

# **YOUNNA SABA SAMPLE OF WORK**

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**THE OUTLINED WORDS ARE LINKS TO EXTERNAL PAGES**

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# BIOGRAPHY

I am a musician, composer and musicologist born in Beirut, Lebanon. My current research focuses on the interrelation between the (sung) Arabic language and electronic and electroacoustic treatments. This research started with the project **Taima'**, developed throughout artistic residencies in France, since 2020.

It has been deployed over different projects, from musical compositions, solo and collaborations, music for films, experimentations on imagined devices for voice and oud and sound installations: naming my latest album "Wishah" released in October 2023, on Touch.

I collaborated with the NeuVocalsolisten ensemble from Stuttgart, Kamilya Jubran, Mike Cooper, Stephen O'Malley, Jean Marc Montera, Tarek Atoui, Kyungso Park among others, and took part in many international artist residencies such as la Cité Internationale des Arts (Paris 2020-2021), Sharjah Foundation (2022), School for Sonic Memory organised by Le Mucem, Onassis Stegi and Theatrum Mundi (2022), GMEM (Marseille 2020), Césaire CNCM (Reims 2020-2021), Hwaeom Spiritual Music Residency (South Korea, 2017), Sound Development City (Spain, Morocco, 2016), Gyeonggi Creation Center (South Korea, 2013).

I recently completed my project **La Reserve des Non-Dits** which was the selected project for the 1st edition of the Sound Residency at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris, 2023.

I performed at festivals such as CTM festival in Berlin (2022), Eclat festival in Stuttgart (2021), Irtijal in Beirut and Berlin (2021-2022), as well as venues and cultural spaces like Fondation Pinault (Paris) with Tarek Atoui in 2021, l'Institut du Monde Arabe (Paris), Akademie Der Kunst in Berlin, Cave12 (Genève), Gugak Center in Seoul, amongst others.

I hold a masters degree in musicology (2014), from Antonine University, Baabda, Lebanon

**PORTFOLIO**  
A SELECTION OF MY WORK

# PORTFOLIO

## La réserve des Non-Dits | Sound Installation | Residency at Musée du Quai Branly - Jacques Chirac in collaboration with Le Fresnoy

### LINK TO PROJECT



<https://www.quaibranly.fr/fr/collections/vie-des-collections/actualites/residence-sonore/residence-sonore-2022-younna-saba>

### Description

“La Reserve des non-dits (storage of the unspoken) explores the sonic behavior of the musical instruments from the museum’s collection in their environment: the ‘tower of instruments’, a preserved and optimized storage that ensures their proper conservation.

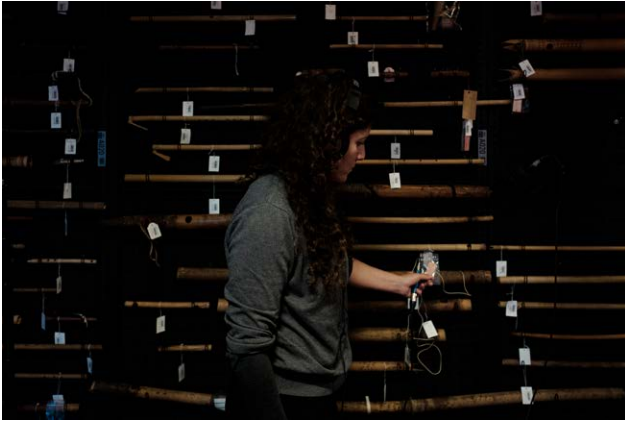
These instruments, organized according to their regional and organological characteristics, are discreet, silent. They timidly invite the public to observe them from afar. They are made from a material that cannot be contemplated. A material that says nothing. When looking at them, as a musician, I felt a great enthusiasm, then a lack of breath, before frustration set in. What can an instrument express in a dark glass tower the public only passes by?

This installation zooms in on the micro-sounds these instruments make in their passive state: their resonances, their voices. It is a way of revealing the inaudible, of exhuming traces of sounds and other residual images, of transcribing their unwritten stories, the information that these instruments capture and record in their bodies, as close to their core as possible.

With this project, I invite the public to new forms of listening, new ways of activating the museum spaces and objects through the different listening points.

