

En attendant



OMAR

Catlatat

A Survey of Art
from Algeria
and Its Diaspora

An exhibition presented by **Triangle – Astérides, Centre d'art contemporain**
In partnership with the **Centre national des arts plastiques and Box24**

12 February
16 May 2021
Exhibition guide

Curated by **Natasha Marie Llorens**

With: **Mohamed Aksouh, Arezki-Aoun, Kader Attia, Louisa Babari, Baya, Fayçal Baghriche, Abdallah Benanteur, Mahjoub Ben Bella, Adel Bentounsi, Halida Boughriet, Nasser Bouzid, Fatima Chafaa, Hakima El Djoudi, Hassen Ferhani, Abdelkader Guermez, Mohammed Khadda, Mourad Krinah, Nawel Louerrad, Amina Menia, Ahmed Abdelaali Merzagui, Lydia Ourahmane, Sadek Rahim, Sara Sadik, Zineb Sedira, Massinissa Selmani, Fella Tamzali Tahari, Djamel Tatah, Hellal Zoubir, Sofiane Zouggar**

Presentation

En attendant Omar Gatlato presents twenty-nine artists from Algeria and its diaspora. This unprecedented perspective on the Algerian artistic context includes art works from 1965 to the present day, including several new commissions. It is inspired by Merzack Allouache's classic film, *Omar Gatlato*, known as the first Algerian film to center on an individual experience of emancipation and self-discovery. Like the film that inspired it, *En attendant Omar Gatlato* exhibits work that, at the scale of everyday experience, is saturated with surreal humor, meticulous attention to the body, and ambivalent sense of belonging.

En attendant Omar Gatlato is also the title of a 1979 book published by Algerian lawyer, writer and feminist Wassyla Tamzali, devoted to early Algerian experimental film. Through her association of references to Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* with Allouache *Omar Gatlato*, Tamzali provides a dual sensibility and an important conceptual way forward. These two portraits of anti-heroes trying to make sense of their day to day lives illuminate the manner in which artists and filmmakers engage decoloniality, or the critique of European colonial regimes of knowledge.

Like Beckett and Allouache the works by the twenty-nine artists in the exhibition offer diverse, polyphonic, unstable representations of life in Algeria and in its diaspora. Rigorously critical in their relation to colonialism's formal legacies, such as Orientalism and the monument, the works represent several generations' reflection on their society that remains an important model for how art continues to think through decolonization.

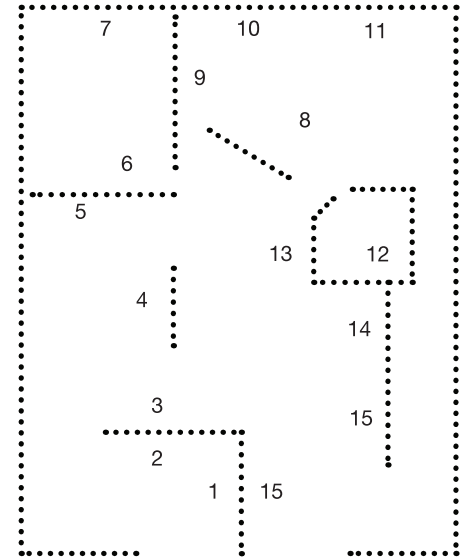
Algeria's eight-year struggle for independence from France (1954 -1962) and the euphoria of its achievement inspired the anti-racist struggles and independence movements of the 1960s and 1970s (most notably the African National Congress' fight against apartheid and the Black Panthers, etc.) Yet over the last fifty years this political legacy has hardened into a singleparty system founded on the war's mythologization. Algeria's artists reject this national mythology in favor of the everyday experience both in their work and, for some, since February 2019 with their bodies in the street. This exhibition testifies their multivalent commitment to emancipation in all the forms in which it finds expression.

Introduction to the visit

Floors 3 and 4 at La Friche loosely represent two parallel discourses present today in Algeria. The third floor is focused on artists' representations of living with the past and the fourth is devoted to artists engaged in a play of signs in Algeria's cosmopolitan society. These correspond to the discourses Omar Gatlato navigates as he moves through his days—trying to manage the everyday legacy of the war and of colonialism on the one hand and immersed in music and cultural signifiers from all over the world on the other. The curatorial lines are not drawn strictly, as artists are never wholly engaged in one type of discourse at a time, but they do aim to produce two different forms of affect: the third floor is contemplative, centered on the internalization of the past, while the fourth is dynamic, devoted to experiments in contemporary aesthetics.

