

THE INSTITUTE OF THE ARAB WORLD
PRESENTS

A SPECIAL EVENT

ŠAMAŠ

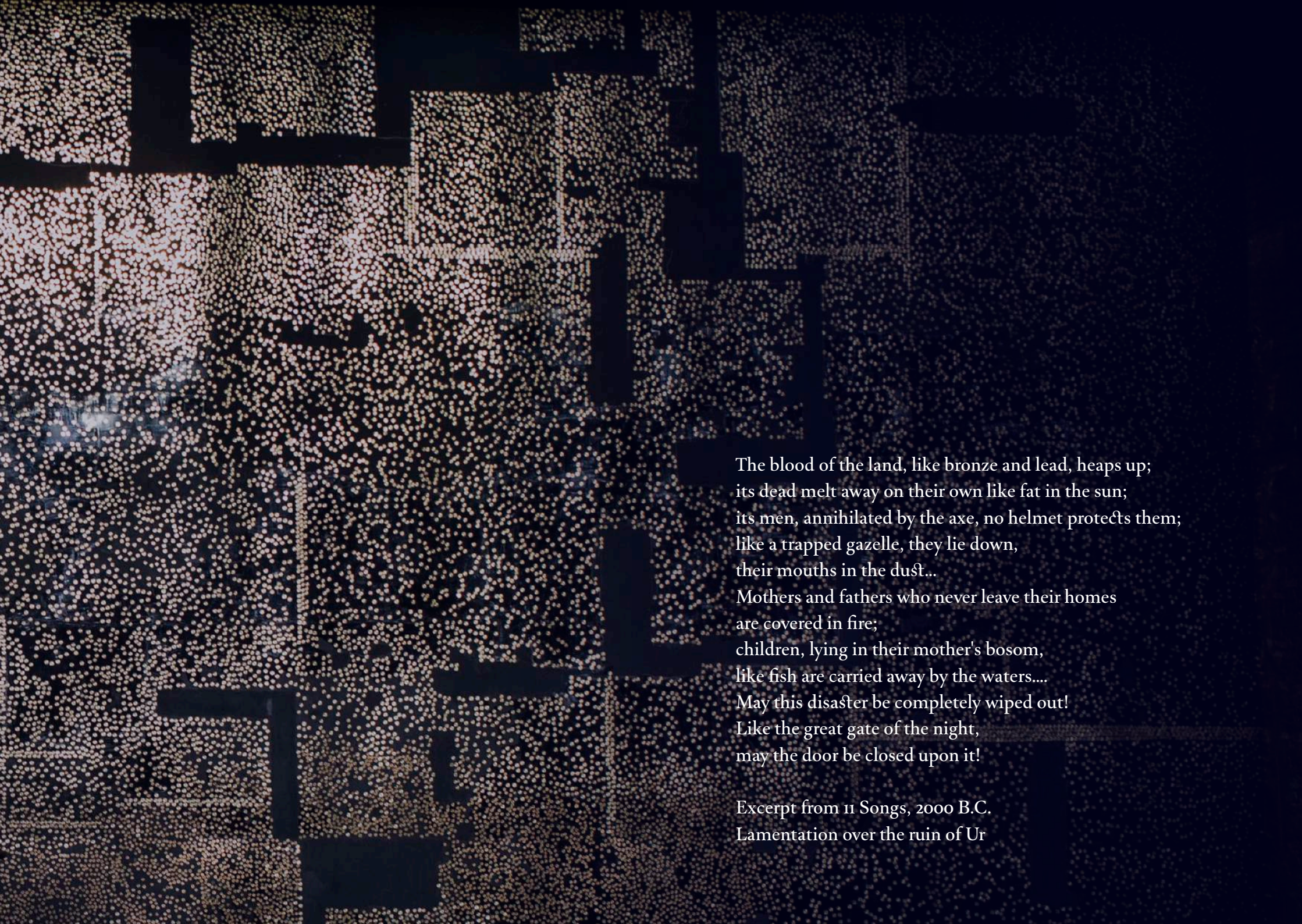
ZAD MOULTAKA

CRYING OUT FOR PEACE

FROM DECEMBER 10, 2024
TO APRIL 6, 2025

INSTITUT
DU MONDE
ARABE

معهد العالم
العربي



The blood of the land, like bronze and lead, heaps up;
its dead melt away on their own like fat in the sun;
its men, annihilated by the axe, no helmet protects them;
like a trapped gazelle, they lie down,
their mouths in the dust...

