



Riyadh Art FAQs

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What is Riyadh Art?

Riyadh Art is one of the four grand projects launched by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on March 19, 2019, under the supervision of the Committee of Grand Projects chaired by His Royal Highness the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Prime Minister and Chairman of the Royal Commission of Riyadh City Board of Directors.

The four grand projects are being developed by the Royal Commission for Riyadh City (RCRC) that will collectively transform the capital into an environmentally friendly, sustainable city which offers the highest standards of livability and lifestyle, in line with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 goals.

Comprising more than 1,000 public art installations and supported by 10 programs and two grand annual festivals, the project brings artworks and landmarks created by local and international artists to residential neighborhoods, gardens and parks, squares and public areas, metro and bus stations, bridges and pedestrian pathways, city entrances and tourist destinations in the city.

Riyadh Art is the first national public art initiative in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Riyadh Art will transform the city of Riyadh into a gallery without walls, and a creative powerhouse for the digital age.

How was the Riyadh Art project structured?

The project structure was built around six curatorial pillars:

1. **Riyadh as the Civic City.** Creating new civic spaces: Riyadh as an urban theatre for the arts. Improving the public realm for future generations. Investing in tomorrow's history. The arts encouraging engagement and exploration.
2. **Riyadh as the Binary City.** Desert and light, blackness and neon. A project balancing tradition and modernity, vernacular and modern architecture, technology and heritage.
3. **Riyadh as the Populated City.** A city for international travelers, students, workers, investors, pilgrims and tourists. Accommodating different ideas and belief systems through dialogue and consultation, understanding and engagement. Realizing the hopes and aspirations of young people.
4. **Riyadh as the Hospitality City.** Opening the city to innovation, entrepreneurial activity, and new urban spaces. Celebrating holidays and friends, festivals and new cultural events. The sharing of food and sharing of cultural experiences.
5. **Riyadh as the Elemental City.** A sensory city shaped by the magnetism of its evolving green spaces. Green, gold and blue – the defining tones that shape Islamic art. Tactility of materials – the feel and scent of wood and of golden Riyadh stone and metal.
6. **Riyadh as the Connected City.** New ways of navigating Riyadh. Entrepreneurial, scientific and technological relationships with the wider world. Rivers of light and technology, art and social media. New universities, factories for ideas powering Riyadh's future.

What are the 10 programs and 2 festivals of Riyadh Art?

- 1) **Urban Art Lab:** Galleries for well-known artists in city squares that encourage interaction between artists and citizens. Each pavilion will include one digital artwork and cultural programming, and is a blend of production atelier, gallery, artist studio, open-air classroom, office and lecture space.
- 2) **Joyous Gardens:** Playgrounds designed by famous artists in neighborhood gardens to encourage creative play as a core part of the healthy and vibrant urban life in Riyadh.



