

FRAGMENTS OF REPAIR

A multi-part project convened by
BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht
with artist Kader Attia and
decolonial forum ~~La Colonie~~, Paris

17 APRIL-26 SEPTEMBER 2021

GUIDEBOOK/ENGLISH

Fragments of Repair

A multi-part project convened by BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht with artist Kader Attia and decolonial forum La-Colonie, Paris

17 April–26 September 2021

Fragments of Repair/Kader Attia

An exhibition by Kader Attia at BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht
17 April–26 September 2021 (open to the public from 5 June 2021)

Fragments of Repair/La-Colonie Nomade

A collective study program convened by Françoise Vergès and hosted at
La Dynamo de Banlieues Bleues, Pantin, Paris
17 April–3 July 2021

Fragments of Repair/Gatherings

A hybrid off- and online series of lectures, conversations, screenings, and
assembly forums convened by BAK on bakonline.org and at BAK, basis voor
actuele kunst, Utrecht
17 April–1 August 2021

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Fragments of Repair

Welcome to *Fragments of Repair*, a multi-part project convened by BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht together with artist Kader Attia and decolonial forum La Colonie, Paris.

Taking place a year-and-a-half into the Covid-19 pandemic, the project *Fragments of Repair* emerges into a world in a more visible state of brokenness. An avid multiplier of not just itself but every injustice it encounters, the virus and its effects continue to reveal deep-seated wounds and injuries across the globe in need of repair. Brought into full view, it becomes obvious that these wounds and injuries issue from the nexuses of historical colonialisms and present-day authoritarianisms, economic disparities and growing racial violence, and the continuous abuses inflicted upon already vulnerable precarious lives and increasingly frequent climate disasters. These underlying historical, social, political, and economic conditions—amplified under pandemic emergency by social isolation, sustained stress, chronic uncertainty, existential insecurity, emotional despair, exhaustion, loss, and fear—have expanded the viral contagion into a disquieting global psychological pandemonium.

Driven by this pandemonium and the urgency of the wounded psyche and the injured collective mental health, the project puts forth the notion of *decolonial repair*, conceptualized by artist Kader Attia, as both a tool and a tactic of engagement with the current conjuncture. Injury, wound, and repair have been key concepts across Attia's artistic practice, particularly in relation to the material and immaterial injustices of colonial violence that persist into the present. Repair, according to the artist, is "a form of cultural resistance by means of reappropriation." Attia often cites the Japanese art of ceramics mending *kintsugi* or the practices in precolonial African societies: while the former showed broken ceramic pottery fragments re-sealed in radiant gold to highlight both their breakage *and* repair, the latter engaged in a boundless chain of reparation upon reparation, acknowledging the objects' journeys and making the traces of their memory fully evident.

In this view, repair is always necessarily bound to wound and injury in a fundamental, permanent way; even if the mind—especially in western societies faring under the modern flag of "reason"—wants to have its psychological and physical scars removed, erased, or hidden at the very least. Against such denial, Attia proposes to reclaim the scars, keep them in sight, and thus acknowledge that in every repair there is something *irreparable*. This irreparability is both the reservoir for ways of knowing the world, as well as a source for future-oriented resistance and resilience. Repair, then, is not a return to past ways but a space for (collective) performative imagination aimed at carving alternative pathways toward what is yet to be.

The exhibition *Fragments of Repair/Kader Attia* is conceived as a multi-vocal repository of knowledges and practices of decolonial repair. Across nine works, it engages with questions of the legacy of colonialism; the conundrum around the restitution of colonial objects; the structural violence of present-day racial and extractivist capitalism; and the practices of state-sponsored control and surveillance of the vulnerable and disenfranchised, and the role of (modern) architecture in them. If the works begin from the robust critique of the past and present ills, they also tirelessly engage with speculative visions of repair in relation to the collective psyche and alternative imaginations. Rerouting, as it were, impending hegemonic futures through *irreparable repair*, they simultaneously model meaningful pathways for life in and out of the current convergence of crises.

“Prefigurative” learning—a collective learning about what is yet to be—is embedded throughout the exhibition. This concept arises again in two accompanying “fragments”: *Fragments of Repair/La Colonie Nomade* and *Fragments of Repair/Gatherings*. The former is a collective study program that gathers together artists, theorists, and activists around a curriculum of decolonial repair, drawing on decolonial strategies as a means of meaningful survival and collective acts of repair *in spite of* the cruel capitalist “economy of exhaustion.” The study program sets forth the mission of *La Colonie* as an independent forum for decolonial thinking, debate, and cultural activism—now in a nomadic form after it closed its doors a year ago due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The third part of the project, *Fragments of Repair/Gatherings*, involves hybrid off- and online conversations, lectures, screenings, and public assembly forums around the theory and practice of repair.

Postscript

Fragments of Repair has evolved over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, engaging with its commanding power to both make painfully palpable existing crises—pandemics in their own right—and unleash new ones as well. The former includes rising police violence and brutal economic disparities, among many others; the latter sees a pandemic of increased psychological distress unfolding with repercussions of yet unimaginable proportions. In such circumstances, the often called for “return to normality” would mean rejoining the trail of linear, hegemonic history with its future that is reserved for the privileged few. Contrarily, decolonial repair engages with the “age of pandemics” not as a theme of some temporary aberration but as a long-term symptom. How this wound will heal is yet unknown, but learning from and practicing decolonial repair may well provide a propellant for crossing over the de-futured abyss; on its other side lie the radical collective imaginaries of alternative futurity.