It also sends an invitation to musicians, composers and researchers to explore this renewable and expansive resource as raw material for creation and to re-examine the practices of conservation and research in musicology, organology and lutherie.”

# PORTFOLIO



Sound recording during my work in the tower



Installation of the microphones and sensors for the installation



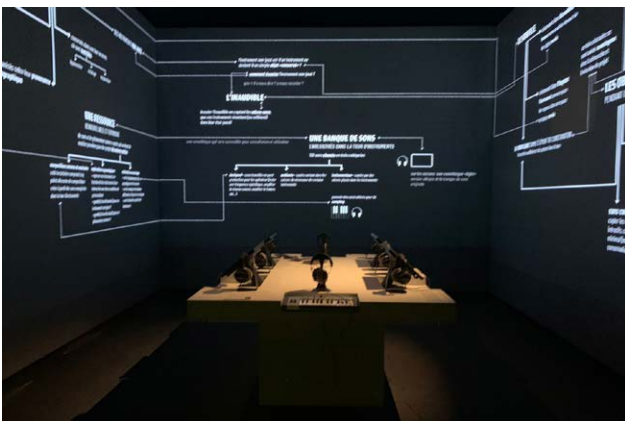
Installation point: viewers can activate microphones placed in some instruments upon touching the glass. The live resonances from these passive instruments are projected outside the tower

## FOR SOUND FILES AND MORE DETAILS

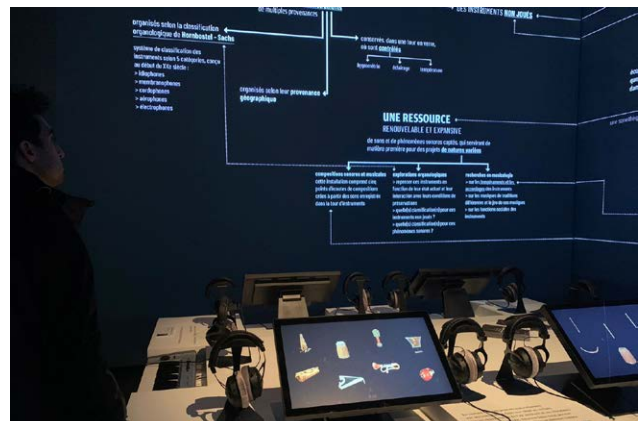
<https://www.quaibrantly.fr/fr/collections/vie-des-collections/actualites/residence-sonore/residence-sonore-2022-youmna-saba>

## FOR A QUICK VIEW

<https://youtu.be/perBM4JajNQ>



This part of the installation explains the process of work and gives access to a light version of the sound bank



*Pictures by Julien Brachhammer and Mayssa Jallad*

# PORTFOLIO

## Taïma'| 2020 - Present | Research project in composition

[LINK TO VIDEO](#)

[LINK TO ALBUM «WISHAH»](#)



[https://youtu.be/M\\_04v7nG5oY](https://youtu.be/M_04v7nG5oY)  
"Wishah" live at Instants Chavirés, Montreuil



<https://touch333.bandcamp.com/album/wishah>  
"Wishah" released as a solo album

### Crédits

Youmna Saba : composition and performance

Album due in 2023

Project presented at:

- > Ballroom Blitz, Beirut, July 2021
- > Cave 12, Genève, December 2021
- > CTM Festival, Berlin, January 2022
- > Lieu Multiple, Poitiers, October 2022
- > Instants Chavirés, Montreuil, October 2022

### Description

"Taïma'" is an exploration of the musicality of the Arabic language and its potentials in generating new methods of working with electronic music. It is a solo set for voice, oud and electronics, using an electronic device for oud that I conceived and techniques I developed in order to merge the acoustic performance with computer synthesized sounds.

Oud electronic device developed with Nicolas Canot, and produced by Césaré CNCM, 2020.

The first composition using this device was released as an album in October 2023, on the label Touch.

# Terra Incognito | 2020 - Present | Collaborative project

[LINK TO VIDEO](#)



## Crédits

[Kamilya Jubran](#) (PL) :

composition, oud, voix

[Floy Krouchi](#) (FR) : composition,

basse, electroniques

Youmna Saba (LB) : composition,

voix, oud

## Description

A collective project of improvised music with 2 ouds, bass, vocals and electronics. It is an exploration of different ways of augmenting these instruments and their interaction with vocals and acoustic sounds.