- 3) **Jewels of Riyadh:** Permanent, large scale site-specific installations form an ongoing program to enhance public spaces, celebrate cultural heritage, contribute to community building, improve the quality of urban life for residents, and attract international tourism.
- 4) **Welcoming Gateways:** A series of grand “gates of culture” heralding the entrance to Riyadh as a city of culture. Riyadh's Welcoming Gateways set the tone for a city where the arts and creativity are essential components of a vibrant and inspiring global city.
- 5) **Art on the Move:** A series of distinctive large-scale, high impact, colorful and kinetic art interventions, designed to support the wayfinding experience of Riyadh. Artworks will be integrated into the core infrastructure of the city, such as bridges and overpasses, and placed at grand road and rail intersections to provide a truly joyful everyday experience.
- 6) **Art in Transit:** This program integrates public art into the core fabric of Riyadh’s Metro and BRT bus system to create beautiful and distinctive stations, supported by innovative programs that foster interaction amongst citizens.
- 7) **Urban Flow:** Integrates public art into the fabric of the citywide network of pedestrian walkways and footpaths, enticing citizens to experience art and the city on their own terms. Shifting focus from a transport system that privileges the car, the city is making the transition to a new future of public transportation, encouraging its citizens out into the streets and onto the Metro to navigate a city that has become the new creative canvas.
- 8) **The Hidden River - The Illuminated Bridges:** Artists illuminate key bridges across the city and highlight not only the structural configuration of their creative canvas, but the bridge itself as a physical, social and emotional connector within the landscape. A distinctive, vibrant experience for everybody.
- 9) **The Hidden River - Art Trail:** Artists interpret the unique history, heritage and ecology of the wadis of Riyadh, while promoting the artisanal and artistic spirit of the community. The Hidden River is an art trail which explores and reimagines traditional craft-based techniques.
- 10) **Garden City:** This is a sculpture park for the 21st century, inviting new interpretations of art, technology and environmental engagement for Riyadh’s residents and visitors. It creates a new environment for experiencing interactive and contemporary art outside of the museum, accessible to all at human scale and a platform for small and medium-sized permanent and temporary outdoor artworks to be programmed as part of the wider park creative experience.
- 11) **Riyadh Icon:** This is dedicated to the creation of a 21st century distinctive icon for the city of Riyadh and for Saudi Arabia. This ambitious international commission is a visual symbol of the cultural aspirations of Vision 2030 and it heralds a new era of Saudi intention to celebrate a global community that sparks creativity, ignites the art movement, encourages self-expression, and creates an inclusive culture.
- 12) **Noor Riyadh:** Noor Riyadh is a new city-wide annual festival of light and art that nurtures creativity, promotes talent and delivers awe-inspiring experiences. The 2021 program unites Saudi and international artists and includes a number of selected public art installations across Riyadh city; ‘Light Upon Light’, a landmark exhibition of light art since the 1960s to present day; and a diverse program of talks, workshops and events.
- 13) **Tuwaiq International Sculpture Symposium:** Sculptors from around the world coming together to produce a series of permanent public artworks. The entire creative process will be open and accessible to the public with a program of events visits, talks and an opening Gala. The work will be on view for 5 days at the end of the Symposium before moving to an open-air gallery that will be accessible to the public.



- **Vision 2030**

How does Riyadh Art fit into Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030?

Vision 2030 recognizes the importance of a vibrant society where everyone enjoys a rich, happy and fulfilling life as a strong foundation for economic prosperity. Riyadh Art is an important part of realizing the goals laid out in Vision 2030, in particular in improving Quality of Life and raising Riyadh's ranking among the top 100 cities of the world.

Art is a critical component in a rich cultural life. It tells a story about our society and culture and gives us insights into different perspectives. It is now a well-accepted principle of urban design that public art contributes to a community's identity, fosters community pride and a sense of belonging, and enhances the quality of life for its residents and visitors. Art adds enormous value to the cultural, aesthetic and economic vitality of a community. Riyadh Art will contribute to the creative economy by bringing jobs through arts related design, manufacture, construction and tourism.

- **Community**

How will Riyadh Art reach the people of Riyadh?

The best way to reach the population is to bring art to where people work (Jewels of Riyadh), to their routes while traveling (Art in Transit), to key points as they move about the city, (Art on the Move, Urban Flow), to where they go for joyful experiences (Joyous Gardens, Hidden River Art Trail, Garden City), and to where they go for connection, inspiration and creative expression (Noor Riyadh, Tuwaiq Sculpture Symposium, Illuminated Bridges, Riyadh Icon). By doing so, the citizens of Riyadh will enjoy a cohesive experience and exposure to the full, exciting program under Riyadh Art.

- **Artworks**

How will the artworks be selected?

Artworks will be evaluated by a 5-person Expert Panel then presented to the Riyadh Art Steering Committee for final decision.

The selection criteria will include

- Overall fit of the selected artworks with Riyadh Art's general project and individual program's main objectives.
- The coherence of the artworks with the proposed locations in Riyadh and/or their transformative impact on the city landscape
- The potential for long term placement of the artworks in Riyadh's urban environment and specific climate as well as the complexity of installing and maintaining the artwork
- The cost of the proposed artwork will be based on market valuations for similar artworks by the same artists in the past.