Mothers and fathers who never leave their homes
are covered in fire;

children, lying in their mother's bosom,
like fish are carried away by the waters....

May this disaster be completely wiped out!

Like the great gate of the night,
may the door be closed upon it!

Excerpt from 11 Songs, 2000 B.C.
Lamentation over the ruin of Ur

ŠAMAŠ

The spectacular Lebanese pavilion* at the 57th Venice Art Biennale, designed by artist and composer Zad Moultaka, is on exhibit at the Institut du Monde Arabe for the first time in France.

The work Šamaš is a monumental sound and visual installation rooted in Zad Moultaka's reflections on the origins of civilizations and their destruction. In it, the Franco-Lebanese artist interrogates the cycles of violence that run through the ancient and recent history of the Near and Middle East. The work presents a paradox: the cradle of Eastern and Western civilizations, the Fertile Crescent is also where the worst human violence has been, and still is, unleashed.

Šamaš has its origins in the Code of Hammurabi, considered to be the first code of laws, carved on a high black

basalt stele almost 4,000 years ago in Mesopotamia. Šamaš, the Babylonian god of sun and justice, is represented on this famous stele, and like the sun, he is the source of both life and destruction.

Organized in three parts, this installation combines sonic innovation and visual experience, and is presented as an 11 min. 30 sec. loop, which like the palindrome of its name is an endless loop illustrating the seemingly unstoppable cycles of justice and of blind violence.

Zad Moultaka here offers a trans-temporal narrative in which past grandeur and present-day violence collide around a reflection on war, justice and the roles of man and the divine.

In front of a wall made up of over 150,000 Lebanese coins — the reincarnation of the

Golden Calf — a Rolls Royce Avon Mk209 jet engine, over 6 meters high, stands at the center of the set. Songs, wails and cries emanate from 32 loudspeakers, addressed to this steel column, materialization of this God of chaos.

Zad Moultaka has written a score in an invented language, inspired by the sounds of the Sumerian language sung by the Antonine University Choir under the direction of Toufic Maatouk, which transports us before the walls of Ur, the city of Abraham (in modern-day Iraq) at the moment of its devastation.

These murmured lamentations and threats bring us back inevitably to the violence of

today's most searing events, to the blood and tears that drown this much coveted land, and to the powerlessness of populations caught up in the crumbling of the world.

As a message of hope, the work closes with a poem calling for peace, with a child's voice reciting a prayer to the clemency of the gods and the elevation of men, a call to reinvent the world and stop these cycles of war.

The Institut du Monde Arabe is presenting this work today for its strength, its accuracy, its humanity and its rejection of fatality in the face of the raging conflagrations currently affecting the Middle East.

* Curated by Emmanuel Daydé



“Within our civilization, it is imperative and urgent to question the sacred in the very heart of man. The work Šamaš is intended to be at the heart of this questioning, through a spatial, temporal and sonic dialogue rooted in the ancient Sumerian city of Ur and in this part of the world, which is still a place of terrible violence today. Šamaš cries out in rejection of the tragedy impacting this sun-struck region of the world that is the Middle East, the cradle of

both Eastern and Western civilizations. However, under skies laden with hatred, we can still glimpse the emergence of the first Babylonian codes of law and the desire for a savage peace. But danger lies in wait for people everywhere, for torn from the ground and detached from the sky, they become deaf and blind to the essence of things. We are programming our own erasure, hastening, out of anguish, the crumbling of the world...”.

Zad Moulaka



ŠAMAŠ ITIMA, MUSICAL CREATION OF THE WORK

The musical piece *Šamaš Itima* (Obscure Sun), an integral part of the Šamaš installation, is the composer's fourth to draw inspiration from ancient languages, following *Baal* for orchestra, *Anath* for bass voice and instrumental ensemble and *Leipsano* for orchestra and three choirs. *Šamaš Itima*, Zad Moulaka's original creation for 32 singers, borrows its text from the hymn to the Sumerian god of justice and draws on an Akkadian lexicon of mutilated words, amputated as if a missile fallen in the middle of the language had exploded. While human and earthly voices struggle to make headway in a muddy substance that imprisons the sounds, a celestial song hovers overhead and a strange melody rises out of a 1950s bomber engine. Amid the tragedy that has befallen the Middle East, Šamaš makes violence sing, since it can't be silenced....