Maria Hlavajova
on behalf of the BAK Team

**FRAGMENTS
OF REPAIR**
/
**KADER
ATTIA**

17 April–26 September 2021 (open to the public from 5 June 2021)
BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht

Fragments of Repair/Kader Attia is the first comprehensive exhibition of Attia's work in the Netherlands. The exhibition features a constellation of the artist's video, collage, and sculptural works grappling with subjects ranging from architecture as a form of social and psychological control, to mental health care from a decolonial perspective, and the notion of restitution as the practice of social justice. These issues are intertwined with the artist's continued inquiry into repair as decolonial strategy, and question how the processes of repair in their social, psychological, and material dimensions play out in a pandemic age.

ARTWORKS

1.

Untitled

2018, SERIES OF SCULPTURES

At the entry to the exhibition, three tall wooden beams are scattered across the hallway appearing to reinforce the ceiling of this near-dilapidated building (a long-neglected public venue that we at BAK have been patching up ever since we moved in some four-odd years ago). On closer inspection, however, the beams—splayed with partially mended cracks—appear fragile, wounded, and worn out. Not quite reaching the ceiling above to firmly support it, they are themselves sustained by pedestals made of metal and concrete.

An articulation of the present world of interdependent, interlacing injuries and wounds in urgent need of repair, the work introduces this notion as it has been conceptualized and pursued by the artist Kader Attia. Repair, here, is not a simple return to how things were before injury, trauma, wound, or illness. Nor is it the superficial physical removal or psychological denial of the event of destruction. Rather, by acknowledging and keeping visible the traces of loss and absence—of the irreparable—Attia's repair affirms what has been and imagines what is yet to be. A source of both past knowledge and future resilience, repair becomes a propositional practice of ethics and politics to come, healing across different contexts and scales, ranging from the colonially looted object to the individual's traumatized body, from alienated urban communities to the global psyche that has been increasingly barraged today by the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.

Reason's Oxymorons

2015, 18-CHANNEL VIDEO INSTALLATION

Inquiring into ways of dealing with trauma and injury, the work *Reason's Oxymorons* brings together various cultural practices and perspectives regarding subjectivity, the psyche, and imagination from around the world. The cultural specificities of the concept of repair are developed across 18 video chapters. Archived under headings such as "Reason and Politics," "The Magical Sciences," "Religion," "Language," "Modernity, Capitalism, and Schizophrenia," "Ancestors and Neurosis," "The Group," and "The Individual," the interviewed protagonists hold a wealth of expertise and competence in fields ranging from psychiatry to ethnography, storytelling, shamanism, philosophy, history, music, etc. While enacted in the west as a strategy to correct or hide imperfections and "brokenness," in non-western contexts repair often involves embracing the scar as a natural part of healing, honoring thus the traces of past wounds as a reservoir of resistance and learning. The work recognizes this west/non-west divide and highlights the continued colonization of the psyche in the mandatory assimilation of disparate cultures into a hegemonic constellation—as is the case, for example, with refugees who experience psychological trauma when forced to integrate into a western socio-political compound that prioritizes individuality above all else. Yet, by embracing "contradictions of reason" and employing both the intuitive and the rational, *Reason's Oxymorons* refuses to succumb to reproducing simplistic binaries, and unfolds instead as a multi-vocal, multi-perspectival, and multi-talented archive pondering the human condition of radical social, psychical, and emotional interdependence.

The videos are installed on computer monitors inside anonymous, standardized, prefabricated, gray office cubicles. Prototyped at the height of western-modernist utopia as the shining example for autonomy, flexibility, and progress, the cubicle became instead a signifier of the architecture of control as well as the atomization, precarization, and disposability of workers. Despite its (post)panoptic architecture of control and surveillance, the visitor is invited to freely chart their own course through the maze in a way that traverses its reductive compartmentalization, forming connections between perspectives that collectively probe new pathways toward decolonial repair in asynchronous chorus.

Featuring interviews with: **Pierre Amrouche** (photographer and poet, France/Togo), **Madjid Belaid** (ethnopsychiatrist, France), **Malek Bensmail** (filmmaker and writer, France/Algeria), **Léopold Gaston Boissy** (psychiatrist specialized in epileptology and family therapy, Senegal), Sister **Thérèse Bou Nassif** and resident at psychiatric hospital "de La Croix" (Lebanon), **Brigitte Derlon** (ethnologist, France), **Souleymane Bachir Diagne** (philosopher and writer, USA/Senegal), **Albert Diefenbacher** (psychiatrist, Germany), **Mamadou Diop** (Master of Ndeup Ceremonies, Senegal), **Abdelhak Elghezouami** (migrant and refugee psychologist, Switzerland), **Roberto Selokankomaku Fagokui** (shaman, Colombia), **Taïeb Ferradji** (psychiatrist in child and adolescent psychopathology, France), **Martine Fourné** (psychoanalyst and researcher, France/Senegal), **Olivier Galavernat** (clinical psychologist, France), **Serge Gruzinski** (historian and social scientist, France/Brazil), **Momar Gueye** (psychiatrist, Dakar), **Gerhard Kubik** (ethnomusicologist and psychoanalyst, Austria/Malawi), **Moya Aliya Malamusi** (ethnomusicologist and psychoanalyst, Austria/Malawi), **Imam Hassen Narimi** (Rokia healer, France), **Maram N'doye** (healer and Master of Ndeup Ceremony, Senegal), **Aida Sylla** (psychiatrist, Senegal), **Christine Théodore** (clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst, France), **Francis Théodore** (ethnopsychiatrist, France), **Jacques Philippe Tsala Tsala** (clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, Yaoundé), **Christine Uwimana** (migrant and refugee psychiatrist and psychotherapist, Switzerland/Rwanda), and **Maria** (mother healer, Malawi) with her husband.

