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**SAÂDANE AFIF**

**15 SEPTEMBER 2010 – 3 JANUARY 2011**

**SAÂDANE AFIF**

**Centre  
Pompidou**

# MARCEL DUCHAMP PRIZE 2009 SAÂDANE AFIF

ANTHOLOGIE DE L'HUMOUR NOIR

15 SEPTEMBER 2010 — 3 JANUARY 2011

ESPACE 315, LEVEL 1

THE MARCEL DUCHAMP PRIZE  
ON TUESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER AT 20<sup>PM</sup>  
AT CENTRE POMPIDOU, FORUM

14 september 2010



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Contemporary Art Department

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Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, Artcurial, Inlex IP Expertise, DTAM

With the collaboration of d'aXense et CreativTv

## 1. SAÂDANE AFIF, PRIZE WINNER OF PRIX MARCEL DUCHAMP 2009

«Saâdane Afif's work is simultaneously incredibly simple and extraordinary complex, at once familiar and strange. Despite operating within recognizable framework of contemporary French sculpture, he stands outside the usual networks of French contemporary art with a career and outlook that is increasingly international.

Afif's sculptures and installations exhibit a melancholic yet festive beauty. They delight in their own materiality and frequently incorporate light, sound and movement, seducing the audience with a compact spectacle of son et lumière. His works demonstrate a whimsical poetry and robust sense of mortality: ghosts appear with regularity and there are repeated references to the passing of time and the inevitability of death, most clearly manifested in the recurrent motifs of the skull and the ticking clock. A fascination with music and music culture is also discernible, in works featuring microphones, amplifiers, and musical instruments. Many also include music as an active ingredient, particularly in the form of play-lists or as outcome of an abstract translation of ideas.

Since 2004, music has also influenced the creation and presentation of Afif's work. At that time, he began inviting writers to create lyrics inspired by his works, a process of artistic delegation that he continues to expand today. The lyrics are co-signed by the songwriter and the artist and have been included in several of Afif's exhibitions – usually as wall-mounted vinyl lettering – replacing institutions' didactic labels. Afif gives the lyrics to musicians, with the commission to set them to music. The resulting songs have been presented in exhibitions as both live and recorded elements, released on CD on the artist's own semiafif label, and broadcast in shows devised by Afif on FM radio in Berlin, Rotterdam and Bremen. Appropriation, infiltration and piracy are key concepts in Afif's practice, all embodied by the medium of radio: the invisible waves on which his ideas travel permeate not only his exhibition spaces, but also the private spaces of local inhabitants as they go about their daily lives.

Afif describes himself as a particle accelerator, provoking the imagination of others. [...]»

Extract from the text of Zoë Gray, curator at the Witte de With at Rotterdam and reporter for Saâdane Afif as part of the 2009 edition of the Marcel Duchamp Prize, published in Le Prix Marcel Duchamp. 2009, éditions Un. Deux... Quatre.

### GALERIE MICHEL REIN

Since 1992, and located in Le Marais close to the Place des Vosges, the galerie Michel Rein presents a programme of exhibitions organized for the promotion of emergent French and international artists, as well as more established artists.

The artists of the gallery exhibit in the most important museums in France and abroad. The pieces of works are purchased by important private and public collections. The galerie Michel Rein participates in numerous contemporary art fairs (FIAC, ArtBrussels...) and in exhibitions' projects and international publications.

The gallery represents the works of Saâdane Afif, Maria Thereza Alves, Maja Bajevic, Jean-Pierre Bertrand, Jordi Colomer, Jimmie Durham, Didier Fiuza Faustino, Dora Garcia, Mathew Hale, Jean-Charles Hue, Armand Jalut,

Yuri Leiderman, Didier Marcel, Stefan Nikolaev, Orlan, Dan Perjovschi, Elisa Pône, Mark Raidpere, Michael Riedel, Allan Sekula, Christian Ward, Raphaël Zarka, Chen Zhen.

