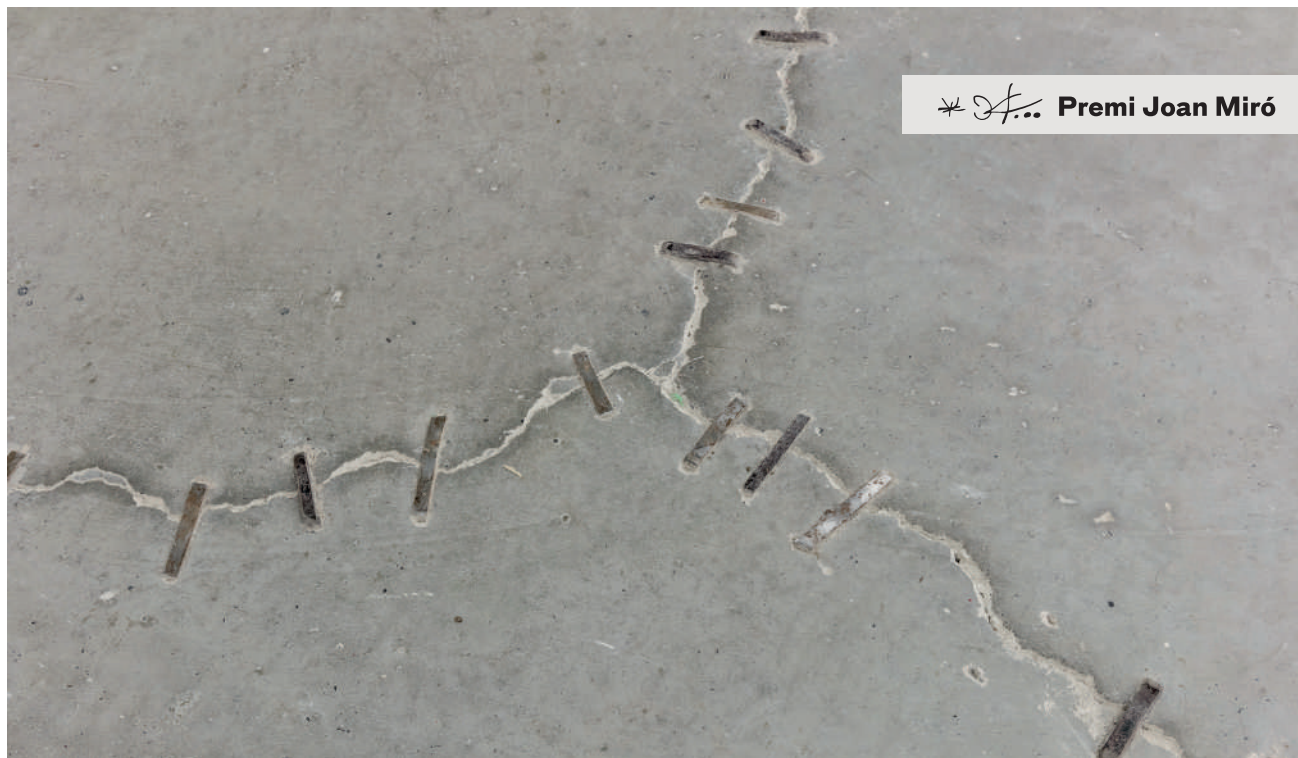


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PRESS KIT

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Temporary Exhibition



\* J... Premi Joan Miró

**Kader Attia**

**Scars remind  
us that our past  
is real**

15.06—30.09.2018

Traditional Repair, Immaterial Injury, 2014. Site-specific installation; concrete floor, metal staples. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Tony Heikenscheid © Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018

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**Fundació Joan Miró**

\* J... Barcelona

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 **"la Caixa" Foundation**

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## Introduction

**Kader Attia**

***Scars Remind Us that Our Past Is Real***

15 June– 30 September 2018

Exhibition organized by the Fundació Joan Miró and Obra Social "la Caixa"

**The Fundació Joan Miró and Obra Social "la Caixa" present Kader Attia's exhibition *Scars Remind Us that Our Past Is Real*.**

**The exhibition is a project signed by the artist that invites visitors to gradually learn about the main concepts in his work.**

**The relationship between architecture and colonial history, the marks of the past on the skin of history like wounds on a body, the concept of repair and the cathartic role of art are some of the key themes in the work of Kader Attia that are reflected in the exhibition.**

***Scars Remind Us that Our Past Is Real* gathers over twenty pieces, including photographs, videos, altered objects, sculptures and installations.**

**The artist sets up a dialogue between some of his most salient works from the last few years and new pieces such as a stainless steel sculpture shaped in the Fundació Joan Miró rooms or the three-screen video installation *Héroes Heridos*, filmed primarily in Barcelona, a document shot in Barcelona that gathers the testimonies of people and organisations that are committed to a variety of social issues.**

**Kader Attia is the winner of the 2017 Joan Miró Prize, a biennial award granted by the Fundació Joan Miró and Obra Social "la Caixa", with a 70,000-euro cash prize and an invitation to show the artist's work in 2018.**

## Press Release

**Kader Attia**

***Scars Remind Us that Our Past is Real***

15 June - 30 September 2018

Exhibition organized by the Fundació Joan Miró and Obra Social "la Caixa"

