

ZAD MOULTAKA

composer and visual artist

artist portfolio

Zad Moulaka (B. 1967)

Born into the contemporary theatre world, Zad Moulaka is a composer and visual artist. He began playing the piano and painting aged five, moving from Lebanon to Paris in 1984. In 1989, he won the First Prize at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris. In 1993, he abandoned his international career as an interpreter to devote himself to composition and visual art.

He has pursued a successful career in the visual arts across media that include installation, painting, photography and video. His work has been exhibited worldwide, including recently at: Cromwell Place, London; the reopening of the Sursock Museum, Beirut; Domaine de Kerguéhennec, Bignan; Galerie Tanit, Munich; Aedaen Gallery, Strasbourg; Totah Gallery, New York; Oscar Niemeyer Dome, Tripoli; Centre Pompidou-Metz; the Lebanese Pavilion for the 57th Venice Art Biennale; Suomennlina, Finland; Nuit Blanche, Paris; Galerie Janine Rubeiz, Beirut; and Art Dubai. In 2021, Moulaka 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, such as the Boghossian Foundation, Belgium; FFA Private Bank, Lebanon; Jean Garcin Fontaine de Vaucluse, History Museum, France; Arsenal of Metz, France; Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA), France.

Trained in the discipline of the western musical writing but linked naturally to his Mediterranean roots, Zad Moulaka creates his own musical language. Noticed by György Kurtág, his meeting with the composer was decisive in the statement of a progressive original and atypical writing. His works are interpreted and appreciated throughout the world; he receives the SACEM Prize, Claude Larrieu 2007 and the Critics' Prize, best musical creation in 2017, for his work *UM sovereign engine of all things*.

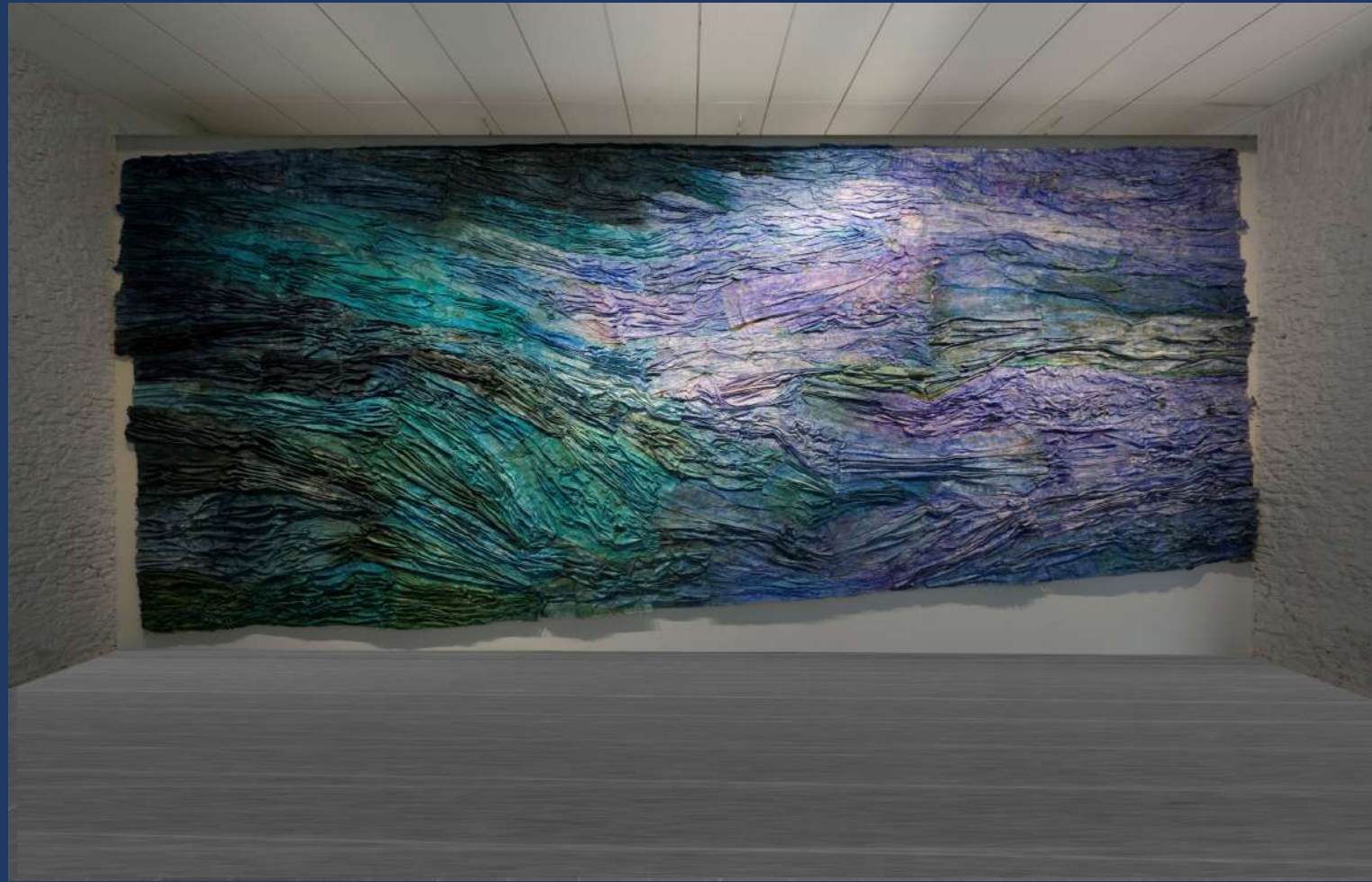
Several operas to his credit: *Hercule, dernier acte*, Festival Berlioz; *Hémon*, Opéra national du Rhin, Strasbourg; *L'Orangeraie*, Compagnie Lyrique de Création Chants Libres, Montreal; *Delirio*, Deutsche Oper Berlin and many musical commissions for Musicatreize, Marseille; Ensemble Modern, Frankfurt; Sveriges Radios Symfoniorchester, Stockholm; Concertgebouw Amsterdam...

