

## Noor Riyadh celebrates outstanding second edition

- *Completion of exhibition From Spark to Spirit concludes season that began with awe-inspiring festival in November*
- *Riyadh Art organizers hail Noor Riyadh, which welcomed 2.8 million visitors, stating it goes ‘above and beyond expectations’*

**Riyadh, March 10, 2023** – Noor Riyadh, the largest light art festival in the world, has concluded the 2022/23 season after captivating local communities and an international audience from across the globe with a series of spectacular events.

From November 3-19, 2022, the second edition of the Noor Riyadh festival saw 200 artworks and installations by more than 130 artists illuminate 40 citywide locations, showcasing immersive site-specific installations, monumental public artworks, ephemeral sculptures, art trails, virtual reality, projections and drone shows. The artworks utilized the medium of light from leading international and Saudi artists to transform the capital into a dazzling center for artistic activity and display – exemplifying the fervent belief of Riyadh Art, Noor Riyadh’s organizers, that art is for all.

Noor Riyadh is among the multiple programs developed by Riyadh Art as it progresses to turn the capital into a creative canvas, a “gallery without walls”, by fostering an environment for creative expression and a thriving creative economy.

The exhibition From Spark to Spirit – which explored themes such as the ‘Technologies of Light’, ‘Architectonics of Light’ and ‘Consciousness of Light’ – accompanied the festival and ran at the JAX District until March 10, 2023. The exhibition ran for more than four months, after an extension of 35 days was secured allowing the public more time to engage with the Light based artworks.

This edition of Noor Riyadh – tripling in scale from the inaugural event in 2021 – welcomed 2.8 million visitors, residents, and travelers alike, providing memories to last a lifetime.

**Khaled Al-Hazani, Executive Director of the Riyadh Art Program, said:** “Noor Riyadh’s theme for its second edition was ‘We Dream of New Horizons’. Within this phrase was a sense of hopefulness for the future – and that has been amplified enormously from what Noor Riyadh has created over the past few months.

“Noor Riyadh has gone above and beyond our expectations, not only in its size and caliber, but also in the reception of the public, with millions of visitors experiencing the festival during its run. We aimed to receive 1 million visitors in the second edition of Noor Riyadh and almost 3 million people from the KSA and the world honored us with their presence at the festival and its exhibition. Seeing how the festival has resonated with the public affirms the overarching goals of the Riyadh Art initiative, which include transforming the capital into a cosmopolitan global city where art and culture can flourish. In addition, Riyadh Art wants to bolster the city’s creative economy, attracting talent and businesses to invest in the city as it undergoes this dynamic change,” he added.

For this edition, renowned names in light art were brought together with an expanding roster of emerging and established local artists – many for whom light was a new artistic medium – within Saudi Arabia. The festival included at least 90 new commissions from international artists such as Daniel Buren, Shohei Fujimoto, Douglas Gordon, Tadashi Kawamata, Alicja Kwade and Jean-Michel Othoniel. They were joined by Saudi artists such as Ahaad Alamoudi, Abdullah AlOthman, Daniah Al Saleh, Rashed AlShashai, Sarah Brahim, Bricklab, and Muhannad Shono. More than a third of artists at Noor Riyadh were from Saudi Arabia.

In addition, they were joined by participants from 40 countries as far and wide as Madagascar, Uganda, Japan, Puerto Rico, Turkey, Poland, France, United Kingdom and United States. The festival was co-curated by Hervé Mikaeloff, Dorothy Di Stefano and Jumana Ghouth. Meanwhile, From Spark to Spirit was curated by Neville Wakefield (lead curator) and Gaida AlMogren (associate curator).

Artworks for Noor Riyadh were accompanied by a diverse public program of more than 500 special activities, including tours, talks, workshops, family activities, film screenings, and music.