VIDEO CHAPTERS

Ancestors—Neurosis, 12:21 min.
Art as Therapy (Part 1), 19:03 min.
Art as Therapy (Part 2), 19:49 min.
Exile, 15:52 min.
Genocide—Colonization, 12:31 min.

The Group, 17:04 min.
Illness, 16:58 min.
The Individual, 18:05 min.
Language, 23:01 min.
The Magical Sciences, 22:09 min.
Modernity—Capitalism—Schizophrenia, 14:00 min.
Modern Science and Traditional Therapy, 22:51 min.
Reason and Politics, 19:50 min.
Religion, 24:26 min.
Totem and Fetish, 23:52 min.
Trance, 21:19 min.
The Unconscious, 23:54 min.
Virtual Real, 17:05 min.

3.

Oil and Sugar #2

2007, VIDEO, 4:30 MIN.

In *Oil and Sugar #2*, a construction made from sugar cubes dissolves as crude oil is poured onto it. It looks like a building imploding in slow motion and then returning from collapse to its initial state, time and again, as the video loops. The work speaks to the place of oil and sugar in the colonial "architecture" of the global world, historically and at present. Recalling at once the plantation and sugar slavery and petroleum and extractive capital's machinery, the video echoes this world of inequality, injustice, poverty, repression, and exclusion for many; this is what hides behind the facade of perfectly straight lines and the clean aesthetic of western-modern minimalism that the white block alludes to. Although turning dark and melting into chaos in the process, the construction manages to endlessly return unchanged. The seeming impossibility to disrupt this vicious circle of disintegration and continuous reemergence unveils the monstrosity of the challenge ahead for the hard labor of decolonization. Yet in every decline, uncertainty, and

catastrophe there is emergence and thus a possibility to reroute the loop into repair, not as a return to what has been but as a gateway between one world and the next.

4.

La Tour Robespierre

2018, VIDEO, 2:14 MIN.

La Tour Robespierre (The Robespierre Tower) is a drone-recorded portrait of a massive modernist housing tower in a Paris suburb, named after a key figure of the 1789 French Revolution, Maximilien Robespierre. The recording unveils a stark contradiction to the French Revolution's ideals of universal equality, as well as to modernist architecture's promise of democratic housing. A residential high-rise in Paris's urban periphery—the *banlieue*—conveys the near untenable reality of public housing. Even though once propagated as egalitarian architecture, it has since become synonymous with the racial othering that plagues its residents, many of whom are working-class and often descendants of former French colonies. The stigmatization renders these *Zones Urbaines* as zones of exclusion. The social, economic, and political segregation gives rise to a pernicious feedback loop of police violence, particularly against young men of color. It fails to address the root causes of the current situation and thus continues to deny the urgent necessity of the reparation of colonial trauma.

Seen through today's Covid-19 pandemic lens, *La Tour Robespierre* cannot but remind us of how systemic racial, class, and gender disparities interlace with public physical, mental, and emotional health inequities. The overcrowded massive apartment block becomes the virus's preferred habitat: multigenerational households; the socio-economic reality of (often) people of

color with no working-from-home opportunities, venturing into the city as “essential workers” to sustain the privileged; and individuals whose bodily and psychological vulnerabilities are intensified by sub-optimum living conditions. A lockdown in this environment, though crucial for managing collective health, often provides a convenient pretext for even heavier policing and securitization of already disproportionately precarized lives. It recalls the origin point of containments and curfews: the military-prison-psychopathological complex that arose in direct lineage from early colonial policy.

Yet, as the work *La Tour Robespierre* browses the surface of the uniform aesthetic order of this failed architectural project, it deliberately averts the impulse to identify, register, and contain the “contesting” urban population inhabiting it. Without puncturing the monotone facade to further invade these peoples' lives, the work respects that they maintain their right to exist beyond scrutiny.

5.

Snails

2009, PHOTOGRAPHIC TRANSPARENCY IN LIGHTBOX

This large photograph offers a startling vista onto what appears to be the outer edges of the Parisian *banlieues*. A bleak and barren area, seemingly suffering under scorching summer conditions, emanates the sense of a dilapidated, abandoned, and motionless world. Two different types and scales of urban architecture frame the scenery, merging together in a near-perfect modernist composition. Meeting at a right angle and offering an illusion of strange parity, it appears as if a small vertical beam in the foreground measures up against the large horizontal social housing block

in the background. The severed steel plinth, however, is covered by a clump of snails clustered in provisional estivation to withstand periods of heat and drought. Countering the grid with their organic formation, they curiously disrupt the formal and ideological geometry as well as the seeming calm of the modernist mass housing estate behind them. Although originally built to provide high-density uniform, atomizing dwellings to the working-class populations, they have since become an allegory for a socio-economic, racial, and ethnic conflict, as well as a site of collective struggle driven by the urgency of decolonial repair.

6.

The Body's Legacies, Pt. 2: The Postcolonial Body

2018, VIDEO, 42 MIN.