**Barcelona, 13 June 2018.** *'Keeping wounds visible is to accept the real. So I set out to repair these wounds by pursuing what my research taught me was fundamental: that repair is an oxymoron that also includes the wound. To deny the wound is to maintain the pain it generates. By repairing history's cracks with metal staples, with yarn or with patches from other, often contradictory cultures, I give voice to the victims; I allow trauma to speak to us and thus to pave the way for catharsis.'*

Kader Attia (Dugny, 1970) defines his artistic practice as the embodiment of a political experience. His work is an exploration that stems, in his words, from the 'urge to recover, through form, the field of emotion in the public debate with the aim of repairing the wounds of history'. This bold and committed endeavour, which has brought together reflection and action over the course of twenty years, merited the 2017 Joan Miró Prize, one of the most prestigious and best-endowed contemporary art awards in the world, jointly granted by the Fundació Joan Miró and Obra Social "la Caixa".

Kader Attia, the winner of the sixth edition of the prize; Elisa Duran, Deputy General Director of the Fundación Bancaria "la Caixa"; and Marko Daniel, Director of the Fundació Joan Miró, presented the exhibition linked to the prize, *Scars Remind Us that Our Past Is Real*, at a press conference.

The show, Kader Attia's first solo exhibition in Spain, is the artist's invitation to gradually discover the essential aspects of his oeuvre through some of his most salient pieces from the last few years, as well as newly-produced work. Over twenty pieces including photographs, videos, altered objects, sculptures and installations lead visitors through the areas of friction between cultures that have suffered unequal relationships.

How do we face the pain of the past, both collectively and at a personal level? How do we treat our wounds? What do we do with our memories? And how do we deal with cultural and social debt? In the artist's view, the West has treated repair of the harshest and most unjust episodes in its wars and its colonial past by attempting to erase their evidence, whereas in other cultures the marks left by traumatic experiences are accepted or even highlighted.

*Scars Remind Us that Our Past Is Real*, whose title is inspired by an excerpt from Cormac McCarthy's novel *All the Pretty Horses*, examines the history of thinking about power and the wounds that are denied by the hegemonic narrative in order to, in Attia's words, 'recall the necessity of their reparation even when they are irreparable'. The project, organized by the Fundació Joan Miró and Obra Social "la Caixa", has also received support from the Zachęta – National Gallery of Art in Warsaw and the Bonniers Konsthall in Stockholm.

The exhibition begins in a space that primarily features works about the relationships between architecture and colonial history. A large installation made of couscous mimics what could be the scale model of a negative of a city in the desert in which the buildings have disappeared leaving nothing but their empty footprints behind. The image of this absence serves as a metaphor of the dynamics of dispossession, appropriation and reappropriation that have dominated East-West relations derived from colonisation. Other pieces in this room, such as the *Dé-construire et Ré-inventer* lightbox or the *La Tour Robespierre* video, are connected to the artist's research concerning the influence of Eastern vernacular architecture on modern Western architecture and, in particular, the impact of traditional Afro-Arab construction – specifically, the legendary Algerian city of Ghardaïa – on the aesthetics of Le Corbusier. The installation *Indépendance Tchao* – in which the artist reproduces a hotel in Dakar that has been closed down for a decade using the index card boxes where the Algerian police kept its reports on activists – completes this area devoted to architecture as a body that shows its own scars in public spaces.

The marks of the past on the skin of history like wounds on human faces – to be hidden or shown – is the central theme around which the pieces in the next room revolve. One of the artist's most renowned works presides over this space: *Open your eyes*, a video installation in which images of traditional African objects are paired against Western elements and photographs of disfigured soldiers from the First World War held in the archives of the Historisches Museum in Frankfurt, the Musée du Service de Santé des Armées in Paris and the Wellcome Collection in London. Next, the sculpture *Chaos + Repair = Universe*, a shattered world assembled with rudimentary metal staples, exposes the fissures through which its unity has been woven, an image that the artist uses to suggest the cyclic universal order of destruction and repair as well as the contemporary globalisation process. The effects of globalisation on people, often visible as wounds on a body, are precisely the subject matter of the video that Attia produced specifically for the exhibition and is shown in this room. It is a three-screen installation titled *Héroes Heridos* and based on a series of interviews shot in Barcelona gathering the testimonies of people and organisations committed to denouncing issues such as the situation of migrants, detention centres for foreign persons, the criminalisation of unlicensed street vendors and the use of rubber bullets by the police.

According to Attia, this video represents 'the ethic reverse of many pieces in the exhibition that address the same issues from a more aesthetic perspective'.

*'From culture to nature, from gender to architecture, from science to philosophy, any system of life is an infinite process of repair.'*

For Kader Attia, any wound calls for repair and the work of art plays a crucial role in this process by enabling catharsis. The artist has devoted a large part of his career to researching the notion of repair based on the analysis of natural dynamics and the different cultural approaches to this concept. The next space in the exhibition includes some of his most relevant pieces in this regard, such as *J'accuse*, an installation featuring a series of busts carved in wood, again based on the portraits of wounded soldiers from the First World War. The striking sculptural ensemble acts as a prologue to the screening of the eponymous anti-war film shot by the French director Abel Gance in 1938. The room also houses the stainless steel sculptures shaped by the artist in the Fundació's spaces specifically for this project, which, hanging on the walls, act as distorting mirrors, as well as slashed canvases repaired with embroidery titled *Mirrors*.

