

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, Galerie Krinzinger, Mourad Mazouz and Galerie Nagel Draxler.

With thanks to Healthy Planet, Thomas Heneague Art Books and The Quarto Group.

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

