



Adrian Paci, *The bell tolls upon the waves*, 2024  
Video, loop, 19'50"

Courtesy the artist, kaufmann, Milan/New York,  
Peter Kilchmann gallery, Zurich and Paris

Curated by Cristiana Perrella

A male figure — a cast of the artist's own body — carries an inverted roof on his shoulders, shaped like a pair of wings, evoking the idea of humanity suspended between precariousness and transcendence. This is *Home to Go*, a sculpture created in 2001 by Adrian Paci (Shkodër, Albania, 1969, currently living in Milan), bringing attention to the forced and dramatic journey of those compelled to leave their homeland, losing ties and roots, and at the same time referring to the human condition as a wanderer, with life on Earth being provisional and its fate unknown.

Adrian Paci's intervention continues in the historic Corsie Sistine of the nearby Monumental Complex of Santo Spirito in Sassia, an ancient place of care and welcome dating back to 727 AD, when the Saxon king Ina founded the *Schola Saxonum* for pilgrims heading to the Tomb of Saint Peter. Here, for the first time in Italy, the video installation *The bell tolls upon the waves* (2024) is exhibited. The work is inspired by a real event: in 1566 in Termoli, during a Turkish attack, looters tried to steal the Bell of Saint Catherine, used to warn sailors of danger — a failed attempt, as the bell fell into the sea, sinking the boat on which it was being transported.

Recalling this event, Paci designed a bell placed on a floating platform in the sea off Termoli, as if the historic one had resurfaced. The intense video shows the bell reacting, with its tolls, to the movement of the waves — sometimes gentle, sometimes violent. *The bell tolls upon the waves* is a work with strong symbolic value, referring to loss and to the Mediterranean as a mass grave holding the remains of tens of thousands of migrants. For them, the swelling of the sea marked the boundary between life and death. The bell's tolling across the waves is a funeral lament, a warning, and a reminder: every lost life concerns us all.

The exhibition's title — *No man is an island* — comes from a quote by the English poet John Donne (London, 1572-1631), taken from *Meditation XVII (Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions, 1624)*: "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main (...) any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." An invitation to acknowledge our common bond and mutual responsibility — foundational values for the Jubilee and the entire *Conciliazione 5* program, which, as hoped by Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, Prefect of the Dicastery, seeks to be a space open to spirituality, critical thought, and the transformative power of art.

*Adrian Paci - No Man Is an Island* is the second project of *Conciliazione 5*, the new contemporary art space of the Dicastery for Culture and Education of the Vatican, with 2025 curation by Cristiana Perrella. A window always open to art and its ability to engage with the major themes of our time in a free and profound way, generating new questions, new thoughts, and opening up possibilities for transformation — culturally, civilly, and spiritually.

The *Conciliazione 5* 2025 program invites reflection on Hope, in line with the theme chosen by Pope Francis for this Jubilee, through four artist in-

interventions addressing powerful and timely social issues: prison, migration, environment, and poverty. Each intervention engages both the *Via della Conciliazione* space and a nearby city location, changing each time and linked to the respective theme — thus creating a widespread art project extending beyond the borders of Vatican City.