Floor 3

- 1 Nawel Louerrad, *Regretter l'absence de l'astre*, 2021
- 2 Baya, *Paysage aux oiseaux*, 1966
- 3 Fatima Chafaa, *My Father's painting: Jeanne N'Soumer or Fatma d'Arc*, 2019
- 4 Adel Bentounsi, *Bibliothèque arabe*, 2017
- 5 Djamel Tatah, *Sans titre*, 1994
- 6 Arezki-Aoun, *Sans titre*, 1988 - 1989
- 7 Halida Boughriet, *Corps de masse*, 2014
- 8 Massinissa Selmani, *Unexcepted distances #1*, 2017-2020
- 9 Zineb Sedira, *The Lovers II*, 2008
- 10 Mahjoub Ben Bella, *Composition II*, 1972
- 11 Abdelkader Guermaz, *Paysage absurde*, 1976
- 12 Fayçal Baghriche, *Le bras du Cardinal*, 2020
- 13 Sofiane Zouggar, *In and Out*, 2016
- 14 Amina Menia, *Enclosed*, 2013
- 15 Hassen Ferhani, *143 rue du Désert*, 2019



What does it mean to carry a past that is not chosen? This floor was conceived to put forward something intangible, a set of circumstances in the past that has come to define what is possible to imagine in the present. In some cases – like **Sofiane Zouggar**'s photographic installation *In and Out* (2019) on the architectural traces of the Black Decade, a period of violent civil unrest between the 1990s and early 2000s, and **Fayçal Baghriche**'s work *Le bras du cardinal* (2020) about a statue in front of Notre Dame d'Afrique that was damaged during the same period – the past in question is painful. **Halida Boughriet** and **Zineb Sedira** also deal with the affect in the present of structural violence, but their approach centers on the body. In Boughriet's case, *Corps de masse* [Body mass] (2014), this entails carefully presenting the sound of bodies coming together and pulling apart, while in Sedira's work, *The Lovers II* (2008) bodies are symbolized by the listing hulks of broken-down shipping vessels; the past is implied by the state of their decay. **Baya**'s vivid gouache *Paysage aux oiseaux* [Landscape with birds] (1966) and **Abdelkader Guermaz**'s luminous painting *Paysage absurde* [Absurd landscape] (1976), by comparison, do not address a specific or traumatic past but rather Amazigh symbolism and the low, dense architecture of the desert, both of which have persisted into the artists' present from the ancient past.

Amina Menia and **Fatima Chafaa**'s approach to the past is speculatively forensic. Menia's installation *Enclosed* (2013) deals directly with the legacy of colonial artists in the postliberation period through a careful investigation of artist M'hamed Issiakhem's monumental public sculpture in the center of Algiers. Chafaa's photographic installation *My Father's Painting: Fatma d'Arc or Jeanne N'Soumer* (2019) reflects on the entanglement of Joan of Arc's image with that of nineteenth-century Algerian resistance symbol Fatma N'Soumer, both women who were renowned military leaders and emblems of the struggle for self-determination. The floor is bracketed by artworks that view the past as both mythic and dynamic at once: it opens with **Nawel Louerrad**'s drawings narrating an encounter between an archetypal figure and human existence, *Regretter l'absence de l'astre* [To regret the absence of the star] (2021), an encounter in which the human becomes birdlike and assumes a timeless aspect. The final artwork on this floor is an installation by **Hassen Ferhani**. His portrait of a woman in a café at the edge of the desert deconstructs the fantasized past of this place and its people by concentrating on Malika, the café owner, and the timeless quality of her days. Louerrad and Ferhani's works suggest that the past that is on view here is cyclical, archetypal, and layered with refusal to participate in Orientalist fantasy.

Labels of the works exhibited
on floor 3



Biographies of the exhibited artists
on floor 3



1. Fayçal Baghriche, *Le bras du Cardinal*, 2020. © Adagp, Paris 2021. | 2. Baya, *Paysage aux oiseaux*, 1966, collection Centre national des arts plastiques, long-term loan at musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac. Photo: Othmane Maieddine. | 3. Fatima Chafaa, *My Father's Painting: Fatma d'Arc or Jeann N'Soumer*, 2019. Photo: Aurélien Mole. | 4. Hassen Ferhani, *143 rue du Désert*, 2019. | 5. Amina Menia, *Enclosed*, 2013. Photo: Aurélien Mole.



1.



2.