*'Works of art — written, painted, or performed — are mirrors, for better or worse, of histories past, present, and future.'*

Precisely, the last room in the exhibition elaborates on the metaphor of the work of art as a mirror that forces us to face our own image, be it individual or collective. The works featured here include *Repaired Broken Mirror #9*, a sutured looking-glass which, when we look into it, reveals the scars that shape us and which we have learned to forget or conceal. This piece establishes a dialogue with other salient works in the show such as *Mirror Mask*, an African ritual mask studded with mirror shards that alludes to the fragmentary, fractured nature of all identities. The exhibition closes with a projection of *Reflecting Memory*, a film poem that places the phantom limb syndrome – the perception of often painful sensations coming from an amputated limb as though it were still connected to the body – in a dialogue with the injuries left by historical trauma that live on in the collective psyche and send out constant calls for repair. These traumas are the subject of two other works that are reflected in Attia's maze of mirrors: the word *Humiliation* sculpted on a wall panel and the large installation titled *Intifada*, which takes the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as the point of departure to examine the links between reappropriation and reparation.

## The Joan Miró Prize

With the prestige of the promoting institution, the Fundació Joan Miró, and the financial support of the Obra Social "la Caixa" – which is responsible for the 70,000 euro cash award and for producing the exhibition – the Joan Miró Prize has reached its sixth edition and consolidated its position as one of the most outstanding artistic awards in the sphere of contemporary art. In previous editions, the prize was granted to the artists Olafur Eliasson, Pipilotti Rist, Mona Hatoum, Roni Horn and Ignasi Aballí. In addition to receiving the cash award, the winning artist is featured in a large-scale solo exhibition at the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona and presented with a titanium trophy, an original design by André Ricard.

The jury panel for the 2017 Joan Miró Prize included Iwona Blazwick, director of Whitechapel Gallery (London); Magnus af Petersens, director of Bonniers Konsthall (Stockholm); Alfred Pacquement, former director of the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris); Nimfa Bisbe, head of the "la Caixa" Foundation contemporary art collection, and Rosa Maria Malet, then director of the Fundació Joan Miró (Barcelona). The jury members, all acclaimed professionals in the field of contemporary art, chose the winner for his vision and creative commitment, akin to the work and spirit of Joan Miró.

### Jury Statement for the 2017 Joan Miró Prize

'Having met to deliberate, the jury of the Joan Miró Prize has unanimously agreed to distinguish French-Algerian artist Kader Attia with the award. Launched in 2007, the Prize is granted every two years to an international artist for his or her artistic achievement, as well as his or her intellectual affinity with Joan Miró's oeuvre and legacy.

In the case of Mr. Attia, the jury applauds the breadth of his research, his bold, syncretic approach to the impact and lingering effects of colonialism, as well as his encyclopaedic, yet nuanced, elaboration of the notion of 'repair' as the basis of his artistic production. His passionate engagement with current affairs and with the shared fate of humanity has close links to Joan Miró's involvement in the critical episodes that marked his generation, while Attia's unique take on complex, often traumatic, human relationships across cultures resonates with Miró's universal aspirations.

It is for these outstanding aspects of Kader Attia's work that the jury is unanimous in its decision and is pleased to add his name to the growing and remarkable list of Joan Miró Prize winners.'

## Kader Attia's speech at the Joan Miró Prize ceremony (excerpts)



Announcement of the 2017 Joan Miró Prize.  
Photo: Pere Pratdesaba  
© Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

*'I find this entire process very interesting at a personal level, like a sort of culmination of my relationship with Barcelona and with this institution, since twenty years ago I was in this city as a student and, obviously, as a visitor to the Fundació Joan Miró as well. Now, every time I come back – and I've been doing so often since 2011 – and see how fast the city is changing, I wonder what Barcelona is in relation to Spain, to Europe, to the world. Twenty years ago, I wandered through it with my camera – analogic, of course – taking pictures here and there of totally destroyed architectures. I remember*

*an abandoned police barracks where Diagonal meets the sea, which is now a university building. I took many photographs of that place. When I was back in Paris, I selected a picture from that series – one of those typical 19th-century windows with broken panes –enlarged it to full scale, printed many copies, and pasted them all over the streets of Paris. We didn't call it 'street art' back then, but clearly that's what it was. Over the years, I've realized that that Barcelona which has disappeared, but not completely – the scars are still there to be seen – has had a huge influence on me, particularly on my interest in architecture. But at the time I never imagined the world we are experiencing today at a global level, and believe I'm not the only one in that sense.*

*My entire education, including my formative period in this city, has helped me understand in a very 'Édouard Glissant' way that now more than ever the world is a mixture of cultures, of exchanges within a dynamic of cultural, economic, intellectual, political, and other movements. I spent most of my youth between Algeria and France, and that movement that my father also explained to me in 'Glissant' terms – placing more importance on the transition, on the journey itself than on the point of departure or of arrival – that movement between two places and two cultural contexts left a lasting mark on me.*

