

THE NATIONAL NEWS

"Noor Riyadh illuminates Saudi capital with immersive artworks"

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► World's largest light festival also includes community activities, talks and performances



Noor Riyadh is back for a third year in the Saudi capital. Pictured: Luminous Whispers 2 by Mexican artist Jose Davila. All Photos: Noor Riyadh

The third [Noor Riyadh](#), the world's largest light festival, is illuminating the Saudi capital.

It features more than 120 installations by 100 local, regional and international artists. Commissioned pieces include everything from light works in gallery spaces to large-scale installations and immersive projections. The theme of this year's festival, *The Bright Side of the Desert Moon*, explores the idea of all forms of light as a unifying element with the power to sustain, comfort and connect people.

The citywide festival, which runs until Saturday, opened with a laser light show by German media artist Christopher Bauder. Entitled *Dialogue*, the seven-minute performance depicted a series of coloured lights flashing between Riyadh's Al Faisaliah Tower and Kingdom Centre skyscrapers.



Dialogue by Christopher Bauder at Noor Riyadh. Photo: Antoine Bernard

The choreography, rhythm and movements of the lights were reminiscent of Morse code, reinforcing Bauder's intention to celebrate the power of communication between individuals and communities around the world.

"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," says Khalid Al-Hazani, executive director of Riyadh Art.

"As we celebrate people, places and possibilities, we wish everyone a memorable experience filled with joy and wonder."

Noor Riyadh is spread across five areas in the capital, with the King Abdullah Financial District serving as a central hub, along with Jax District, Salam Park, Wadi Hanifa and Wadi Namar.

The artworks, by creatives from 35 countries, are diverse in style, scale, execution and methodology. They include works by American sculptor Janet Echelman, who uses scientific data to create energetic visual pieces; German artist Carsten Holler's work *Decimal Clock*, which uses light to explore the connections between time and space; and French sculptor Ugo Schiavi's work *The Day the Sand Caught Fire*, which contains objects sourced from the Saudi desert.

Noor Riyadh also commissioned 35 established and emerging Saudi artists to create site-specific works.

These works include Abdullah Alamoudi's light work *Look Up and You'll Find Me* at Wadi Namar, along with Aziz Jamal's *The Whites of Their Eyes*.



Look Up And You'll Find Me by Saudi artist Abdullah Alamoudi. Photo: Noor Riyadh

At Wadi Hanifa, Saudi-Palestinian artist Ayman Yossri Daydban's *Tree House* installation uses cut-out wooden forms to explore perceptions of identity. While, Saudi artist Khaled Makhshoush's untitled work uses LED billboard video graphics, which present a contrast against the surrounding natural environment.

Running alongside the light festival is a public programme of community activities, educational workshops, talks and performances. This includes the exhibition entitled *Refracted Identities, Shared Futures*.

The exhibition, which features work by more than 30 artists, is on show at the Jax District until March 2 and explores ideas from mythology, astrophysics and properties of light. Pieces featured in the exhibition include those by Emirati artist Shaikha Al Mazrou, Saudi artist Abdulmohsen Albinali, Kuwait artist Aidha Badr and Syrian artist Talin Hazbar.

Noor Riyadh festival runs until Saturday. More information is available at riyadhart.sa