Glaz 2023 - 1000 x 500 acrylic on paper

Domaine de Kerguéhennec, France 2023

Even before the episode of Noah's ark in the Bible, it is mentioned - in an Epic of Gilgamesh tablet found in Nineveh - of a Flood sent by the Gods to depopulate the Earth and stop the chaos of men: "Reducing into darkness everything that had been luminous, squalls, driving rains, thunder, lightning and hurricanes broke the Earth like a jar. On the seventh day the sea became calm and still, and the ark landed. Remembering this original Mesopotamian Flood, Zad Moultaka celebrates the reign of water, where the earth would gently sink into the ringing of things. In order to drown this image of the humanity annihilation in transparency and color, the French-Lebanese artist set up in Kerguéhennec, in the middle of the fields and bad weather, a gigantic strip of paper measuring 10m by 5m. Seeking to become rain and wind, the artist worked his painting of the abyss not watery but with water, covering every trace of the flooded soil with this indefinable terracotta color of *Glaz*, at once blue, green and gray, that the sea pulls at high tide.







Déluge 2023

domaine de Kerguéhennec, France

video and electroacoustic music

In view of these post-Anthropocene Water Lilies, where the hand of man gives way to that of nature, Zad Moultağa has built a monumental video waterfall, where the images of the world are poured out to us daily, fall into rain on the distressed visitor. At the same time as the threat of rising waters, our disappearance is lost in the contemporary audiovisual Flood, where the endless flow of images and sounds, deprived of meaning, is a prelude to our own engulfment.

“This tireless and dizzying fall is built from 10,000 images taken from the web. The obsessive sound of water is just a superposition of noises in our society; trains, planes, various machines, schoolyards, people shouting in a financial market... This non-stop agitation is periodically pierced by vocal “shadows” and “light” transforming the image wall into a sort of translucent stained glass window. The appearance of a more human presence inside this “grinding machine” is supported by the appearance of a Bach chorale as well as Ubi es, a piece for vocal ensemble that I composed in 2017 on the visionss of Hildegard von Bingen.” Zad Moultağa



que restera-t-il de nous après la vengeance des fleurs des arbres et des ruisseaux
des oiseaux du vent des papillons du soleil des lucioles
après la domination des jasmines de la pluie des montagnes
de la douceur des nuits des orages du printemps
que restera-t-il de nous après le branlement
après ce tremblement

