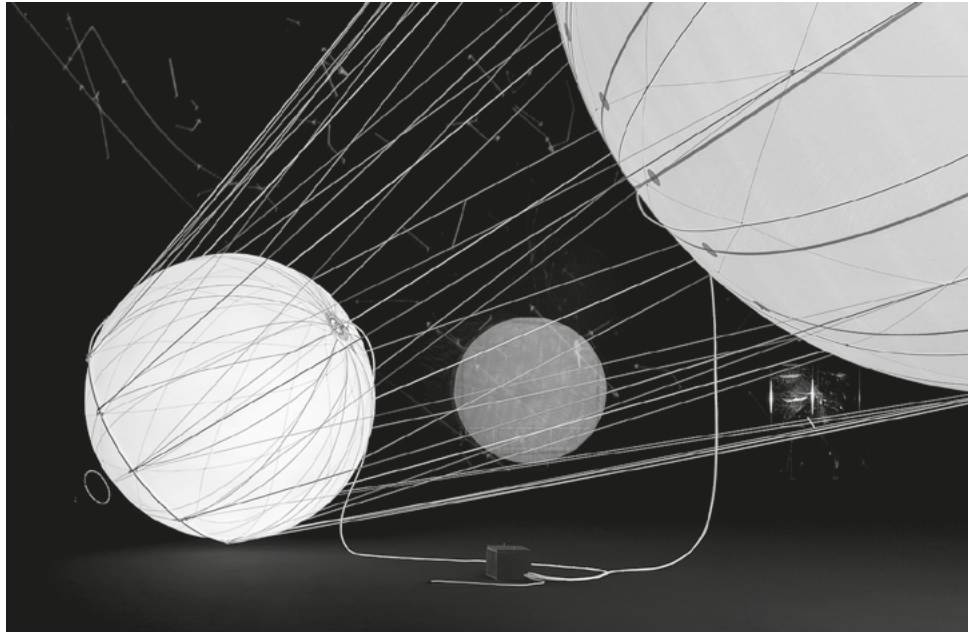


# The Overlapping,

or the feeling of having been here before as your scribbled shadow extends out from beneath you and you realise with the slight squeakiness of a felt-tip pen nib across the first page of a brand new sketchbook, that it's the feeling of an old love joining you

I take the escalator down into an exhibition hall so large that it seems to be a sleight of hand. It seems improbable that this space could extend from the slender corridor, on which the slender man in a spick-and-span suit is keeping an earnest eye, his hand on the walkie talkie that's clipped to his waistband, ready to report anything suspicious at the press of an oversized red button. I feel his eyes between my shoulders—concentrated, keen, professionally suspicious. I am, after all, the only visitor knocking around the caverns of the ACC today, it's me or no one, it's now or never. It's -18°C outside and viewers are hard to come by. Even if it is a steady 22°C in here and the only wind you feel is the velvety, expertly engineered air that caresses the galleries.



I'm halfway down the escalator and all manner of incongruous feelings begin to arise. I'm in a space I've never been to before. In a city I've known for forty minutes. And yet, things are familiar. Like seeing an old school mate who looks, somehow, the same and, somehow, different. Have they got a fringe now? Or is it divorce that's crossed their brow?

The orbs have changed since I saw them last. They're no longer giant, plastic bubbles anchored to water-filled sacks on the floor. The ladder that once invited you to climb up and lollop around inside is nowhere to be seen. A smile crosses my face as I remember how we lay there, on our backs, tracing the swirling circle patterns across the sculptures' surfaces, our bodies bobbing in that off-beat rhythm that they remember from that time we tried out water mattresses. I was surprised to be lying across from you again.

They're not huge transparent spheres anymore. They're translucent, the full range of colours of pickled onions in jars, half forgotten in bars: bright, papery white by day and sallow

by night. The sculptures are no longer tautly tied together, nor intricately weaved webs balancing among themselves—and neither are we. They are tethered and lurch sideways, a flurry of hot air balloons struggling in a gale. We exchange the odd email. Maybe I'll send you one about this. As I look at what grew out of the *Cloud Cities*, I feel the eternal ease of the presence of an old warm love, a love that wanders over into the philosophical, a felt-tip shadow that makes the drawing of yourself in your mind's eye all the more realistic. I'm happy you're here today, in Gwangju, a fuzzy outline drawn amidst *Our Interplanetary Bodies*.

— Clare Molloy

Based on: Tomás Saraceno, not *Cloud Cities* at the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Germany, September 2011 to February 2012, but *Our Interplanetary Bodies* at Asia Cultural Centre, Gwangju, Korea, July 2017 to March 2018

## The Cracks

The first time I discovered the frescoes of Camille Henrot, I saw the cracks. That's what caught my attention the most: the cracks.

For the artist's exhibition *Days are Dogs* at the Palais de Tokyo in 2017, the frescoes shown were the ones she created for a personal 2016 exhibition called *Monday* at the Fondazione Memmo in Rome. As indicated by the title and the Foundation's website, the exhibition was already part of her final proposition and was in the production schedule for the artist's *carte blanche* for her upcoming show in 2017. Given the content of Camille Henrot's exhibition in Rome and the program of the Fondazione Memmo, it was obvious that the frescoes were not intended to be kept on-site

(the Foundation offers about five exhibitions per year). The frescoes were conceptualized and created with the intention of being moved. This approach gives the impression of inadequacy: when an artist produces a fresco for a specific location, one assumes that it will be donated to the space in question. Camille Henrot's frescoes, however, emphasize the artist's mindset: time exists without space, or at least as a separate element, independent from the other. Still, space plays an important role in the whole project, with the exhibition spreading the *times*—the days of a week—over 13,000

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