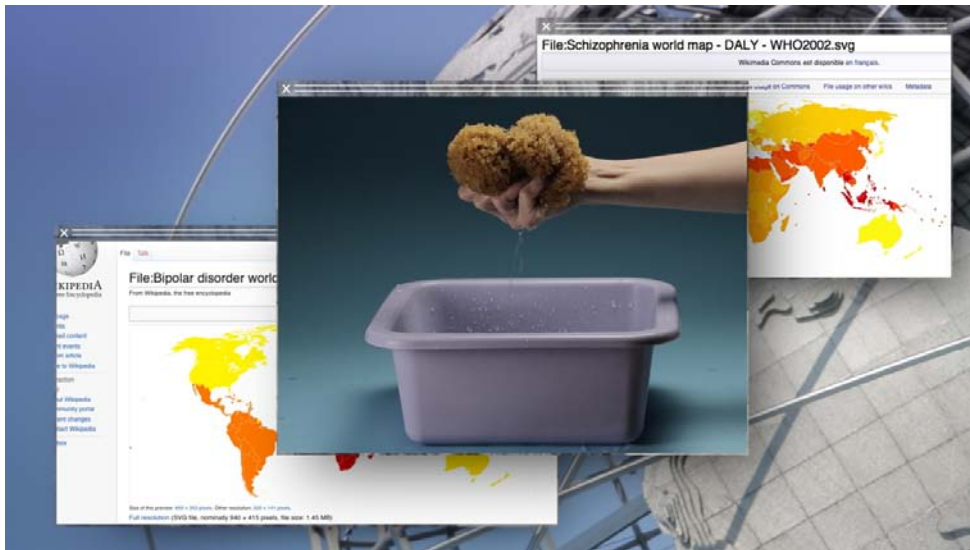
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© ADAGP Camille Henrot

Courtesy the artist, Silex Films and kamel mennour, Paris

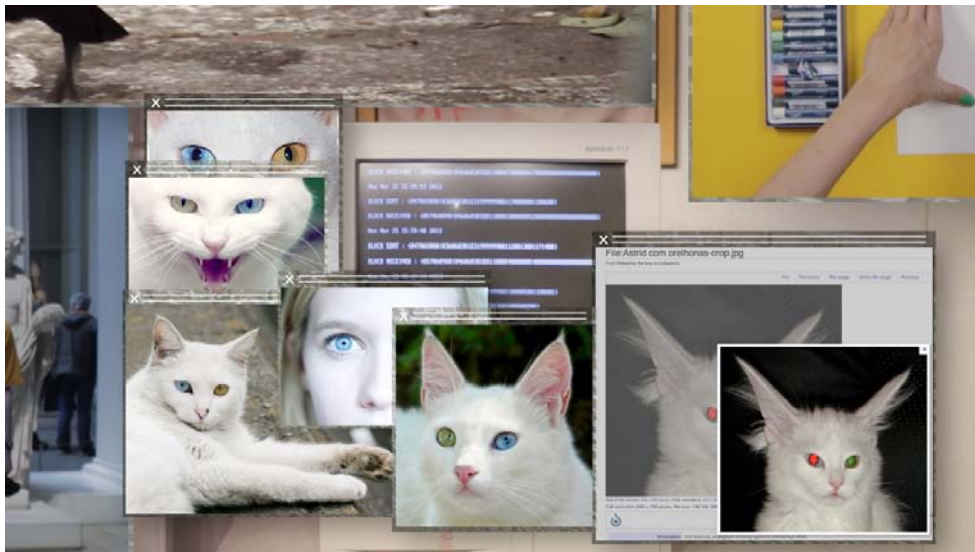
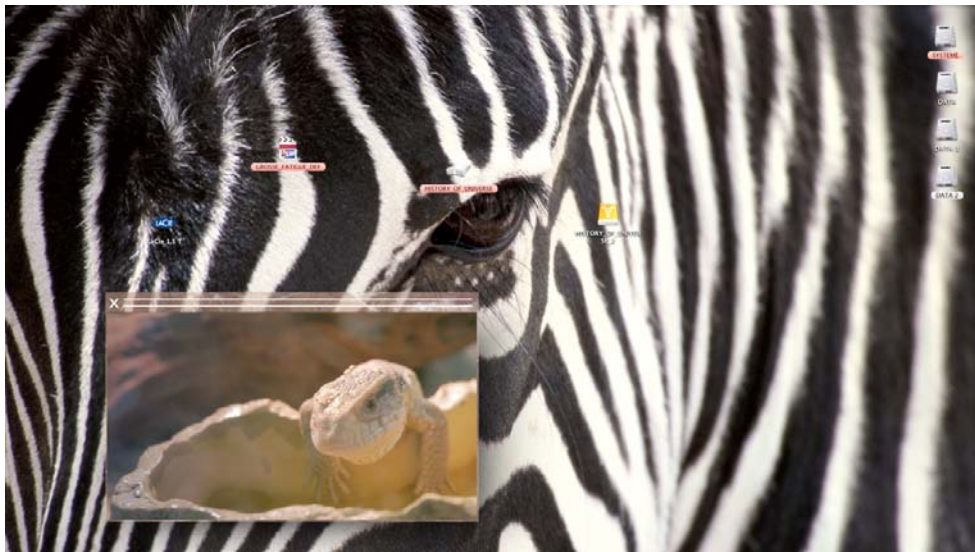