qui nous mettra à genoux le dos tourné au ciel
implorant le sol d'accepter à nouveau nos angles et nos doigts
que restera-t-il sinon nos corps gorgés du vivant
debordant de désirs assoufflés de matière
pour réapprendre le sable la boue et le limon
la pierre l'eau et la glaise
que restera-t-il sinon nos peaux tendues tels des tambours

adjuvant les nuages de remplir à nouveau nos amères
de ces mystères oubliés qui nous hantent tout nuage
il restera la chair nos peurs nos souffrances
l'offra le sabissement et un souffle allant et venant
comme affilé entre nos cœurs et les étoiles
et nous serons soulevés à nouveau par des gestes premiers
des gestes originaux et humbles
ouvrant un enchaînement salvateur
maternel inexploré sans intermédiaire
entre nos dermes et le cosmos

autrement nous serons
engloutis dans la gorge
devant le du

précipice

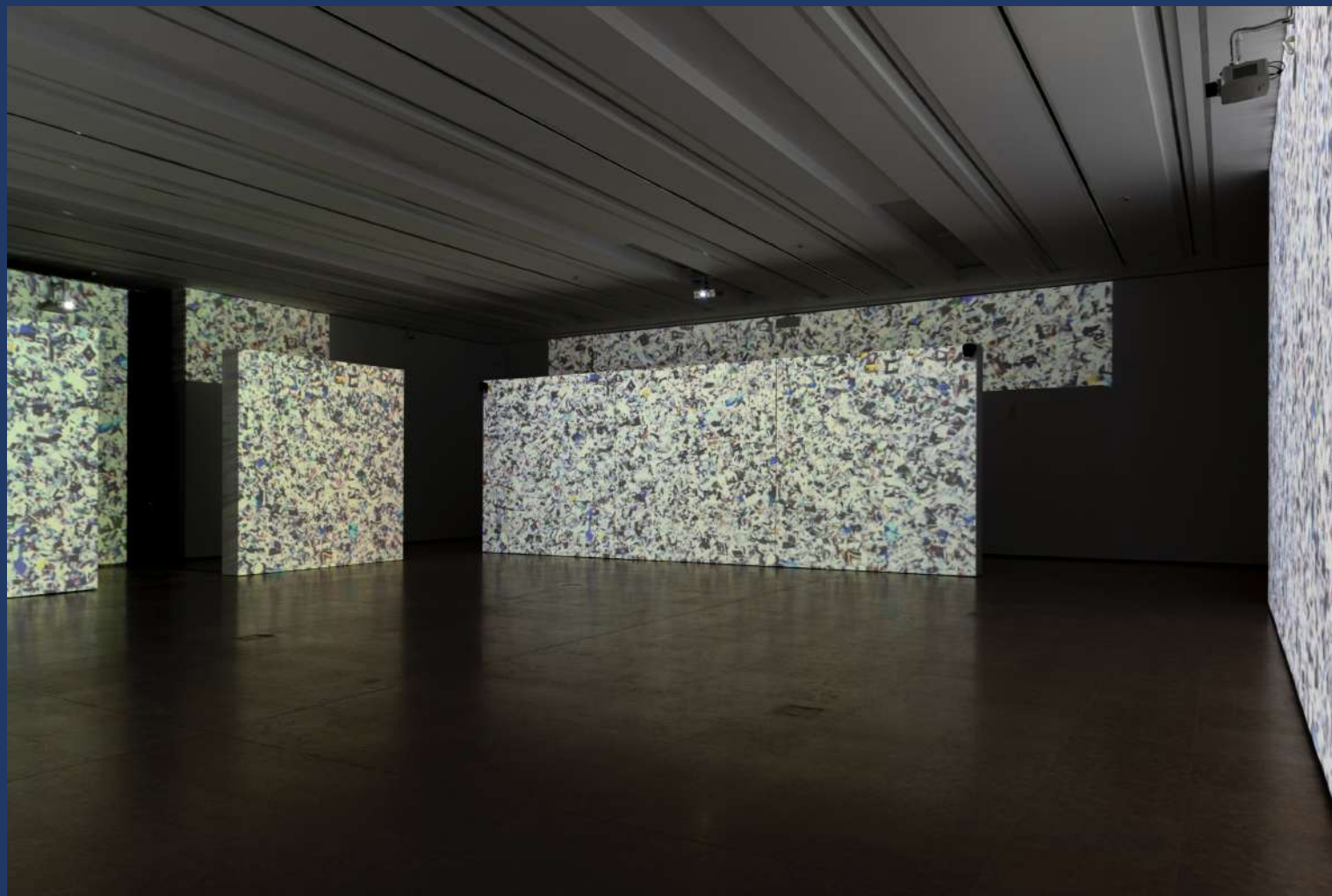
« Que restera-t-il de nous après la vengeance des fleurs
des arbres et des ruisseaux des oiseaux du vent des papillons
du soleil des lucioles Après la damnation des jasmins
de la pluie des montagnes de la douceur des nuits
des orages du printemps
Que restera-t-il de nous après l'ébranlement
après ce **tremblement** qui nous mettra à genoux
le dos tourné au ciel implorant le sol d'accepter à nouveau
nos ongles et nos doigts.
Que restera-t-il sinon **nos corps**
gorgés du vivant débordant de désirs
assoiffés de matière pour réapprendre le sable
la boue et le limon la pierre l'eau et la glaise
Que restera-t-il sinon **nos peaux**
tendues tels des tambours adjurant les nuages
de remplir à nouveau nos mains de ces mystères oubliés
qui nous hantaient tant naguère.
Il restera la **chair** nos peurs nos souffrances
L'effroi le **saisissement** et un souffle allant et venant
comme affolé entre nos cœurs et les étoiles
Et nous serons sauvés à nouveau par des gestes premiers
des gestes originels et humbles ouvrant un archaïsme
salvateur
moderne inexploré sans intermédiaire
entre nos dermes et le **cosmos**
Autrement nous serons engloutis dans la gorge dévorante
du **précipice** »

