

ENGLISH

GALLERIA CONTINUA

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# ADEL ABDESSEMED

## OUT, OUT, BRIEF CANDLE

GALLERIA CONTINUA | Paris - From October 8, 2022

GALLERIA CONTINUA is proud to present *Out, Out, Brief Candle*, by Adel Abdessemed. This is the artist's first exhibition at GALLERIA CONTINUA since the gallery announced his representation. Weaving illuminating links between history, poetry and current social and political events, his works will be displayed in the entire Parisian space.

*There aren't many artists who take my breath away, bowl me over with fear or laughter, reach out and shake me with a word or a vision. Adel Abdessemed is one of these shockers. He can simultaneously make me fly and delight me.*

Hélène Cixous

Darkness versus light, power versus vulnerability: Adel Abdessemed listens to the cry of a faltering world. His challenge - and honour - is to serve as an impartial witness. His art, despite or beyond any controversy, is above all an allegory. Consequently, any accusation or *fatwa* vanishes in the face of the artist's innocence.

Evoking the fragility of all things, the title "*Out, Out, Brief Candle*" is a famous quote from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. As if responding to this injunction, the artist smashes a candle with his foot in his video *Politics of the Studio, Out, Out, Brief Candle* (2020).

In *Jam Proximus Ardet, the Last Video* (2021), the artist also uses fire. The

burning of a ship in the middle of the sea becomes the mausoleum for all the tragedies that have marked the Mediterranean Sea, which both connects and separates the artist's country of origin from his country of adoption. The title of the work comes from Virgil's poem the *Aeneid*, in which the main protagonist realises that the city of Troy is doomed to destruction. The brief video loop breaks with the narrative, opting for a single shot, a flickering image that seems to be coming closer to us. A ship in flames looms on the horizon, we hear the deafening sound of flames devouring the boat... Gradually, we make out the figure of the captain, who is none other than the artist himself. Stoic, standing on the deck, seemingly oblivious to the drama unfolding behind him, he remains at the helm.

Here, the artist also confronts the deluge of images from the war in Ukraine that currently flood our media. He has retained two images of this war, which he transformed into monumental *bas-reliefs* of burnt wood, like funerary steles. In *Entièrement brûlé (1)* [*Completely Burned (1)*], two unharmed girls contemplate the spectacle of destruction, while *Entièrement brûlé (2)* [*Completely Burned (2)*] imposes on us the unbearable image of a wounded female body.

Standing in the gallery space is a sculpture of the artist's body. He carries a burning globe on his shoulder. Its title sounds like an omen or a warning: *Tonight No Man Will Sleep...*

Upstairs, we are confronted by an army of life-size roosters sculpted from barbed wire. Fascinating and disturbing, they are the mirror of our cruelty.

In the back room, the last work of the exhibition can be seen: *Tomorrow and tomorrow*. This is a huge metal crusher driven by perpetual motion. A mechanical ballet, a hypnotic show: a true call to bravery, it is the last illusion to pass through, the last veil to tear away, the one covering the truth.

Adel Abdessemed is a French artist of Berber origin. He was born in Constantine, Algeria in 1971. After living in New York, Berlin and London, he now lives in Paris. He uses a wide variety of media such as drawing, sculpture, performance, video and installation. His works, which evoke themes such as war, violence and religion, quickly found an international audience.

Since his first solo exhibition in 2001, Abdessemed has been shown at MoMA PS1 in New York; CNAC - Le Magasin (Centre National d'Art Contemporain) in Grenoble, France; Parasol Unit in London; Centre Pompidou in Paris (Adel Abdessemed *Je suis innocent*, 2012); CAC in Malaga, Spain; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in Canada (Adel Abdessemed: *Conflict*, 2017), L'Antidote at the Musée d'Art Contemporain (MAC) of Lyon in France, etc. Adel Abdessemed's works have been exhibited at the Venice International Art Exhibition three times (2003, 2009, 2015) as well as at the Istanbul Biennale (2017), the Havana Biennale (2009), the Gwangju Biennale (2008), the Lyon Biennale (2007) and the São Paulo Biennale (2006). In 2017, he participated in the Milan Triennial "The Restless Earth" as well as the Oku-Noto Triennial in Japan. In March 2022, the artist opened "An Imperial Message", a major solo exhibition spanning over five floors at the Rockbund Art Museum in Shanghai.