## 2. INTRODUCTION OF THE EXHIBITION

Here in Espace 315 Saâdane Afif presents a large, two-metre-long coffin in the form of the Centre Pompidou. On the basis of a very precise brief about the project, he has commissioned song lyrics from more than a dozen writers of his acquaintance, now displayed on the walls of the exhibition space. He also commissioned the aluminium cylinders – cast from a mould of one of the stone bollards surrounding the Piazza outside the Centre – on which, on the day of the opening, an actor will stand to declaim the words. This format – the production of objects combined with the commissioning of texts to detailed guidelines – has now become typical of an artist who describes himself as a «wordy conceptualist.» Behind the project is a desire to absorb and express a sense of the place, but the work also embodies a sprawling network of stories connected with the artist's encounters in the making of it, for which it acts as a receptacle. To get others to write about and around his work is to bring it new forms and to prompt reflection on the notions of metamorphosis and shifting point of view. «It's a method that allows the constant generation of mutations within the work, the mutation of forms. They mutate, rather than being transformed. My work can cite itself and it doesn't get desiccated, because there's always the input of others.»

### Elaboration of meaning

All Saâdane Afif's pieces work with multiple layers of meaning. They are anchored in a place, here the Centre Pompidou, around which revolve the artist's own history and the histories of the Centre and of the people he has encountered in the context of the project, intersecting and interpenetrating, each adding a layer of meaning. Afif emphasizes the fact that it was at the Centre Pompidou he discovered art, visiting as a teenager. «When I was twelve. I lived in Blois. I used to go to my aunt's in Ménilmontant to get away from the boredom of a provincial town. I learned to take the Métro all by myself, getting off the Ménilmontant line at Rambuteau. By then, the Piano and Rogers building was fully operational and it was very accessible.» The meeting place that is the Centre's Forum is for him the locus of all possibilities, the place of intersection of all the currents. But why a coffin? «There are obviously a lot of possibilities. A coffin for the artist, for the artist's work. And it reflects too the ideas of the avant-gardes about the death of art, the death of beauty, the death of painting and then the death of the artist: the museum as necropolis. It could be a Vanitas, which is a recurrent theme in my work.» This reference to the tradition of the Vanitas is an important aspect of all his projects. Behind the theme are many centuries of the history of art, here strikingly transformed into an object. Nonetheless, the artist rejects anything definite, anything that might resemble a fixed and finished form. The title of the exhibition indeed evokes many other narratives and references. «An Anthology of Black Humour»: taken from the title of an anthology by André Breton, it makes direct reference to Dada and Surrealism, while the exhibition has been organized in the context of the Marcel Duchamp Prize. The artist decided to baptize his coffin «Black Humour», and so the texts he commissioned about it may be thought of as forming an «anthology of black humour» in another sense. He also mentions the exhibition «Les Magiciens de la terre» at the Centre Pompidou and La Villette in 1989, where Ghanaian coffins in the form of animals, vehicles etc. were shown for the first time. In presenting his coffin, Saâdane Afif re-presents this history. Indeed, he went to Ghana to have the coffin made, there meeting Kudjoe, a young artisan once the assistant to Paa Joe, who created coffins in extraordinary shapes. Adding a further layer of meaning, he mentions too the importance of African sculpture to the modernist tradition. Remembering the Centre Pompidou of his teenage years, Saâdane Afif also recalls the presence of soapbox speakers on the street. «When I was in Ghana,» he says, «I was fortunate to be invited to a funerary ceremony. There they spoke of the deceased as if he were living and told stories about him. In the end, this «soapbox» business gets its meaning from that day, very far from the Centre's Piazza.» The multiple elements all gravitate around the history of a single place, while taking in Ghana, surrealism and Dada. They find themselves materialised in a group of objects and retransmitted in the lyrics that elaborate upon them.