Zad Moulaka

Ejecta 2023

Reopening of the Sursock Museum, Beirut, Lebanon

“Ejecta is an immersive installation, for video and electroacoustic music: refusing collapse, opposing degradation, responding to violence with opposite violence, that which uses as its only weapon thought, culture, art and what man has something honorable and more luminous in him. Ejecta incites to take the weapons of mass construction. A lightning bolt is always possible to strike down Ignorance. We must fight the shadows with profusion of light, the black with color saturation, the explosion with an even more powerful explosion. Ejecta is a luminous explosion, the eruption of volcanic hope before the emergence of a comforting song, it is a cathartic temple inside which, rubble and ruins, ashes and debris mutate into sparkling crystal for the soothing of all the pain.” Zad Moulaka



Sisyphe 2023

Couvent des Carmes - Beauvoir en Royans

« Sisyphe is the third part of a triptych of which the first two are Déluge, built at the Domaine de Kerguéhennec and Ejecta for the opening of the Sursock Museum of Modern Art in Beirut. If Déluge evokes the invasion of the world by the images and the noise, Ejecta a volcanic abundant works of art having been buried in the explosion of August 4, 2020 in the port of Beirut, Sisyphe ends the work in merging the first two. The vertiginous fall of the tens of thousands of images collected on the internet for Déluge are countered by the upward movement of those of Ejecta, creating a gripping struggle between the movement of these two forces. Sometimes the fall is essential, sometimes it is the thrust that dominates, thus providing a sensation of fierce confrontation between these opposing dynamics. The voices of the soloists come to support a relentless and fragile presence, that of Sisyphe, ours, underlining the endless essential fight of the human condition. » Zad Moulaka



Acqua Alta 2021 - 195x130 acrylic on canvas

Acqua Alta is the first work in a new ongoing series. It continues the reflection on the strata, folds and traces already carried out by a long work on paper. Here it is the imprints of these crumpled and torn leaves that create the shapes which rest on the surface of the canvas as if the latter were collecting the memory of these wounds.



