

square meters of the institution. Each day, from Saturday to Friday, was dedicated to one space. Some of the days featured well-known works from Camille Henrot, creating a retrospective effect.

It is possible to move a fresco from its original support to another location—usually a place that will ensure proper conservation and suitable visibility. The idea of the portable fresco is not new. Practiced first by the Etruscans, the fresco was also an art among the Romans until the time of the catacombs, as proven by the discoveries of Pompeii and Herculaneum. In Pompeii, archaeological excavations have revealed Greek frescoes that were moved by the Romans with the wall on which they were originally painted. Two techniques can be used to perform this operation. One method, named a *stacco*, consists of detaching from the wall the paint and a layer of plaster simultaneously; one then cuts a layer of the wall several centimetres deep. The other, called a *strappo*, is more delicate, and only the fine picture—the upper part of the fresco—is removed. The decisive constraints of moving a fresco include the perfection of the joints between the panels (in order not to show the artifice of the reconstruction) and the accessibility of the reconstructed space (which decisively contributes in determining the impression produced by the whole context). Another important parameter to consider in reconstruction is lighting. These conservation criteria, when related to the inseparable unity of painting and architecture, generally prioritize an in situ conservation, with integration being paramount. When considering the difficulty of the operation, which demands the best technicians and all the related costs, it is interesting to imagine some ancient arts specialists appointed by Camille Henrot at work on detaching freshly made frescoes for contemporary art institutions. A masterwork of uchronia.

*Monday* refers to a sad, gloomy day, and to a day of focus, tension, and transformation in the studio, as the artist starts the weekly cycle once again. Beginnings are always difficult. “But in everyday life, Monday is also the beginning of the week—the return to work and the melancholy it induces. It is a day one would rather spend at home, outside of the world in a meditative, creative space, where, like Proust or Matisse, one could create from one’s bed. These two concomitant aspects—the one metaphysical and mythical, the other social and personal—are associated here to shape the world of Monday as an artist’s studio, replete with chasms in *trompe l’œil*. This space—a sort of artist’s ‘maison absolue’ [absolute house], as Henrot describes it—is a twilight zone between dreaming and wakefulness that blurs the distinctions between idleness and productivity, the mundane and the transformative, the trivial and the monumental.”<sup>1</sup> Why, then, evoke the artist’s workshop—her room and her seclusion—if not to take advantage of the institution and push to the limits this vertiginous *carte blanche*? Why not arrogate the right to turn this gigantic space into a workshop for the time of the installation? To do so would have twisted upside down the production of these frescoes, along with their meaning, their desires, and their time in place. Probably just like the planning of the artist who had to manage this mega production.

Coming from Italian and meaning “day”, the Giornata method of mural painting is to be understood here in the

sense of a day of work. This technique makes it possible to materialize part of the fresco; dividing and operating within different days of work allows the artist to always apply their paint on fresh plaster, thus making the artwork more durable. A light layer of intonaco (referred to as “velo” in Italian) is first applied to the portion of the wall that is expected to be painted before the end of the day. Major attention is paid to masking the joints between the different days of work: these interventions are only made with tempera. When carefully analyzing a fresco, we can find and classify the different days of work thanks to the connections of successive coatings, which travel top to bottom and overlap each other very slightly. Generally, three layers of successive coatings are applied. Each coating should be separated by a few hours, in a decreasing order of time. The first layer must be applied several days before the start of the painting, the second one the day before, while the last, on average, is applied twelve hours before. The period during which the artist can paint is a very short interval of only a few hours. The day, therefore, represents the surface of fresh plaster on which the artist can paint before it dries.

This project appeals to me: the lightness of Camille Henrot’s drawing, which garners its elegance from the color of Japanese pigments, when compared to the technical aspect related to the process and appearance of the fresco, is remarkable. The choice of this process is so antagonistic of its limited life span at the exhibition space and clearly conveys the artist’s desire for conservation at any price. It is precisely this dissonance that makes the project interesting. The curves of the vaults of the Fondazione Memmo are found on the gigantic white walls of the Palais de Tokyo. Perhaps once more, at the end of this exhibition in Paris, the artist will repeat this gesture and the frescoes will be moved again, simulating a race against death, against recovery, against erasure, against disappearance. A strappo, again. The conundrum then is to develop this set of frescoes, resolutely immobile, but destined to circulate.

