

Fabien Adèle Cycles

Sep 4 — 27, 2025 | Paris, Turenne (Front Space)

Almine Rech Paris, Turenne (Front Space) is pleased to present 'Cycles', Fabien Adèle's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery, on view from September 4 to 27, 2025.

The general conception of seriality and repetition is that it is something that belongs in the world of factories and industry; that it is boring and banal. We all want to be different; and we're taught to search out experiences that are unique. Yet seriality and repetition stand at the heart of many of the extremely personal and particular works that make up Fabien Adèle's artistic practice. "It was drawing, for example, a flower and repeating it until it become something else, something that is moving," he explains of the origins of some of his latest series of works. While drawings often proceed paintings and compositions evolve, the final composition is as much the product of the artist's imagination (he doesn't work with models, collages or external sources) and what the materials suggest. To a degree each work is shaped as it is made, with a freedom that belies its apparently strict composition.

So, for example, in one of his new paintings we see three rows of flowers, two daisy-like, one tulip-like, popping up between blades of grass at regular intervals. Too regular to be natural; not precise enough to be machine-made. Each rendition of each flower-type the same, but a little different. Different in tone, in angle, and in a central passage that appears to be rather theatrically spotlit. As if to remind us that there is nothing natural about this scene, that it belongs as much to the stage and the screen as it does to the great outdoors, however natural the gold-tinged flora and fauna may appear. A pair of scissors, blades akimbo, seems to have danced into the lowest row of daisy-type flowers, its shears mirroring their stalks, its finger-holes their heads. At a first glance it might seem another part of a regular whole, rather than a sinister surreal form. The painting is innocently titled: *Dans le jardin* (2025). Which makes it seem more sinister still. The spotlight now perhaps a searchlight, patrolling for who knows what. A psychoanalyst would, literally, have a field day. And the artist too is open about the way in which his work is the product of both conscious and unconscious thought.

And yet, Adèle's work is also, undoubtedly, sensual too; made up of washes of colour, glowing lights and fantastically fleshy subjects. The product of the artist's deft manipulation of oil paint, chalk and sand. In a related work, *Fallen peach/Pêche tombée de l'arbre* (2024–25), a similar pattern of flowers is complemented by a neatly arranged row of enormous peaches, half buried in the grass but conveying every sensual and sexual trigger we might have heard associated with them. We might think of Rococo designs in which curving, pastel forms provide a natural disguise for formal order. And then we notice a row of human forms emerging from the treeline, literally emerging from the paint – more the red-brown colours taking shape rather than form itself. "I like when I start with an abstract thing, and then you start to be figurative at some point with the colours and shades," Adèle says as he continues to describe his process. But you don't really need the artist to point that out. Because, as you look at his work, it's all there.

In a way, we, as viewers, are performing the same actions Adèle, albeit in a slightly different way. We read his palette to shape a season or a mood – late summer, early autumn perhaps, warm, earthy tones, hot reds and yellows, the odd cool blue. A time of fecundity and change. A time when people, like the ones in the largest of the works here, *Still Here/Toujours ici* (2024–25), might be inclined to wear less clothing as they lounge in the landscape. Their bodies and the fields, thanks to the artist’s brush strokes, seem to pass through both figure and ground, becoming inseparable, one. Which we might then read as telling us about the two figures in the work, one lounging against a tree, one standing. Perhaps lovers. And just like that we’re starting to transform two figures in a landscape into a narrative or a tale.

Armed with Adèle’s biography we might start to take that further still: a young, gay man, growing up in the rural south of France, dreaming of escaping to the big city (Paris) where a life led in his imagination might become something more real. The current works were born out of a residency in Brescia, Italy, where the artist was surrounded by murals and paintings created out of washes which were reminiscent of the colour palettes that the artist grew up with in the south of France. A reconnection of sorts to the site of his teenage years and a place of dreams, and a search for belonging, triggering the artist the same way that these biographical details might have triggered you to read Adèle’s work in a particular way. Although you don’t *need* to take things that far. What’s more important is the way in which Adèle’s paintings take the abstract material of dreams and construct a scene in which people (not just what’s depicted, but viewers too) and objects seem to fit in, most of the time.

In a sense, every work of art creates an imagined community, a place of belonging. A group of people – the artist; his audience – who don’t know each other but assume, when they are looking at the artwork, that they are thinking the same things. Even if there is no evidence to prove it. “It’s just a window for people to imagine what they want to imagine.” And so, we follow in the footsteps of the artist. Doing exactly what they did.

— Mark Rappolt, Editor-in-Chief of ArtReview.