



Noor Riyadh 2023: The world's largest annual festival of light and art returns to Saudi Arabia's Capital, with over 120 artworks by more than 100 local and international artists

- Noor Riyadh festival runs from November 30 – December 16, 2023, over five hubs across the capital
- The exhibition '*Refracted Identities, Shared Futures*' runs concurrently in JAX District from November 30, 2023, to March 2, 2024
- Noor Riyadh features over 120 innovative artworks by more than 100 artists from 35 countries including: Ahaad Alamoudi, Bruno Ribero, Chris Levine, Diana Thater, Iván Argote, Janet Echelman, Muhannad Shono, Random International, SUPERFLEX and Zahrah Al Ghamdi



From left to right: Chris Levine, *Molecule of Light*, 2021; Muhannad Shono, *Absent Sky*, 2023; Sara AlMultaq, *Do We Ever Really Remember The Same?* 2023. Images courtesy the artists and HAVAS. Photos © Noor Riyadh 2023, a Riyadh Art Program

Riyadh, November 30, 2023 – Noor Riyadh, the world's largest light art festival, will return to Saudi Arabia's capital for its third edition from **November 30 to December 16, 2023**. More than 120 **artworks**, large-scale installations and immersive projections will light up the city, bringing art to the people and boosting the creative economy. The event supports the Riyadh Art objective of transforming Riyadh into an awe-inspiring '**gallery without walls**', engaging diverse audiences, transcending boundaries, and integrating art into the urban fabric.

Presented by Lead Curator **Jérôme Sans** and Curators **Pedro Alonzo**, **Fahad Bin Naif** and **Alaa Tarabzouni** Noor Riyadh's 2023 theme '*The Bright Side of the Desert Moon*' explores light as a

unifying force that sustains, comforts and connects us all. Artworks are dispersed across five main hubs and additional locations throughout Riyadh City, with the central hub located at the **King Abdullah Financial District (KAFD)**, complemented by those at JAX District, Salam Park, Wadi Hanifa and Wadi Namar. Across the festival, the luminous city is contrasted against its arid surroundings, like a whirlwind of transformation. While the dazzling light of the desert is compared to the isolation of modern technology, the artworks by artists from 35 countries invite visitors to slow down, transcend time and space and reintegrate.

While sculptor and artist **Janet Echelman** transforms scientific data into a dynamic visual spectacle, **Diana Thater** and the collective **SUPERFLEX** present monumental and immersive video art projections.

In *Decimal Clock* **Carsten Höller** uses light to explore the intricate relationship between time and space, creating “the most complicated clock on earth”, which makes visitors lose their bearings. Elsewhere, **Ugo Schiavi** weaves together time and space, corrupting the distinction between the past and present, sustained by artworks and objects from Riyadh, the desert around the Tuwaiq mountains and other Saudi Arabian locations in *The Day the Sand Caught Fire*.

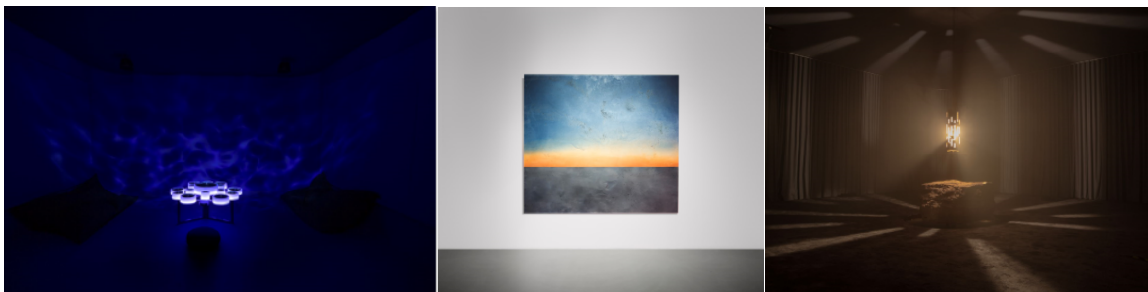
Dana-Fiona Armour creates a dystopian landscape with oddly shaped glass sculptures directly inspired by a species of snake native to Saudi Arabia’s deserts, echoing the numerous cosmogonies in which the creature steals the sun or the moon.

A plethora of internationally renowned artists hailing from Saudi Arabia and around the globe reconvene in the capital after their much-acclaimed participation in the past editions of Noor Riyadh, including **Bruno Ribero**, **Christopher Bauder**, **Chris Levine**, **DRIFT** and **Muhannad Shono**.

Saudi Artists creating site-specific work

Among the highlights at Noor Riyadh is a number of site-specific commissions by 35 established and emerging **Saudi artists**. At Wadi Namar, **Abdullah Alamoudi’s** *Look Up and You’ll Find Me* uses light as a metaphor for guidance and connection, while **Aziz Jamal’s** *The Whites of Their Eyes* employs light to weave together cultural narratives. At Wadi Hanifa, **Zahrah Al Ghamdi’s** installation explores light as a powerful symbol of life, growth, and transformation. **Ayman Yossri Daydban’s** *Tree House* uses cut out wooden forms to respond to perceptions of identity and heritage, while **Khaled Makhshoush’s** LED billboard juxtaposes nostalgic video game graphics against the natural landscape, a dialogue between the past and present.