kamel mennour 

CAMILLE HENROT  
GROSSE FATIGUE, 2013

Voice over

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.

In the beginning, the universe was a black egg where heaven and earth were mixed together.

In the beginning there was an explosion.

In the beginning, a dark ocean washed on the shores of nothingness and licked the edges of Night.

In the beginning was the eternal night *Han*.

In the beginning, before all things, there was Amma, and he rested upon nothing.

In the beginning, Ptah the demiurge born from the essential ocean.

In the beginning, the fabric of space-time unfurled, it inflated.

In the beginning, the atoms were formed.

In the beginning a giant cobra floated on the waters.

In the beginning everything was still, there was no beginning.

In the beginning and in the Void, the Oldest of Old Gods was formed, the world had no time, no shape, and no life, except in the mind of the Creator.

In the beginning the Word already was.

There was no world then, only the white, yellow, blue, black, silver, and red mists floating in the air.

In the beginning was only the sky above, and water and marshland below.

In the beginning was nucleosynthesis.

And when the universe became transparent to light,

Then the Milky Way took form,

Then there was no need for light on Dzambu Ling, for the gods emitted a pure light from their own bodies,  
Then the Creator was in the form of a man without bones,  
Then the gravity of galaxies slowed the expansion of the universe,  
Then were units of matter,  
Then Pan Gu died and parts of his body became parts of the universe,  
Then there was recombination, local contraction,  
Then the Supreme God Ometeotl, being both masculine and feminine spawned four children,  
Then Ra created his wife Hathor with whom he had a son, Horus, who married Isis,  
Then Atem took his penis in his hand to obtain the pleasure of orgasm thereby,  
Then Iusaas was Lady of the Vulva and the Hand of God,  
Then Ogo introduced disorder into the world by committing incest with his mother Earth,  
Then the first menstrual blood came from this union, as well as Yeban and Andumbulu, the spirits of the underworld.

And there was violent relaxation,  
And God said, "Let there be light" and there was light, and God saw the light, that it was good,  
Heart-of-Sky only says the word "Earth," and the earth rises, like a mist from the sea,  
And Bumba vomited up the sun, and the sun dried up some of the water, leaving land,  
And when the earth was to be made, it fell down from the sky.  
Earth, hills and stones, all fell down from the sky,  
And the earth rose up like a mountain,  
And She used many colors of earth which she mixed with saliva,  
And his spit was the oceans and his phlegm was the earth,  
And denser elements sank to the earth's core,  
And the King above the Sky said, "Punch holes in the Earth, the water will drain away".  
The Creating Power then took many animals and birds from his great pipe bag and spread them across the earth.