## PORTFOLIO

### **I Covered the planet with a dried leaf | 2020 - 2021|**

Composition for NeueVocalsolisten ensemble

Composition for 6 voix, oud and electronics

#### **LINK TO VIDEO**

<https://vimeo.com/703324235/5b880a88fc>

#### **Crédits**

Youmna Saba : composition

Performance by  
NeueVocalsolisten

Projet presented at:

- > Ultima Festival, Oslo, September 2022
- > Time of Music, Vitsaari, July 2022
- > Irtijal Festival, Beirut, April 2022
- > Akademie der Kunst, Berlin, August 2021
- > Eclat Festival, Stuttgart, February 2021

#### **Description**

Composition based on the interaction of 6 voices with the resonance of the oud. The oud, facing the 6 singers, reflects their voices through feedback that is modulated by the play of their voices. This composition is part of the project **Voice Affairs**, that brings together composers from around the Mediterranean sea.

Première : February 2021 Stuttgart, Germany

**I Covered the planet with a dried leaf | 2020 - 2021 |**  
Score

# عَطِيتُ الْكوكِبَ بِوَرَقَةٍ يَا بَسَّة

## I COVERED THE PLANET WITH A DRIED LEAF

Voice Affairs - Neue Vocalsolisten / by Youmna Saba, ©2020

PART 1 \ FILLING UP THE SILENCE					PART 2 \ A PSEUDO CONVERSATION BETWEEN SINGERS AND OUD FEEDBACK			PART 3 \ LOSS OF SPEECH, LOSS OF MEANING										
SOPRANO	> Single notes > Let each note ring > Silence in between > Sound: Tan	Same	Harmonics get narrower in between one another	Same	Same	> Pick one note and sustain > Followed by slow glissando down 3/4 tone	> Sing this note in sustain	> Sing this note in sustain	Pattern 2 > Staccato > Light and fast > Use consonants with attacks (b, t, k, p)	Pattern 2 > Improvise on that pattern > Notes can be swept into micro tones	Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Fades into feedback		
MEZZO		Harmonics, filling up the silences in between soprano's voice	Harmonics get narrower in between one another	Same	Same	> Pick one note and sustain > Followed by slow glissando down 3/4 tone	Hum an improvised melody	Hum an improvised melody	Note sustain	Note sustain, fades out	Pattern 2 > Shifted in time from soprano	Pattern 2 > Improvise on that pattern > Notes can be swept into micro tones	Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Fades into feedback		
ALTO		Melody 1 > Sweep notes from one to the other	Melody 1 > Improvise on this melody	Melody 1 > Improvise on this melody	> Fade out into feedback	Rhythm	Note sustain	Note sustain	Pattern 2	Pattern 2 > Staccato > Light and fast > Use consonants with attacks (b, t, k, p)	Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Fades into feedback			
TENOR		Trace of alto line, pitchless noise	Trace of alto line, pitchless noise	Trace of alto line, pitchless noise	Fade out into feedback	Rhythm	Rhythm	Rhythm	Fades out				Hums a soft melody	Hums a soft melody	Hums a soft melody	Hums a soft melody	Hums a soft melody	
BARITONE			Melody 2 > Sing the notes > Staccato > Affirmed	Melody 2 > Improvise on this melody	Fade out into feedback	Whistling	Whistling	Note sustain	Fades out			Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Fades into feedback			
BASS			Melody 2 > Sing the notes > Well affirmed	Melody 2 > Improvise	Fade out into feedback	Pitchless bass drone					Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Pattern 2	Fades into feedback		
FEEDBACK-ELECTRO																		
VOID GRADUALLY FILLING UP, CREATING TEXTURES WITH SEPARATE NOTES OR SIMPLE MELODIC FORMULAS + STARTING TO TRIGGER THE FEEDBACK OF THE OUD						OUD FEEDBACK TAKES SOME SPACE; ALL OTHER VOICES REMAIN IN A SUBTLE EXPRESSION, CREATING THE ILLUSION OF A STRUCTURE. USE: NOISE, WHISTLES, ETC MEZZO HUMS A SOFT MELODY				FRUSTRATION SETTLES IN, REPEATING PATTERNS, STACCATO EXPRESSION, USE OF CONSONANTS WITH ATTACK SUCH AS B, P, K, T, SOUNDS. FEEDBACK STARTS DROWNING THE SOUNDS AND MAKES THEM DISAPPEAR (THEY FADE OUT). WHAT REMAINS IS A SUSTAINED FEEDBACK WITH A TUNE, HUMMED BY TENOR, VERY MELODIC AND SOFT								

