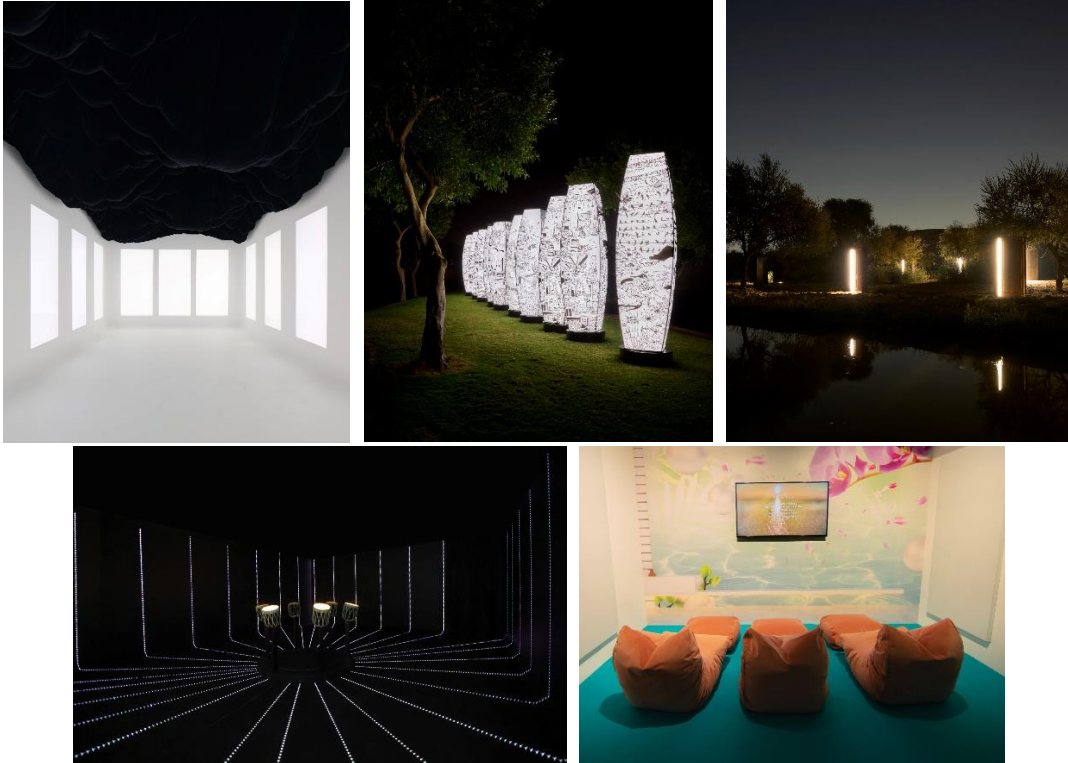


## Saudi and MENA artists light up the Saudi capital as part of Noor Riyadh, The Largest Light Art Festival in the World

- **More than 30 Saudi artists** are among over 100 artists from more than 35 countries, including a **strong MENA representation**, illuminating Riyadh with over 120 artworks
- The third edition of the **Noor Riyadh festival runs until December 16**, with the accompanying **exhibition open until March 2, 2024**.
- Noor Riyadh's first two editions have been awarded a combined eight Guinness World Records.



For high-res artwork and artist profile images, [click here](#)

**December 11, 2023, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia** – Celebrated Saudi artists **Huda Alnasir, Badiya Studio and Muhannad Shono** are among the homegrown talent captivating audiences from across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the world with spectacular artworks as part of Noor Riyadh 2023. The event also features artists from the rest of the region, including **Emirati Farah Al Qasimi, Kuwaiti Monira Al Qadiri and French-born Moroccan artist Chourouk Hriech**. The Largest Light Art Festival in the World returns to the Saudi capital under the theme “The Bright Side of the Desert Moon”. The citywide festival runs until December 16, 2023, complemented by an exhibition open until March 2, 2024.

Riyadh-based **Alnasir** created the commissioned artwork **Last Seen** (2023) for the festival. The site-specific work comprises various doors that are slightly ajar. A light shines through their openings, evoking the tension of the unknown. For Alnasir, Riyadh is a city that never sleeps, as if the city has collected the sunlight that shines down on it all day behind her doors, and this accumulated light tries to escape to experience the Riyadh nights. The open doors are also a sign of life and are thought of optimistically as being ready to welcome visitors. Alnasir uses the installation to embody the metaphor or “Nawarat Alriyadh”, an expression that is said to visitors when arriving to Riyadh, translating to “Riyadh is illuminated because of you”.

**Shono's** festival-commissioned work is **Absent Sky** (2023), composed of kinetic technology, fabric and lighting. With this immersive installation, the artist plunges visitors into a room entirely submerged in white light. Above them hovers a black, light-absorbing void ostensibly lacking form and depth. Appearing to possess no beginning nor end, this empty space begins to move, descend and deform. Coming alive, the shapeless gains form and exists on its own as a moving entity, as if drawing lines in the space. Playing with luminescence and obscurity, emptiness and fullness, **Absent Sky**

transforms the void into the source of an imagined universe. By recreating a moving cosmic sky above, the work invites the viewer to observe this living, breathing essence of the imagination, and to reflect on the porous border between light and darkness, the physical and the invisible.

