

Noor Riyadh 2023: World's Biggest Annual Festival of Light and Art concludes with six Guinness World Records bringing the overall number to 14, while concurrent exhibition continues until 2 March 2024

- Third edition of Noor Riyadh inspires visitors and residents of Saudi Arabia's capital city with dazzling light artworks and a varied community engagement program, collecting a series of Guinness World Record-breaking achievements in the realm of light art by its final night of December 16
- The 2023 records are set by artists Christopher Bauder, Miguel Chevalier, Studio Drift and Yinka Ilori
- The exhibition '*Refracted Identities, Shared Futures*' and a series of workshops and public talks continue in JAX District until March 2, 2024



Christopher Bauder, DIALOGUE, 2023. Image courtesy the artist. Photo © Noor Riyadh 2023, a Riyadh Art Program

Riyadh, December 18, 2023 – Noor Riyadh, the critically acclaimed light art festival, celebrated as the world's largest annual event of its kind, has successfully concluded its 2023 edition. The public light art showcase, which ran from November 30 to December 16, transformed Saudi Arabia's capital into a dazzling 'gallery without walls', engaging almost **3 million** visitors with over **120** innovative artworks by more than **100** artists from **30** countries, more than **35** of which are from Saudi Arabia.

Adding six new Guinness World Records to the previous years' achievements, **Christopher Bauder's** *DIALOGUE* on Al Faisaliyah Tower set a record for the most lights in a light show on a single building as well as the record for the most lights used in a temporary light and sound show, illuminating both Al

Faisaliyah Tower and Kingdom Tower. **Studio Drift's** *Desert Swarm* created the largest drone bird swarm with an astounding **3,000 drones**. Overall, the festival has also launched the most drones in a week, illuminating the skies with awe-inspiring performances. **Miguel Chevalier's** *Magic Carpet*, *Origin of the World* presented the largest interactive projection-mapped display while **Yinka Ilori's** *Block Cubes* featured the largest temporary skatepark – a surprisingly refreshing experience within a light art festival.

Noor Riyadh 2023, curated by **Jérôme Sans, Pedro Alonzo, Fahad Bin Naif** and **Alaa Tarabzouni** under the theme, *'The Bright Side of the Desert Moon'*, captivated visitors with its exploration of light as a unifying force in these times of progress-induced isolation. Artworks displayed across five main hubs in Riyadh, including the **King Abdullah Financial District (KAFD), JAX District, Salam Park, Wadi Hanifa** and **Wadi Namar**, offered residents and visitors alike a unique blend of art and technology, redefining the city's nightscape and inviting viewers to slow down, transcend time and space and get together under the magical light of the Riyadh moon.

Highlights included **Janet Echelman's** transformation of scientific data into visual spectacles, **Diana Thater** and **SUPERFLEX's** immersive video art projections, and **Christopher Bauder's** *DIALOGUE*, which illuminated Riyadh's architectural landmarks. Middle Eastern and specifically Saudi artists shone brightly, with site-specific commissions and artistic interventions throughout the wadis, parks, and business districts of the city. In Salam Park, **Chourouk Hriech's** *Cities of Stars* presented structures covered in textiles depicting landscapes of global cities, intertwined with nature's essence. In JAX District, **Muhannad Shono's** *Absent Sky* created a mesmerizing experience with its play on light and formlessness. **Monira Al Qadiri's** works – the impactful *Monument* featured in the festival and the luminescent *Zephyr* series, presented in the exhibition – reflected on nature's dualities and microscopic marine life.

'Refracted Identities, Shared Futures' Exhibition Continues Until 2 March 2024



From left to right: Badiya Studio, *Symphony Of Light*, 2023; Farah Al Qasimi, *The Swarm*, 2023; Sarah Brahim, *Memory Machine*, 2023. Images courtesy the artists. Photos © Noor Riyadh 2023, a Riyadh Art Program

While the outdoor citywide artworks will dim their lights tonight, the journey through the dazzling world of art continues with the exhibition *'Refracted Identities, Shared Futures'*. Running until March 2, 2024, in the JAX District, the showcase, curated by **Neville Wakefield** and **Maya Al Athel**, delves deeper into themes of mythology, astrophysics, and the multifaceted properties of light. Featuring artworks from over 30 artists, the exhibition will keep the spirit of Noor Riyadh 2023 alive, inviting visitors to continue exploring the interplay of light, art, and technology. For example, **Badiya Studio's** *Symphony of Light* merges traditional music with innovative technology to celebrate Saudi culture while **Farah Al Qasimi's** *The Swarm* offers an immersive video installation exploring the intersection of social media influence and ancestral history. Finally, **Sarah Brahim's** *Memory Machine* uses dual film channels to explore the complexities of memory and forgetting, inspired by philosophical musings.

