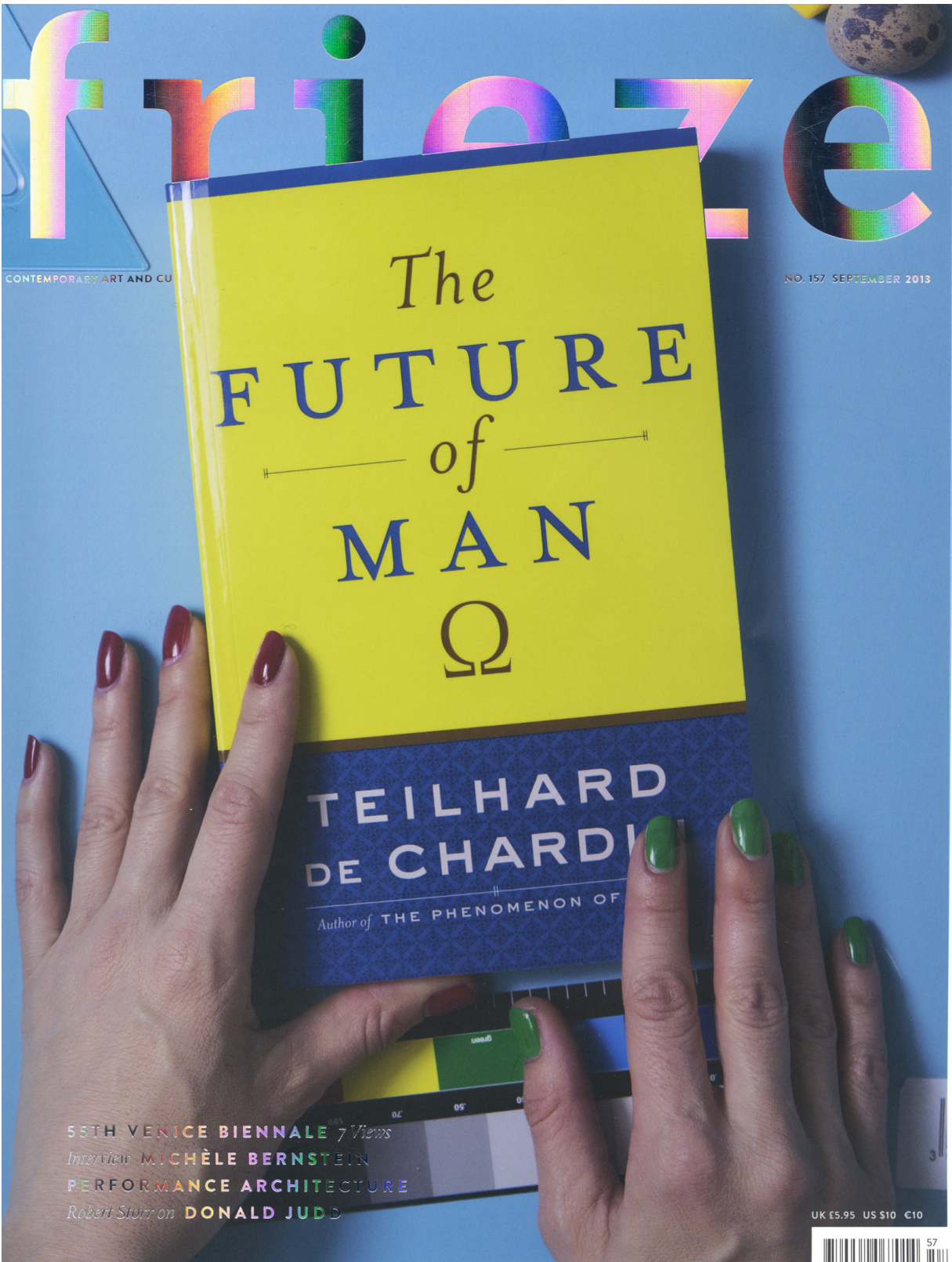


# METRO PICTURES

Heiser, Jörg. "The Film Essay," *Frieze* (September, 2013): 107, 176, cover.



# Camille Henrot

Q

What do you like the look of?

*What images keep you company in the space where you work?*

Cameron Jamie's *La Peur du lieu inconnu* (The Fear of the Unknown Place, 2001) – a found image of an Indian man walking on a tightrope with a donkey strapped to his back. The donkey is blindfolded. When I saw this image, I immediately felt it was the perfect representation of what artists do.