Lost Paradise 2021 - 230x150 acrylic on paper

This work, titled initially *forest*, explores the notion of “loss” and what could resist the environmental and planetary cataclysm that awaits us. It is an imaginary place that men could have found after fleeing the earth that had become unbreathable, with the help of a spaceship, finding refuge on a distant planet. This theme having been crucial in the life of Etel Adnan, forest was subsequently renamed *lost paradise* in homage to this great figure of contemporary art and literature.



Apocalypse 2020

ArtHaus Beirut- Galerie Aedaen, Strasbourg 2021

This series was emerged directly after the explosion of August 4, 2020 at the port of Beirut. The first works under the name of Apocalypse, turned into “Revelations”. By distancing from this terrifying event, *Revelation* seek to express the trauma through a quest for light and appeasement. What is trying to be revealed is the resonance of the “horrible” with the invitation to transformation in order to oppose the crazy violence that resides inside the man’s heart.

Révélation 10 - 104x74

Révélation 18 - 104x74

Révélation 6 - 85x60







Terra Incognita 2018 - 590x130 acrylic on paper

ArtHaus Beirut 2020- Galerie Aedaen, Strasbourg 2021

Terra Incognita could be a premonitory work. It was painted a few months before the major uprisings that ended in failure and unprecedented repression in Lebanon. We can perceive a counterpart to *Così in Cielo* with violent cracks giving the feeling of significant aridity. Despite the obscure and dramatic spirit of the work, opening of blue and green colors appear like explosions of greenery in the middle of fields of ruins, it shows that life is ready to emerge with power in all circumstances.



Così in Cielo 2015 - 500x150 acrylic on paper

Palazzo Albrizzi, Venice 2015

This work is part of the *Come in Terra* series. *Così in Cielo* was completed on Easter Sunday, April 5, 2015. The war was in full swing in Syria and the region was in fire and blood. The work questions if the sky is like the earth? where are the gods who protect us? The cracked surface evokes a floor that has suffered the impact of extreme violence, but the intense and vivid colors transform death into a dazzling space of resurrection. The blue and turquoise colors appear in the background as a solid peaceful place beyond our broken world.

