



DETAILS

The **Musée d'Art et de Culture Soufis MTO® (MACS MTO®)**, the first museum dedicated to the art and culture of Sufism, opened in the Paris suburb of Chatou last September. MACS MTO aims to offer a platform for cultural exchange, social interaction, and spiritual discovery.

Spanning the Achaemenid Empire (6th-4th centuries BCE) to the present day, the museum's collection includes sculpture, textiles, calligraphy, ceramic and mirror mosaics, and site-specific installations emblematic of Sufi themes and spiritual symbolism. Highlights include a monumental granite kashkūl sculpture—a symbolic vessel representing spiritual emptiness and receptivity—and a collection of khirqa, wool cloaks passed between Sufi masters that embody humility and spiritual transmission. A programme of contemporary art exhibitions, talks, events and workshops, reveals the rich contribution Sufism has made to global art and culture throughout history, from the musical traditions inspired by poets such as Rumi to its impact on architecture.

Resonant: Bodies, Songs, and Strings, the next exhibition in the museum's programme opening to the public on the 6th June 2025, is an immersive project that explores how knowledge circulates through sound, vibration, and listening. Conceived as both a sensory and introspective experience, the exhibition brings together contemporary artworks in conversation with a selection of Sufi pieces from the museum's permanent collection.

Works by fourteen international contemporary artists, some of whom are exhibiting in Paris for the first time, will be on display in this exhibition. The exhibition features new commissions by artists **Rada Akbar, Brook Andrew, Meris Angioletti, Paula Valero Comin, JJJJerome Ellis, Marie-Claire Messouma Manlabien**, and **Sara Ouahdou**, with additional works by **Nevin Aladağ, Katy'taya Catitu Tayassu, Célia Gondol, Yoshimi Futamura, Guadalupe Maravilla, Vesna Petresin**, and **Charwei Tsai**.

Curated by **Elena Sorokina** and **Simona Dvorák**, with curatorial advisors **Nataša Petresin-Bachelez** and the **Initiative for Practices and Visions of Radical Care (RCI)**, the exhibition invites visitors on a meditative journey where sound, vibration, and listening become tools of transmission, healing, and collective memory.

The exhibition unfolds across three floors through installations, sound works, and ritual objects. Each floor explores a theme, the first 'transmissions of knowledge', the second 'the resonant body' and the third 'sound as healing'.

On the first floor, works by Yoshimi Futamura, Meris Angioletti, Paula Valero Comin, Sara Ouahdou, and Charwei Tsai are presented with Sufi objects from the museum's collection, including rosaries, calligraphy, and kashkūl—revealing the links between sound, 'symbolic forms', and meaning.

Engaging with Sufi practices of teaching and transmission, featured artists on the second floor—Rada Akbar, Célia Gondol, JJJJerome Ellis, Marie-Claire Messouma Manlabien, and Vesna Petresin—enter into dialogue with symbolic Sufi instruments, manuscripts, and poetic texts, all set against the backdrop of the museum's Persian garden. At the heart of this constellation is the setār, a traditional stringed Sufi instrument. It becomes a powerful metaphor for the human body: a resonant chamber that receives, amplifies, and transmits vibrations that move beyond the realm of language.

On the third floor, sound emerges as a force of transformation. Nevin Aladağ, Brook Andrew, Katy'taya Catitu Tayassu, Guadalupe Maravilla, with additional works by Yoshimi Futamura and visual scores by JJJJerome Ellis, blur the boundaries between body, music, and spirit. From multi-sensory installations to sonic rituals, the artists demonstrate how sound can mend, connect, and carry meaning forward, revealing knowledge as a shared vibration.

The Museum is located on the banks of the Seine in the Parisian suburb of Chatou, facing the historic Île des Impressionnistes and housed in a 19th-century mansion. Acclaimed French scenographers Atelier Maciej Fiszer and architects Ducatillon Gimel worked with the museum on planning, development and design, to facilitate its transformation into an accessible and environmentally sustainable cultural space, preserving original features, such as wall and ceiling cornices, mosaic tiling, a Neoclassical pediment and the ultramarine blue of the building's facade. The Museum includes 600 square metres of exhibition space across three floors as well as a serene garden and an archival research library.

The establishment of the Museum was initiated by the Maktab Tarighat Oveyssi Sharmaghsoodi – School of Islamic Sufism. Today, MTO Sharmaghsoodi is an international non-profit organisation with around 150 centres worldwide, spanning six continents. They strive to teach the principles of love, unity, and harmony inherent in Sufism and are characterised by openness to students from all backgrounds.

MACS MTO is supported by the philanthropic organisations American Friends of Sufi Arts, Culture and Knowledge® (AFSACK®) and Canadian Friends of Sufi Arts, Culture and Knowledge® (CFSACK®), and guided by a board of directors including Claire Sahar Bay (President), Muriel Boccara (Treasurer), Negah Angha (Founding Member and Vice President), Hana Chidiac (Head of the Scientific Committee), Eric Delpont (Head of the Acquisition Committee), and Parastou Youssefi (Secretary).

Eric Delpont, Director of Museum, Institut du Monde Arabe and MACS MTO board member, says: "It has been an honour for me to play an advisory role in the establishment of MACS MTO and see it successfully launch in autumn last year. At the heart of this latest exhibition at MACS MTO is an intriguing question about the role that sound plays in the transmission of knowledge. Each artist attempts to respond in their own unique way. The exhibition breathes new life into a selection of pieces from the collection, offering visitors the opportunity to discover them in an unprecedented way through the sense of hearing, and to better grasp their philosophical, spiritual, and aesthetic dimensions. I look forward to seeing these interpretations shed new light on many Sufi objects that I've been familiar with and yet continue to reveal new and exciting dimensions."

Press release from Musée d'Art et de Culture Soufis MTO

Image: Célia Gondol. *Omni Tempore*. 2018. Polished mirror-finish stainless steel. Image courtesy of the artist