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

# PORTFOLIO

## For jars, voice and oud | 2021 |

> Sharjah, Décembre 2021

**LINK TO VIDEO LIVE AT SHARJAH ART  
FOUNDATION**

CODE: SAF123

**<https://vimeo.com/667186982>**    **CODE: SAF123**

### Credits

Younna Saba : composition and performance

Electronic device borrowed from  
**Tarek Atoui's installations**

Performance footage courtesy of  
**Sharjah Art Foundation**

### Description

This piece explores the intersection of the voice with the resonances of different objects: the oud in a feedback chain with clay jars from Sharjah. This project was presented at the end of my residency at the Sharjah Art Foundation, in the framework of Tarek Atoui's exhibition.

# PORTFOLIO

## Tracks | 2021 - 2022 |

### Al Sobh



<https://youmnasaba.bandcamp.com/track/al-sobh>

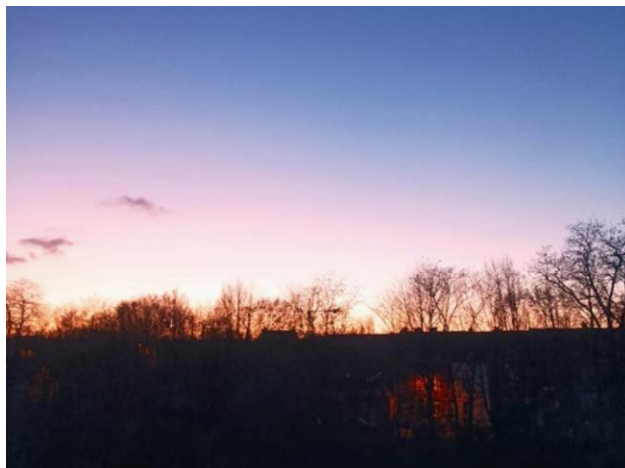
Written and performed by Youmna Saba

for the RELIEF Centre 2021 conference:

“Working Through Crisis: Innovations, Possibilities  
and Limitations of Research in a Volatile Lebanon.”

Recorded in March 2021.

### Ritha'



<https://youmnasaba.bandcamp.com/track/ritha>

Poem by Assulaka (“Assulaka tarthi ‘ibnuha”, 7th c)

Music and performance by Youmna Saba

Based on “Surface Grinder 7” clip, from the Beirut  
Heritage Initiative sound library

## PORTFOLIO

### En Présence de l'Absence | 2022 |

#### Collaboration with Layale Chaker

> Presented at the festival Détours de Babel , Grenoble

#### LINK TO VIDEO



<https://youtu.be/ziNbagMJgHk>

#### Credits

Layale Chaker Composition, Violin

Victor Guaita Alto

Magdalena Cepke Cello

Samar Talaat Contrebasse

Younna Saba Sound design

#### Description

Sound design for Layale Chaker's composition around the work of Edward Said.

## PORTFOLIO

### In case of revolution break the glass | 2019 |

Music for film

> Beirut, Lebanon

#### LINK TO VIDEO



<https://youtu.be/h2cXSYK6ZoE>

#### Crédits

Rémie Maksoud: direction and cinematography

Wafa'a Céline Halawi: direction and cinematography

Samer Beyhum: editing

Yumna Saba: composition, performance, sound design

Fadi Tabbal: sound design, recording and mixing

Dima Geagea: colorist

#### Dates:

Release in March 2020

Selection of Cinédans Festival 2020

# PORTFOLIO

## Solo albums | 2017 - 2014 |

> Beirut, Lebanon



### [LINK TO LISTEN](#)

#### **Arb'een (40) | May 2017**

Solo project by Youmna Saba

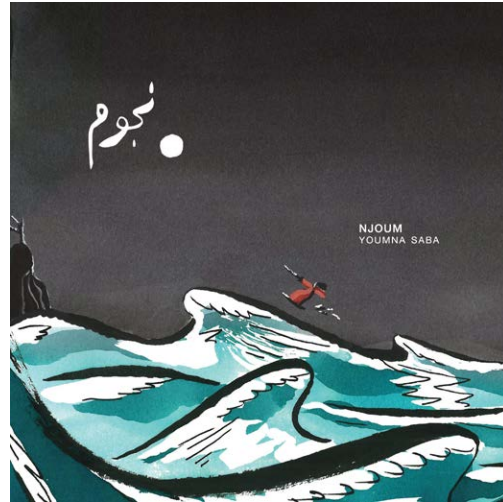
Youmna Saba : composition, performance and arrangements