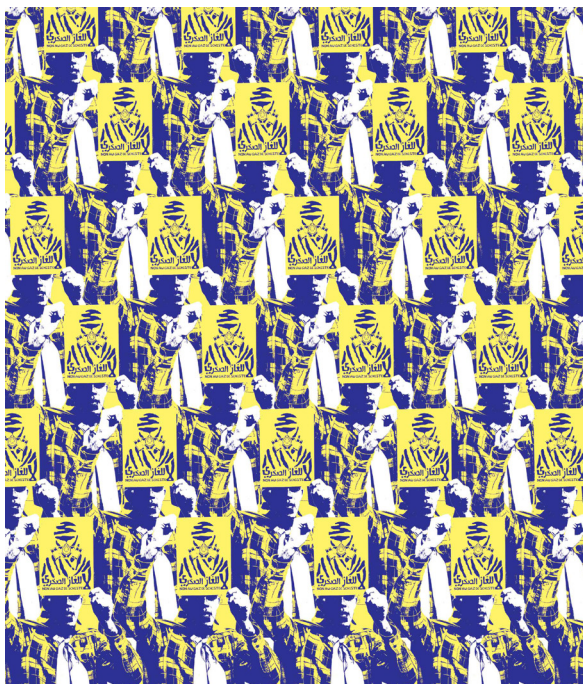
3.



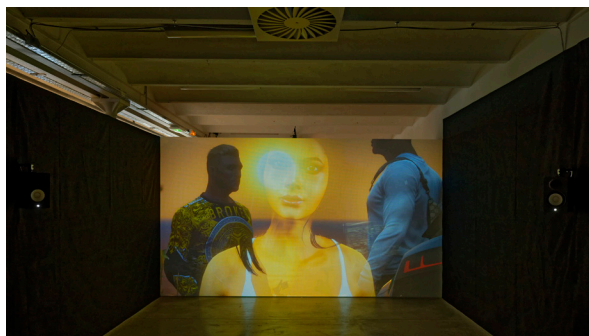
4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



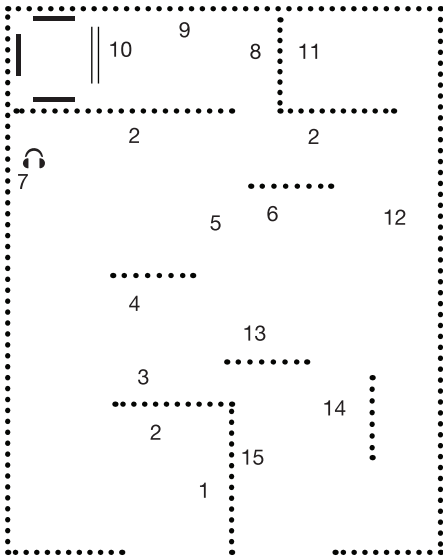
10.



9.

6. Mourad Krimah, *NON AU GAZ DE SCHISTE*, 2020. | 7. Sara Sadik, *Khitbogone*, 2020-21. Photo: Aurélien Mole. | 8. Lydia Ourahmane, *Boudjima*, 2021 (left); Oskar and Ola, 2019 (right). Photo: Aurélien Mole. | 9. Sadek Rahim, *Made in the USSR*, 2019. Photo: Aurélien Mole. | 10. Kader Attia, *Femmes*, from the series *Photostories*, 1997-2001, collection Centre national des arts plastiques. Photo: Aurélien Mole.

Floor 4



- 1 Mohammed Khadda, *Sans titre*, circa 1960
- 2 Mourad Krinah, *NON AU GAZ DE SCHISTE*, 2020
- 3 Lydia Ourahmane, *Oskar and Ola*, 2019 / *Boudjima*, 2021
- 4 Mohamed Aksouh, *Peinture*, 1979
- 5 Nasser Bouzid, *Sans titre*, September 1990
- 6 Fella Tamzali Tahari, *Mare Nostrum*, 2019
- 7 Louisa Babari, *Lecture*, 2017
- 8 Abdallah Benanteur, *Sans titre*, no date
- 9 Sadek Rahim, *Made in the USSR*, 2019
- 10 Kader Attia, *Photostories*, 1997-2001
- 11 Sara Sadik, *Khtobtogone*, 2020-2021
- 12 Hakima El Djoudi, *L'ennui au bout des lèvres*, 2008
- 13 Baya, *Paysage aux maisons et collines*, 1966
- 14 Hellal Zoubir, *Icare*, 1978
- 15 Ahmed Abdelaali Merzagui, *Occidental Sahara Between Homunculus and Reality*, 2019