The Body's Legacies, Pt. 2: The Postcolonial Body tackles police violence and racial body politics in postcolonial France. Throughout the work four decolonial thinkers and activists share thoughts around the subject of the individual and collective racialized body. The exchange pivots around a concrete, devastating instance of racially motivated police aggression where a young man of Congolese descent, Théo Luhaka, was assaulted by police officers following a race-based identity check in a Parisian *banlieue* in 2017. Weaved through personal recollections, philosophical perspectives, and sociological scrutiny, there emerges an unambiguous account of present-day police brutality and institutional racism. This powerful testimony of systemic oppression of Black lives draws a straight line from historical colonialism into the present and throws into crisis the self-congratulatory western narrative of progress and reason that has led to contemporary democracy with its supposed all-encompassing equity.

The key questions the work addresses become ever more urgent at the present intersection of two global crises—the Covid-19 pandemic and increasing attacks by police against racial and ethnic minorities. As the already marginalized populations are subjected to disproportionate pandemic impact *and* ever more control, patrolling, and state-sponsored harm, we see intensification of Black Lives Matter and similar mobilizations across the world. Shaping the public space and the space of politics by accommodating them *against* and *in spite of* their hostile “racial logic,” the notion of repair is guided not by the ideals of mere “inclusion” of the postcolonial body in western society, but by the urgency to radically overhaul this society’s racist psyche.

Featuring interviews with: **Norman Ajari** (philosopher, France/USA); **Amine Khaled** (dramaturge, France); **Olivier Marboeuf** (writer, critic, and curator, France); and **Louisa Yousfi** (journalist and decolonial activist, France).

Please note that the work contains graphic video surveillance footage of the assault on Théo Luhaka. Although we at BAK are aware and take part in the ongoing public conversation about the circulation and reproduction of violent images that may have potentially harmful effects, we have chosen to include the work due to this footage’s galvanizing effect on the French left in the struggle against police brutality.

7.

The Object's Interlacing

2020, INSTALLATION WITH VIDEO (78 MIN.) AND 17 OBJECTS (WOODEN AND 3D NYLON-PRINTED COPIES OF AFRICAN ARTEFACTS)

In the video within this installation, a variety of practitioners engage with the complex subject of the “restitution” of African cultural artefacts that were violently displaced into western ownership during the era of historical colonialisms. Considered from various contemporary perspectives—philosophical, legal, anthropological, psychoanalytical, and economic, as well as from the viewpoint of collecting and

museology—the assembly of voices unfolds an understanding of restitution as a practice of repair that reaches far beyond a simple returning of plundered objects to their place of origin. Through their spoken accounts, the protagonists decry the looting colonial machine as well as its tragic disregard for the “local cosmology of life” that the stolen objects signify. Within such a cosmology, the objects are the living and acting force and a fundamental symbolic, philosophical, and discursive resource—sustaining its people as a society. The west appropriated them not for these cultural, social, and religious meanings but for their material and market worth, thus emptying them of spiritual charge, soul, and secrets. Yet, having been kept from their natural function and native habitat, over time the artefacts themselves have “internalized” their new roles, absorbing in particular their characterization as aesthetic or ethnographic objects. Accumulating these manifold hybrid identities, they underwent fundamental mutation, as did the populations where they once belonged so clearly. “When you talk about the return of objects,” one protagonist asks, “where are they going to return to?” Do they return merely as goods or are the immaterial qualities they once held reclaimable? If they are “irreparable,” can this “irreparable repair” become a source of creative reinvention, in spite of persisting colonial asymmetries?

As the intricate discourse around these questions unfolds throughout the video, it is beamed through a field populated with replicas of artefacts of non-western provenance, some made as “traditional” wood carvings and others as high-tech 3D-printed sculptures. The objects cast their silhouettes onto the screen to performatively (re)claim their own voice in the conversation. Superimposing their (im)material presence onto the footage, they seem to attest

that the spiritual exists in excess of the material and thus cannot be owned. Yet in the shadow play they initiate, one can also sense a proposition for a *decolonial epistemology* that recognizes the *interlacing* of both the historicity and the legitimacy of the objects with their journey and translocation.

Featuring interviews with: **Souleymane Bachir Diagne** (philosopher and writer, USA/Senegal); **Awa Cheikh Diouf** (Director of the Henriette Bathily Women’s Museum, Senegal); **Massamba Guèye** (writer, storyteller, and poet, Senegal); **Serge Guézo** (Prince of Abomey and Savè, direct descendant of King Guézo of Dahomé and cultural heritage activist, Benin/France); **Alexis Malefakis** (ethnologist and cultural anthropologist, Switzerland); **El Hadji Malick Ndiaye** (Director of the Théodore Monod African Art Museum, Senegal); **Sylvain Sankalé** (lawyer, historian, and African art collector, Senegal); **Felwine Sarr** (economist, cultural theorist, and writer, Senegal/USA); **Bénédicte Savoy** (art historian, Germany); and **Christine Théodore** (clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst, France).

8a.

Following the Modern Genealogy

2012–2021, SERIES OF COLLAGES

AND

8b.

Untitled

2021, ARCHIVAL MATERIAL (BOOKS AND PHOTOGRAPHS)

In this installation of collages and viewing tables featuring photographs and books from the artist’s archive, Kader Attia draws a genealogy of architectural modernity through examining how the utopian ideals of western modernist architecture were inspired by the vernacular building practices of France’s former colonies, particularly in Algeria. A notable example is Ghardaïa which inspired the modernist architect Le Corbusier’s designs for social housing, among them the iconic *La Cité Radieuse* (The Radiant City) in Marseille. The utopian premise of *vivre-ensemble* (living together) that Le Corbusier’s designs promulgated—and the vernacular architecture that influenced his designs—later became hollowed out

by state-endorsed neoliberal policies that maximized the profit gained from social housing projects by minimizing the comfort of living for their predominantly postcolonial inhabitants. In bringing such an obfuscated backstory of modern architectural utopianism to light (Le Corbusier never acknowledged his inspiration), Attia traces structural and architectural parallels, similarities, and connections between so-called “developed” and “developing” countries. Attia provides an alternate architectural history that critiques and disrupts the dominant, western-oriented view of modern architecture’s genealogy and advocates instead for a multi-directional and cross-cultural dynamic of borrowing and appropriation.

