

# KÖNIG GALERIE

**CAMILLE HENROT**

**THE PALE FOX**

5 SEPTEMBER - 1 NOVEMBER 2015

OPENING: 4 SEPTEMBER, 6-9 PM

Ogo the fox is sad. The other deities were born twins. But unlike his siblings, Ogo emerged from the womb alone. Watch as the loneliness of Ogo turns into sadness, his sadness into anger, and his anger into chaos.

Today, we can hear the pale fox in the okra fields, dancing with a hat he crafted from the hulls of string beans. Seen from the blue-white light of the screen, how dark the world looks! How ripe for foraging! To his siblings, Ogo the forager remains chaotic and impudent. He likes to insult the Almighty God, who hates his recalcitrance. Yet such contempt only spurs on Ogo in his trickery. The fox persists in his disruption. And we, too, must listen to his dancing.

To Ogo, the pale fox - does he know? - we owe the title of a large study, published in 1965, by Germaine Dieterlen and Marcel Griaule, of the cosmogony and cosmology of the Dogon tribe of Burkina Faso and western Mali. Throughout the 20th century, the Dogon served as load-bearers of the French ethnological and anthropological gaze onto African culture, from Griaule to Michel Leiris to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, for whom Dogon artifacts, myths and science provided a way of circumventing Western metaphysics. But the joke, seen today, was on such forager-figures - as lonely and sad as the pale fox, who continues to deceive them.

For her exhibition The Pale Fox, Camille Henrot - inspired by both this figure of disruptive imbalance, and the ethnographical context from which he was analyzed in the last century - presents a room-sized architectural display system filled with found and constructed materials and objects. Each of the four walls of the space relates to a natural element, to a philosophical principle of Leibniz, to a stage of life, and to a cardinal point on a compass. Yet the order begets disorder, and the eponymous fox emerges from the chaotic, creation-in-destruction of such heaps of matter: bronze and ceramic casts, found and eBay-sourced photographs and books, National Geographic back issues, bound newspapers, primitivist sculptures, two sliced-open watermelons, city skylines, drawings, novelty mugs. Here, Henrot conveys her ongoing concern with contemporary rituals and symbols and the mysticism that lingers behind imagery, referential systems and the 'grosse fatigue' of online information overload. Reversing the classical anthropologist's gaze onto 'other' cultures, she estranges her own, presenting it back in recombined, fractious figments.

We other primitives - are we all foragers? Astrologers? Or are we dancers like Ogo, albeit with tools for hats, shelves for our fields? When Griaule, the anthropologist, died in 1956, and the gods smiled down upon him, he was still unsure as to whether the Dogon had invented the zodiac (later diffused throughout the world), or if the Dogons had stolen it from an ancient culture. Griaule could cease in his wondering; the Dogons, tickled or admiring, performed their own funerary rite for him. In lieu of his body, though, they employed as the focal point of their ceremony a white mannequin they constructed, fitted with pith helmet, notebook and drawing instrument. Amid this, the pale fox continued dancing in the fields.

- Pablo Larios

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Camille Henrot (born 1978) lives and works in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster (2015); Bétonsalon, Paris (2014); Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2014); New Museum, New York (2014); Schinkel Pavillion, Berlin (2014) and The Baltimore Museum of Art (2014). Henrot was nominated for the Prix Marcel Duchamp in 2010 and received the Silver Lion at the 55th Venice Biennale, 2013. In 2014, she was a finalist for the Hugo Boss Prize and for the Absolut Art Award, and winner of the Nam June Paik Award. Camille Henrot will be taking part in the 13th Lyon Biennial, and has forthcoming exhibitions at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2016) and at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2017).

The Pale Fox is commissioned and produced in partnership with Chisenhale Gallery, London; Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen; Bétonsalon – Centre for art and research, Paris; Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster; KÖNIG GALERIE, Berlin, and kamel mennour, Paris.