*After many years of field work and research in Africa, Barcelona, Latin America and Asia, I realized that art as a human being's poetic and political process of creation, as a discipline of knowledge that is just as important as science in the landscape of human production, is a necessary tool for opening our eyes as human beings. That's why several years ago I presented a work at Documenta titled Open Your Eyes, which*



*explains that while the modern West has always followed the principle that wounds are supposed to disappear when we repair something, that they are supposed to be erased, in traditional African and Asian societies, for example, the repair must be visible.*

*In Japan, they have a sublime technique known as kintsugi. When a tea ceremony cup breaks, they repair it and paint the crack in gold. According to the ritual, you are offered the cup with the wound facing you, and when you take it in your hands, you turn the cup around to make it visible. In Africa the examples are very interesting. Everyday objects and sacred objects are repaired with artisanal methods that make the wound more visible and also include materials brought over from the West, from the colonizer, from the occupying power: manufactured objects, plastic... It seems very simple, but the metaphor is far more complicated. The post-modern world is in total denial of time, of the wound, and, therefore, of its history. And that's the world we live in: a world full of phantoms, of the suffering wounded who call out for reparation.*

*Fethi Benslama, a Tunisian-born Lacanian psychoanalyst who is the director of the Hospital de Bobigny in Paris, claims that all we have to do is look at a city map to see that most of the street names belong to dead people. As he sees it, we travel through a cemetery, through arteries of the dead, and that affects us, it's a psychological tomb. But the post-modern neoliberal process makes us focus on the now. In this powerful denial, not only are we incapable of understanding our present; we are also unable to visualize the future.*

*What fascinates me is that the poetic strength of art has the power to make a profound, unique impression on each human being. Art has that cathartic ability to bring people from all political leanings together, even if we disagree or precisely because we disagree. It's an agora for eliciting and sharing emotions, points of view, for dialogue. The poetic dimension of art as its reason for existing is a very important strength that has been neglected in the last few decades. The impact of new technologies on our lives is positive because it helps us do things faster, but it is also transforming our lives and our realities very quickly. Art that is physical, formal, present or far more conceptual has that power to keep us connected to reality in a dynamic way, not just passively, unlike technology, which depersonalises us. The presence of a work of art like a Miró sculpture, an African mask, a medieval crucifix, a piece of music, or even poetry –everything that has been created by human beings – is what helps us build ourselves and live in the real, unlike the virtual, which is exclusively the architecture or the mythology of the present.'*

Fundació Joan Miró, October 2017

## The Artist



Kader Attia, 2017 Joan Miró Prize  
Photo: Pere Pratdesaba  
© Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

Kader Attia (Dugny, 1970) is a French-Algerian artist who lives and works in Berlin and Algiers. Attia spent his childhood between his parents' country, Algeria, and the suburbs of his native Paris. During his training as an artist, he experienced several cultures, living in different places: in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where he had his first solo exhibition in 1996, in Venezuela, and in Barcelona. This experience in multiculturalism, essential to his own identity, is at the root of a dynamic artistic practice that reflects on the aesthetics and the ethics of different cultures.

Specifically, taking a poetic and symbolic approach, Kader Attia examines the wide-ranging repercussions of Western cultural hegemony and colonialism on non-Western cultures and the rebound of this impact on the West itself. The artist has investigated colonial and post-colonial identity politics, from tradition to modernity, in the light of the present globalised world, creating a veritable genealogy.

With sculpture as his point of departure, over the course of his career Kader Attia has produced a multi-disciplinary artistic output that spans a broad range of techniques, materials, scales and symbols. His photography and his films, particularly focused on detail, capture the 'silent noise', in Attia's words, that emerges from the history of colonisation. The artist also uses minimalist installations to recreate spaces that challenge viewers in terms of their fantasies and phobias. His sculptures, made with unconventional materials – from couscous to plastic bags – are often characterised by the opposition of formal sensory appeal and penetrating content. Not without reason, Attia points out: 'In my artistic practice, the form is just as important as the concept, since it describes the fundamental presence of space within this inseparable dialogue it maintains with time. A repair could be the tie that lashes these paradoxical states together.'

Indeed, this concept, central to the colonial question, has guided his artistic practice over the last decade. Attia views repair as a constant in human nature, of which 'the modern Western mind and traditional non-Western thought have always had contrary views'. His work aims to 'help repair social injuries that are both centuries old and planetary'. In addition to financial restitution and political arrangements, Attia's work observes and addresses the other lingering wounds of the conflict: the subtle psychic, historical, linguistic, personal and generational aftermath. 'For me, the idea of repair is no more than a continuum. Repair is neither a beginning nor an end; it is the space in between. I often use the most tangible aspects (such as damaged flesh or broken objects) to clearly explain the issues at stake in processes of repair, whether abstract or concrete, since they operate with the same principles.'

Attia's wide range of interests has frequently led him to turn to other disciplines, such as medicine, physics, philosophy, psychoanalysis, architecture, history and political science. Kader Attia has explored the concept of repair from the vantage points of these fields, identifying the interrelationships between them and expanding the interpretations thereof. 'One might think that when something breaks, all you need to do is put the pieces back together. In fact, though, repair is about more than just control. It is a process that can be understood, for example, as a form of cultural reappropriation. Or that can be seen in parallel dynamics on other scales, such as re-enactment, natural selection, translation, absorption, improvement, rectification or transformation. From culture to nature, from gender to architecture, from science to philosophy – any system of life is an infinite process of repair. Repair makes continuity possible.'