What can be done with the images and signs that lay about in the everyday? This floor is devoted to artworks that play with aesthetic signs to depict the complexity of the current moment. **Hellal Zoubir's** *Icare* (1978) and Zine, the main character in **Sara Sadik's** video installation *Khtobtogone* (2020–21), are both figures that could also be Omar Gatlatto, as they navigate a complex semiotic field in search of personal transcendence. The tone in this part of the exhibition is set by a wallpaper installation by **Mourad Krinah**, *NON AU GAZ DE SCHISTE* (2020), with its loud blue and fluorescent yellow motif. The work is a graphic composition made using the image of a protestor who could be anyone, his flannel shirt ubiquitous among young men in demonstrations around the globe. He is holding a sign of a Sahrawi protestor in a gas mask with the slogan NO TO FRACKING written in Arabic and French. Krinah's representation of the present in Algeria is militant, but also participates in a global political aesthetics, which it uses to engender solidarity. His work is juxtaposed with an untitled painting by **Mohammed Khadda** that dates to the early 1960s. At the time, Khadda was absorbed by the question of how to reconcile traditional forms of abstraction, which date back millennia in Amazigh cultures, with Cubism's deconstruction of perception within the picture plane. Khadda's engagement is close to Krinah's in the way both suggest that the distinction between East and West, Occident and Orient was never fully operative. **Lydia Ourahmane** and Baya stay focused on one object and its relationship to the land. In Ourahmane's case, the object is a pair of heavy iron dog chains that belong to her family's pair of dogs, which lay limp and empty on the floor of the exhibition space. In the adjacent video, *Boudjima* (2021), the pair can be seen romping with delicious irreverence through the hillsides of Grand Kabilya in May 2020 their play is strikingly at odds with the country's reputation for strict COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. In **Baya's** case, *Paysage aux maisons et collines* [Landscape with houses and hills] (1966) buildings are nestled into the mountainside, signs of the entanglement between human dwelling and the land. **Kader Attia's** photographic collection *Photostories* (1997–2001) depicts less functional everyday objects – stuffed cats and carved wooden figurines in shop windows, but also snapshots of bondage sex play, old men whiling away their time on benches and women buying home goods at market stalls – that nevertheless allow brief glimpses into Parisian life in the late 1990s and early 2000s. **Sadek Rahim's** *Made in the USSR* (2019) is installed nearby and demonstrates a similar attention to the significance of everyday objects in the way a place is imagined. An industrial iron injection pump weighs down a vivid blue carpet, suggesting that Algeria's brand of socialism and the Orientalist notion of flying carpets are at odds with lived reality.

Labels of the works exhibited
on floor 4



Biographies of the exhibited artists
on floor 4



About the Centre national des arts plastiques

Le Centre national des arts plastiques (Cnap) is one of the principal administrators of the French Ministry of Culture's policies within the realm of contemporary visual arts. It continually enriches the National Contemporary Art Collection, which it conserves and also promotes via loans and consignments to both French and foreign institutions. Comprising nearly 105,000 works acquired from living artists over the past two centuries, this extensive collection illustrates the variety of artistic movements and styles. An essential cultural entity, the Cnap encourages the arts in all their diversity, accompanying both artists and art-world professionals via various support services. Furthermore, it showcases its supported projects through different dissemination actions and events, notably publications, conferences and exhibitions.

Triangle – Astérides' partnership with the Cnap for the exhibition *En attendant Omar Gatlato* evolved out of the curator's curatorial research fellowship at the Cnap in 2017. The Cnap is supporting two new commissioned artworks for the exhibition by Fayçal Baghriche and Sara Sadik which it will also acquire and through the loan of a number of works from its collection.

About Box24

Box24 is an experimental arts organization founded by Walid Aïdoud in 2008 in Algiers that supports experimentation and international collaboration, in part through long-term involvement with ARTIfariti, an annual art festival held in Western Sahara in solidarity with the struggle of the Saharawi people. *En attendant Omar Gatlato* partnered with Box24 to widen the scope of the exhibition beyond established artists working in Algiers and Oran, the established artistic centers of Algeria.

About Natasha Marie Llorens, curator

Natasha Marie Llorens is a Franco-American independent curator and writer. She recently defended a doctoral dissertation in the department of Art History at Columbia University in New York.

She has presented exhibitions and curatorial projects in various venues in the United States and Europe, including the International Studio and Curatorial Program (Brooklyn), Tabakalera (San Sebastian), CUE Art Foundation (New York), and Framer Framed (Amsterdam). She has been hosted for curatorial residencies at Marra Tein (Beirut, Lebanon), Rond-Point Projects in Marseille, Triangle Arts Association (New York) and the Jan Van Eyck Academie (Maastricht).