Architecture, and specifically western architectural modernity, takes prominent place across Attia’s oeuvre. There exists a paradox between, on one hand, progress, functionality, and transparency, and on the other, dominance, social control, and discipline; it is both a product of colonial modernity and that which generates it. Its aesthetic, ethical, and psychological influences extend up to the present and continue to shape the individual and collective “postcolonial body.”

9.

Repair & Listen

2021, PODCAST AND SOUND INSTALLATION

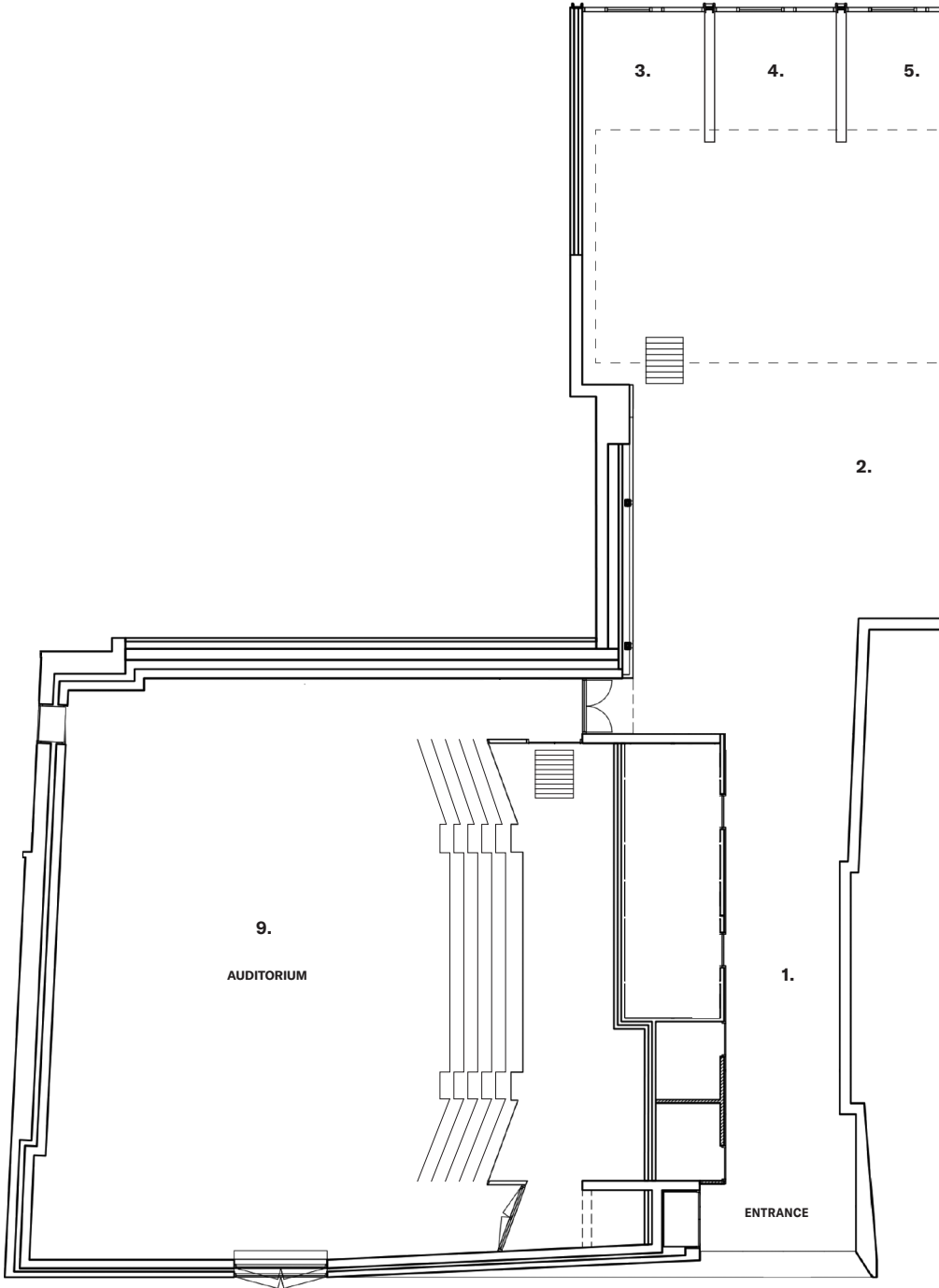
Throughout the duration of the project *Fragments of Repair*, Kader Attia engages in creating a new work in the form of a gradually unfolding podcast and sound installation in twelve parts. Episodes are based upon one-on-one conversations between the artist and Utrecht or internationally-based academics, students, or activists from fields such as philosophy,