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### **The Lyrics**

«I work with writers who aren't so much songwriters as people who can write, who enjoy writing.» These texts, which he describes as “outgrowths” of his work, contribute something extra to it, «through the imagination of others, raising one of the questions that I take to be fundamental: what responsibility do we have in bringing our attention to bear on works of art? How do we integrate them into the field of our own culture, in our own words? How does one interpret a work of art? How do we make a work our own?» In foregrounding the metaphorical relation between word and work, it is this that he invites visitor to do.

### **The centrality of the visitor**

For Afif indeed, the visitor is a central figure. In this respect he is one of recent generation of artists to have taken the question of the viewer or visitor seriously. «I often sum up my work in the questions: Why do we make works of art? What needs do they meet? What do they do to the way I see the world? And so on. These are very straightforward questions, without a definite answer, which give me the energy to do things and the pleasure I take in that.» All these elements contribute to a work in constant movement. «I spend my time trying not to finish work. I end up showing finished moments, but they already point to something beyond. When you have a sculpture with texts that speak of all the things I've just discussed, there is/already a potential elsewhere, a potential future for the work. It's the antithesis of wanting to fix and reify the work of art, which then becomes a sort of dumb idol.» For all that, the question of form is crucial for Saâdane Afif. «It's not iconoclastic, it's work that reflects on how one achieves form. Above all, the form of the exhibition, which is my favoured medium. Forms are important, they are the way-marks on our journeys.»

### 3. ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

#### SOLO EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

- 2010 A lecture, a recording & few witnesses, OPA, Guadalajara, Mexico
- 2009 Vice de Forme : In search of melodies, Galerie Michel Rein, Paris  
Feedback, EACC - Espai d'art contemporani de Castelló, Espagne  
Variétés, galerie Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin, Allemagne
- 2008 Technical specifications, Witte de With, Rotterdam, Pays-Bas  
Two..., FRAC Basse-Normandie, Caen, France  
One, FRAC Pays de Loire, Carquefou, France
- 2007 Blue Time vs. Suspense, galerie Xavier Hufkens, Bruxelles, Belgique  
58:22 & some words, galerie Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin, Allemagne
- 2006 Power Chords/ 9 pièces réduites, Fondation Prince Pierre, Monaco (cat.)  
Power Chords, Cité de la Musique, Paris  
galleria Maze, Torino, Italie
- 2005 Lyrics, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (cat.)  
Hors-catégorie, galerie Michel Rein, Paris  
One Million BPM, Cimaise et portique, Albi, France

#### GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

- 2010 Act VII : of facts and fables (cur. Juan A. Gaitan, Nicolaus Schafhausen; assisted by Amira Gad), Witte de With, Rotterdam, Pays-Bas  
Diagonales (cur. Florence Derieux, Sébastien Faucon), Palais du Tau, in partnership with le FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims, France  
The Moon is an Arrant Thief (cur. Thom O'Nions, Luiza Teixeira de Freitas, Olivier Martinez-Kandt), The David Roberts Art Foundation Limited, Fitzrovia, Londres, Angleterre  
Perpetual Battles (cur. Maria Baibakova, Kate Sutton, Jean-Max Colard), Red October Chocolate Factory, BAIBAKOV art projects, Moscou, Russie  
Seconde Main (cur. Anne Dressen), Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris  
Radical posture (cur. Christine Ollier), FDC SATELLITE, Bruxelles  
Something Strange Happened Here (collection Marie & Hugues Taittinger and artworks chosen by Laurence Dreyfus, guest curator), At Marie & Hugues Taittinger, Bruxelles  
Ins Blickfeld gerückt (a project by Gaëlle Boucand and Francisca Würz), Institut Français de Berlin
- 2009 Itinéraire bis, Frac Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur hors les murs, group show, musée Gassendi, Digne-les-Bains, France  
Zweckgemeinschaft (cur. by Art at Work), MICAMOCA, Berlin  
Kunstpreis der Böttcherstraße in Bremen, Weserburg - Museum für Moderne Kunst in Bremen, Brême, Allemagne  
Concours de monuments (cur. Kristina Solomoukha and Elfi Turpin), Le Dojo, Nice, France  
Im kleinen Wald von Meudon, Rigaerstrasse 69, Berlin, Allemagne  
Kunst und Pop-Musik, Kunsthaus Graz, Graz, Autriche  
Le travail de Rivière, CREDAC, Ivry-sur-Seine, France (cur. Claire le Restif)

