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## My Week: Hans-Ulrich Obrist

In the week he was voted the art world's most powerful figure, the Serpentine Gallery co-director was busy holding meetings at 6.30 in the morning

INTERVIEW BY GILLIAN ORR Saturday 17 October 2009

### Monday

First thing this morning I go and interview Damien Hirst at the Wallace Collection for part of my ongoing project of interviewing artists. It's a sort of time capsule of conversations with artists which are published. I'm very interested in the idea of unusual museums, ones that are not necessarily contemporary art museums, more like historical collections or house museums.

I then go back to the Serpentine Gallery where I'm co-director of exhibitions and programmes and director of international projects with director Julia Peyton-Jones. I'm in the office today but attend the John Baldessari exhibition at Tate Modern in the evening. He's a legendary artist from Los Angeles; it's an extraordinary show of all the work he has done since the 1960s. It's amazing to see how he influences contemporary culture.

### Tuesday

This weekend we are holding a poetry marathon at the Serpentine. It's a 24-hour event, the idea being to bring poetry and art together again. In the avant-garde of the 20th century there were a lot of links: like realism and Dada. We'll have poems read out by Gilbert & George, Tracey Emin, Nick Laird, James Fenton and Geoffrey Hill, as well as many others. I spend most of the day working on this. In the evening, Julia Peyton-Jones and I go to a number of gallery openings: Anish Kapoor, Ryan Gander, Ed Ruscha. It's amazing there are so many good shows in London during the Frieze week: it's an exhibition marathon.

### Wednesday

I spend the whole day at the Frieze Art Fair preview. There's a lot of young art to be seen. It's also interesting to see artists of previous generations. The fair offers a great mix between new positions or trends and emerging artists as well as previous generations.

### Thursday

I organise one of my brutally early club meetings which involves a bunch of us meeting in a café at 6.30am. There are artists and curators and we have an early-morning brainstorm. Today we discuss

the future of the museum. At 8am we go on to the Museum of Everything, which is a big exhibition of Art Brut, or Outsider Art. I do a lecture there at 9am about the Swiss artist Hans Krüsi. He died in 1995 but he did these amazing encyclopedias of cows and animals. He was a very important influence on me in my childhood, growing up in Switzerland. He was one of the first artists I ever met. I then continue to work at the gallery. I go to the Zoo Art Fair but have to go back to Frieze where I have a book launch of a book I co-edited together with the artist Susan Hefuna about her work and the city of Cairo. I end the evening by attending the Frieze Cartier dinner.

Friday

I have interviews and various meetings and we do rehearsals for the marathon tomorrow. We need 24 hours of rehearsals before the 24-hour marathon so we'll be working well into the night.



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