

# TEMPLON



JITISH KALLAT

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## Jitish Kallat: *Adrift Signs—raising flags*

A project by museum in progress, curated by Alois Herrmann and Kaspar Mühlemann Hartl.

From March 10 to May 22, Vienna's Stubenbrücke—a historic bridge spanning the Wien River in the city's center—becomes a temporary mast for *Adrift Signs*, a new public installation by Jitish Kallat. Presented by museum in progress as part of its *raising flags* series, four maritime signal flags—usually seen on ships at sea—now rise over the city, fluttering as coded signals from a planet adrift.

Each flag carries a terse yet urgent code from the International Code of Signals (ICS): "I require a pilot", "Keep clear of me. I am on fire and carrying dangerous cargo", "I require medical assistance", and "I am carrying dangerous goods". Traditionally used to ensure safety and survival at sea, these phrases—when dislocated from their nautical context and planted on solid ground—become planetary semaphores: poetic, cautionary, and charged with new meaning.

The flags turn Stubenbrücke into a site of reflection and reckoning. "I require a pilot" becomes a plea for lost guidance in a world adrift. "I am on fire..." evokes a volatile, overheated Earth. "I require medical assistance" echoes as a planetary cry for healing. These flags speak less of nations and more of a shared planetary vulnerability.

For Kallat, the Earth itself becomes the vessel in peril. "*Adrift Signs* are not forms imprinted on flags", he remarks. "Instead, they are flags repositioned from sea to land... on a bridge—a transitory space." The act of hoisting these signals in a civic space transforms the language of navigation into a reflection on stewardship, care, and planetary well-being.

*Adrift Signs* extends a broader arc within Kallat's practice, tracing the intersections of the cosmic and the civic, the historical and the contemporary. His previous public commission, *Whorled (Here After Here After Here)* at Somerset House, London (2023), took the form of a 400-meter spiral of coordinates that transformed a neoclassical courtyard into a planetary field of inquiry. In his ongoing *Public Notice 3*, at the Art Institute of Chicago, Swami Vivekananda's speech from September 11, 1893, at the First World Parliament of Religions is illuminated in the shifting colors of post-9/11 terror alert codes and inscribed across 118 steps. Each of these works channels signs as emissaries from one moment to another—urgent signals redirected toward a complex present.

In *Adrift Signs*, the urgency is not tied to nation or era but to the ongoing condition of Earth itself. The maritime flags, no longer confined to oceans, now address the vast planetary vessel we all inhabit. They flutter above a city, but speak for the planet.

Explore an interview on Arterritory, where artist Jitish Kallat discusses his flag project with Una Meister.

*Adrift Signs* by Jitish Kallat is available as a signed and numbered flag edition in the format 45 x 45 cm. It consists of four flags and is limited to 25 copies.

Founded in 1990, *museum in progress* is a Vienna-based institution acclaimed for its pioneering approach to presenting contemporary art in public space and in media. Its ongoing *raising flags* series invites contemporary artists to respond to civic contexts and public spaces through ephemeral flag installations around the world. Previous project locations include Ladakh in India, Bad Gastein in Austria, Ahungalla in Sri Lanka and Paris. As part of *raising flags* on Vienna's Stubenbrücke, a single artist is invited to engage with this historic passage, reimagining the flag—not as a territorial emblem, but as a mobile and inclusive gesture.

In 2025 a project catalogue was published at Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König.

The catalogue is available under: museum in progress, Buchhandlung Walther König.

*raising flags* is a project by museum in progress, curated by Alois Herrmann and Kaspar Mühlemann Hartl. The project partners of Jitish Kallat's flag installation include Bildrecht, Fahren-Gärtner, Hotel Altstadt and Arterritory.