



34. *16h 30m / -50°*, by Thomas Ruff. 1989. Chromogenic print, 260 by 188 cm. (Courtesy the artist; exh. Whitechapel Gallery, London).

The portraits are hung in a band, running along a wall and around a corner; their proportions and the tight fit on the walls suggest an alternative and more complex reading: they encourage us to look forensically at each non-expressive face. Furthermore, the photographs make the viewer feel small, a physical manifestation of the camera's usual ability to shift our scale in relation to objects. The perception of shifting body size is heightened by the way the exhibition then flows into Ruff's series *Stars*, images of the galaxy such as *16h 30m / -50°* (1989–92; p.65; Fig.34), which the artist has enhanced to bring out dense fields of stars. The paper and glass he used combine to produce a highly reflective black surface. While we are temporarily overwhelmed yet again, we are in fact now rendered too large to

glean any further information from the images in front of us.

The installation at the Whitechapel reveals a more playful side of Ruff, both formal and informal but always experimenting with the image. He reminds us that the image is a complex technical and even theoretical object, always moving between senses of the real and the virtual or imaginary planes of the image. Excerpts of writings on photography selected by the artist are an excellent addition to the catalogue, making this object more than a record of the exhibition.

¹ Catalogue: *Thomas Ruff*. Edited by Iwona Blazwick, with contributions by the editor, David Company, Cameron Foote and Sarah E. James. 232 pp. incl. 200 col. ills. (Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2017), £35. ISBN 987-0-85488-260-1.

² It was reviewed in this Magazine, 100 (1958), p.450.

Camille Henrot

Paris

by JOHN PARTON

CAMILLE HENROT'S EXHIBITION *Days are Dogs* at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (to 7th January), begins with her new, nineteen-minute-long 3D film, *Saturday* (Fig.35).¹ Set to a chanting soundtrack of choral hymns, the film combines footage of the baptism rituals of members of the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) Church from across Tonga, Polynesia and the United States, with underwater shots of huge waves in lurid-blue tropical waters mixed in with, among other things, a growing overlay of text ribbons of the sort that scroll constantly across twenty-four-hour news screens. Although there is the odd bit of celebrity gossip thrown in, these tickers tell largely of bad news, but on a biblical scale – they brim with messages of the drowning of migrant refugees, the uncontrollable spread of forest fires and the threatening skies of record-breaking monsoons.

As the name of the film hints, Henrot's exhibition is structured around the days of the week. Weeks, according to the show's curator, Daria de Beauvais, are a 'human invention'. While years are the measure of the Earth's orbit of the sun, months are related to the position of the moon and days are our tally of the Earth's rotation, weeks have no such relation to the ticking progression of the cosmos. The message is that we concoct the week ourselves and find meaning in its seven days only through mythology, ritual and routine.

This is a sprawling proposition, perhaps a fitting response therefore to Henrot having been given free rein over the huge rooms of the Palais de Tokyo as part of the gallery's 'carte blanche' series, in which artists are invited to take over all 13,000 square metres of exhibition space. Henrot has divided this space into sections named after each day of the week and filled them with her own works, old and new, as well as some made by or in collaboration with six other artists: Jacob Bromberg, David Horvitz, Maria Loboda, Nancy Lupo, Samara Scott and Avery Singer.

Saturday operates well within the exhibition's conceit. A foundation of the SDA church is its recognition of Saturday as the day of worship. The church and its members rally around that day, base their routine upon it, have named themselves after it, and essentially define themselves through it. In the context of this rigid religious structure, the rolling news bites can be seen as messages of punishment for the sin baptism promises to wash away, or simply as positing that age-old questioning of faith – given more credence in an era where such bombardment of instant information has led to disaster fatigue – that if God existed, why would he or she let so many bad things happen? Either way, however, they tell of the uncontrollable tumult



35. Still from *Saturday*, by Camille Henrot. 2017. 3D film. (Courtesy the artist; exh. Palais de Tokyo, Paris).



36. *The evolution of kings*, by Maria Loboda. 2017. Digital print on Hahnemühle Cotton Paper, 100 by 150 cm. (Courtesy the artist and Maisterravalbuena, Madrid; exh. Palais de Tokyo, Paris).

of the world, which perhaps explains the attraction of the Church and the hope of a sense of order that it provides – hinted at in Henrot's film by the beaming smiles of those who emerge from their baptismal dunking.