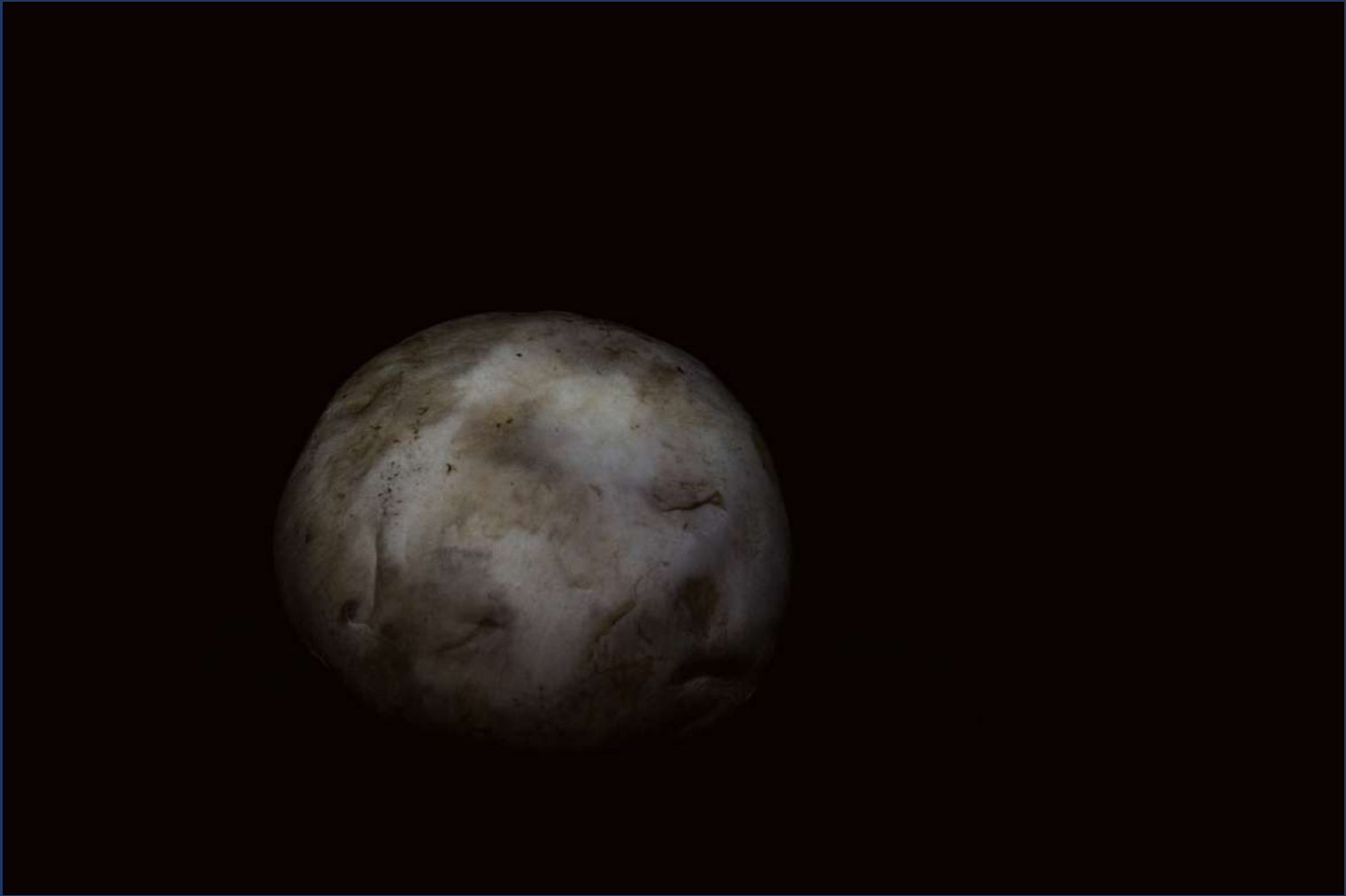


Astres Fruitiers 2015 photography

Biennale de la photographie, Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA) - Arsenal de Metz, - Art Dubai, 2017

Series of photographs of fruits and vegetables captured with a very long exposure time, that make them look like stars and constellations in the night of space, with a symphony on the sound of the planets