Attia studied philosophy and fine arts at the École Supérieure des Arts Appliqués Duperré and the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, as well as at the Escola Massana, Centre d'Art i Disseny in Barcelona. His work has been shown in leading international institutions of contemporary art, such as the Centre Pompidou (Paris), MoMA (New York), the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York), Tate Modern (London), Whitechapel Gallery (London), the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (Sydney), the KW Institute for Contemporary Art (Berlin), and the Museum für Moderne Kunst (Frankfurt). It has also been featured in multiple biennales, including the Cairo Biennale, the Marrakech Biennale, dOCUMENTA in Kassel, and the Venice Biennale. He is the winner of the Biennale Prize at the 2008 Cairo Biennale, the 2010 Abraaj Capital Art Prize, and the 2016 Marcel Duchamp Prize.

His work appears in numerous collections around the world and is represented by Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin and Cologne; Lehmann Maupin, Nova York, Hong Kong and Seoul; Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna; and Galleria Continua, San Gimignano, Beijing, Les Moulins and Havana.

His most recent exhibitions include *Les racines poussent aussi dans le béton*, a solo show at MAC VAL, Musée d'art contemporain de Val-de-Marne, Vitry-sur-Seine; *Kader Attia*, at The Power Plant, in Toronto; *Viva Arte Viva*, at the 57th Venice Biennale; *Sacrifice and Harmony*, a solo exhibition at the Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt; the solo show *The Injuries Are Here*, at Musée Cantonal des Beaux Arts in Lausanne; *Culture, Another Nature Repaired*, at Middelheim Museum Antwerp; *Contre Nature*, a solo show at the Beirut Art Center; *Continuum of Repair: The Light of Jacob's Ladder*, at Whitechapel Gallery, London; *Reparatur. 5 Akte*, at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; and *Construire, Déconstruire, Reconstruire: Le Corps Utopique*, a solo exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. He has also shown at the Biennale of Contemporary African Art in Dakar; at dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel; at MoMA in New York (*Performing Histories (1)*) and at Tate Modern in London (*Contested Terrains*).

Kader Attia currently divides his time between his studios in Berlin and Algiers, and is fully engaged in the programming of *La Colonie*, a space of cultural and artistic exchange in Paris.

For more information about Kader Attia and his career, visit <http://kaderattia.de/>

## Selection of Works and Writings by the Artist

Sala 17

### Kader Attia

*Hommage à Ibrahima Sow*, 2018.  
Video HD, 16:9, colour, sound  
Courtesy of the artist  
© Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018



### Kader Attia

*Untitled (Couscous)*, 2009  
Floor sculpture. Couscous, black acrylic paint, spotlight  
Courtesy of the artist; Galerie Nagel Draxler Berlin/Cologne; Collection FRAC Centre – Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain, Orléans  
Photo: François Fernandez  
© Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018



**Kader Attia**

*Dé-construire et Ré-inventer*, 2012

Lightbox

Courtesy of the artist and Galleria Continua

Photo: Kader Attia

© Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018



**Kader Attia**

*La Tour Robespierre*, 2018

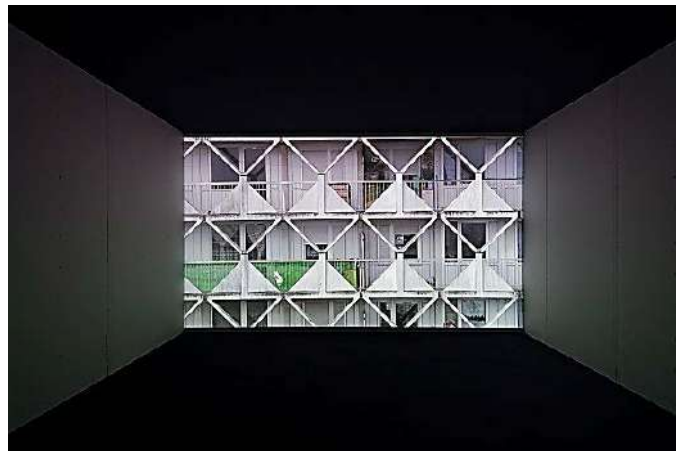
HD video, 16:9, colour, sound.