Natasha Marie Llorens is a graduate of the MA program at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College. She is a core tutor at Piet Zwart in Rotterdam and Professor of Art and Theory at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm

About Triangle – Astérides

Triangle – Astérides is a 26 year old non-profit contemporary visual art organization based in "La Friche la Belle de Mai", a former tobacco factory in the center of Marseille, where it supports artists and serves diverse and expanding audiences. Providing spaces for artistic creation and exhibitions, the organization's stated mission is to be a catalyst for a broad dialogue between living artists and the public. Triangle – Astérides develops a yearly program of exhibitions, public events, and new commissions, as well as highly respected residencies and studio programs dedicated to Marseille-based, French, and international artists; supporting artistic research, experimentation and production.

Since its founding in 1994, it has established itself as one of France's most innovative organizations supporting French and international artists who have not yet had wide public exposure or critical acceptance from a broader public. It supports emerging artists, as well as artists that are underrepresented in France by establishing long-term relationships with them to collaborate in the development, production and presentation of significant new projects.

In 26 years, the organization has hosted more than 600 artists in residence and produced more than 130 exhibitions, with a focus on equal representation, open debate, and multiple viewpoints regardless of race, gender, class, or creed. It has helped launch the careers of many artists who have gone on to worldwide prominence. Rooted in its local context, Triangle – Astérides is a place of assertion of cultural rights, where audiences are appreciated for the singularity of their relation to art. As an active member of Triangle Network; an international network of over 90 arts organizations in 41 countries, it also underlines the positive value of transnational dialog, which constitutes the DNA of its project.

—
An exhibition commissioned and produced by
Triangle – Astérides, Centre d'art contemporain.

In partnership with the **Centre national des arts plastiques** in the frame of its curatorial research grant, and with **Box24**.

In coproduction with la **Friche la Belle de Mai**. And with support from **Institut Français d'Algérie** and **Région Sud**.

Sponsor: **PICTO Méditerranée**

Thanks to the team of Triangle - Astérides, Centre d'art contemporain: Céline Kopp (Director), Florence Gosset (Administrator), Marie de Gaulejac (Curator and Residency coordinator), Frédéric Blancart (Communication and Residency manager), Anne Marchis-Mouren (Education coordinator) and Louna Gimenez (Education intern).

Triangle – Astérides thanks its partners: the whole team of the Centre national des arts plastiques, Walid Aïdoud from the Box24, the SCIC Friche la Belle de Mai et the installation team: Jean-Christophe Aubert, Hugo Bonnifait, Simon Bryckaert, Thomas Cadart, Benoit Fremaux, Pablo Hassani, Chems-eddine Mejbri, Thomas Meysson, Vincent Sojic, Sara Vincent.

A special thank you to Walid Bouchouchi for the visual identity of this exhibition; Romane Prunières for design work; Orit Gat for editing; Lucas Morin for translation; Serge Damon for lighting design; Radio Grenouille; Carrière Perasso; and all the many people involved in the production of this exhibition.

The curator thanks, in particular: Nadira Laggoune-Aklouche, Myriam Amroun and Khaled Bouzidi of Rhizome, Maya Benchikh El Fegoun, and Mehdi Djelil for their invaluable expertise and generosity.

Triangle – Astérides
Centre d'art contemporain
Friche la Belle de Mai
41 rue Jobin - 13003 Marseille

www.trianglefrance.org
contact@trianglefrance.org
+33 (0)4 95 04 96 11

Follow us:
[@triangle_asterides](https://twitter.com/triangle_asterides)
[#omargatlato](https://www.instagram.com/omargatlato)

Commission & production
**TRI-
ANGLE
FRANCE**
Astérides

Partenaires
**Centre national
des arts plastiques**



Coproduit par
**FRICHE
LA BELLE
DE MAI**

Soutiens institutionnels
**INSTITUT
FRANÇAIS**
ALGERIE



Réseaux
**TRIANGLE
NETWORK**



PleinSud

PPFC
le réseau
le festival
le lieu

Soutien privé
PICTO
MEDITERRANEE



Partenaires institutionnels
**PRÉFET
DE LA RÉGION
PROVENCE-ALPES-
CÔTE D'AZUR**



**DÉPARTEMENT
BOUCHES
DU RHÔNE**



**RÉGION
SUD**
PROVENCE
ALPES
CÔTE D'AZUR



**VILLE DE
MARSEILLE**
www.marseille.fr