“Questioning the musical imagination of a remote, even archaic time is no mere speculation on the part of composers; it is above all a quest for an ancient energy, for a space rooted in beliefs linking man's destiny to something beyond appearances, a space buried today under the rubble of a terribly superficial world. Far from being any sort of historical reconstruction, it is a question of searching within ourselves for the debris of a salutary archaism, enabling us simply to recenter ourselves on an interiority that has been violated by an excess of the apparent.”

Zad Moulaka

ZAD MOULTAKA

Born into the world of contemporary theater, Zad Moultaqa is a composer and visual artist. He began playing the piano and painting at the age of five, and left Lebanon for Paris in 1984. In 1989, he won First Prize at the Paris Conservatory. In 1993, he abandoned his international performing career to devote himself to composition and the visual arts.

His successful career in the visual arts has ranged across media including installation, painting, photography and video. His work has been exhibited worldwide, including: Beiteddine Palace, Lebanon; Tanit Gallery, Beirut; Cromwell Place, London; the reopening of the Sursock Museum, Beirut; the Kergu hennec estate, Bignan (Brittany); Tanit Gallery, Munich; Aedaen Gallery, Strasbourg; Totah Gallery, New York; the Oscar Niemeyer Dome, Tripoli (Lebanon); Centre Pompidou, Metz; the Lebanese pavilion at the 57th Venice Art Biennale; Suomennlina, Finland; Nuit Blanche, Paris; Janine Rubeiz Gallery, Beirut and Art Dubai.

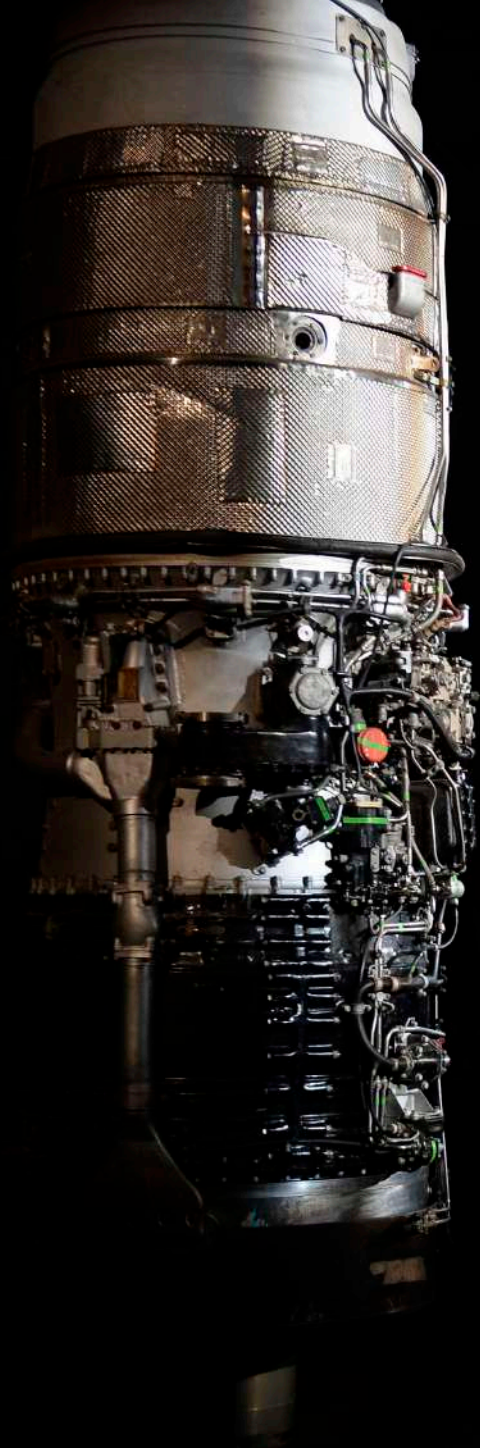
In 2021, Moultaqa was selected by Maison Louis Vuitton to design a trunk to mark the 200th birthday of its founder. Many of his works have been acquired by private collectors and institutions, including the

Boghossian Foundation, Belgium; Fonds Claude et France Lemand, Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA), France; FFA Private Bank, Lebanon; Mus e d'Histoire Jean Garcin, Fontaine-de-Vaucluse, France; Arsenal de Metz, France.