**Badiya Studio**, comprising Saudi Mohammed Al Hamdan and Omani Mohamed Al Kindi, are presenting ***Symphony of Light*** (2023) at the exhibition. This innovative performance art piece celebrates the rich cultural heritage of Saudi Arabia. Synthesizing traditional music with cutting-edge technology, the production invites the audience on an immersive experience where the interplay of sound and light unveils the enchanting beauty of Saudi folklore.

Other Saudi artists participating in Noor Riyadh 2023 include **Ibrahim Romman's *Like Moths to a Flame***, inspired by the central positioning of chandeliers in domestic spaces; **Hana Almilli's *Journey Through the Ripples of the Sand***, an immersive installation formed of textiles that leads viewers on a visual and sensory journey; **Mohammad Alfaraj's *Where are you, my shadow?*** (2023), a site-specific installation and film; **Ayman Zedani's *The Ancient Ones***, a single-channel video installation that highlights the ancient trees of Saudi's Sarawat Mountains, exploring themes centered around human influence on the planet; and **Suliman Al Salem's *Tunnel***, a single-channel video the artist has manipulated from a video shot in the longest tunnel in the Makkah mountains.

The MENA region is well represented at Noor Riyadh, with a number of artworks by notable artists shining bright. **Farah Al Qasimi** presents ***The Swarm*** (2021), an immersive video installation that portrays the story of a social media influencer who becomes addicted to a meditation and wellness app. She is joined by fellow Emirati artist **Shaikha Al Mazrou**, who presents ***Beyond All Measures***, composed of oxidized brass sheets.

**Monira Al Qadiri's** commissioned sculpture ***Monument*** explores the intertwined facts and myths shaping the understanding of nature, while **Chourouk Hriech's** commissioned work is ***Cities of Stars***, an ensemble of structures that act almost as nests for light.

Qatari-American artist, writer and filmmaker **Sophia Al Maria** presents ***Cathartic Fantasies (Revisions)*** (2022), an immersive installation featuring "paper-video" collages that represent the passage of time in a rapidly growing place. It is accompanied by ***Aural Futures*** (2022), a sound installation that fills the space with the hopes and dreams of four Qatar residents. She is joined by fellow Qatari artist **Amna Al Baker**, who presents ***Story of Land, Sea, and Stars*** (2023), a multimedia installation inspired by the origins of the Arabian Peninsula's inhabitants and their connection to the local environment.

Established Saudi artist **Ayman Yossri Daydban's *Tree House*** is an ongoing, large-scale work that deconstructs stereotypical narratives related to cultural heritage and identity, as well as the Middle East's historical relation to Western colonial powers. It uses a multitude of cut-out forms to both posit and challenge these dominant narratives, while also drawing on the subjective nature of words and language. For this edition of the work, which is conceived and produced for this exhibition, Daydban searches for clarity about identity and new notions of citizenry. Mimicking a house-like structure, ***Tree House*** examines the relation between the self and a home, and intercedes in the space between the personal and public, and between the outside of perception and the inside of intention.

Syrian artist **Talin Hazbar's *Earth Records*** (2023) is a newly commissioned series of nine sand structures that explores the formation of organic structures where the material is the structure and the mold itself. Dubai-based Egyptian-American artist **Aidha Badr** presents ***Please don't leave me yet, we know so little about each other*** (2023). The newly commissioned immersive installation draws inspiration from Alexandria's vibrant tapestries and the interplay of light on the city's streets.

Multimedia artist and photographer **Mashael Al Saie's** practice expresses a research-driven interpretation of Bahraini mythologies through text, image and glass. ***Sea of Tears*** (2023) is a multimedia installation that investigates the folklore of Ain Adhari, a desolate natural spring in Bahrain. The myth of the maiden of Adhari recalls the plight of a young woman who is menacingly approached by a strange man in a palm tree grove. She consequently wails in fear until her tears alchemize into an eternal spring. Through the lenses of mythology, eco-feminism and oral histories, ***Sea of Tears*** reimagines the metaphysical transformation of Ain Adhari from the young woman's physical body into a body of water. The installation is a three-part narrative composed of sculptural glass tears, video and audio.

The Noor Riyadh festival is curated by **Jérôme Sans, Pedro Alonzo, Alaa Tarabzouni and Fahad Bin Naif**. It features more than **120 large-scale light art installations**, building projections, performances and more by over **100 artists** from more than **35 countries**. The event also features more than 30 Saudi artists.

The accompanying Noor Riyadh exhibition, titled ***Refracted Identities, Shared Futures***, is curated by **Neville Wakefield and Maya Al Athel**, and features the work of **32 artists** from across the world exploring a multidimensional world of light.

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** to the festival and winning **six Guinness World Records**, one of which being the largest celebration of light art in the world.

The third edition of Noor Riyadh opened on the back of the Saudi capital being elected as the host city of **World Expo 2030**. Riyadh will be only the second Arab city to host the Expo.

-Ends-

#### **Notes to editors**

##### **About Noor Riyadh**

Noor Riyadh is a citywide annual festival of light and art that launched in March 2021. Noor Riyadh includes a festival and world-class exhibition, along with a public program of activities for the community that includes 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)

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