Noor Riyadh's mesmerizing displays not only captivated visitors, but set astounding new records officially noted by adjudicators at the Guinness World Records™. The following six Guinness World Records™ titles were achieved by Noor Riyadh during the edition:

- 'Largest Mesh Screen on a Building' and 'Highest Mesh Screen on a Building' for the installation and light performance *titled Pulse of Light* on Riyadh's Kingdom Tower
- *Pulse of Light* also achieved the 'Largest Laser Show' in terms of area covered and the 'Longest Distance Covered by a Laser Light Show'
- 'Most Drones Performing an Aerial Dance Display' was awarded for Marc Brickman's unforgettable aerial installations – The *order of chaos: chaos in order* and *K A L E I D O S C O P E* – using 1,990 drones as their medium
- And last, but most certainly not least, Noor Riyadh achieved the Guinness World Record title of 'Largest Light Art Festival' with a total of 201 installations across the festival and exhibition, surpassing the minimum requirement of 185 installations.

Launched in 2021, Noor Riyadh is part of the broader Riyadh Art program, one of the largest public art projects undertaken in the world today. As Riyadh Art develops, it will present more than 1,000 artworks across Saudi Arabia's capital. Among its 12 programs, two have been launched, specifically Noor Riyadh and Tuwaiq Sculpture, an annual sculpture symposium that brings together artists to create large-scale works that will become part of the city's fabric. With Vision 2030 as its guiding force, Riyadh Art will continue its mission to make the capital a more livable and lovable for all.

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### About Noor Riyadh

Noor Riyadh is a citywide annual festival of light and art which launched in March 2021. The 2022 theme, '*We Dream of New Horizons*', alludes to a reflective hopeful future and refers to the shining light of dreams. The 2022 edition of the festival includes over 200 artworks by more than 130 artists – with 34% from Saudi Arabia – including large scale public installations, projections and interventions across the city of Riyadh, as well as a world-class exhibition entitled '*From*



*Spark to Spirit*. Artworks will be accompanied by a diverse public and community program, including tours, talks, workshops, family activities and music.

Noor Riyadh combines the highest quality light artworks from leading international and Saudi artists, across the largest city footprint of any light art festival worldwide. Staged under Riyadh Art, the festival aims to nurture local talent and inspire youth to drive Saudi Arabia's creative economy.

Noor Riyadh 2022 took place in the following locations: King Abdullah Park, Salam Park, Diplomatic Quarter, JAX District, KAFD, Bayt AlMalaz, Al Masmak, Aladel Square, Imam Muhammad bin Saud Square, Riyadh High Court, Wadi Namar, Kindi Square, Oud Square, Yamamah Park, Asheeh Park, Cultural Palace, Wadi Hanifah, The Ritz-Carlton Riyadh, Olaya Park, King Fahad National Library, Narcissus Riyadh Hotel, Centria Mall, Al Faisaliah Tower, Kingdom Centre, Majdoul Tower, Ghadeer Walking Trail, The Zone, Digital City, U Walk, Al Nakheel Park, Boulevard Riyadh City, JAX District Valley, King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue, AlNada South Park, Alwaha Park, as well as Prince Abdulaziz bin Muhammad bin Ayyaf Park, Riyadh Front, King Khalid International Airport, Riyadh Exhibition & Convention Center, and Lakes Park.

Website: <http://noorriyadh.sa>  
Instagram: [@noorriyadhfestival](https://www.instagram.com/noorriyadhfestival)  
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Noor Riyadh is presented by Riyadh Art and the Royal Commission for Riyadh City.

### **About Riyadh Art**

Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia, is on a ten-year mission to become one of the world's most livable and competitive cities, a global city which is open for business and that welcomes the world. With a young and rapidly growing population of 7+ million residents, Riyadh is transforming into a vibrant and cosmopolitan global city.

Art and culture reflect the spirit of a city. That's why the Riyadh Art project has been developed to turn the whole capital into a creative canvas - a gallery without walls - to enrich lives, ignite creative expression and kindle the creative economy. Riyadh Art is a demonstration of the open, accessible and creative transformation of the capital, where the exchange of ideas through creative expression, develops a deeper mutual understanding and respect.

The Riyadh Art project will have a positive impact on people, bringing every day moments of joy to residents and visitors alike, while instilling a greater sense of civic pride and creating a more beautiful city for everyone to enjoy. It will also spark the development of the new creative economy and have a positive effect in attracting new businesses to invest in the city.

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