

Press release

ADN Galeria will open on November 25th the solo show *Hellraiser* by Kendell Geers, curated by Pierre-Olivier Rollin, director of B.P.S.22 in Charleroi, Belgium, and ADN Galeria.

Kendell Geers' work formulates a critical and iconoclast standpoint almost atypical in the contemporary artistic landscape. As the main line in his work, the notion of power comes out in representations that deal directly or metaphorically with issues like violence, religion and spirituality, moral, sex and body, discipline and fear. Geers undermines the system of values set by our Western society and harshly reveals some aspects that are usually left in the dark: struggles for power, racism, coercion, injustice, exploitation of the weakest, feigned puritanism.

Far from the moralist, right-thinking tone that characterizes the so-called "political art", Geers presents himself instead as a "terrorealist" (according to his own formula) who indecently exposes the reality without distorting ideological filters. He doesn't hesitate to use forms and expressions which provoke for their violence and their authoritarian or sexist character to unsettling the ideals of racial, ideological or religious purity. While relying on recurrent visual motives and humble materials (tin foil, black painting or ink dripping, construction materials), Geers' works appear like signs that interfere and destabilize a system which legitimacy is based on the tacit omission of its dysfunctions.

As Pierre Olivier Rollin, curator of the exhibition observes: "in this exhibition, the artist will articulate some works realized in the last years along with his most recent production: drawings, sculptures, paintings, sculptural surfaces, installations, wall paintings. The exhibition synthesizes a series of concerns that have permeated the artist's practice since his beginnings: the conjunction of extreme positions, the transformation of images and objects, the political reinterpretation of ready-made, minimalism and conceptual art, the alteration of senses, the aporia of language. Assembled in a large "cluster hanging", works from various periods, media and expressive forms will compose an extended installation, increasing their levels of understanding. The works' layout deliberately opens a multiplicity of interpretations that bring the works in their deep coherence and ramifications."

The works exhibited at ADN surprise for their communicative efficiency: they are simple and determined, well structured and visually attractive. The aesthetic dimension of the works functions as a counter-weight for their provoking and violent contents. This ironically recalls us that violence is, also, "glamorous", and produces fascination and addiction. The title of the exhibition, *Hellraiser*, plays with this dual vision of a figure that is desired just for being powerful and dangerous. A large wall painting takes the well-known "LOVE" pattern of Robert Indiana and turns it into a weaving of graphic signs to compose the Spanish colloquial word "COÑO" (the feminine sex). The same impression of latent threat emanates from an installation *Strange fruit (Last Supper)*, composed by bricks suspended over the visitors' head, recalling the weapons used by Apartheid's opponents and the execution of Afro-Americans in United States. Several sculptures in bronze reproduce some typical motives of Geers' visual and symbolic field of references: religious, political or popular icons like the Belgian "Manneken Pis", variations on African statues, daily objects with fingerprints or moldings of parts of the artist's body. The display also includes a series of interventions on images appropriated from magazines and a new series of pornographic drawings that play with the voyeuristic condition of the spectator, who sees her/himself reflected on the support of the artworks.

The whole selection of pieces relies on black humor and obscenity; it shows the artist's clear predilection for a bitter use of blasphemy and a smiling and caustic provocation. Language itself, as an essential component in Geers' work, has a double face: the enigmatic phrases appearing in his drawings or painted on the walls hide standard words and concepts which have often been "stolen" from artistic or political discourses. Geers ill-treats and transforms language, aware of its ambivalence and properties to manipulate the public. Facing the works, the spectator has no other choice than confronting his/her own adhesion to this phantasmagoric script and his/her level of involvement and enjoyment.

Despite his iconoclastic tone, the artist's expression is rarely univocal, since he keeps his own position ambiguous. Likewise, his biography and personal mythology follows the same scheme of ambivalence; from his identity as white man born and raised in South-Africa and militancy against the regime of the Apartheid, to his own decision to adopt 1968 as his symbolic date of birth, Geers exploits his personal history and constructs for himself a fictional character, while the discourses of the art establishment utilize these inputs to render, in turn, as a subversive icon.

Information

Kendell Geers, *Hellraiser*

Exhibition curated by Pierre-Olivier Rollin and ADN Galeria

Opening on Friday, November 25th, 2011, at 7.30 p.m.

Exhibition from November 26th, 2011 to January 14th, 2012.

Opening hours to the public :

Tuesday to Friday from 10 a.m to 2 p.m and from 4 to 8 p.m.

Saturday from 11 a.m to 2 p.m and from 5 p.m to 8.30 p.m.