The moving of a fresco—torn away from the original context—is usually due to the threat of disappearance, and is often linked to the importance of the fresco from a historical point of view. In the case of Camille Henrot’s frescoes, however, the dark force of disappearance struggles to occur, to exist. By constantly fighting against death, the frescoes only become spectral traces of their still too recent past. It’s as if they swelled with steroids to ensure the (over)visibility of a well-inflated body; embodied and present. Why not celebrate the fragility, see the generosity in the gesture of the artist that implemented a work for the particular pleasure of the eye, ephemeral and doomed to disappear? Like the ephemerides (calendars) that the artist used as signs in the exhibition and which will remain frozen in time, the practice of *ikebana* could have led us to believe that the artist was dedicated to this philosophy of thought.

But I may be wrong about which perspective to adopt vis-à-vis the frescoes of Camille Henrot. They were, it seems, treated as posters in a teenager’s room: stuck, loose, torn, displaced, damaged, and cracked. The circulation of images of the exhibition on social networks certainly make it possible to transform their nature, and thus the frescoes will save themselves from the problems of historicity, materiality, and authenticity. So we will all be together in this great teenager’s

room, walls filled with selfies, other projections, other desires.

Speaking of misunderstandings, intimate spaces, desires, and projection, I would like to mention Eileen Gray and the Villa E-1027 in Roquebrune-Cap Martin in order to give a new light to the mobility of Camille Henrot’s frescoes. The Villa was the first architectural construction of the Irish designer and architect based in France. Gray was close to painter and architect Le Corbusier, a friendly relationship based on mutual theoretical interest and criticism of the modern movement (that turned to the brink of obsession for Le Corbusier). He painted, in the Villa of Eileen Gray and Jean Badovici, without the consent of Gray, several frescoes in different parts of the house and the yard. Eileen Gray considered this gesture an act of vandalism, a “rape”, in total opposition to her architectural approach. Time passed, the outrage remained, Le Corbusier died, drowned at sea in the bay of Roquebrune. At the death of Badovici, the house was bought by a friend of Le Corbusier who took care to preserve the architecture, frescoes included. A new sale took place, a murder, squats, drugs. After some dark years, the Villa was bought again and restored so as to be open to the public in May 2015. As noted by historian Élisabeth Lebovici, the story of Le Corbusier’s frescoes for the Villa E-1027 was told thousands of times.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the restoration of the Villa E-1027 has benefited from the support of the Fondation Le Corbusier. Ironically, the presence of these frescoes seems to have contributed to the conservation and restoration of the building. It is not surprising to see E-1027 with the frescoes exhibited within; they are sealed on the spot, in the purest and most immobile form of the classical fresco. Unlike the frescoes of Camille Henrot, the dark force at work within the gesture of Le Corbusier does exist: he literally wanted to cancel Eileen Gray and

her dissent (both sexual and ideological) with his frescoes.

It is a double irony to consider the situation of Camille Henrot’s light frescoes flying from one wall to another when compared to those of Le Corbusier; so heavy, aggressive and illegitimate in the eyes of Eileen Gray. The frescoes of both Le Corbusier and Camille Henrot reveal more than the subject matter of the individual works: they also expose the nature of their valorization and the powerful forces leading to their circulation as iconic, rich, precious, patrimonial, capitalist, and even patriarchal images in the case of Villa E-1027. Henrot’s fresco, a light, purely artistic gesture in a white cube, references the history of Rome. Le Corbusier’s fresco, on the other hand, represents an undesired, unwelcome intervention; the cause and result of tensions and offense. But both frescoes, because of their inner nature to belong to the wall, to be fully a part of the architecture, are nothing more than a way to focus on and draw the attention to the context in which they appear. For when it comes to frescoes, the context is the image.

— Laëtitia Badaut Haussmann

1 Camille Henrot, *Days are Dogs*, Palais de Tokyo (October, 2017), [http://www.palaisdetokyo.com/sites/default/files/depliant\\_camille\\_henrot\\_web\\_en.pdf](http://www.palaisdetokyo.com/sites/default/files/depliant_camille_henrot_web_en.pdf) (accessed 5 March 2018).

2 See Elisabeth Lebovici, “Le Corbusier à Paris et Roquebrune: d’un ‘harcèlement pictural’ et de quelques omissions au Centre Pompidou,” *Le Beau Vice* (3 May 2015), <http://le-beau-vice.blogspot.fr/2015/05/le-corbusier-paris-et-roquebrune-un.html?q=E+1027> (accessed 5 March 2018).

