



Bedwork / A Little Rest Under Proust's Bed, 2023. Courtesy of the artist and THE PILL®

THE PILL® is pleased to host Soufiane Ababri's second solo exhibition at the gallery titled *In An Instant, The Magician Had Conjured a Dove From His Hat* between the dates 21 September — 05 November 2023. The exhibition precedes Ababri's first major UK solo show at the Barbican, London in 2024 and explores recovery and appropriation as tactics of defense and proliferation to sustain an emancipatory horizon despite hardening positions around fixed gender identities.

In a conversation with Ross Bleckner from 1995, artist Felix Gonzales Torres recounts "People would say, "Can I come to your studio?" And, I'd say, "Sure, but my studio is underneath my bed." Activating this historical conversation around art and artistic practice in the most intimate setting, Soufiane Ababri invites the spectators to take part in a trans-historical imaginary exchange between himself, Felix Gonzales Torres and Ross Bleckner taking place in the bedroom. The space of the bed as a metaphor for the rejection of the studio has been a prominent feature in Soufiane Ababri's practice for a long time, particularly embodied in his ongoing series of drawings titled *Bedworks*. Critically and humourously engaging with the intimacy of the bed in its associations with the body and the subconscious, Ababri's works reveal the underlying vulnerability in expressions of masculinity. In his large drawings and collages, what's hidden, stored or repressed underneath the bed is deployed through a colorful fantasmatic imagery intertwining fear and eroticism. The exclusively male figures in his drawings seem caught in moments of intimate, sexual, and emotional exposure and vulnerability, alternating between expressions of shame, desire, horror and joy.

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Besides a series of new glass sculptures and an immersive installation, the exhibition features the latest works from Ababri's ongoing series *Bedworks*, produced from a horizontal bodily position using crayons and pastels on paper, further emphasizing the privacy and affect of the bedroom and instead of the studio.

Soufiane Ababri's visual storytelling is akin to an art-historical activism questioning the process of history writing while emphasizing minor histories and intimate recorded events as the point of departure of his works. Deftly weaving his own biography and heritage with the intellectual and artistic output of figures such as Jean Genet, Michel Foucault, Felix Gonzales Torres, Allen Ginsberg or Nazim Hikmet, his works mobilize the anecdotal, diaristic and sometimes accidental as the location where an intimate knowledge based on affinities can engender a sense of community in motion across time and place. Besides series of drawings and collages on paper, Soufiane Ababri actively engages with installation, sculpture and performance to create immersive environments in reference to clandestine forms of socializing, acting through theatricality to reflect on how we record, share, claim and participate in collective resonances of our most intimate fantasies and fears.

Soufiane Ababri (1985, Rabat) lives and works between Tangiers and Paris.

Soufiane Ababri has had solo exhibitions worldwide including *Si nous ne brûlons pas, comment éclairer la nuit?*, Praz-Delavallade (Paris, 2023); *NON MERCI!!!*, Dittrich & Schlechtriem (Berlin, 2022); *Bunch of Queequeg*, Praz-Delavallade, (Los Angeles, 2021); *YES! Aï Aï Aï Aï Aï Aï Aï ... AM*, Mendes Wood DM, (Brussels, 2021); *A Circus Act Behind Bars of Lilac And Blood*, Kulte Art Center (Rabat, 2020); *Tropical Concrete Gym Park*, Glassbox (Paris, 2020) and *Memories Of A Solitary Cruise*, THE PILL® (Istanbul, 201). His work has been shown in institutional group shows such as *Every Moment Counts*, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter (Oslo, 2022); *Queering The Narrative*, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein (Aachen, 2022); *Trilogie des cendres*, FRAC Pays de la Loire (Carquefou, 2022); *Habibi, les révolutions de l'amour*, Institute du Monde Arabe (Paris, 2022); *Attention*, International Festival For Contemporary Art (Glasgow, 2021); *Welcome Home Vol.II*, MACAAL (Marrakesh, 2020); *Lignes de vies - Une exposition de légendes*, MAC VAL (Vitry, 2019) and *Par amour du jeu*, Magasins Généraux (Pantin, 2018), among many. His work is part of private and public collections of FRAC Poitou-Charentes and FRAC Pays de la Loire; MACVAL; Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden in Morocco and X Museum in Beijing.