2 min14 s

Courtesy of the artist

Photo: Aurélien Mole

© Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018



**Kader Attia**

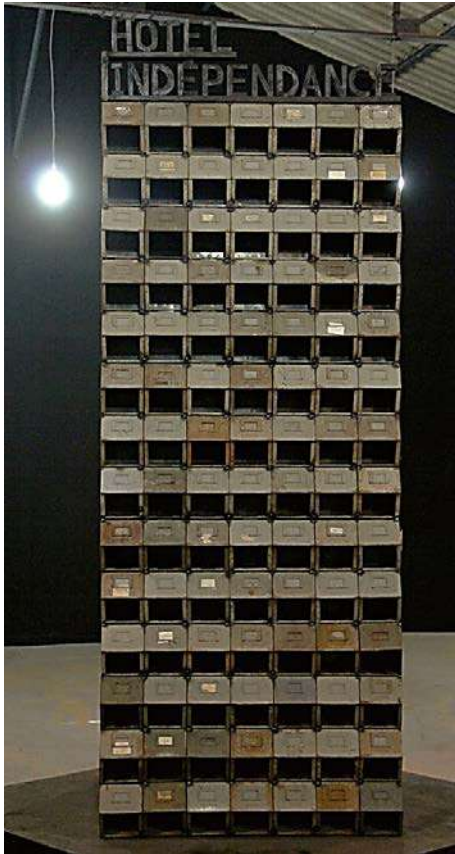
*Indépendance Tchao*, 2014

Sculpture. Vintage metallic boxes from the French colonial administration

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nagel Draxler Berlin/Cologne

Photo: Simon Vogel

© Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018



*[...] Following my researches on Modern Architecture and its relation with Colonial History, especially in Africa, I have been fascinated by a building in Dakar, which is located at a place called Place de l'Indépendance. This beautiful building has been closed now for more than ten years because of a conflict between political powers and the real owner, who is the architect and builder of the building, and whom I met four years ago. Nobody understands why this beautiful hotel, which is called Hotel Indépendance, is closed, but many assume that it is because of a so-called political campaign claiming that there is a risk it will collapse soon. Deepening my investigations, I have discovered that thanks to others Senegalese architects, as the owner told me, the building is totally stable and strongly and deeply standing on its foundations.*

*At almost the same time when they were closing this building, I collected old rusted boxes in Algiers, which used to be used by the police during the forties and fifties to gather information on Algerian activists.*

*In a process I call reappropriation, I have flipped these boxes up and down to create a perfect geometrical echo to this amazing modernist 'brise soleil', which is the basic pattern of the Hotel Indépendance's facade. [...] The delusion of independence is all what this work is about; it is a critique of the failure of post-independence into bureaucracy and corruption, in which Africa as many other countries is lost.*

© Kader Attia

Sala 18



**Kader Attia**

*Chaos + Repair = Universe*, 2014. Sculpture. Mirror fragments, metal wires  
Exhibition view, *Sacrifice and Harmony*, at the MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, 2016.  
Courtesy of the artist and Galleria Continua. Photo: Axel Schneider  
© Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018

**Kader Attia**

*Héroes Heridos*, 2018  
Three-screen video installation  
Courtesy of the artist  
© Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018





**Kader Attia**

*Mirrors And Mask*, 2013

Wooden mask, mirror, steel stand, pedestal  
 Collection Robert Müller-Brunotte / Dan Söderholm /  
 Stockholm / Berlin  
 Photo: Pere Pratdesaba  
 © Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018



**Kader Attia**

*Open Your Eyes*, 2011

Double slide projection, 80 slides each  
 Courtesy of the artist; MoMA collection, New York; Frac Pays de la Loire collection; Moderna  
 Museet collection, Stockholm; private collection and Galleria Continua  
 Photo: Musée du Service de Santé des Armées, Paris; Martin Monestier, and Royal Museum for  
 Central Africa, Tervuren  
 © Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018



*[...] When I discovered a ritual Congolese sculpture from the Vili ethnic group, which had a missing eye that had been repaired in its original environment with a European button, I was immediately astonished. Then, when I realized that this sculpture seemed to have been kept in the institution's storage and never exhibited since it had been brought to Europe, I felt strongly the misunderstanding in which Occident has always participated in when it comes to an unexpected element in non-Occidental cultures, especially the ones it had colonized.*

*[...] While a notion of repair in Occident tries to 'put things back in order', following the search for perfection that matches Western Thought, on the contrary, repair in the non-Occidental world doesn't return to the initial state, but gives a different form to the broken object, creating a new aesthetic vocabulary.*

*At the beginning of the last century, when thousands of African objects, like masks and sculptures, were brought to Europe, this continent was living out one of its biggest traumas: the First World War. During and after this war, millions of wounded soldiers came back home seriously injured and disfigured. At this early moment of Modernity, the extremely complex wounds, especially the ones on faces, brought forward a different way to repair the body.*

*This new context was the medical laboratory devoted to developing and increasing the practice of repair, a form of early plastic surgery, on disfigured human faces. Sometimes the surgery was so rough that there is an obvious analogy between African repaired sculptures and masks, and 'broken faces' of Europe. I have pointed out the similarities between these two kinds of repair in Open your Eyes. This work shows formally how the 'radicalism' of any physical trauma's context is concerned by repair, first as an ethics, and then as an aesthetics.*