## Some Notes on Lewis Stein’s Recent Exhibition at Essex Street (New York) and the ‘Object as Is’

Essex Street’s Lewis Stein exhibition last autumn was perspective-altering. Despite having been made between 1968 and 1980, each work looked new and fit perfectly in line with my interests as well as with those of other artists in my generation. That is, an interest in objects presented as is and the limits of artistic medium utility and narrative these objects possess. I didn’t believe the authenticity of their creation or dating of the works, initially telling myself that the show and accompanying book from 1980, reprinted for the exhibition, was a project or work by Maxwell Graham, the owner of the gallery. And even after receiving information that affirmed the storyline of the work, I refused for days to trust it. My disbelief was completely related to ingrained ideas I have regarding time based hierarchies and trajectories of art. To scrutinize these trajectories, I have begun putting together



a timeline of the so-called pure readymade. This timeline is subjective to my research completed so far, the works within



an artist’s practice I’ve decided are crucial and, basically, my general awareness. At points it is unbiased and at others it is stacked with many pieces by artists I adore. All of the Lewis Stein works included in the exhibition at Essex Street are listed. Duchamp’s *En prévision du bras cassé* and *Fountain* are included despite having assisted painted text on the objects.

1914	Marcel Duchamp purchases an iron bottle rack as an ‘already made’.
1915	Marcel Duchamp’s <i>En prévision du bras cassé</i> , the first work he calls a ‘readymade’.
1917	Marcel Duchamp’s <i>Fountain</i>
1938	Pablo Picasso’s <i>Tête</i>
1961	Daniel Spoerri’s <i>Grocery Store</i> Ben Vautier’s <i>Le Temps</i> George Brecht’s <i>Exit</i> (realized 1962-63) George Brecht’s <i>Barrel Bolt</i> (realized 1963-64)
1963	George Brecht’s <i>No Smoking</i> (realized 1964)
1968	Lewis Stein’s <i>Untitled</i> , a commercially purchased police billy club
1971	Lewis Stein’s <i>Untitled</i> , garbage can in an edition of five Lewis Stein’s <i>Untitled</i> , four stanchions with velvet rope
1972	Lewis Stein’s <i>Untitled</i> , a chrome plated rail
1976	Lewis Stein’s <i>Untitled</i> , a working door buzzer
1977	Lewis Stein’s <i>Untitled</i> , a siren Lewis Stein’s <i>Untitled</i> , a chrome door handle
1978–79	Jeff Koons’ <i>Inflatables</i> series
1979–80	Lewis Stein’s <i>Untitled</i> , a street lamp
1982	Isa Genzken’s <i>Weltempfänger</i>
1984–85	Cady Noland’s <i>Dirt Corral</i>
1987	Laurie Parsons’ exhibition of found objects at Lorence-Monk Gallery
c. 1988	Laurie Parsons’ <i>Coat Hanger</i>
1990	Sylvie Fleury’s <i>The Art of Survival</i> Felix Gonzalez-Torres’ <i>Untitled (USA Today)</i> Mike Kelley’s <i>Arenas</i> series Cady Noland’s <i>Awning Blanks</i>
1991	Felix Gonzalez-Torres’ <i>Untitled (Perfect Lovers)</i> Cady Noland’s <i>Industry Park</i> Fred Wilson’s <i>Guarded View</i>
1992	Fischli Weiss’ <i>Objects of Everyday Use</i> , a commission of works in situ for the new Zurich stock exchange Tom Friedman’s <i>Hot Balls</i>
1993	Gabriel Orozco’s <i>Empty Shoe Box</i>
1996	Maurizio Cattelan’s <i>Another Fucking Readymade</i>
1998	Tracey Emin’s <i>My Bed</i>
2000	Tony Feher’s exhibition at Storefront for Art and Architecture
2002	Wade Guyton’s <i>Inverted Woodpile</i>
2002	Zoe Leonard’s <i>1961</i>
2004	Valentin Carron’s <i>Colors</i>
2005	Latifa Echakhch’s <i>Principe d’Economie II</i> Nate Lowman’s <i>Young America 1995</i>
2006	Wilfredo Prieto’s <i>Untitled (crane)</i> Danh Vo’s <i>If You Were to Climb the Himalayas Tomorrow</i>
2007	Wade Guyton’s <i>Untitled Action Sculpture (5 Enron Chairs)</i> Richard Prince’s <i>Pure Thoughts</i>
2008	Martin Creed’s <i>Work No. 878</i> Ceal Floyer’s <i>Wish You Were Here</i> Gedi Sibony’s <i>The Middle of the World</i> Danh Vo’s <i>Grave Marker for Maria Ngo Thi Ha</i>
2009	Wilfredo Prieto’s <i>Holy Water</i>
2010	Fayçal Baghriche’s <i>Envelopments</i> Latifa Echakhch’s <i>Skins</i> Klara Liden exhibits trash cans stolen from public spaces at the Bonner Kunstverein.
2011	Darren Bader’s <i>my aunt’s car</i> Wilfredo Prieto’s <i>Fish Bowl Without Fish</i> Danh Vo’s <i>Theodore Kaczynski’s Smith Corona Portable Typewriter</i>
2011–12	Lutz Bacher’s <i>Baseballs II</i>
2012	Kevin Beasley’s <i>Untitled</i> , a cotton gin motor
2014	Park McArthur exhibits <i>Ramps</i> at Essex Street. Park McArthur’s <i>Passive Vibration Isolation</i> series