Khaled Al-Hazani, Executive Director of Riyadh Art, expressed his gratitude and excitement: "Noor Riyadh 2023 has not only illuminated our city but also our hearts and minds. As we close this

chapter, we look forward to the ongoing exhibition and the continuous enrichment of Riyadh's art and culture landscape. Our journey towards transforming the capital into a vibrant, creative global hub and 'gallery without walls' is aligned with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, and we are thrilled to contribute to this dynamic evolution."

Leaving its mark on the Saudi capital's community with its extensive and diverse engagement programs, the festival featured over 100 workshops, more than 40 talks, over 100 family activities, and more than 1,000 guided tours, adding to the festival's vibrant atmosphere. Playing a pivotal role in nurturing talent, it embedded 41 apprentices into various festival teams while leveraging the support of more than 460 dedicated volunteers and support staff. These initiatives underscore Noor Riyadh's commitment to developing the city's creative economy, fostering creative expression, and supporting local talents.

For more information on the ongoing exhibition and programming, please visit Noor Riyadh's website: <http://noorriyadh.sa>

-Ends-

Noor Riyadh 2023 by numbers (up to 15 December 2023):

Item	Quantity
Number of festival artists	94 individuals / 83 collectives
Number of festival artworks	94
Number of countries represented in the festival	30
Number of Saudi artists in the festival	28
Number of women artists in the festival	33
Footfall of NR23 festival (up to December 15)	2,942,858
Number of exhibition artists	30
Number of exhibition artworks	32
Number of countries represented in the exhibition	16
Number of Saudi artists in the exhibition	10
Number of women artists in the exhibition	17
Footfall of NR23 exhibition (up to December 15)	7,309
Number of family activities	100+
Number of workshops	122
Number of talks	44
Number of Creative Experiences	13
Number of guided tours	1,000+
Total number of apprentices trained from all partners	41
Total number of volunteers & support staff engaged	469

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>

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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)

Facebook: [@NoorRiyadhFestival](https://www.facebook.com/NoorRiyadhFestival)

Noor Riyadh Guinness World Records

Over its three editions, Noor Riyadh has achieved a remarkable total of 14 Guinness World Records showcasing the festival's commitment to pushing the boundaries of light art.

Noor Riyadh 2023:

1. **Most Lights in a Light Show on a Single Building:** Christopher Bauder's *DIALOGUE* with 360 individual lights on Al Faisaliyah Tower.
2. **Most Lights Used in a Temporary Light and Sound Show:** *DIALOGUE* also achieved a record with 560 lights across Al Faisaliyah Tower and Kingdom Tower.
3. **Largest Interactive Projection-Mapped Display:** 163.72 sqm by Miguel Chevalier's *Magic Carpet, Origin of the World*.
4. **Largest Temporary Skatepark:** Yinka Ilori's *Block Cubes* at 994.49 sqm.
5. **Largest Drone Bird Swarm:** Studio Drift's *Desert Swarm* with 3,000 drones.
6. **The most drones launched in a week:** 21,000 drones.

Noor Riyadh 2022:

1. **Largest Light Art Festival:** Featuring 201 artworks/installations.
2. **Most Multirotors/Drones in an Aerial Dance Display:** 1,990 drones.
3. **Largest Laser Show (Area Covered):** 14,459,160 m².
4. **Longest Distance Covered by a Laser Light Show:** 6.01 km.
5. **Highest Mesh Screen on a Building:** 203.508 m.
6. **Largest Mesh Screen on a Building:** 1,603 m².

Noor Riyadh 2021:

1. **Brightest Suspended Ornament:** 1.2 million lumens by Koert Vermeulen's *Star in Motion*.
2. **Largest LED Structure:** 272,160 LEDs in Karolina Halatek's *Beacon*.

This impressive collection not only highlights the festival's innovative spirit but also its role in transforming Riyadh into a global hub for light art.

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)

X: [@Riyadh_Arts](https://twitter.com/Riyadh_Arts)

Facebook: [@RiyadhArtOfficial](https://www.facebook.com/RiyadhArtOfficial)

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