Trained in the discipline of Western musical writing, but organically linked to his Mediterranean roots, Zad Moultaqa created his own musical language. He was noticed by composer Gy rgy Kurt g, and their meeting was decisive in his formulation of an original and atypical progressive writing. His works have been performed and appreciated all over the world; he was awarded the SACEM Claude Arrieu prize in 2007 and the Prix de la Critique: best musical creation in 2017, for his work *UM, the sovereign driving force of all things*.

He has several operas to his credit: *Hercule, dernier acte*, Berlioz Festival; *H mon*, Op ra National du Rhin, Strasbourg; *L'Orangerie*, Compagnie Lyrique de Cr ation Chants Libres, Montr al; and *Delirio*, Deutsche Oper Berlin, as well as musical commissions for Musicatreize, Marseille; Ensemble Modern, Frankfurt; Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Stockholm; and Royal Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, among others.





SPECIAL EVENING WITH ZAD MOULTAKA

Tuesday February 4, 2024

· 7pm, 7:30pm and 9:30pm

ŠamaŠ Itima, musical piece for 20 singers (12 min)

Original creation of Zad Moultaqa, interpreted by the singers of the group La Tempête

· 8pm

Zad Moultaqa, lecture

The artist and composer will offer us an in-depth analysis of his spectacular, protean work, in a conversation with Élodie Bouffard, Exhibitions Manager at the Institut du Monde Arabe.

Reservations are required at imarabe.org



zadmoultaqa.com

In partnership with
Ircam - Centre Pompidou



With the support of

GALERIE TANIT
MUNICH | BEYROUTH



PHOTO CREDITS

page 2 (detail), page 6, page 10: HL_MVILLA_; page 15: Klara Beck; page 16: Zad Moultaqa Studio

INSTITUT DU MONDE ARABE

Jack Lang · President
Chawki Abdelamir · General Manager
Annette Poehlmann · General Secretary

MUSEUM AND EXHIBITIONS DEPARTMENT

Nathalie Bondil · Director
Élodie Bouffard · Exhibitions Manager
Marie Chominot · Production Manager
David Briend · Exhibition Space Manager

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Martin Garagnon · Director of Communications
Mériam Kettani-Tirot · Head of Communications and Media Partnerships
Charles Saba · Press Officer (Arab world media)
Yann Pichonnière · Digital Communications Officer
Brigitte Nérout · Website
Marion Toulat · Visual Communications Manager
Cassandre Beyne, Maya Carquex · Work-Study Trainees

Press contact

Rita Bassil · Press Attachée | rbassil@imarabe.org

MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

Soufiane Bencharif · Department Manager
Hafida Bensouilah, Sophie Puel, Marianne Carion · Marketing and Promotion
Olivier Hountchegnon · Marketing and Ticketing
Kouider Médjadji · Reception Manager
Juliano Neves Lima and Zaher Hayate

ZAD MOULTAKA STUDIO

Nadine Saddi · Production Manager

IRCAM

Manuel Poletti · Electronics, Ircam
Clément Cerles · Sound design, Ircam
Gilbert Nouno · Computer music production, Ircam

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Institut du monde arabe
1, rue des Fossés-Saint-Bernard
Place Mohammed V – 75005 Paris
+33140513838 / www.imarabe.org

ADMISSION
Regular €8, reduced €6,
18-26 years old €4
Under 18 free

FOLLOW THE IMA
ON SOCIAL MEDIA
Facebook, Instagram,
LinkedIn, TikTok et Youtube

Exhibition hall (level 1)
Metro stations : Jussieu, Cardinal-Lemoine
Buses: 63, 67, 75, 86, 87, 89
IMA public carpark

OPENING HOURS
Tuesday to Friday, 10am to 6pm; Saturday, Sunday and public holidays, 10am to 7pm (5pm on December 24 and 31)
Ticket offices close 45 minutes before the exhibit closes
Closed on Mondays and on Wednesday, December 25, 2024

INSTITUT
DU MONDE
ARABE