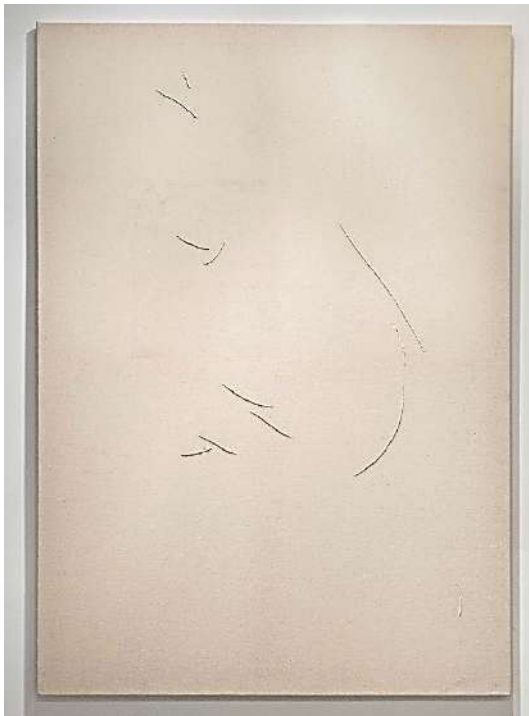
*But behind this ethics of repair, a sign of otherness is always hidden.*

*Here is the paradoxical connection that exists between broken African artefacts, repaired in a non-identical way, emphasized by an unexpected presence, and Occidental modernity's obsession for the balance between how it was before and how it has to be after the repair. Indeed, whereas at the beginning, the repair of the faces in Occident was imperfect, its aim as we see now is a fake, smooth and stretched look. And like many fields that Modernity has globalized, the repair of broken bodies and faces has led to the current celebration of plastic surgery; another myth generated by Modern Thought: the Myth of Perfection.*

*Today, after observing the cynicism of this absence of recognition for many years, in which Occident is totally involved, not only politically but also via the disciplines of the Arts and Sciences, I attempt to find the hidden dialogue that could be a fold between these two 'universalities' we are talking about [...]*

Kader Attia: *Open your Eyes: 'La Réparation' in Africa and in the Occident*

Sala 19



**Kader Attia**

*Mirrors*, 2018

Stitched canvas

Courtesy of the artist and

Lehmann Maupin, Nova York, Hong Kong and

Seoul and Galerie Nagel Draxler,

Berlin/Cologne

Photo: Tony Hafkenschaid

© Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018



**Kader Attia**

*J'accuse*, 2016

Installation. Wooden busts on metallic plinths, wooden sculptures on metallic supports, single-screen video projection, colour, sound

Exhibition view, *Sacrifice and Harmony*, at MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt/Main, 2016

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nagel Draxler Berlin/Cologne

Photo: Axel Schneider

© Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018



*[...] A society's certitude is amnesia that pulls it sooner or later toward the repetition of its mistakes. The title of the installation, J'accuse! revives not only the headline of Emile Zola's article publicly engaging him in the defence of Captain Dreyfus who was condemned for spying because of an overlay of anti-Semitism, but also the film by Abel Gance who after World War I decides to make an immense pacifist work that will describe the disasters of war. When in 1918 Gance decides to film actual broken faces to make visible the horror of war and terrify crowds to dissuade them from repeating the unimaginable, all the soldiers he invites to take part refuse.*

*So he's forced to make the film with actors wearing make-up. Almost two decades later, at the time of the rise of Nazism, Gance decides to reconnect with the broken faces to show to the world what war produces in a scene where a character calls to the dead of the Great War from every nation so that they return and dissuade man from starting all over again. [6]*

*With my assistants in Dakar who are descended from Senegalese colonial infantry, the Tirailleurs Sénégalais, I sculpted into hundred-year-old trees the broken faces I found in hospital archives in France and Germany. To play the phantoms of the war of 1914-1918 as the film of Abel Gance is projected on a screen in front of them, I constructed the silhouette of a marching column of broken faces frozen in time and space staring at those who file past.*

*The work of art plays a crucial role in the reparation process. Besides the fact that it constitutes itself a reparation, it also questions a political horizon touching all the categories of society. It is always discussed, even hated, but never meaningless. Why? Because it incarnates the field of emotion! It is both a projection and a necessary mirror of society that seeks to exorcise its evil in order to find inner peace—'to purify oneself,' said Aristotle, and thus to restore peace in the community. He called that catharsis.[7] I call it the field of emotion.*

*Works of art—written, painted, or performed—are mirrors, for better or worse, of histories past, present, and future.*

*The History of thinking on power, the inheritor of slavery, of colonisation, and of genocides, writes tirelessly a hegemonic, universalist story, and denies by its certitude that of the phantoms of wounds that it generated, and which ceaselessly grow, despite the distance in time from the trauma. Like a phantom limb, these wounds are there and the works are a means to recall the necessity of their reparation even when they are irreparable.*

Kader Attia: *The field of emotion* <http://kaderattia.de/the-field-of-emotion/>

[6] Abel Gance, *J'accuse*, Pathé Frères/United Artists, 1919; Abel Gance, *J'accuse*, Forrester-Parents-Productions, 1938.

[7] Aristotle, *Peri Poietikis / Poetics*, chapter 6.