The exhibition also includes, in the representation of Thursday, the film *Grosse Fatigue* (2013; Museum of Modern Art, New York). Exhibited notably at the 55th Venice Biennale, where it earned Henrot the Silver Lion, *Grosse Fatigue* was made in response to Henrot being awarded an artist's research fellowship at the Smithsonian Museum, Washington. It is a bold undertaking; an attempt at describing the creation of the universe, no less, expressed through a progression of images of the museum's archived specimens and artefacts bound in with found video footage. This is all depicted in a cascade of windows on a computer desktop screen and is accompanied by a rapped soundtrack styled as a catchy creationist-myth come jazzed-up performance poem. Like *Saturday*, the work

is characterised by a fluid and intuitive handling of a huge quantity of words and images that aim to celebrate storytelling, but also to underscore our reliance on it as a way of coping with the expanse of our own totality, particularly in the post-internet era, where the amount of information on offer may only make the world seem bigger than ever.

Grosse Fatigue does, however, seem a little at sea within the show. Other works in the Thursday section appear to relate to money. The nearby *Small change* (2017), for example, consists of thousands of coins glued to the floor to form a glittering pathway towards Friday, suggesting the reward of a pay cheque at the end of the week. The coins also lead to Maria Loboda's *The evolution of kings* (Fig.36), a series of mysterious photographs showing only black-suited trouser hems and patent leather shoes standing motionless in glistening mud, tracing the idea of dirty money, or the detritus that builds up towards the

end of a working week.

That *Grosse Fatigue* doesn't obviously relate to these surrounding works points to a few pitfalls in the show. For if, at the end of the day, the week can mean all things to everyone, you are never far from questioning whether some of the work benefits from being shown within this context, or if it might breathe better on its own. Understandably Henrot has also had to bring in a large amount of existing work to fill the enormous space. While this is a welcome chance to see the work, some of it seems conceptually shoehorned in and, in this way, the exhibition at times becomes an odd mixture, somewhere between a retrospective and a holistic installation.

And yet there are many points where the show hits its stride brilliantly. Tuesday, for example, has been given over to a double-height space carpeted with red and mauve jiu-jitsu mats in chequerboard fashion. Various sculptures hang from the ceiling, each made up of tangled combinations of muscular, limb-like forms in solid metallic silver and soft fabric. The room is suffused with echoes of the slow, throbbing soundtrack of the film *Tuesday*, which is projected in one corner and mixes slowed-down footage of pairs of bearded, grappling jiu-jitsu wrestlers with wide-angle shots of the rippling flanks of heavy-breathing racehorses. Together, the space becomes a charged and seedy celebration of competition, aggression and struggle, recognising Tuesday's relationship in many languages (Henrot's native French, included) with Mars, the Roman god of war, but also perhaps with a sense that by the third day of the week it's time to determine and force out some form of direction before embarking on the remaining four.

¹ The exhibition catalogue takes magazine form: *Magazine Palais 26*. Edited by Camille Henrot, with contributions from Ben Eastham, Orit Gat, Haidy Geismar, Chris Kraus, Miranda Lash, Lora Ann Chaisson, Chris Sharp and Polly Staple. 192 pp. incl. numerous col. ills. (Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2017), €15. ISBN 978-2-84711-075-3. There are no catalogue or page numbers.

Nathalie Du Pasquier

London

by ISABEL SELIGMAN

IN NATHALIE DU PASQUIER'S STUDIO we see a heterogeneous collection of objects. A turquoise teapot, a blue-and-white figurine in Manchu dress and a bushy shaving brush are interspersed with a lime-green shuttlecock, a stone and a pine cone. Paintings peek out surreptitiously like these objects' abstracted shadows, along with black-and-white photographs of a laughing Seamus Heaney with Joseph Brodsky, Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye and Colantonio's *St Jerome in his study* (Museo