2008 Antidote 4, Galerie des Galeries Lafayette, Paris  
Pop! goes the weasel, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Allemagne (cur. Anja Casser)  
Past Forward, 176 Project Space, Londres (cur. Vincent Honoré)  
Library, UOVO Open Office, Berlin (cur. Adam Carr)  
Sabbatique (with Alejandro Vidal), galeria Elba Benitez, Espagne  
Hantologie contemporaine, FRAC île de France, Parc culturel de Rentilly, France  
Bucoliques, Abbaye du Valasse, France  
The Store, Tulips & Roses, Vilnius, Lituanie (cur. Adam Carr)  
Mondo e Terra, Musée d'Art de Nuoro, Sardaigne  
Archéologies du présent – Collection FRAC Centre, Musée Archéologique d'Argentomagus, Les Mersans, France  
Ready-made, galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris

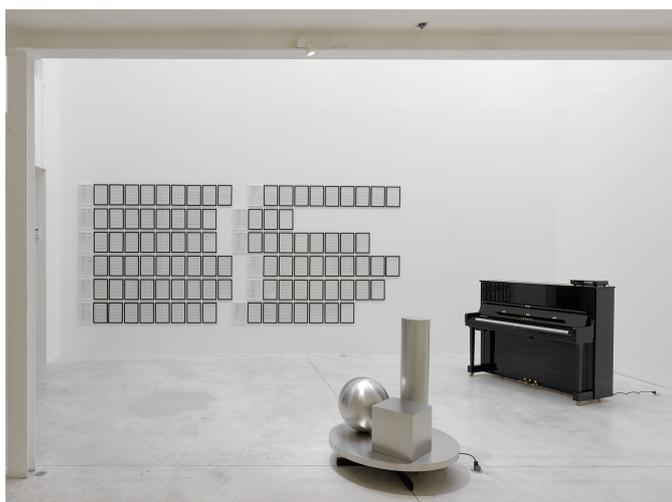
#### 4. PUBLICATIONS

ADIAF/PRIX MARCEL DUCHAMP 2009, Un-Deux... Quatre Éditions  
Size : 22 x 27 cm, 48 pages, Bilingual French/English  
Authors: Caroline Bourgeois, Zoë Gray, Éric Mangion, Ralph Melcher

Catalogue des Éditions du Centre Pompidou to be published  
Size: 15 x 24 cm, 64 pages. Price: 24,90 euros

#### 5. VISUALS FOR THE PRESS

The piece of art Anthologie de l'humour noir is conceived for the Espace 315 specifically, contact for the visuals: Dorothee Mireux (dorothee.mireux@centrepompidou.fr) or on the website, press column with the access codes (press office) on Wednesday the 15<sup>th</sup> of september.



Vice de forme, 2009  
View of the exhibition:  
Courtesy galerie Michel Rein, Paris  
photo: Florian Kleinefenn



Vice de forme, 2009  
Global view:  
Courtesy galerie Michel Rein, Paris  
photo: Bérénice Rapegno

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## 6. LE MARCEL DUCHAMP PRIZE, 2009 EDITION

www.adiaf.com

### NOMINATED ARTISTS

Saâdane Afif, born in Vendôme in 1970 – Sculpture, installation  
Lives and works in Berlin  
Reporter: Zoë Gray, Curator au Witte de With (Rotterdam)  
Galerie Michel Rein, Paris