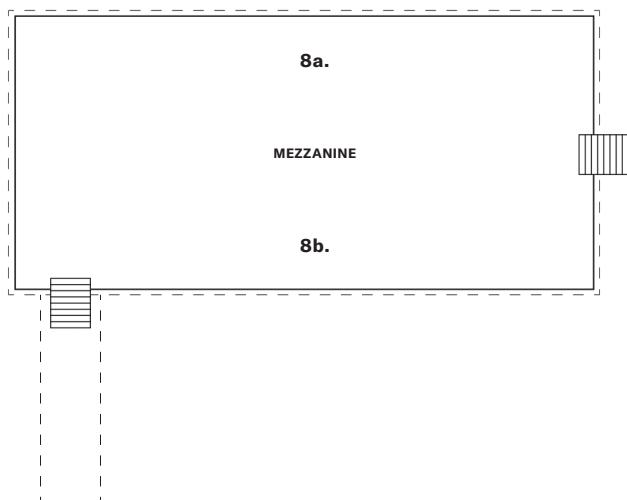
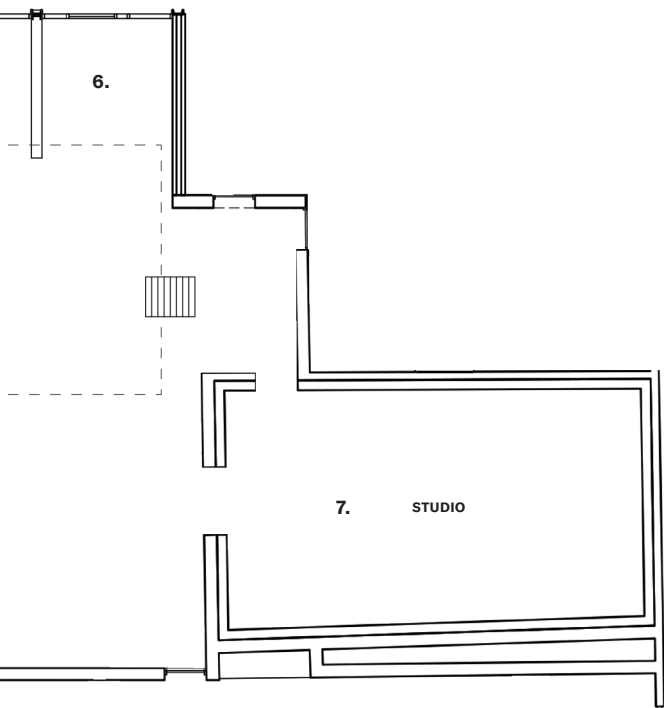
history of science, economics, psychoanalysis, psychiatry, and social epidemiology. Drawing on transcultural epistemologies and lived experiences, the work investigates repair as a concrete practice to counter the psychological impact of living through a pandemic.

The recorded conversations form part of an archive that is accessible both online and as part of a roaming listening-space installation to be exhibited in various academic and health care institutions across the Netherlands.

The work *Repair & Listen* is commissioned and produced by BAK and realized in collaboration with academics, students, and activists in the city of Utrecht and internationally; Utrecht University and a number of partners in the field of higher education and medical research.







FRAGMENTS OF REPAIR / ~~LA COLONIE~~ NOMADE

La Dynamo de Banlieues Bleues, Pantin, Paris
17 April–3 July 2021

Fragments of Repair/La Colonie Nomade is a collective study program conceptualized and convened by political theorist, feminist, and decolonial activist Françoise Vergès. *Fragments of Repair/La Colonie Nomade* expands on the notion of decolonial repair, drawing on decolonial strategies as a means of meaningful survival and collective acts of repair in spite of the cruel capitalist “economy of exhaustion.” It marks the continuation of *La Colonie*¹ in a nomadic form, and is hosted at La Dynamo de Banlieues Bleues, Pantin, Paris for the duration of the study program.

Exhaustion—mental and bodily depletion—is endemic to capitalism. Capitalism is premised on extractivism that produces a constant exhaustion of all forms and forces of living—humans and animals, soil and subsoil, oceans and rivers, air and water—for the well-being of a select few. The Covid-19 pandemic has magnified capitalism’s underlying health epidemic of exhaustion and the psychic debility—including but not limited to anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation—that arises from it. During quarantines and lockdowns there are, on the one hand, people with relative privilege working from home who manage their social and work connections through Zoom. Yet on the other hand, there

is a spectral labor of millions of people—many women, many people of color—who keep the city sanitized, care for the sick and the elderly, and deliver food and goods to those who can afford to stay inside. This lopsided equation of those dependent on people working and living in increasingly exhausting conditions is part of what Vergès has described as the “economy of exhaustion.” In Vergès’s words, the economy of exhaustion has “a long history in the modern world: it started with colonial slavery, mining human energy to death; the Industrial Revolution adopted this logic, exhausting the bodies of white workers and children until they finally obtained a reduction of work hours and hard physical labor thanks to the exhaustion of racialized bodies in the colonies. Liberal and neoliberal countries still rest on mining to exhaustion the bodies of migrants and people of color.”²

Aligning with decolonial perspectives, how could repair as decolonial strategy allow for brief moments of “joyful surviving,” as opposed to just bare, exhausted survival? How does decolonial practice as repair help develop collective tools for emancipation and resistance? How could repair, as a pragmatic intervention in one’s own life, enable escape from the dominant subjectivity of the neoliberal economy of exhaustion? How might people think together and enact repair in the wake of a pandemic which has been precipitated by that which is broken (social, ecological, and economic injustices)? And, in the face of what is irreparable, how can one understand repair as imperfect, unfinished, and always ongoing, in opposition to the routine of repairing all kinds of wounds and hiding their scars, which is, as Attia has shown, deeply tied to European modernity?

