



GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA

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KADER ATTIA

Reflecting Memory

Opening: Saturday February 18th 2017, Via del Castello 11, 6pm-midnight
Until 23.04.2017, Monday-Sunday, 10am-1pm, 2-7pm

Galleria Continua is pleased to once again host a solo exhibition by Kader Attia at its San Gimignano venue. Entitled *Reflecting Memory*, it comprises a series of new sculptures, installations conceived specifically for the gallery spaces and a documentary video work, through which the artist explores the political, aesthetic and architectural meanings of the notion of repair.

Following his participation in the most recent Documenta, Attia has come to be regarded as one of the most influential artists of his generation. In 2016, he firmly established himself on the international art scene: he received the prestigious Marcel Duchamp Prize, while the German section of AICA (International Association of Art Critics) judged his solo show at the Museo MMK für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt to be the best exhibition of the year. Also in 2016, Attia opened *La Colonie* in Paris, a multidisciplinary space that avoids the inherent dynamics of museum spaces, presenting itself instead as a project with a powerful symbolic value. In the same spirit, in January of this year he

took part in the 13th Sharjah Biennale with *Vive l'Indépendance de l'Eau*, a reflection on the politics, social structures and aesthetics of water distribution. Attia will also be at the next Venice Biennale, *Viva Arte Viva*, curated by Christine Macel, where he will be exhibiting at the Arsenale.

Shaped by a heterogeneous cultural background, Kader Attia has developed an idiom informed by his North African origins, French culture and his cosmopolitan condition as a contemporary artist. In his work he combines phenomena relating to various ages and cultures within a broader panorama that enables him to shed light on current issues and to interpret the present in a different way, reflecting on cultural re-appropriation and the hybridization of objects, with reference to different historic and geographic contexts.

Fundamental to Attia's poetics is the concept of repair. This does not involve the pursuit of an ideal of perfection or of the re-creation of an original state, and is not only physical but also moral. For the artist, in fact, it is an action not designed to cancel the past by erasing the signs of a trauma, but one that leads to the recollection of what was, generating a new level of meaning involving memory

and not excluding pain. The fulcrum of the show is *Reflecting Memory*, a documentary video about the phantom limb syndrome, featuring a series of interviews with specialists such as surgeons, neurologists and psychoanalysts, and with amputees. This pathology, which affects those who have lost a part of their body, involves the persistent sensation of the presence of a limb even after it has been amputated, that is, the perception of pain coming from a body part that actually no longer exists. The work dialogues with a series of previously unshown sculptures that continue and extend *"the reflection about the complexity of memory, the working of memory, the duty of memory and its representation; about "repair" as a form of "re-appropriation", but above all as a form of resistance"*, explains the artist.

Another recurrent element of the works on display is the mirror, an object which refers to the real but is unable to grasp its essence, which shows the present and at the same time refers to the past. The vast carpet of mirror fragments that covers the stalls area reflects the whole of the surrounding architecture, a 1950s cinema, and its aesthetics, with an immediate reference to the past. This revelation generates a kind of collective memory that prompts us to reflect upon a continually changing world. The mirror, which offers a transient image of our body, which creates an illusion lying between objective and subjective perception, the real and the imaginary, simultaneously reflects a world in ruin, shattered by innumerable conflicts and losses.

Kader Attia was born in 1970 in the Paris suburbs of Seine-Saint-Denis, to an Algerian family. He now lives and works in Berlin and Algiers. The artist showed for the first time in Italy in 2003, at the 50th Venice Biennale. In 2005 he took part in the 8th Lyon Biennale; in 2007 he had his first solo show in the United States, at the ICA in Boston. In 2009 he participated in the Paris Triennale and the Havana Biennial. He received an award at the Cairo Biennial in 2008, and in 2010 he won the Abraaj Capital Prize and took part in the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship Program. In the same year he took part in the Biennale of Sydney, the Busan Biennale in Korea and in exhibitions at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha (Qatar), and the Haus der Kunst in Munich. In 2011 he showed at the 4th Moscow Biennale, the Dublin Biennial and in various international venues, including the Mori Museum in Tokyo, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, Tate Modern in London and the Sharjah Art Foundation in Sharjah. In 2012 he showed at the MoMA in New York, at DOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel and at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. In 2013 he was at the Whitechapel in London and the Kunst Werke Museum in Berlin. In 2014 he took part in the Kochi Biennale in India, and that of Poznan in Poland, while in 2015 he was at the Lyon Biennale. In 2016 he won the Marcel Duchamp Prize and showed at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, the 12th Biennale of Dakar in Senegal, the Marrakech Biennale in Morocco and the Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt.

For further information about the exhibition and for photographs:

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