

METRO PICTURES

Camille Henrot

November 5 - December 12, 2015

Opening reception November 5, 6 - 8 PM



Killing Time, 2015. Watercolor on paper mounted to dibond.

In her first exhibition at Metro Pictures Camille Henrot presents an installation comprising large gestural drawings and sculptural works that constructs a view of dysfunctions and felt inadequacies inherent to the interpersonal dynamics of any given social group, be it of citizens or family members. The works point out familiar social anxieties that are often brushed off as insignificant “headaches” or “hang-ups” and suggest a connection to more severe psychological and sociopolitical concerns.

The exhibition demonstrates the expansive breadth of her artistic output and far-reaching intellectual pursuits; Henrot absorbs and filters the vast and cacophonous amount of information so readily available today with striking agility and adeptly incorporates select elements into her works. In the exhibition she includes a sculptural zoetrope, and an installation of simplified telephones conceived by the artist to function as uniquely programmed self-help hotlines, which the artist developed in collaboration with writer Jacob Bromberg.

Instead of asking if we need help scheduling an appointment or rebooking a flight, Henrot’s hotlines, for example, prompt us to “press 5 if your dog manipulates you with lies, contradictions or promises.” Guiding you through a labyrinthine series of inane questions, the voice on the other end transforms from the trusted authority into the patronizing patriarch or shaming schoolteacher. In this parodic exaggeration of the frustrating nature and absurdity of automated hotlines, Henrot questions who within a society is an authority, why we accept them as such and asks why we submit to being held hostage to these systems while waiting for a desired outcome.

As viewers dial their way through the dizzying hotline, which at first amuses but ultimately exasperates, we are left with a sense of disappointment; we are disappointed because the authority, “the man in charge,” has finally failed to meet our expectations. The result of this failure is a feeling of angst that for Henrot exemplifies the struggles that characterize contemporary life. The telephones mimic our relationship to technology, which we now rely on to resolve problems as minute as removing a stain and as major as diagnosing a sickness. Henrot’s telephones, playful in scale and appearance, are the exuberant manifestations of our dependence on websites and apps like WebMD or Wikihow.

Henrot’s new watercolor drawings represent anthropomorphic animal figures to illustrate unjust, unfair and abusive scenes taken from sources ranging from mythology to gossip blogs. The imagery recalls the disturbing actions and remorseless characters familiar in cartoons and comics. Similar to those genres Henrot employs human-like animals with a sparring and winsome style, which in Henrot’s drawings evokes Modernist painters like Matisse and cartoonists such as Saul Steinberg. In one drawing a happy couple stands casually as their unborn child bursts from inside the belly of its father to reveal its grimacing face and in another a pelican father stands with a snide expression in his eyes as he eats his young.

Henrot’s acclaimed film *Grosse Fatigue* is on view in the exhibition “Scenes for a New Heritage: Contemporary Art from the Collection” through April 10, 2016 at the Museum of Modern Art.

“Elephant Child,” the first catalogue of Henrot’s work, connects the film and her exhibition “The Pale Fox” with a text by the artist and an interview by social-anthropologist Monique Judy-Ballini. It is scheduled for release later this fall. “The Pale Fox,” was a sweeping installation that travelled from Chisenhale Gallery, London to Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen; Bétonsalon, Paris and Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster in 2014 and 2015.

Forthcoming exhibitions are scheduled at Fondazione Memmo, Rome in March 2016 and Palais de Tokyo in February 2017. She has also had one-person exhibitions at the New Museum, New York (2014), the Schinkel Pavilion, Berlin (2014) and the New Orleans Museum of Art (2013). A newly conceived installation is on view at the Lyon Biennial through January 2016 and she will participate in the 2016 Biennale of Sydney. Henrot has previously been included in the Taipei and Gwangju biennials as well as Prospect New Orleans. She is the recipient of the 2014 Nam June Paik Award and in 2013 won the Silver Lion prize for most promising young artist at the 55th Venice Biennale.

519 W 24TH ST NEW YORK, NY 10011 T 212 206 7100 F 212 337 0070
WWW.METROPICTURES.COM GALLERY@METROPICTURES.COM