	Cameron Rowland’s <i>Loot</i>
2015	Ramaya Tegegne’s <i>Tetris</i>
2016	Anna-Sophie Berger’s <i>Parabolic Reflectors</i> Zoe Leonard’s <i>Total Picture Control</i> Bunny Rogers’ <i>Cafeteria Set</i> Cameron Rowland’s <i>91020000</i> at Artists Space and <i>Indirect Benefit</i> at Fri-Art Luke Willis Thompson’s <i>Sucu Mate / Born Dead</i>
2017	Prem Sahib’s <i>Do you care? We do</i>
2018	Ghislaine Leung’s <i>Public Sculpture</i>

When looked at within the context of the past century, work exhibited by myself and my peers since about 2014 of objects presented without alteration may appear as shockingly new or reaching towards a pure sculptural clarity. In this thought process, the ‘rediscovery’ of these works by Lewis Stein shocks a now institutionally recognized contemporary artistic process in which power dynamics, narrative, and the political are revealed through inanimate entities. The timeline, as I’ve constructed it, allows me to see what the Lewis Stein exhibition has the ability to illustrate. His works are not the outliers in time they seem to be. While viewing art within a successive timeline can serve a purpose, it must not be default and can be as dangerous as favoring great artists over great artworks. The academic research concerning the pure readymade is a totally open field. The changes in the use and understanding of the readymade varies widely. They can be seen as devoid of nearly all meaning, or looked at as all-encompassing. The possibilities of the readymade are not exhausted, and many questions remain unanswered. For example, why are so many women, queer, and non-white artists attracted to the readymade? That an exhibition had the power to bring up so many revelations and concerns should not be taken lightly.

— Mitchell Anderson

## In Defense of Disappointment

Being in Venice in 2017 you find it difficult to ignore the Damien Hirst show *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable* that is double staged in the vast venues of Palazzo Grassi and Punta della Dogana.



The shipwreck story\* sounds intriguing, the reviews are strictly divisive and whatever is on the pictures available, looks horrendous. So yes, you really want to see it.

Not least intriguing is the surprising potency of a show that held at a private

foundation, by an established (white, male, British) artist wasn’t expected to be debated that much at all. Not least because some of his better known artworks are full of a baroque post pop that seems to be so clearly rooted in (and fitting for) the last decade. It surely wasn’t what the world was waiting for.

So, I want to say we came because we were invited to see a spectacle and even if we haven’t rushed to go we had to go, eventually. Not being the people who have to make a point by not going. But then maybe it isn’t really an invitation after all if you have to pay 18 Euros for a ticket at the entrance.

Palazzo Grassi. You enter first and after you queue and pay you are handed a piece of paper. You see a gigantic foot. It is painted in bronze and paired with another, belonging to the centerpiece in the Palazzos hall; a headless giant. But, you have been warned. It’s looking back at you like an 18 meter high question mark. Walking up the Palazzo’s beautiful staircase you meet smaller but not more digestible pieces. The army of figures awaiting are a boundless pastiche of Greek mythology: fantasy figurines, porn star bodies, sea shells and Disney characters (is Disney the ultimate default for anyone

who is lacking an idea?) Some are confined to immaculate vitrines (of course), others not. The logic here appears to be that because a lot of the objects are made out of a different material than the plaque is claiming, the vitrines keep the onlooker further away and more assured of its content’s value. The effort put into achieving this illusion (or clues left to something else) varies greatly; there is a sea shell painted in crude airbrush, there is a “made in China” stamp on the back of another, there are some that leave you unsure.

You ask a guard what the beheaded giant is made of and she says “bronze”. You say, “No, what is it really made of?” and she says, “Oh, polymere.”

The plaques on the vitrines are a bit funny: “This freestanding monument presents a man beating a drum, which is balanced on the elongated head of a child or spirit. Seemingly carved directly out of a cliff face, it is possibly of Chinese origin. While the sculpture’s function is unknown, the phallic suggestion of the smaller figure’s head implies a relationship with maturation rituals, perhaps accompanied by music and drum beating.”