Press contact :

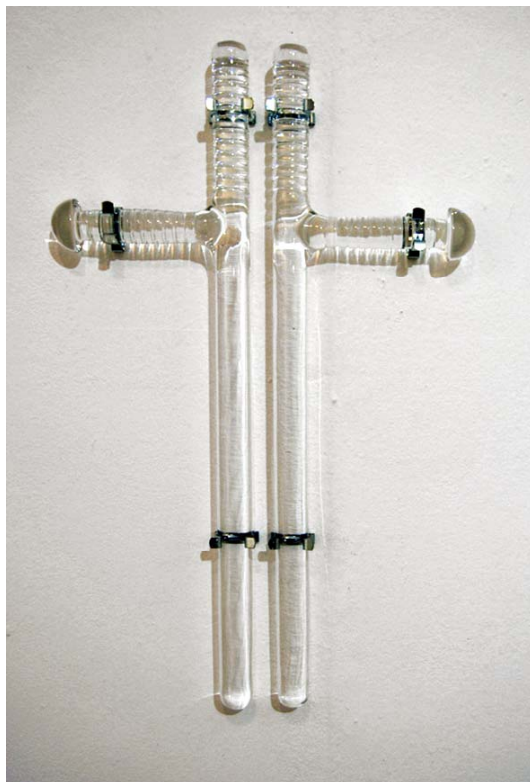
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Images



La Sainte Vierge 604, 2009, Ink on paper



Eros by another name, 2011, Crystal police batons

Images



Post Pop Coño, 2011, mural intervention



Mutus Liber (Brussels Spirit Pot) 10, 2011, mixed media



Kannibale (Chemical Brothers) 5, 2007, ink on paper

Selected biography



Kendell Geers – 1968 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Lives and works in Brussels, Belgium

Solo shows (selection): **2011** *Hellraiser*, ADN Galeria, Barcelona, Spain. *Fin de Partie*, Galleria Continua, Beijing, China. **2010** *Third World Disorder*, Goodman Gallery - Cape Town Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa. *HANDGRENADES FROM MY HEART*, GALERIE RODOLPHE JANSSEN, Brussels, Belgium. **2009** *Irrespektiv*, MART, Trento, Italy. **2008** *PRAYPLAYPREY* Oficina Para de Arte A.C., Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. *Irrespektiv*, Musée d'art Contemporain Cité internationale, Lyon, France / DA2 Domus Artium 2002, Salamanca, Spain. *Post Punk Pagan Pop*, De Pury & Luxembourg, Zürich, Switzerland. **2007** *Kannibale*, Yvon Lambert Galerie, Paris, France. *Irrespektiv*, S.M.A.K. Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent, Belgium / BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art Gateshead, UK / Moca - Musée d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, Lyon, France / MART, Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Trento, Italy. **2006** *Kendell Geers*, Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, UK. **2005** *Satyr:Ikón*, Galleria Continua, San Gimignano, Italy. *The Fall*, Sorry, we're closed, Brussels, Belgium. *Hung, Drawn and Quartered*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, USA.

Group shows (selection): **2011** *Sopra/naturale. La Forma riflette*, Pietrasanta, Italia. *ArtUnlimited*, Art Basel, Basel, Switzerland. *Sympathy for the Devil*, VanhaerentsArtCollection, Brussels, Belgium. *The Luminous Interval*, The Daskalopoulos Collection, The Guggenheim, Bilbao, Spain. **2010** *The rights to protest*, Museum on the Seam / Socio-Political Contemporary Art Museum, Jerusalem, Israel. *Lust and Vice: The Seven Deadly Sins from Dürer to Nauman*, Bern, Switzerland. *29th Bienal de São Paulo "Há sempre um copo de mar para o homem navegar" [There is always a cup of sea to sail in]*, Sao Paulo, Brazil. *Dominó Canibal*, Pac Murcia, Sala Verónicas, Murcia, Spain. **2009** *Scratch*, ADN Galería, Barcelona, Spain. *Sphères*, Galleria Continua / Le Moulin, Boissy-le-Chatel, France. *Time of the signs*, De Pury & Luxembourg, Zürich, Switzerland. **2008** *Artist-Citizen / Contextual artistic practices*, Cultural Centre of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia. *BETWIXT*, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konstall, Stockholm, Sweden. *WALL ROCKETS*, FLAG Art Foundation 9th & 10th floors, Chelsea Arts Tower, New York, USA. Collection Agustin et Isabel Coppel, Mexico: *Expected/Unexpected*, La Maison Rouge, Paris, France. *Person of the Crowd: The contemporary Art of Flânerie*, Neuberger Museum of Art, New York, USA. *Signals in the Dark: Art in the Shadow of War*, Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto at Mississauga, Canada. **2007** *J'embrasse pas la collection*, Yvon Lambert, Avignon, France. *Passage du Temps*, Collection François Pinault Foundation, Lille, France. *Hidden Cities*, Third International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam, Rotterdam, The Netherlands. *África pavilion*, 52nd Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy. *Global Cities*, Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London, UK. *Stock Zero*, Or The Icy Water Of Egoistical calculation, 2nd Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia. **2006** *Expérience Pommery*, Domaine Pommery, Reims, France. *SD OBSERVATORIO*, Institut valencià d'Art Modern, Valencia, Spain. *DON JUAN alias Don Giovanni¹ or "Two plus two equals four" or "Lust is the only swindle I wish permanence"*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria. *Looking both ways*, Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, USA.

Pierre-Olivier Rollin

Pierre-Olivier Rollin is director of B.P.S.22, space for contemporary creation in Charleroi, Belgium. He organized exhibitions of artists such as Wang Du, Kendell Geers, Jota Castro or Patrick Everaert. He is an independent curator and art critic as well.