

Kader Attia

Continuum of Repair: The Light of Jacob's Ladder

For this annual sculptural commission, French-Algerian artist **Kader Attia** (b. 1970) has created an intriguing cabinet of scientific curiosities that revisits the biblical story of Jacob's Ladder.

Kader Attia's multi-media installations reflect on anthropology, politics and science and are rooted in history and archival research. His works explore ideas around identity in an age of globalisation and are informed by the experience of growing up between Algeria and the Parisian suburbs, and later living in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Venezuela.

At the centre of the work is a cabinet of curiosities filled with rare artefacts, books and scientific measuring instruments. Above it, a beam of light shines up to a mirrored ceiling, creating an infinity reflection which evokes the biblical tale prophet Jacob's vision of angels ascending from earth to heaven.

Surrounding the cabinet is a towering floor to ceiling structure of books that fills the gallery, exploring subjects such as history, art, architecture, science, physics and astronomy.

The commission is the result of an in-depth engagement with the space as the reading room of the former Whitechapel library. It looks at the idea of books and objects as receptacles of history, continuously carrying memories with them. Attia links the trajectory of religious and scientific knowledge to the concept of repair, which he sees as an underlying principle of development and evolution.

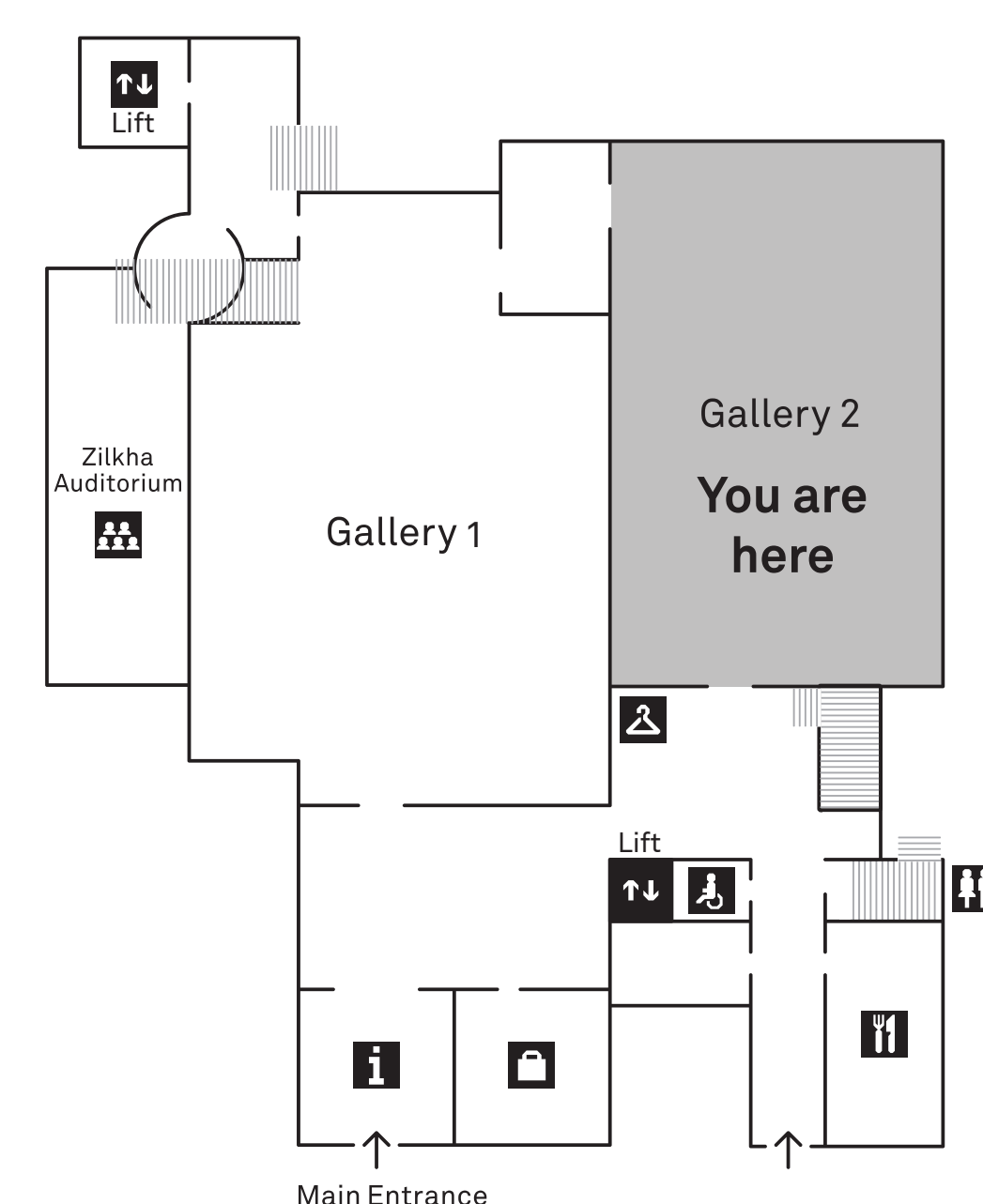
Exhibition Circle Supporters:

Galleria Continua, Leili Huth & Reza Kharaghan, Mourad Mazouz and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin/Cologne.

Find Out More:

A fully illustrated catalogue documenting the commission will be published in 2014.

Please see the website for an interview with the artist and more information on the commission whitechapelgallery.org



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The installation is the latest development in Kader Attia's research into the concept of repair, which he sees as an underlying principle of development and evolution. As Attia says 'the biggest illusion of the Human Mind is probably the one on which Man has built himself: the idea that he invents something, when all he does is repair.'

This concept began with Attia's presentation at the international art survey dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel in 2012, where he juxtaposed images of wounded soldiers from World War I with re-appropriated African masks suggesting a connection between physical healing and cultural reconstruction, both of which are processes of repair. He extended this examination in relation to both nature and culture at a solo exhibition at KunstWerke, Berlin in 2013, and for this commission he takes science and religion as its central focus.

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