



Lament of Ur: **Addressing Drought Through Art**



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In the Present as in the Past...

The exhibition "**Lament for Ur**" stems from the desire to communicate the impact of climate change through art.

Eight paintings by **Beppe Schiavetta** depict the destruction of the Sumerian city of Ur, which was also caused by severe drought.

Art as a means of **historical narration** and raising **awareness of climate events**.



The Historical and Environmental Context

Ur (Mesopotamia, circa 2100 BCE):

A great Sumerian city, a symbol of civilization and progress.

A **prolonged drought weakened the city**, making it easier for the Elamites to conquer.

The ancient text “Lament for Ur” describes the devastation: **dry rivers, arid fields, and people fleeing.**

A striking parallel with the **current climate crisis** and its **social and geopolitical consequences.**



Schiavetta's Pictorial Language

Beppe Schiavetta employs a style between **abstraction and symbolism**, evoking fragmentation and dissolution.

Materials and techniques: oil on cardboard and canvas, creating a visual effect that suggests **fragility and material destruction**.

The artworks convey a sense of a **world on the brink of collapse**, just like Ur, which disappeared due to drought.



The Artworks and Drought

“The wild bull has abandoned his cow-pen”: a metaphor for the **violence of nature and climate chaos**.

“The storm struck like a lion – the people moaned”: the **destructive power of the elements** manifests as a storm.

“The canals of my city, silt up”: the drying up of the land, the **disappearance of water**.

“My luxuriant plain is cracked as if from a kiln”: the once-fertile land **now marked by drought**.



Art and Science in Dialogue

Art interprets and anticipates major crises, raising awareness of issues like climate change.

The exhibition acts as a **bridge between scientific research and emotional perception:** CIMA Research Foundation promotes this dialogue between scientific and artistic language.

Schiavetta's **art translates into images** what science describes through data and models.



Tools to Change Course

Just as Ur was destroyed by drought and wars, today we face climate crises with devastating effects.

Art is a powerful **tool to connect the past with the present** and generate awareness.

What will our fate be? We have the tools to change course and **prevent the repetition of another Ur?**



The World Drought Atlas - Maps for Facing Crises

The World Drought Atlas documents the effects of drought throughout history, showing it as a **global and borderless phenomenon**.

Drought has social, economic, and political consequences: **food crises and water scarcity, forced migrations and conflicts** over resources, **loss of biodiversity and land degradation**.

Just as Ur was devastated by drought, today we see similar scenarios in many parts of the world. **Interconnected scenarios, with cascading effects and systemic impacts.**

Art and Awareness. A parallel between History and Future

The World Drought Atlas shows the increasing frequency and severity of droughts, highlighting the **urgency of our response**.

Beppe Schiavetta's works do not only tell Ur's story; they **reflect our present and our future**.

Just as drought led to the fall of entire civilizations in the past, **today we face the same global challenge**.



**Ur was forgotten by history.
What will be the fate of our
cities if we fail to act today?**



**Discover our Art & Science
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the exhibition catalogue**





Thank you for your attention

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