



«SPOKEN WORD»

A Tribute to Words from Here & Elsewhere

lead by

Atif SIDDIQI

with poets **Naïm KATTAN**, **Nada SATTOUF**,
Hossein SHARANG, **Shin'UET**, **Rachna VOHRA**
and musician **Babak TOWHIDI**

Sunday May 9, 2010

2 pm

Le Saint-Sulpice

1680 St-Denis

Free admission

photo credits (clockwise) : Melissa Wheller (A.Siddiqi); (B.Towhidi); Jacko Restkian (N.Sattouf); Hossein Arang (H.Sharang); Isabelle Paille (R.Vohra); (N.Kattan); Caroline Hayeur (S.Uet)

A Tribute to Words from Here & Elsewhere

Festival Accès Asie invites you to join us in a relaxing atmosphere at Le Saint-Sulpice to discover a lively universe of cultures from the four corners of Asia.

With multidisciplinary artist **Atif Siddiqi** as the master of ceremony, "**Spoken Word**" proposes an encounter with authors and performers of diverse cultural origins from Iraq, Lebanon, Iran, China and Montreal with **Naim Kattan**, **Nada Sattouf**, **Hossein Sharang**, **Shin'Uet**, and **Rachna Vohra**. Accompanied by Iranian musician **Babak Towhidi**, these inspiring and animated readers will speak their minds and deliver their messages in French, English, Urdu Arabic, Lebanese, Persian, and Mandarin.

The "Spoken Word" is a form of oral poems. It can be recited with musical accompaniment, but the focus is on the recitation. "Slam" is a competition of oral poems or "Spoken Word".

Atif SIDDIQI, Master of Ceremony

Atif Siddiqi an artist originally from Pakistan, speaks English, French and Urdu. He studied fashion design in Los Angeles and has since been perfecting his craft in video production and performance in Montreal. Issues on identity, gender politics and notions of personal transformation and metamorphosis notably inspire **Siddiqi's** works that are based on symbols and icons. A multidisciplinary artist, **Atif Siddiqi's** creative expressions are as much as a filmmaker and as experimenting in video, as he is an actor and performer.

His works include the award winning documentaries, **Solo** and **M! Mom, Madonna & Me**, which have been broadcast in Canada and in official competitions in film festivals internationally. **Siddiqi** will perform in English and in Urdu from his latest CD recording in 2009, *Jugnu (Firefly)*, that are children's poems written by Ismail Meeruti who is renowned as one of the fathers of 19th century children's literature in India.

Le Saint-Sulpice, a historical place with character

Since 1980, the **Saint-Sulpice** accommodates over 1500 guests in its centenarian mansion. In addition to its legendary terrace, this bar houses paintings, sculptures, lounges and a billiard table. A small library also gives its predominantly student clientele a relaxing reading space in a lounge setting while enjoying free Internet access. A poetry competition occurs every year at this bar.

www.lesaintsulpice.ca

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Naïm KATTAN

Born in Baghdad, **Naim Kattan** initially studied law before pursuing literature in Sorbonne, obtaining a scholarship bursary from the French government. After immigrating to Canada in 1954, **Kattan** worked for the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, and later became a professional literary critic and a regular contributor to the literary pages of the newspaper, *Le Devoir*. In 1967 he became directly involved in the public funding of the arts in Canada as head of the writing and publication section of the Canada Council, a position which he still holds. Author of more than 35 books, **Naim Kattan** has been inspired by many cultures, human relationships and diversity. His works, translated from Arabic into various languages, are celebrated internationally for their universality. Tributes made in his respect have increased over the years. With honorary doctorates from universities across the world, **Kattan** is notably recipient of the Order of Canada, Chevalier of the Order of Quebec and was awarded the National Order of the Legion of Honor of France.

Nada SATTOUF

Born in Lebanon, **Nada Sattouf** has resided in Montreal since 2002. She has four collections of poems: *Bayt* (2009), and *Mémoires et un sommeil* (2007), the publishings of "Poètes de brousse" in Montreal as well as *Attente prévue* (2000), and *Postiche ouvert au vent* (1997) in the Lebanese publishing company, *Al-Jadid*.

Nada Sattouf is currently completing a doctorate degree in French Studies while participating in various literary events including the International Literature Festival (FIL), the Festival Voix d'Amérique and the Blue Metropolis Festival.

*"Lebanon is the place which gave me life,
which embroidered my memories,
instilling doses of light and darkness ."*
— **Nada Sattouf**

Hossein SHARANG

Hossein Sharang has lived in exile in Montreal, after leaving Iran in 1982. He has published several collections of poetry, his first one at the age of nineteen while in Iran, then in Germany, Sweden and Quebec. The collections "Mountagnes fugitives" and "Livre sauvage" were published by "Éditions du Noroît". His poems also appear in various periodicals in Iran, Europe and North America and have been translated into 4 languages. In addition to regularly participating in "Slam" and "Spoken Word" evenings, **Sharang** has also been writer in residence at the Canadian Institute in Quebec in 2008-2009. The poetry of **Hossein Sharang** is unique. The poet's images reflect a life of wandering, deep relationships with humanity, earth and the constant refreshing experiences in life.

www.myspace.com/hosseinsharang

Shin'UET

Poet and writer originally from Shanghai, **Shin'Uet** speaks French, Chinese and Spanish. Born in 1977, he grew up amidst a collapsed Chinese culture, poverty and ultra-materialism. Before his departure for France at the age of 25, **Shin'Uet** was an activist of an alternative Shanghaiese culture as a poet, event organizer and facilitator. Having a strong presence on the stage of "Slam" in Paris during the last decade, he was often heard in L'Espace L'Harmattan and Club des Poètes. His first collection of bilingual poetry «Little Thug in Yagpu District» was published by Éditions L'Harmattan in 2005.

In 2007, **Shin'Uet** immigrated to Quebec where he sings his passions through poems in the night sky of Montreal. Last year, he participated in the Festival Voix d'Amériques.

<http://xingyu.canalblog.com/>

Rachna VOHRA

Montreal-born poet and spoken word artist **Rachna Vohra** dreams of a better world. With a goal of transforming minds, she discovered spoken word to be an empowering tool towards social change and critical thinking. Over the last few years, she has begun affecting change by addressing social, political, and emotional issues through her work. She has self-published two books and been published in magazines, zines, and anthologies. **Vohra** has been recorded on CD, has performed at a variety of literary and arts festivals and has featured, slammed, and read at poetry and spoken word venues across North America. To find out more about **Rachna Vohra**, you can visit her website.

www.rachnavohra.com

Babak TOWHIDI, musicien

Born in Tehran in 1981, **Babak Towhidi** was introduced to Persian music at the age of eight. In Montreal, he developed his technique on sehtar (Persian lute) and his knowledge of Radif (a collection of Iranian art music) with Kiya Tabassian for two years. He has progressed in his studies taking classes and workshops with Hamid Motebasseem, Jean-Marc Bouchard and Philippe Kayser. He continues in the art by self-teaching.

Babak Towhidi is founder and artistic director of the music series, *Trésor Musical Persan*, a series of transcendence with the music ensemble, Académique de Musique Persane as well as the music group, Advarr. He has produced these events over the past few years as part of the Festival du Monde d'arabe. **Babak Towhidi** now teaches sehtar and practices with the music group, *Constantinople*

«For me, a culture does not deny the other. My culturess do not compete .» - Naïm Kattan