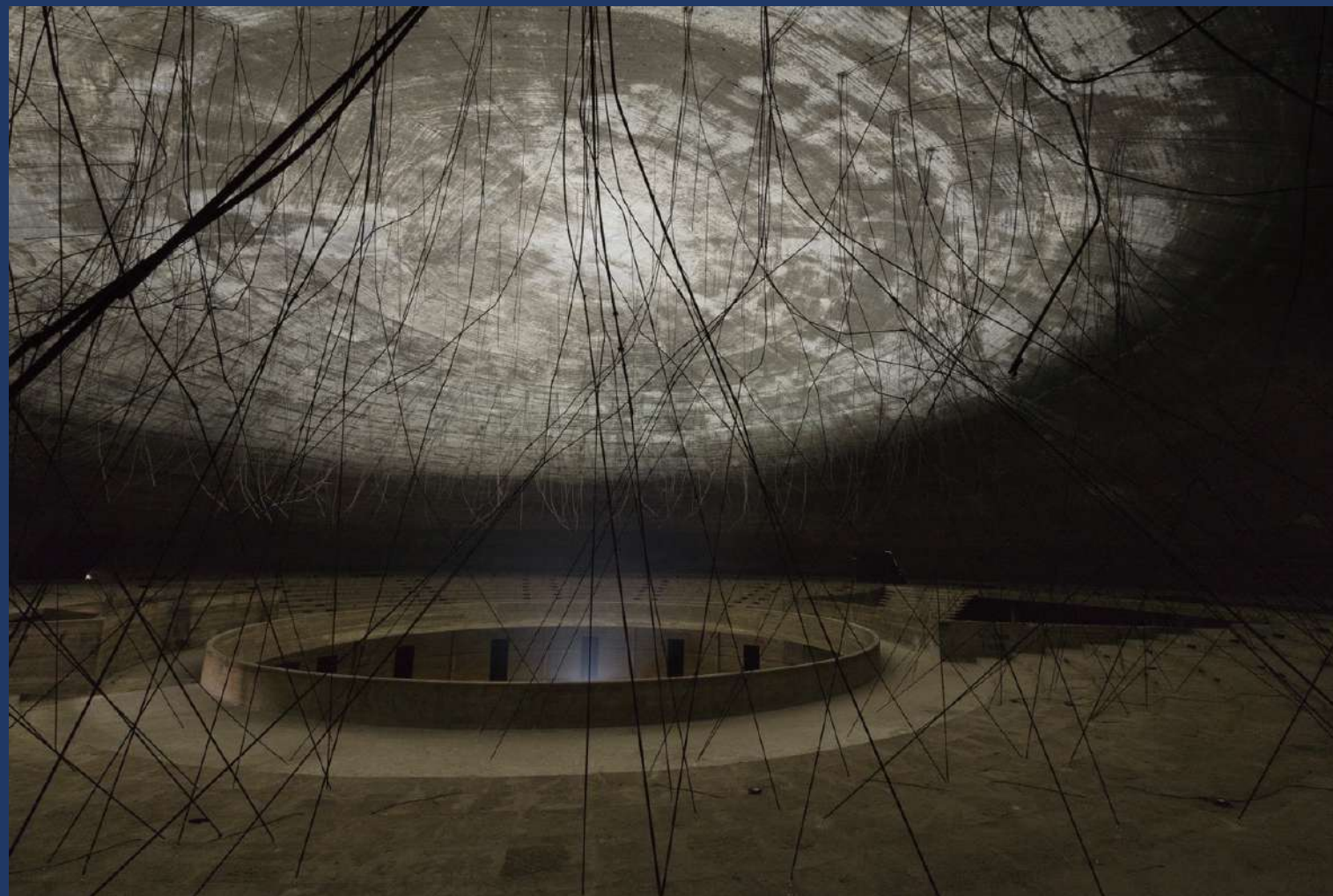




DON'T FALL 2018

Dôme Oscar Niemeyer, Tripoli - Lebanon

The work of Zad Moultaqa is in dialogue with the dome built by Oscar Niemeyer, within the international fair of Tripoli (1968-1974), a space that has not been completed to this day. The artist proposes to extend 580 iron rods hanging from the concrete ceiling with ropes joining them to the ground. Links between heaven and earth, collapse, labyrinthine space, vision of a world dangerously suspended, also inspired by the Aztec codex of Chimalpopala. According to this mythology, we are currently living under the 5th sun (after the fall of the first 4), which is bound to collapse too. It's up to us to maintain it and to preserve our world as long as possible before its unavoidable disappearance. "Don't Fall", this myth is calling us to be vigilant, " because whoever fell, will fall for good" since whoever falls will fall forever.