First came self-promoting chemicals, and then fat formed membranes,  
And then came the green algae colonies in the sea,  
And then the oxygen, oxygen  
Eight-faced air, air to make winds and breezes,  
Air filled with sounds, air carrying oceans,  
And from the protozoa came the animal,  
And from the bacteria came the plant,  
Then came the fungi from which came the fungi,

Then came the corals and the sponges and anemones,  
Then came the arthropods from which came the fruit fly,  
Then the mollusks from which came the bees,  
And then came the vertebrates, the jawless fish  
And then came the nautiloids in the Devonian age of fishes,  
And then came the amphibians from the coelacanth,  
And then came the birds from the coelacanth,  
And after the flowering plants came the bees,  
And after the bees came the snakes,  
And after the snakes came the ants,  
And after the ants came the creodonts,  
And after the creodonts came the primates,  
And after the primates came the song birds, the parrots, the loons, the swifts,  
And then came the butterflies and moths,  
And came the grasses,  
And came the marsupials,  
And came the pigs and cats from the coelacanth,  
And came the deer,  
And came the hyenas, the bears the giraffes,  
And then came the tree sloths, the hippopotami, the zebras, the elephants, the lions, the dogs,  
And then came the mammoths from which came nothing at all.

There was the beginning of stereovision,  
There was a man who went out, crying "Hok—hok—hok!" and the dogs came hurrying out from the hummocks.  
When Neanderthal man considered the mysteries of the world,  
Homo Sapiens came next to replace him.  
and Obtala, being drunk, fashioned imperfect figures  
and one figure was made of clay, earth, sand, water  
Nzame made a new man, one who would know death,  
and the man who would know death made a woman from a tree  
and in the trees lived arboreal primates  
and the first man, Mwuetsi, became the moon  
and the Moon and the Morning Star became our ancestors  
and our ancestors were cut up into very small pieces  
and the eyes were perceived light and then color and depth.

Then the Gods split humans in two, making them each search for their lost half.  
Then some degree of sperm competition took place.  
Then Eve of the rib was adorned in jewelry.  
Then a brother and sister were locked in a yellow wooden drum.  
Then the stones that they threw became men, became women.  
Then the three sons of Bor found two stems of wood, which they shaped into a woman  
and into a man.

And language was used to praise Heart-of-Sky rightly.

And mankind discovered the knowledge of history and nature,  
of minerals, vegetables, animals and elements,  
the knowledge of logic and the art of thinking,  
the sciences of gratification and those of utility,  
the art of remembering and pure mathematics,  
the science of physics, the science of medicine,  
the science of botany, the science of chemistry,  
the knowledge of politics, the knowledge of alphabets,  
the knowledge of magic and the science of God,  
the knowledge of virtue and the mechanics of poetry,  
the science of laws and the science of commerce,  
the metaphysics of bodies and the transcendental geometry,  
the dynamics, the hydraulics, the optics, the dioptrics,  
the acoustics and grammar, music, cosmology, geography,

orthography, chronology, zoology, physiology, pathology, astrology, aerology and more.

Then there was promiscuity and monogamy and polygyny and polyandry and polygynandry.  
Then Mayshe and Mashyane fulfilled their desire.

The whole earth was heavy and then Yahweh rested.

And Pan Gu felt lonely  
And Heart-of-Sky felt lonely with the loneliness that ends the worlds.  
Who can understand the loneliness of gods?  
Yaweh was lonely  
And Ogo was lonely  
Lonely like Wak and lonely like Allah.  
Loneliness was all in all each and each of each every  
Surrounding surroundings surrendered to selves that  
Speaking a simple word, snapping two fingers, or just thinking a thought  
Lift loneliness and divide it in portions so that  
Every electron is lonely as it flies around its lonely nucleus,  
The nucleus, the heart of this.

But the Universe continues to expand and distend indefinitely, indefinitely, indefinitely,

And Obatala settled down with the cat for company and grew bored with his routine.

And humans evolved from the same clade as lemurs, rabbits and rodents.

He decided to create beings like himself to keep him company.

In the beginning, there was no one to praise God's glory.

The sun bearer hauls the sun across the sky on his back.

Woman Who Fell From the Sky rested on turtle's back.

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all his work.

The arrow of time points to the heat death of the universe.

The whole earth was heavy and then Yahweh rested.

Relaxation is the settling of a system into equilibrium.

Resting, Pan Gu laid down and resting, he died.

The arrow of time.  
Heat death of the universe.  
Pan Gu laid down  
And resting, he died.