Fragments of Repair/La Colonie Nomade aims to go beyond a mere reporting on the conditions of the world and seeks to imagine and enact collective strategies and concrete gestures of repair. It also aims to inquire about the place and role of art in a politics of repair in the neoliberal-capitalist context of extraction and exploitation by (cultural) institutions, of savage inequalities, of intractable racism, sexism and xenophobia, and of global devastation of the lives of the racialized and the poor. Aware of the cultural institutions’ complicity in this situation, the conveners of *Fragments of Repair/La Colonie Nomade* seek to offer a safe place where complicity is openly debated and resisted.

Fragments of Repair/La Colonie Nomade is closely entwined with *Fragments of Repair/Gatherings*, an online series of lectures, conversations, and assembly forums which is part of *La Colonie Nomade*’s curriculum. It also attends regularly to the artworks of *Fragments of Repair/Kader Attia* as a departure point for collective study and to facilitate thinking about, reimagining, and practicing repair in and through art.

¹ Between October 2016–July 2020 *La Colonie*, co-founded by Kader Attia, was an independent space for decolonial thinking, debate, and cultural activism located in Paris’s Gare du Nord area. In summer 2020, *La Colonie* closed its doors due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the framework of this project, *La Colonie* assumes a nomadic existence in collaboration with BAK.

² Françoise Vergès, “Capitalocene, Waste, Race, and Gender,” *e-flux journal*, no. 100 (May 2019), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/100/269165/capitalocene-waste-race-and-gender>.

**FRAGMENTS
OF REPAIR
/
GATHERINGS**

bakonline.org
17 April–1 August 2021

Fragments of Repair/Gatherings involves a hybrid off- and online series of lectures, conversations, screenings, and assembly forums around the theory and practice of repair, convened by BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht on bakonline.org.

I. OPENING PROGRAM

17.04.2021, 13.30–18.00 hrs*

Lectures and conversations from BAK, Utrecht, and La Colonie/La Dynamo de Banlieues Bleues, Pantin, Paris

With **Kader Attia** (artist, Berlin), **Maria Hlavajova** (BAK general and artistic director, Utrecht), **Sven Lütticken** (art historian and BAK senior research advisor, Utrecht), **Wietske Maas** (BAK curator, Utrecht/Berlin), **Catherine Malabou** (philosopher, Paris), **Achille Mbembe** (philosopher and political thinker, Johannesburg), and **Françoise Vergès** (political theorist, feminist, and decolonial activist, Paris)

II. THE BODY'S LEGACIES, PT .2 THE POSTCOLONIAL BODY

02.05.2021, 14.30–16.30 hrs

Screening and conversation from BAK, Utrecht, La Colonie/La Dynamo de Banlieues Bleues, Pantin, Paris, and Lisbon

Screening: Kader Attia, *The Body's Legacies, Pt .2, The Postcolonial Body*, 2018

With **Olivier Marboeuf** (writer, critic, and curator, Paris) and **Ruth Wilson Gilmore** (abolitionist scholar and activist, Lisbon)

III. UTOPIANISM, ANTI-UTOPIANISM, AND THE RADICAL POLITICS OF CHRONOTOPIAN UNGOVERNABILITY

13.05.2021, 18.30–20.00 hrs

Lecture and conversation from BAK, Utrecht and Granville, Ohio

With **Omedi Ochieng** (writer and critic, Granville, OH) and
Rachael Rakes (BAK curator of public practice, Utrecht)

IV. ON DECOLONIAL AESTHESIS

10.06.2021, 18.30–20.15 hrs

Lecture and conversation from BAK, Utrecht and Paris

With **Rolando Vázquez** (sociologist and decolonial thinker,
Utrecht) and **Françoise Vergès** (political theorist, feminist,
and decolonial activist, Paris)

V. THE OBJECT'S INTERLACING

24.06.2021, 17.30–20.00 hrs

Screening and conversation from BAK, Utrecht and New York

Screening: Kader Attia, *The Object's Interlacing*, 2020

With **Wayne Modest** (material culture and critical
heritage scholar and curator, Rotterdam/Amsterdam) and
Souleymane Bachir Diagne (philosopher, New York/Dakar)

VI. INVISIBLE BRIDGES

15.07.2021, 18.30–20.00 hrs

Screening and conversation from BAK, Utrecht, Berlin, and Berkely, CA

Screening: Kader Attia, *Reason's Oxymorons*, 2015, excerpts

With **Kader Attia** (artist, Berlin) and **Stefania Pandolfo**
(medical anthropologist, Berkeley, CA)

VII. REPAIR & LISTEN

01.08.2021, 15.00–18.00 hrs

Concluding program from BAK, Utrecht and other localities to be confirmed

Repair & Listen is the concluding program to *Fragments of Repair/Gatherings* which launches Kader Attia's new sound installation and podcast work commissioned and co-produced by BAK. This final Gathering involves contributors to *Repair & Listen* to be confirmed.

**All times are Central European Summer Time (CEST).*

CO-CONVENORS

Kader Attia

Kader Attia is an artist who explores the wide-ranging effects of western cultural hegemony and colonialism. Central to his inquiry are the concepts of “injury” and “repair,” which he uses to connect diverse bodies of knowledge, including architecture, music, psychoanalysis, medical science, and traditional healing and spiritual beliefs. Throughout his multimedia practice—ranging from sculpture to film installation—“reparation” does not mark a return to an “intact” state, but instead makes visible the immaterial scars of psychic injury. This approach is informed by Attia’s experience of growing up between Algeria and the Paris banlieues.