Šamaš

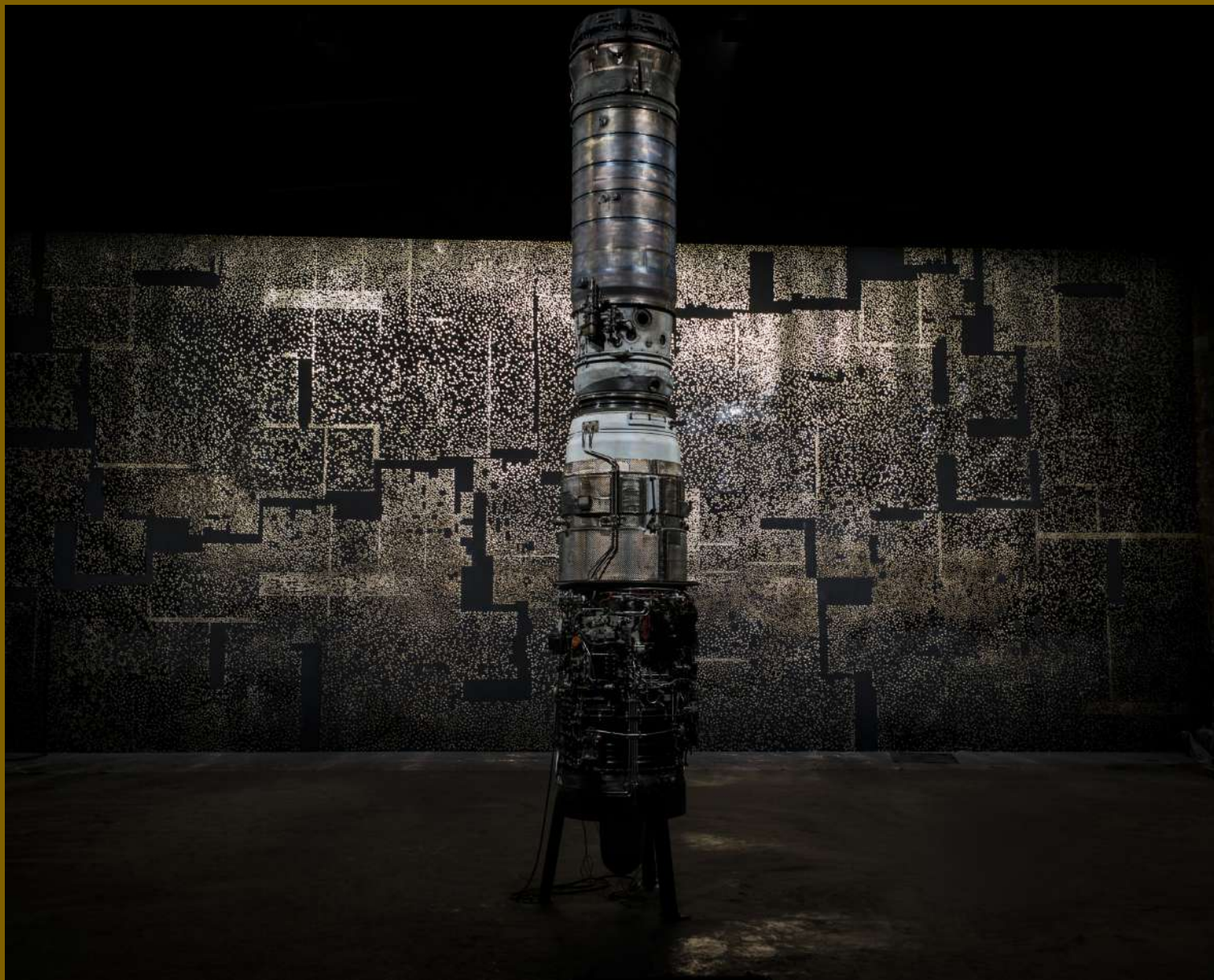
Soleil Noir Soleil

Lebanese Pavilion - Venice biennial , Italy 2017

Sursock Museum - Beirut, Lebanon 2018

Suomennlina, Finland 2018

The installation consists of a wall made up of 150,000 Lebanese coins evoking the golden calf, a Rolls Royce Avon Mk209 bomber curiously recalling the first known codes of law at the origin of our civilization and a sound environment made from a ritual mantra written specifically for the work, as well as 7 seconds of the sound of the bomber stretched to 12 minutes strangely making distant cries and complaints appear, as if the violence is carrying the scars of pain.



“To date the oldest code of law engraved on stone around 1750 BCE in Mesopotamia, the Code of Hammurabi has today become the twilight relic of a collapsing world. Its planned disappearance calls once again for the cries and whispers of the Lamentation over the city of Ur, the complaint that was recited while weeping 4000 years ago in front of the wall of the devastated city of Abraham and which resounds today again, sang by the voice of a child. The high stele of Hammurabi is carved from a monolith of black basalt extracted from the Zagros mountains. Its domed top is sculpted in bas-relief on the front, depicting a meeting scene between King Hammurabi of Babylon and the god Šamaš (or Shamash). Just as the sun disperses darkness, this god, patron of justice, exposes evil and injustice to full light. Today he has become the sovereign driving force behind the law of the strongest, Šamaš is also a palindrome, that oscillates between justice and injustice. Who is Šamaš today? What is this golden calf that we adore? Who is this god of war who charms us with his destructive chants and convinces us to kill each other? What is this song of bombs that covers the song of the Earth? What is this lordly hum that annihilates our humanity and our thought? And who praises his power?”

Every civilization contains within itself the seed of its destruction - Elie Faure





Nadine Saddi / Managing Director / Zad Moulaka Studio / nadine.saddi@zadmoulaka.com / +33 6 75 23 58 26 / +9613 726 668 / zadmoulaka.com