

Tang Contemporary Art presents:

Adel Abdessemed “Unlock”

Artist: Adel Abdessemed

Curator: Jérôme Sans

Exhibition Dates: March 23 – April 22, 2019

Location: 10/F, H Queen’s, 80 Queen’s Road Central, Central, Hong Kong

Media private viewing: Saturday, March 23 (Please make an appointment with the gallery)

Media tour (guided by Jérôme Sans): Monday, March 25, 3 – 4 pm

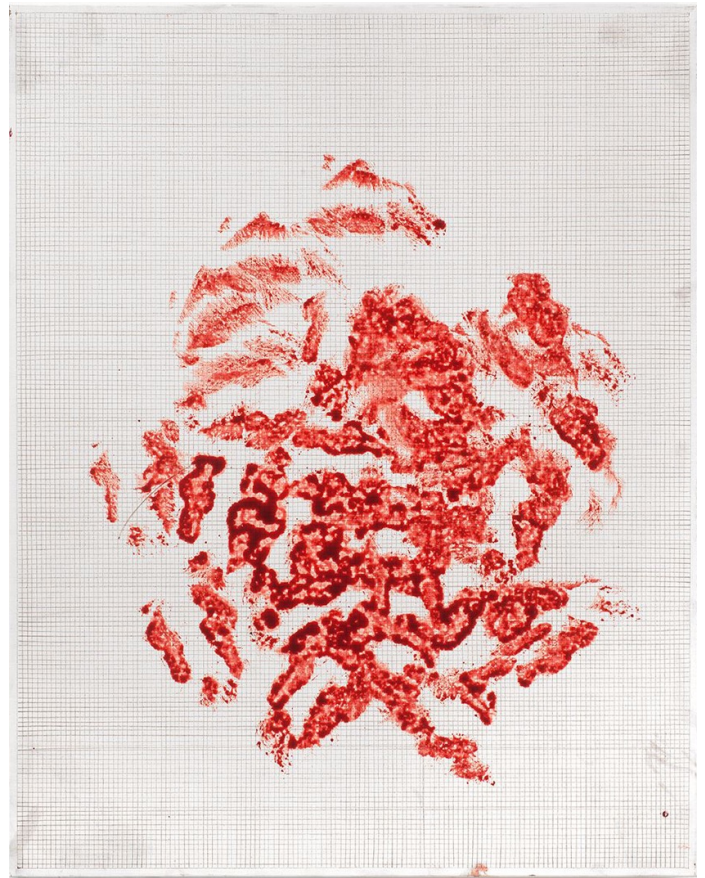
Opening Reception: Monday, March 25, 4 – 7 pm (Artist and curator will be present)

*Please contact us at info@tangcontemporary.com.hk or +852 26828289 in advance for scheduling interviews.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (HONG KONG – February 20, 2019):

Tang Contemporary Art is proud to present the first exhibition, of Adel Abdessemed in Hong Kong, one of the most emblematic artists of his generation, with a new body of work.

Titled *Unlock*, the exhibition is an introspective journey into the rugged world of Adel Abdessemed. Embedded in political themes, the work of the Franco-Algerian artist is a response to the situation of the contemporary world crossed by all kinds of convulsive movements. Born in 1971 in Constantine, nine years after the end of the Algerian War of Independence, Adel Abdessemed left his homeland under dramatic circumstances in 1994. From drawing to installation, from sculpture to film, he is the author of a large formal repertory composed of mass media images, religious symbols, intoxicating substances, animals and relatives, that he manipulates, stretches and reinvents in a wide variety of approaches. His Christ in barbed wire, his videos of animals’ massacres, his carcasses of folded planes and burnt cars, draw a vision of the world indexed on the horizon of sacrifice, disaster and contemporary traumas. Immigration, violence, misery conveyed by media images are captured and condensed in freeze frames, cropped, enlarged, transposed into sculpture-objects that enhance our experience of reality.



Forbidden Colours, 92 x 73.5 x 3.5 cm, mixed media on canvas, 2018
《禁色》, 92x73x3.5 cm, 布面綜合材料, 2018

The exhibition title *Unlock* refers to the mystery part of creation, which crosses the entire history of art, a story of codes that are constantly broken, encoded, disconnected and reinvented, as well as the condition of the world today, a digital age and era of data protection, in which all our informations and our lives continue to be encoded and hacked relentlessly.

At the center of the exhibition space, there is a massive used helicopter, gutted like a fish and lying on the floor in the shape of a ring. If the helicopter is one of the most exclusive means of contemporary travel in an overpopulated world, it is also a military engine or a surveillance object. Before the invasion of film sets by drones, the helicopter was one of the most used elements in the cinema to film in high altitude or in fast speed all kinds of situations, such as aerial views and panorama with



La Tendresse Du Tigre, 130 x 90.5 cm, charcoal on paper, 2015
《老虎的溫柔》· 130 x 90.5 cm · 紙本炭畫 · 2015

a great freedom of movement. This spectacular piece is a new development of several works such as *Bourek* (2005), a plane wrapped around himself, like his mother's pastries, *Telle mère tel fils* (*Like Mother, like Son*) (2008), three cabins and tailplanes twisted and knotted together, fragile and monumental at once, or his performance *Helikoptère* (2007), in which, suspended by the feet to a hovering helicopter over wooden plates, the artist compares the act of drawing with the rhythm and risks of the machine and of the wind and swings of his body. His new series of *Forbidden Colours* (2018), specially made for **Unlock**, are not made with human or animal blood, but with subterfuges borrowed from the special effects for the film industry, like in many of his works such as *Adel Abdessemed Je Suis Innocent*, (*Adel Abdessemed I'm Innocent*) (2012), an impressive self-portrait in which he stands on fire in the street.