Attia’s work has been shown in biennials such as the Shanghai Biennial; Gwangju Biennial; Manifesta, Palermo; Venice Biennial, Venice; and Documenta, Kassel. Notable solo exhibitions include *Kader Attia. Remembering the Future*, Kunsthaus Zürich, Zurich, 2020; *The Museum of Emotion*, The Hayward Gallery, London, 2019; *Scars Remind Us that Our Past is Real*, Fundacio Joan Miro, Barcelona, 2018; *Roots also grow in concrete*, MAC VAL, Vitry-sur-Seine, 2018; *Repairing the Invisible*, SMAK, Ghent, 2017; *The Injuries are Here*, Musée Cantonal des Beaux Arts, Lausanne, 2015; *contre nature*, Beirut Art Center, Beirut, 2014; and *Continuum of Repair: The Light of Jacob’s Ladder*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2013. Attia has shown in group exhibitions at venues such as MoMA, New York; Tate Modern, London; and Centre Pompidou, Paris.

Attia has been awarded the Marcel Duchamp Prize (2016), the Joan Miró Prize (2016), and the Yanghyun Art Prize (2017). In 2016, Kader Attia founded ~~La Colonie~~ in Paris’s Gare du Nord area as an open space for decolonial thinking, debate, and cultural activism. Attia is the appointed curator for the 12th Berlin Biennale in 2022. Attia lives and works in Berlin and Paris.

~~La Colonie~~

Founded by Kader Attia, ~~La Colonie~~ opened its doors on 17 October 2016, the anniversary of the 1961 Paris massacre in which police officers attacked and killed demonstrators for Algerian independence. From 2016–2020, ~~La Colonie~~ was located in Paris’s Gare du Nord area. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was forced to close its doors and begin a nomadic existence, initiated through the project *Fragments of Repair* in collaboration with BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht. ~~La Colonie~~ is an open forum for decolonial thinking, debate, and cultural activism. Together with artists, researchers, activists, local residents, different cultural and political communities, and various publics, ~~La Colonie~~ seeks to decolonize the conditions of knowledge production and the everyday structures of living together; fathoming a future disentangled from the legacies of colonial violence.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

FRAGMENTS OF REPAIR/KADER ATTIA

Opening hours exhibition:

Wednesdays–Sundays 13–19 hrs

Dates may vary during public holidays.

Entrance fee:

Regular admission: € 6

Under 18s, students, CJP, and seniors: € 3

Under 12s, AICA, Museum Card, and U-Pass: free

Please note that in light of the current Covid-19 lockdown in the Netherlands, the opening date of the exhibition *Fragments of Repair/Kader Attia* is yet to be determined. Also note that it is required to pre-book a timeslot and ticket for your exhibition visit online, see bakonline.org/visit.

Group visits and (virtual) introductions:

Please contact info@bakonline.org.

FRAGMENTS OF REPAIR/~~LA COLONIE NOMADE~~

Registration for the collective study program is closed. For more information on the syllabus and the online archival platform, visit bakonline.org/program

FRAGMENTS OF REPAIR/GATHERINGS

Registration:

Regular tickets (online): € 4

Regular tickets (in person): € 6

Student tickets (online): € 2

Student tickets (in person): € 3

Solidarity tickets: free

Donation options are available.

The opening program (Gathering I) is free of charge.



Registration via BAK's online ticket shop, see bakonline.org/visit.

COLOPHON

This guidebook has been published on the occasion of *Fragments of Repair*, a multi-part project convened by BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht with artist Kader Attia and decolonial forum *La Colonie*, Paris, 17 April–1 August 2021.

Fragments of Repair has been conceptualized by Wietske Maas and Kader Attia in conversation with Maria Hlavajova and the BAK Team.

Guidebook

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Fragments of Repair/Kader Attia

CONCEPTUALIZED BY:

Kader Attia and Wietske Maas

PRODUCED BY:

Thomas Orbon, Kamara Sassi, Nina Spa, and the BAK Team

COMMUNICATION:

Maarten Buser and Olga Leonhard

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Fragments of Repair/La Colonie Nomade

CONCEPTUALIZED AND CONVENED BY:

Françoise Vergès in conversation with Kader Attia and Wietske Maas

PRODUCED BY:

Alix Hugonnier

HOSTED BY:

Alix Hugonnier

COMMUNICATION:

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Fragments of Repair/Gatherings

CONCEPTUALIZED AND CONVENED BY:

Wietske Maas

PRODUCED BY:

Thomas Orbon, Daniel Lodeweges, Nina Spa, and the BAK Team

LIVESTREAM:

Ruben Hamelink

COMMUNICATION:

Maarten Buser and Olga Leonhard

Repair & Listen (podcast and sound installation), a new work by Kader Attia

DIRECTED BY:

Kader Attia

PRODUCED BY:

Thomas Orbon and the BAK team; Kamara Sassi and the Studio Kader Attia team

EDITED BY:

Kader Attia and Jochen Jezussek

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Wietske Maas and Nina Spa

Organized by:

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STUDIO KADER ATTIA:

Kader Attia, Hélène des Rieux, Kamara Sassi, Larissa Scheidt, and Marina Trancoso

LA-COLONIE:

Alix Hugonnier, program coordinator

LA DYNAMO DE BANLIEUES BLEUES:

Hamid Kolli, technical direction; Xavier Lemette, director; William Lopez, technical direction; Sandra Marschutz, general secretary; Ségolène Reungoat, administration

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BAK's main partner in the field of education and research is HKU University of the Arts Utrecht.



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