

Noor Riyadh's Apprenticeship and Volunteer programs empower the next generation of Saudi creatives

- Noor Riyadh invests in emerging talent in arts to develop their knowledge and expertise.
- The Apprenticeship and Volunteer programs are aligned with Saudi Vision 2030 objective of developing the Kingdom's creative ecosystem.
- The six-month program will deliver 300-400 training hours, with hands-on skills training participants can apply in their careers.



The Noor Riyadh Apprentices attend a series of workshops throughout the programme, including with Gaida Al Mogren, Artistic Director of Noor Riyadh. Photo © Noor Riyadh 2023, a Riyadh Art Program
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December 15, 2023, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia – As the Largest Light Art Festival in the World illuminates the Kingdom's capital for its third edition, Noor Riyadh 2023 is energizing the next generation to lead Saudi Arabia's creative ecosystem with structured Apprenticeship and Volunteer programs. The initiative sees a team of young creatives contributing to the smooth running of the festival while developing their skills towards careers in the creative industries.

The citywide festival runs until December 16, and features more than 120 artworks by over 100 artists from more than 35 countries. The Noor Riyadh exhibition, held at the Riyadh Art space in JAX District until March 2, 2024, is titled *Refracted Identities, Shared Futures*. Curated by Neville Wakefield and Maya Al Athel, the exhibition features the work of 32 artists from across the world exploring a multidimensional world of light.

The Noor Riyadh Apprenticeship Program invests in emerging talent in arts to develop their knowledge and expertise. As part of the program, 13 young Saudis are gaining practical experience working alongside professionals staging the Noor Riyadh exhibition, and contributing to four streams – curatorial, event management, artist development and exhibition operations. They are supported by a pool of carefully selected expert mentors with extensive experience in each of the specialized streams, providing hands-on training and guidance. Practical training includes lessons, group discussions, self-study, workshops, field trips, interactive activities and practical projects. Apprentices are also encouraged to attend art events like workshops and conferences, to network, and to stay up to date with the latest industry trends and developments.

The six-month program will deliver 300-400 training hours. The apprentices can then apply their new-found knowledge and skills in their careers.

Driven by a desire to look at artworks from a different perspective, visual artist Ebtisam Almutlaq participated in the Noor Riyadh Apprenticeship Program in 2022 as an apprentice to the [then] Exhibition Curator, Gaida Al Mogren. This year she serves as the Program Manager of the Noor Riyadh Exhibition. “During my apprenticeship, I had the valuable opportunity to shadow multiple mentors, gaining insight into different departments alongside my main mentor, said Almutlaq. “I was eager to learn, and fortunately my mentors were always willing to provide assistance. Utilizing my observation and development skills, I successfully identified areas that could be enhanced, and worked on building an enhanced program for Noor Riyadh 2023.

Almutlaq added: “The Noor Riyadh Apprenticeship Program offers a unique and enriching experience, allowing participants to learn and train under the guidance of highly skilled experts in various fields. We acquired valuable knowledge, particularly in effective exhibition planning, encompassing both artistic and non-technical exhibits. Additionally, we gained insights into operational aspects and acquired new skills. The highlight of my experience in Noor Riyadh 2022 was visiting the exhibition, witnessing the present and comparing it to previous years. The intricate details and captivating scenes displayed remarkable artistic transformations in each location, making it the most memorable event of my career.”

Abdullah Al Watban (Exhibition Operations) joined the Noor Riyadh Apprenticeship Program “for professional growth, driven by a desire for continuous improvement”. He said: “Being an apprentice aligns with my commitment to expanding my knowledge in a dynamic work environment. While Noor Riyadh didn’t cover computer science, it broadened my career perspective.”

Said Haya Hamidaddin (Event Management): “Being in high school, I often find myself unsure about what comes next. While I always pictured myself in an art-related field, I also want to be doing something flexible. What better way to figure out my next step than some exposure to this field?”

Hamidaddin said she not only learned about managing events, but also about the necessary people skills to succeed in this field, including how to effectively manage people and navigate various situations diplomatically. “The entire experience was a journey of self-discovery, where I learned more about my strengths and weaknesses in the work environment. Observing others and learning from all the creative people around me helped in clearing up the fog I had regarding what career path I see myself in,” she added.

Rakan Abdullah (Event Management), joined the program to get involved in the creative industries, and has realized she has a deep affinity for the art sector. Abeer Alkhouraji (Exhibition Operations), meanwhile, highlights learning about effective exhibition planning, encompassing both artistic and non-technical exhibits, as a key takeaway.

Aspiring artist Areej Alfadel is contributing to the Artist Development stream. “The program is a great resource for artists to expand their minds,” she said. “I explored my creativity, conducted innovative research, and discovered ideal methods and materials to express my artistic vision.”

Said Raghda Aldawish (Curatorial): “I developed several skills, such as problem-solving, effective communication and how to choose appropriate artworks and build the concept and story of the art exhibition. I’m excited to learn more.”

Noor Riyadh 2023 also has volunteers and support staff members who play a crucial role on the exhibition’s peak days. They actively contribute to the execution of the event’s community programs and the daily operations of the exhibition. Aligned with the Kingdom’s goal of 1 million volunteers annually, the Noor Riyadh volunteers and support staff collaborate with the operations team to facilitate community engagement programs, assist the on-ground team in the successful implementation of the public talks program, support with activating family workshops and school programs, and address safety and operational concerns and extend assistance as required for other tasks. They also contribute to the smooth execution of VIP visits, guided tours, and overall exhibition operations.

Noor Riyadh is presented under the theme “The Bright Side of the Desert Moon”, curated by Jérôme Sans, Pedro Alonzo, Alaa Tarabzouni and Fahad Bin Naif. It features large-scale light art installations, building projections, performances and more, transporting visitors from the heart of the city to the doors of the desert through five main hubs – JAX District, the King Abdullah Financial District, Salam Park, Wadi Hanifa and Wadi Namar.

Developed with the aim of nurturing local talent and amplifying Saudi Arabia’s cultural economy, Noor Riyadh is part of Riyadh Art, one of the largest public art initiatives in the world. Riyadh Art aims to transform the Saudi capital into a “gallery without walls”, with more than 1,000 public art installations, to be spread out across the city through 10 programs and two annual events.

Across its editions, Noor Riyadh has created unique moments of joy across the city and provided millions of visitors the opportunity to appreciate world-class light artworks, and rediscover the city of Riyadh in a new light. In 2022, Noor Riyadh celebrated multiple achievements, including welcoming 2.8 million visitors and winning six Guinness World Records.

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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)

X: [@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