## Sala 20

**Kader Attia**

*Intifada: The Endless Rhizomes of Revolution*, 2016

Installation. Metal sculptures, rubber, stones,  
newspapers, photocopies

Exhibition view, *Sacrifice and Harmony*, at MMK  
Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt/Main, 2016

Courtesy of the artist, Galerie Krinzinger  
and Galerie Nagel Draxler Berlin / Cologne

Photo: Axel Schneider

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*[...] In this project, as often in my work, the main focus is on two fundamental aspects of the universe. On the one hand, reappropriation – in other words, how that which has oppressed us, has ruled us, the metal construction material that is used to make concrete pillars, and which one finds protruding from houses in all developing countries, is recycled/reused for people to defend themselves, to fight. And, on the other hand, how this repurposing of an everyday material as a weapon of revolt (reappropriation) becomes, at least in this gesture, a form of repair, through a desire for social reparation; the desire for reparation of a social, cultural, and racial inequality in the hopes of achieving an ideal future and a freedom from which the oppressed individual or social group has long been excluded [...].*

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**Kader Attia**

*Humiliation*, 2018  
 Site-specific wall sculpture;  
 carving  
 Courtesy of the artist  
 Photo: Pere Pratdesaba  
 © Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018



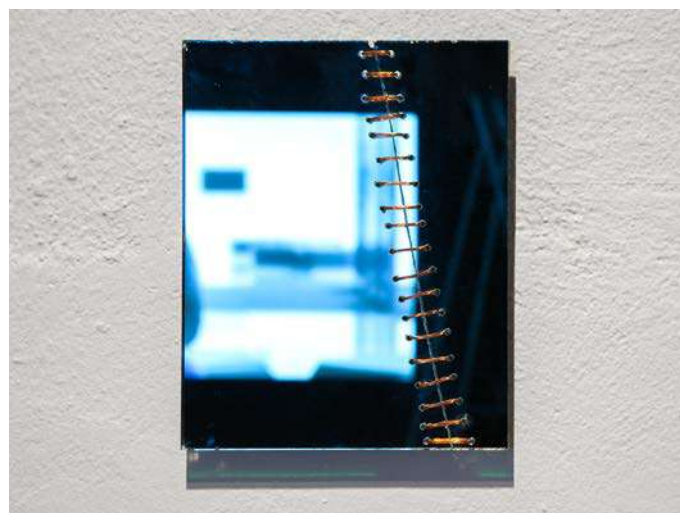
**Kader Attia**

*Entropy*, 2016  
 Stainless steel telescopic arm,  
 ancient African wood sculpture,  
 steel plate  
 Courtesy of the artist and  
 Lehmann Maupin, Nova York,  
 Hong Kong and Seoul  
 Photo: Vanni Bassetti  
 © Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018



**Kader Attia**

*Repaired Broken Mirror #9*,  
 2015.  
 Mirror and metal wire  
 Collection Robert Müller-  
 Brunotte /  
 Dan Söderholm / Stockholm /  
 Berlin  
 Photo: Pere Pratdesaba  
 © Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018



**Kader Attia***Reflecting Memory*, 2016

Single-screen HD digital video projection, colour, sound

Courtesy of the artist; Galleria Continua; Galerie Krinzinger; Lehmann Maupin, Nova York, Hong Kong and Seoul, and Galerie Nagel Draxler Berlin/Cologne. Photo: Kader Attia

© Kader Attia, VEGAP, 2018

*This cinematographic poem presents interviews with surgeons, neurologists and psychoanalysts on the phenomenon of the 'phantom limb', the sensation that a missing part still remains connected to the body, following physical amputation and subsequent hallucinosis. The most likely cause of this condition can be located in the so-called 'mirror neurons', which send impulses in response to mimetic desire (René Girard) and are specific to human beings. Beyond the scientific and political relevance of the inquiry, the work offers a journey through mimetic and hybrid phenomena, such as dub music (a genre that originated in Jamaica and is based on the subtraction of sounds). Referencing both intimate and collective injuries, material and immaterial symptoms, the film expands beyond physical and individual amputation, harking back to the ghosts of contemporary history (slavery, colonialism, communism and genocide) and their demands for repair.*



*Our contemporary world is haunted by wounds from the past. Over centuries multiple inequalities have arisen – between rich and poor, between men and women, between races, between cultures. From the dawn of Humanity, one hundred billion humans have lived on the Earth. The trace of their existence remains in our psyche. But the traumas resulting from the worst moments in history such as wars, famines, and genocides have left lasting material and immaterial scars which, like a phantom limb of an amputated part of the body, are still there. They demand reparation. [...]*

Kader Attia: *The field of emotion* <http://kaderattia.de/the-field-of-emotion/>



## General Information

### Opening Hours

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays	10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Thursdays	10 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Saturdays	10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Sundays and Holidays	10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Mondays (except holidays)	Closed

### General Admission

Temporary exhibition	€7 / Concessions*: €5
Permanent collection + temporary exhibition:	€12 / Concessions*: €7

\* Students aged 15 to 30 and seniors over 65

Children under 15 and the unemployed (proof required): Free admission

Annual Pass	€13
Multimedia Guide	€5
ArticketBCN (6 art museums in Barcelona)	€30 <a href="http://www.articketbcn.org">www.articketbcn.org</a>

### Accessibility



**Images** and digital **press kit** are available at our virtual press office, [www.fmirobcn.org/press](http://www.fmirobcn.org/press) and at the following link: <http://bit.do/ekKrM>

**Follow** the activities related to *Kader Attia. Scars Remind Us that Our Past Is Real* on social media with the hashtag [#KaderAttia](https://twitter.com/KaderAttia) and on our website [www.fmirobcn.org](http://www.fmirobcn.org)

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## Fundació Joan Miró

 Barcelona



"la Caixa" Foundation

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