

ADEL ABDESSEMED

JE SUIS INNOCENT

3 OCTOBER 2012 – 7 JANUARY 2013

Twisted and contorted aircraft frames, molded and annealed car bodies, rows of entangled barbed wire interspersed with double cutting blades and sharp spikes, boats carrying illegal immigrants are the images that the artist Adel Abdessemed has drawn on since the early 2000s. These images appropriate the forces of violence and destruction. The artist deploys different media (installations, performances, drawings, sculptures, videos) to reflect global conflicts in his works. His work tells a profane and composite mythological storyline with an infinite number of equivalents that reflect the endless emergency of order and harmony from chaos.

Driven by a feeling of historical concern and urgency, the work of Adel Abdessemed fits into the tradition of occidental realism along the lines laid down by Masaccio, Grünewald, Goya or Géricault, at times bringing back to life the fantastical or grotesque figures of the mediaeval illuminations. His work is a series of fusions, movements, fragmentations, star-shaped patterns and disparate themes that interlace and form an ornamental lattice. It is inspired by the power of dreams which carry his images in an endlessly moving process of transformation.

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ORNAMENTS

Adel Abdessemed's work refers to history, using ornaments as a means to transfigure or stylize it. The Twisted aircraft frames in **Telle mère tel fils** [Like mother like son] (2008) become a huge mesh of meandering shapes. The barbed wire in **Wall Drawing** (2006) forms perfect circles. The work of Abdessemed is a meshing of repetitive lines and symmetrical or asymmetrical variations inspired by ornamental art. The patterns, whether historical, secular, heroic, erotic, animal or plant related, change constantly, suggesting the infinity. In 2005, Adel Abdessemed threw his camera out of a helicopter. The camera turned and twisted in the sky over the city of Berlin. **Schnell**: the extreme brevity of the film screen in a loop transforms the free fall into a circular pattern. The Coca cola can in **Foot on** (2005) or the lemon in **Pressoir, fais-le** [Oil-press, do it] (2002) explode under the pressure of a hell and turn into percussive and rhythmic devices. In the video **God is design** (2005), a network of meshed and moving line is projected against a white background. The towering, flat structures in **God is design** replicate the melodic organization of **maqâmât** (intervals in the Arab musical tradition).

CROSS REFERENCES

The work of Adel Abdessemed comprises numerous and complex references and can only be understood in the broad context of the history of art. While the artist's references to the minimalism of the 1960s, such as the simple and circular of **Wall Drawing** (2006) are clear, the artist goes further back in history to recall the tragic and burlesque pessimism of Goya with **Also sprach Allah** (2008). In this video, the unshaven artist, wearing socks, thrown into a blanked by henchmen wearing white shirts, tries to write the words that give his title to the work on a mat stretched on the ceiling – a clear reference to **Pelele** that Goya painted in 1792 and which depicts four young elegant men hurl into the dawn light a dislocated and contorted straw dummy that wears a indecipherable and smiling mask. Adel Abdessemed's work can be analyzed as a journey through history. It brings together and fixes the intensity of the powers that organize and disorganize the world. On the occasion of this exhibition, the Piazza in front of the Centre Pompidou hosts a monumental bronze statue over five meters high. It represents the most famous moment in the final of the 2006 football world cup when Zinedine Zidane head butted Marco Materazzi in reaction to an insult from the Italian player. Entitled **Coup de tête** [Head butt] (2011-2012), the work highlights the brutality of the physical impact. The context has entirely disappeared; only the spectacular clash between these two giants, suggesting the confrontation between **Hercules and Antaeus**, a small bronze by Antonio del Pollaiuolo, a 15th century Italian artist representing the Greek hero in a brutal body grip with the giant that he confronts.

DREAMS

Dreams play a prominent role in the works of Adel Abdessemed. In the same way as, in Freudian theory, the day that precedes a dream provides the material for the shaping of dreams, history provide Adel Abdessemed with the material for his works. These elements or events, which Freud called "day dreams", are subsequently transformed through movement and condensation. **Pluie noire** [Black rain] (2006) is a forest that comprises several other "forests". The four Christs in **Décor** (2011-2012) comprise barbed wire spiked with razor blades, suggesting that the crowns of thorns invade entire "bodies". The large low relief with its stuffed and charred animals in **Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?** (2011-2012) simultaneously refers to the martyr

of Guernica and to childhood dreams (the big bad wolf, charred cuddle toys). In the same way as the meaning of a dream is not limited to its storyline and refers back to childhood events and episodes, the works of Adel Abdessemed are not confined to their immediate and occasional origin but suggest are more distant and older dimension comprising an aggregate of images and texts which leave their mark in the artist's memory.

EXHIBITION

CURATOR

Philippe-Alain Michaud

ARCHITECTURE

Corinne Marchand

PRODUCTION

Claire Blanchon

En partenariat média avec

les **inRockuptibles**

nova
101.5 FM

CATALOGUE

Adel Abdessemed. I am innocent

Director: Philippe-Alain Michaud
Essays written by Emmanuel Alloa,
Hou Hanru, Patricia Falguières,
Pamela M. Lee, Tom McDonough
and Philippe-Alain Michaud.
Co-published by Steidl and Éditions
du Centre Pompidou.
248 p., 200 ill. colour.
Price : 40€



AROUND THE EXHIBITION

“UN DIMANCHE, UNE ŒUVRE”

Interview with Adel Abdessemed
With Patricia Falguières around
Habitbi, 2006
2 December, 11.30 am, Petite salle
4.50€. Reduced rate 3.50€
Free with the Annual Pass.

GUIDED VISITS

In French
Every Saturday at 3.30 pm
Wednesday 31 October at 7 pm.
4.50€. Reduced rate 3.50€
[+ Museum & exhibitions ticket,
reduced rate 10€]
3.50€ with the Annual Pass.
Meet with purchased tickets at the
entrance of the exhibition.

TOURS FOR VISITORS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- **Lip-reading tour: for hearing impaired persons**
Saturday 17 November at 11 am
4.50 including admittance, free for
one accompanying person.
Reservation required at least
3 days before.
Fax 01 44 78 16 62
SMS 06 17 48 45 50
nicole.fournier@centrepompidou.fr

- **Visit in sign language for visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing**
Saturday 17 November at 2.30 pm.
Meet in the Education Area, level 0.
4.50€, free for accompanying adults
Booking compulsory no later than
3 days before. Tel: 01 44 78 49 54.

INFORMATION

01 44 78 12 33

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EXHIBITION OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

3 October 2012 to 7 January 2013
Galerie sud, Forum, Piazza
Daily, except Tuesday,
from 11 am to 9 pm
Ticket office closes at 8 pm

ADMISSION

with the “Museum & exhibitions”
ticket

13€, reduced rate 10€
Valid for same day and single entry
to the Museum, all exhibitions and
panoramic viewing balcony
Free for under 18 year-olds and for
Annual Pass holders

On-line ticket purchases and printing

www.centrepompidou.fr/billetterie

TWITTER

More information on the exhibition
can be found via Twitter (hashtag
#Abdessemed) or via <http://www.twitter.com/centrepompidou>

Some works of art presented in
this exhibition may hurt the publics
feelings, particularly those of young
children.

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des publics, Service de l'information
des publics et de la médiation, 2012

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c-album

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