Fadi Tabbal : recording and mixing at [Tunefork Recording Studios](#), Lebanon

Lopazz : mastering at Mixmastering, Germany

Produced by Youmna Saba and Fadi Tabbal (Tunefork)

Joseph Kai : illustration and design



### [LINK TO LISTEN](#)

#### **Njoum | Septembre 2014**

Youmna Saba : composition, performance and arrangements

Fadi Tabbal : arrangements, recording and mixing at [Tunefork Recording Studios](#), Lebanon

Lopazz : mastering at Mixmastering, Germany

Produced by Youmna Saba and Fadi Tabbal (Tunefork)

Joseph Kai : illustration and design

# “En Dash” | A Space In-Between | 2019 |

## LINK TO PROJECT



<https://www.optophono.com/acousticcitieslondonbeirut>

### Credits

Younna Saba: conception, composition, performance, recording

En Dash is part of Optophono's 2019 edition: Acoustic Cities: London Beirut.

### Description

“En Dash” is an experiment that explores the act of singing while walking in the city. With a recorder in hand, I wandered around Beirut capturing some vocal improvisations of a pre-written tune, and the multiple transformations it undergoes, when moving from one neighborhood to another.

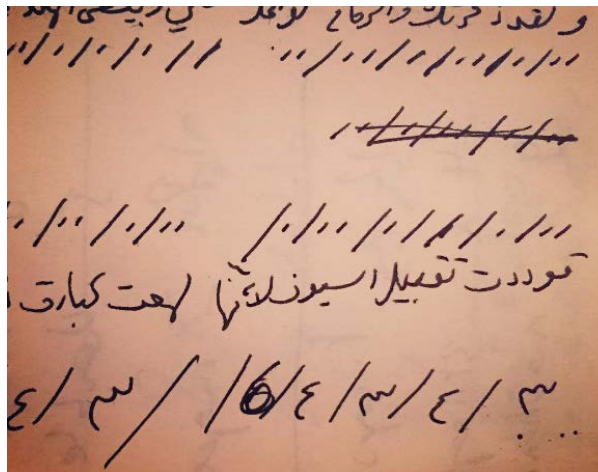
While I usually sing to block external sounds and create for myself a safe shielding sonic space, I found myself crossing over to an already established amalgam of sonic occurrences, blurring the boundaries in-between my personal space and the public sonic atmosphere. What appeared as “noise” revealed an array of synchronicities and meta-schemes, unveiling a musical flow that re-questions the haphazardness of it all.



## 1.2 SECONDS AGO | 2016 |

Project achieved in the context of the residency Sound Development City

### LINK TO PROJECT



<https://1-2secondsago.tumblr.com/>

### Credits

Younna Saba : words,  
composition, and performance

With Andreas Oskar Hirsch,  
Abdellah El Khajlani, Nadir  
Houboub, Moisés Martín Flores,  
Lukatoyboy, Alonzo Vazquez.

Here is a link to [the blog](#)

And to [the sound files](#)

### Description

This project is based on the hypothesis that the environment and the sensorial stimuli are a primordial agent in the shaping of artistic languages: it is an experiment that examines the effects of an atmosphere in motion.

The project started with a "ritournelle" (a short repetitive piece) that I composed in Beirut, and stretched to document the different transformations this track has undergone during my road trip from Madrid to Casablanca, as part of Sound Development City artist expedition.

Traveling with my oud, my voice, a recorder and a camera, I performed this piece in different public places and with different musicians and sound artists that I met, recording different versions and documenting the evolution of the track.

I also experimented with new ways of composing based on my wanderings in the cities and the sonic environments I found myself in.

This project was conceived and achieved during the 5th edition of the artist residency Sound Development City, produced by Heller Enterprises (CH) in September 2016.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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