Damien Deroubaix, born in Lille in 1972 – Painter  
Lives and works in Berlin  
Reporter : Ralph Melcher, Director of the Musées de la Sarre in Saarbrücken  
Galerie In Situ, Paris

Nicolas Moulin, né à Paris en 1970 – Vidéo  
Lives and works in Berlin  
Rapporteur: Éric Mangion,  
Director of the Centre National d'Art Contemporain de la Villa Arson, in Nice  
Galerie Chez Valentin, Paris

Philippe Perrot, born in Paris in 1967 – Painter  
Lives and works in Paris  
Reporter: Caroline Bourgeois,  
Curator of the exhibition, artistic director for the François Pinault Foundation  
Galerie Art : Concept, Paris

### INTERNATIONAL JURY 2009

James Cottrell (Etats-Unis), Collectionneur  
Gilles Fuchs (France), Président de l'ADIAF  
Dakis Joannou (Grèce), Collectionneur  
Kasper König (Allemagne), Directeur du Ludwig Museum, Cologne  
Charlotte Laubard (France), Directrice du CAPC Bordeaux  
Jacqueline Matisse-Monnier (France, États-Unis), artiste  
Alfred Pacquement (France), Directeur du Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Pompidou

### PRIZE'S ENDOWMENT

Nominated artists:

Marcel Duchamp Prize exhibition at the FIAC,  
Publication by the ADIAF of a catalogue of the 4 selected artists.

Winner:

Personal exhibition during 3 months at the Centre Pompidou in the 315 space,  
Financial endowment of 35 000 offered by the ADIAF,  
Participation of the ADIAF to the production of the piece of work,  
Publication by the Centre Pompidou of a catalogue of the winning artist.

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## SUPPORT FROM COMPANIES ENGAGED IN ART SPONSORSHIP

### **Lombard Odier** — [www.lombardodier.com](http://www.lombardodier.com)

Founded in 1796, Lombard Odier is one of the oldest established private bankers in Geneva and one of the largest in Switzerland and in Europe. The Group plays a major role in international finance and offers a wide range of advice to a private clientele in matters of heritage, financial products and specialised services.

The associates of Lombard Odier Darier Hentsch & Co have always been engaged with a number of development projects in the domain of culture, education and social responsibility. Aware of the importance of leaving future generations with a renewed and enriched heritage, they are particularly keen to support the artists of tomorrow. The Marcel Duchamp Prize subscribes to these principles by encouraging creativity amongst the young in France and offering its talented artists the possibility of recognition on an international scale. And so Lombard Odier is associated with awarding the Marcel Duchamp Prize in Paris, organised jointly since the year 2000 between the ADIAF and the Centre Pompidou, National Museum of Modern Art.

### **Sanofi-Aventis** — [www.sanofi-aventis.com](http://www.sanofi-aventis.com)

Sanofi-aventis, a global leader in the pharmaceutical industry, researches and develops medicine and vaccines to help improve the lives of the greatest possible number of people. R&D explores a broad spectrum of innovative approaches, and develops new products in the key areas of therapeutic expertise: Thrombosis, Cardiovascular diseases, Diabetes, Vaccines, Oncology, Central Nervous System disorders and Internal Medicine. The Company's growth is attributable to a regional approach to business operations, backed by a comprehensive portfolio of innovative products, mature prescription medicines, consumer health products and generics, as well as vaccines. By virtue of its commitments, sanofi-aventis constantly adapts its development model to the world's emerging human and economic problems.