Noor Riyadh Exhibition – ‘Refracted Identities, Shared Futures’



From left to right: Artur Weber, *Inner Waves*, 2023; Shaikha Al Mazrou, *Beyond All Measures*, 2023; Julian Charriere, *Vertigo*, 2021. Images courtesy the artists. Photos © Noor Riyadh 2023, a Riyadh Art Program

Running concurrently to the festival in the JAX District from **November 30, 2023**, to **March 2, 2024**, the exhibition **'Refracted Identities, Shared Futures'**, curated by **Neville Wakefield** and **Maya Al Athel**, offers a more intimate exploration of the concepts presented at the festival.

Refracted Identities, Shared Futures is a journey that moves through the three spaces of the exhibition: *Cosmos, Temporality* and *Connectivity*. Works from over **30 artists** from across the globe address mythology, astrophysics, swarm intelligence, and the unique and multifaceted properties of light.

Examples of this include **Abdulmohsen Al Bin Ali's** *The Dreamer Dreams*, which invites the viewer to explore the interconnected realms of memory and the desert. **Talin Hazbar's** *Earth Records* unearths temporal layers, revealing hidden histories embedded in the very earth beneath our feet, while **Shaikha Al Mazrou's** *Beyond All Measures* layers time in the form of paired horizons in which the oxidization of metals serves to create infinitely slow sunsets. In the closing space of the exhibition, **Aidha Badr's** filaments of luminescent threads weave us together, while **Ahaad Alamoudi** uses light to become a form of social interaction reaching across divides.

The synergy between the Noor Riyadh festival and exhibition is exemplified by artists such as **Julian Charrière, Mariko Mori, Monira Al Qadiri, and Random International**. Their works featured across both encourage dialogue that connects the grandeur of the festival's public displays to the exhibition's introspective and nuanced environment.

Spectacular artist-led presentations

Building on last year's Guinness World Record-breaking drone performance, **DRIFT's** *Desert Swarm* is set to be a highlight at the festival preview at KAFD, in which the artist presents a spectacular drone performance that uses art to reconnect nature with technology, mimicking the movements of the natural world accompanied by a live piano soundtrack.

Christopher Bauder is set to captivate audiences once again at Noor Riyadh with his latest light piece, *DIALOGUE*, which uses light and colour to bring a dynamic conversation to life between two of Riyadh's architectural monuments: the Kingdom Center and Al Faisaliah Towers.

Public Program and Community Engagement

Committed to developing opportunities for the local community, Noor Riyadh 2023 features a robust program of more than 100 workshops, 40 talks and family activities, and over 1,000 guided tours. The event is also deeply engaging with 450 schools and 60 university ambassadors as well as embedding 43 apprentices into the festival teams. Through these efforts, Noor Riyadh is helping to develop the city's creative economy to enrich lives, ignite creative expression and support diverse local talents.

Noor Riyadh is alive with activities for the community, featuring a unique creative experience called "Create Your Own Lantern", led by artist Rafael Domenech. Themed guided tours offer deeper insights, while enlightening talks and discussions explore the role of art in the kingdom and its connections with the global art scene. For families, there are frequent engaging activities at various family hubs, including Salam Park. Additionally, emerging artists can benefit from specialized workshops, such as the "Generative Poetry" workshop by Artur Weber, another talented Noor Riyadh artist.

Khaled Al-Hazani, Executive Director of the Riyadh Art, said: "With a stunning selection of artworks and a rich community engagement program, Noor Riyadh 2023 promises to bring us another step closer to Riyadh Art's ambition of transforming the city into a 'gallery without walls'. As we celebrate people, places and possibilities, we wish everyone a memorable experience filled with joy and wonder."

Tickets and attendance at Noor Riyadh

Most of the outdoor citywide artworks for Noor Riyadh are non-ticketed and open to all. However, some events require prior booking. The full program and ticketing details is available on Noor Riyadh's website: <http://noorriyadh.sa>

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Noor Riyadh 2023 in situ installations imagery is available here: <https://rb.gy/hqh0ax>

Noor Riyadh 2023 press kit is available here: <https://rb.gy/dk7tt>

Noor Riyadh 2023 KVs are available here: <https://rb.gy/81erry>

Noor Riyadh 2023 TVC is available here: <https://rb.gy/4w7znr>

For more information regarding Riyadh Art and Noor Riyadh contact:

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Notes to editors

About Noor Riyadh

Noor Riyadh is a citywide annual festival of light and art which launched in March 2021. Noor Riyadh includes a festival and world-class exhibition, along with a public program of community activities, featuring educational workshops, talks and performances. Noor Riyadh is the largest light art festival in the world.

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.

Website: <http://noorriyadh.sa>

Instagram: [@noorriyadhfestival](https://www.instagram.com/noorriyadhfestival)

Twitter: [@NoorRiyadhFest](https://twitter.com/NoorRiyadhFest)

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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 10-year mission to become one of the world's most livable and competitive cities, a global center 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 metropolis.

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 sense of mutual understanding and respect.

The Riyadh Art project will have a positive impact on people, bringing everyday 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 on attracting new businesses to invest in the city.

Website: www.riyadhart.sa

Instagram: [@riyadhartofficial](https://www.instagram.com/riyadhartofficial)

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Noor Riyadh 2023 Partners

Festival Partners: Ministry of Culture, KAFD, JAX District

Official Partners: Kingdom Center, Al Khozama

Media Partner: SRMG

Supporting Partner: Nova Water, Visit Saudi, King Fahad National Library, Digital City, VIA Riyadh

Hospitality Partner: Altanfeethi

Programming Partner: Misk Art Institute