In contrast to realism, the *Forbidden Colours* reflect our current world flooded with fake news. These abstract canvases play with the ambiguity of blood, even though they are painted with a liquid used in cinema to simulate real blood in a hyperrealistic way. Adel Abdessemed takes us into a world of simulation and illusion, in the age of manipulated images or photoshopped photographs that seem more real than reality itself. As vast frescoes of the history of our humanity, they witness the omnipresence and the instrumentalization of violence, which engenders nothing but passivity and habituation. These paintings extend Jackson

Pollock's all-over technique, as each painting becomes a palimpsest of spills or dripping decomposed into successive layers of blood, just like the constant spill of violence that is spread out every day beyond all borders.

Fascinated by the relentless flow of images, Abdessemed recycles the most powerful forms. He abandons the chronology to stage the dramas featuring collective mythology, to interpret the violence of men whether it is political, religious or moral. He became the chanter of the forgotten, the oppressed, the slaughtered animals, the migrants who entrust their lives to the waves. Like accidents, the works gathered in the exhibition, sharpen our emotional sensitivity to violence. They affect our vulnerability by deconstructing our solid and reliable preconceived worldviews. Decontextualized from their historical context, they nevertheless remain as common places of a shared Western visual culture while it is doubted.

He tirelessly exacerbates cruelty to increase the spectator's awareness towards the irrationality of the violent act, encouraging him to take some distance. The exhibition re-enacts this oscillation between the tragic and innocence, war and peace, around which the artist adjusts his voice. "I feel like a messenger of the minimum", he says.

www.adelabdessemed.com

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Adel Abdessemed (b. 1971, Constantine, Algeria) is a prominent figure of the international art scene.

From drawing to video, from sculpture to installation, Adel probes in the wounds of our present. His work has been the subject, during the last thirty years, of numerous major solo exhibitions, at MoMA PS1 in New York, MIT List Art Center in Cambridge (Massachusetts), Magasin — Centre National d'Art Contemporain in Grenoble, at Parasol Unit in London,

Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin, Musée national d'Art Moderne — Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris for a retrospective, « *Adel Abdessemed. Je suis Innocent* » (2012), CAC in Málaga, or at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal. Two major monographic exhibitions take place in 2018: *Otchi Tchiornie* at the Musée du Grand-Hornu in Belgium, and *L'Antidote* at the MAC Lyon.

Adel Abdessemed's work has been presented at four Venice Biennales (2003, 2007, 2011, 2015), where he received the Benesse Prize (2007), at two Biennales in Istanbul (2007, 2017), and in the Biennales of Havana (2009), Gwangju (2008), Lyon (2007), and São Paulo (2006). In 2010, he participated in the first Triennale in Aichi, in 2017 at the Triennale of Milan and at the Triennale *Oku-Noto* in Suzu (Japan). In 2018 he participated at the Triennale *Echigo-Tsumari Art*. On the same year, he also took part in the *Rencontres de la photographie d'Arles*, where he exhibited a series of photographs and sculptures curated by Jean Nouvel. In 2015 he directed the scenography and light of *Retour à Berratham*, during the Avignon Festival, for the choreographer Angelin Preljocaj. In 2016, he was invited to draw the poster for the Avignon Festival and to create his project « *Surfaces* ». At the same time, the organization Bold Tendencies commissioned the work *Bristow* as part of its artistic program in Peckham (London).

He maintains a collaboration with creators from all fields, like poetry (two books created with Adonis, and many with Hélène Cixous) or architecture (*Jalousies. Complicités avec Jean Nouvel*, in the Collection Lambert at the Musée de Vence, in 2015).

Recently, the three-volume monograph came out, *Works 1988-2015*, published by Koenig Books, bringing together the catalogue of nearly 30 years of creation.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Curator, art critic, artistic director and director of internationally renowned institutions, Jérôme Sans is the co-founder of the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. After being director of the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) in Beijing from 2008 to 2012, he was recently appointed as artistic director of the future contemporary art foundation of the Ile Seguin, developed by Emerige. He also jointly co-founded Perfect Crossovers in Beijing, a consultancy group for cultural projects between China and the rest of the world.

ABOUT TANG CONTEMPORARY ART

Tang Contemporary Art was established in 1997 in Bangkok, later establishing galleries in Beijing and Hong Kong. The gallery is fully committed to producing critical projects and exhibitions to promote Chinese contemporary art regionally and worldwide, and encourage a dynamic exchange between Chinese artists and those abroad. Acting as one of the most progressive and critically driven exhibition spaces in China, the gallery strives to initiate dialogue between artists, curators, collectors and institutions working both locally and internationally. A roster of groundbreaking exhibitions has earned them international recognition, establishing their status as a pioneer of the contemporary art scene in Asia.

Tang Contemporary Art represents leading figures in Chinese art including Ai Weiwei, Huang Yongping, Shen Yuan, Wang Du, Liu Xiaodong, Yang Jiechang, Xia Xiaowan, Sun Yuan & Peng Yu, Yan Lei, Wang Yin, Wang Yuping, Yang Jiang Group, Guo Wei, Zheng Guogu, Michael Lin, Lin Yilin, H. H. Lim, He An, Zhao Zhao, Wang Yuyang, Weng Fen, Yang Yong, Xu Qu, Xu Xiaoguo, Ji Zhou, Cai Lei, Ling Jian and Chen Wenbo, additionally collaborating with international artists such as Rirkrit Tiravanija, Navin Rawanchaikul, Sakarin Krue-on, and Michael Zelehoski.

Tang Contemporary Art
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Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 11am – 7pm

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