### **Fondation d'entreprise Hermès** — [www.fondationentreprisehermes.org](http://www.fondationentreprisehermes.org)

Created in April 2008, the Hermès Foundation is the vehicle for the development of its patronage activity, to be pursued in a generous and civic spirit in harmony with the values of Hermès. In its commitment to support contemporary art, it programs events for each of the eight Hermès exhibition spaces worldwide and produces the exhibitions held there. These galleries showcase contemporary artwork and photography. Add to that the H Box, a nomadic structure exclusively dedicated to video art. The Hermès Foundation is also a committed sponsor of many other social as well as cultural projects. It is in this spirit that it chose, as did the house of Hermès before it, to support the Marcel Duchamp Prize in the accompaniment of young artists.

### **Artcurial / Briest Poulain F. Tajan** — [www.artcurial.com](http://www.artcurial.com)

Artcurial is happy to support the Association for the International Diffusion of French Art in its promotion of French contemporary art, notably through the Marcel Duchamp Prize, intended to raise the profile of young French artists on the international scene. The leading French auction house, Artcurial Briest Poulain F. Tajan is part of the international reality of the art market and has been asserting its leadership in contemporary art sales in France for more than ten years now. However, this major actor on the market remains open and curious about new talents and doesn't hesitate to break new ground for collectors, with for instance Street Art or contemporary art in the Middle East. Finally, the auction house is housed in the Hôtel Marcel Dassault, alongside the greatest art library in Paris, offering a richness and quality of advice that makes it one of the Adiaf collectors' favourite establishments.

**Inlex IP Expertise** — [www.inlex.com](http://www.inlex.com)

Inlex Ip Expertise is one of the main French offices dealing with the protection of intellectual property rights (trademarks, industrial designs, technological innovations, copyright, unfair competition, etc.). Dynamic and committed, this firm has been engaged, since it was founded fourteen years ago, in international and interdisciplinary action aimed at promoting and protecting artistic and creative efforts of enterprises of any size, nationality or field of activity. INLEX appreciates the genuinely united approach shown by the ADIAF towards the values associated with art to which our team has subscribed. Hence, we wish to renew our support to the ADIAF and our participation in the Marcel Duchamp Prize.

**Day Trade Asset Management/DTAM** — [www.dtam.fr](http://www.dtam.fr)

Founded in 2002 by two bond traders, this Asset Management Company has brought to the market a new and innovative strategy: Day Trading in Equities. A pioneer in the French market, it has managed to put together Day Trading and mutual funds. Independent, entrepreneurial and regulated by the AMF (French Market Authority), DTAM offers dynamic funds, targeted for both individuals and institutions. In sponsoring young and talented French artists alongside ADIAF, DTAM wants to encourage innovation and contribute to select tomorrow's perennial benchmarks...

## 7. PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### INFORMATIONS PRATIQUES

#### Centre Pompidou

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phone

00 33 (0)1 44 78 12 33

métro

Hôtel de Ville, Rambuteau

#### Horaires

11 am – 9 pm

every day ex. Tuesday

#### Admission

10 euros – 12 euros, depending on time

concessions: 8 euros – 9 euros

ticket valid the same day for  
the Musée National d'Art Moderne  
and all exhibitions

free for under-18s and members  
of the Centre Pompidou (holders  
of the annual pass)

#### Information on

01 44 78 14 63

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[www.centrepompidou.fr](http://www.centrepompidou.fr)

### AT THE SAME TIME AT CENTRE POMPIDOU

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3 JANUARY 2011

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#### ARMAN

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10 JANUARY 2011

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#### L'AVENTURE DES OBJETS

##### EXPOSITION-ATELIER

##### AUTOUR D'ARMAN

22 SEPTEMBER 2010 –

10 JANUARY 2011

press officer

Céline Janvier

01 44 78 49 87

#### NANCY SPERO

13 OCTOBER 2010 –

10 JANUARY 2011

press officer

Sébastien Gravier

01 44 78 48 56

#### MONDRIAN/DE STIJL

1<sup>ER</sup> DECEMBER 2010 –

21 MARCH 2011

press officer

Anne-Marie Pereira

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### CURATOR

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curator at the Musée national  
d'art moderne, Contemporary Art  
Department