*What was the first piece of art that really mattered to you?*

A black and white engraving, in an Expressionist style, of what appears to be an angel falling from the sky. It was at my grandmother's house, and I used to spend hours looking at it, trying to understand what was going on and why someone who had wings would ever fall. It wasn't until some years later that I discovered my mother had actually created the image. I now know that it was a depiction of Icarus.

*If you could live with only one piece of art what would it be?*

If you mean that I would have to get rid of all the works of art I already own except one, I would keep my Sottsass Carlton shelf. If you mean that I could own any work of art I wanted to, I think I would choose *The Piano Lesson* (1916) by Henri Matisse; I always used to feel frustrated that I couldn't have it in my own home, so I could work out why it disturbs me so much. On reflection, though, perhaps Paul Klee's *The Concert Party* (1907) would be a better choice: it's a beautiful and significant work but it's not the artist's greatest masterpiece, so owning it would not be such a heavy responsibility.

*What is your favourite title of an art work?*

Klee's *Head of Man, Going Senile* (c. 1922).

*What do you wish you knew?*

Everything! That's why I decided the focus of my research at the Smithsonian Institution would be the history of the

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People's faces when they are very surprised.



Cameron Jamie  
*La Peur du lieu inconnu* (The Fear of the Unknown Place), 2001,  
serigraph on paper, 80 × 60 cm

universe. It was a brutal experiment in the limits of knowledge and in my own capacity for physical endurance. I also wish I knew how to speak English better; I wish I knew how to drive a car; I wish I knew how to empty my head; I wish I knew how to use the Internet more wisely; I wish I knew where to start and when to stop.

*What should change?*

The way humans regard animals, the way men regard women, and the way women regard themselves.

*What should stay the same?*

Dogs.

*What could you imagine doing if you didn't do what you do?*

I spend a lot of time thinking about this every day, but that doesn't mean I would actually like to do the things I think about. I often imagine myself having to find the solution to problems on a global scale like

climate change, economical disparities and the inequalities of economic globalization. I get very excited when it comes to politics, but I try to refrain from communicating it in my work because I think it's always boring. When it comes to politics and art, if things are unilateral then the complexity of politics is not respected.

*What music are you listening to?*

All kinds of good music: calypso, electronica, afro beat, soul, hiphop. For almost a year now, I have been addicted to 'Jasmine' (2012) by Jai Paul. I went through a stage of listening to this song obsessively: I would put on these huge headphones I have and play it really loudly as I walked down the street. I'm not sure exactly why or how – it might have had something to do with the compression of the sound – but this song really inspired me to make my film *Grosse Fatigue* (Dead Tired, 2013). Right now I'm listening to a lot of ambient music; I'm fascinated by the healing power of music.

*What are you reading?*

I've just finished Jeanette Winterson's *Boating for Beginners* (1985) and currently on my desk is *Red Fox*, *The Catlike Canine* (1986) by J. David Henry, a boreal ecologist who also wrote *How to Spot a Fox* (1993). Another book I found very interesting recently is *Du divan à l'écran* (From Couch to Screen, 1999) by Murielle Gagnebin. Offering a psychoanalytical take on how viewers interpret works of art, the author considers the contradictory desires that animate art works and how they can become objects of personal fantasy. Gagnebin's is an anthropomorphic approach to the art object, assuming the work has its own personality and neuroses quite independent from the artist's neuroses. Also on my desk is *Why Translation Matters?* (2010) by Edith Grossman and, at night, before going to sleep, I'll read *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem* (1939) by William Faulkner.

*What is art for?*

It's to help human beings feel less resigned; and to help others feel happy despite their resignation.

*Camille Henrot lives and works in Paris, France, and New York, USA. Her work has recently been exhibited at SculptureCenter, New York; the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, UK; and the Louvre Museum and the Centre Pompidou, Paris. Her video Grosse Fatigue (2013) was produced through the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship Program in Washington, D.C., USA, and won the Silver Lion at the 55th Venice Biennale, Italy, which runs until 24 November. Henrot will have solo exhibitions at the New Orleans Museum of Art, USA, in October, and at Chisenhall Gallery, London, in February 2014.*