

Islamic Arts Biennale 2023

ABOUT DIRIYAH BIENNALE FOUNDATION

Diriyah Biennale Foundation (DBF), established in 2020, is a not-for-profit organization established by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Culture, that plays a role in nurturing creative expression, instilling an appreciation of art's transformative power and creating cultural experiences that connect the Kingdom's past and future.

The foundation has been bringing its vision to life through a holistic educational calendar of programming, two-city biennales that highlight both the contemporary and the Islamic arts, and an eclectic array of commissions that represent a wide variety of people and backgrounds, site-specific work and community engagement.

Contemporary Art Biennale:

2021
The inaugural Contemporary Art Biennale was hosted

100K+
Unique visitors


1000+
Secure attendance of students and school groups


650
Public programs, events and performances


935
Hours of programming

329
Artists and performers participating, 50% of that being from Saudi Arabia

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#IslamicArtsBiennale #Jeddah

ABOUT ISLAMIC ARTS BIENNALE



Nestled within the Aga Khan
**Award winning
Western Hajj Terminal.**

Themed 'Awwal Bait' ("The First House"), the inaugural Islamic Arts Biennale interweaves newly commissioned works and never-exhibited-before historical artefacts. A 1983 Aga Khan Award-winner, the Western Hajj Terminal was designed by the world-renowned international architecture firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) in the late 1970's, and opened to pilgrims in the early 1980's.

This biennale looks at how the Ka'bah in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah inspire Muslims – on both cultural and metaphysical levels – to create a sense of belonging in their own home, their own "bait", wherever that may be.



The Biennale, hosted in a
**118,000
square meter**

purpose-built venue at the Western Hajj Terminal, King Abdulaziz International Airport, Jeddah, will provide a unique sensorial visitor experience through five galleries, two pavillions and one grand canopy.

The first-of-its-kind exhibition has never been attempted before in terms of breadth and scale and in its portrayal of the Islamic arts as a living tradition that connects past, present, and future, through a journey that oscillates from the individual to the collective, from the historic, to the contemporary. The extraordinary Western Hajj Terminal venue will provide the perfect backdrop for shifting conversations around the Islamic arts.

The Islamic Arts Biennale will ensure an inclusive, wholesome and memorable experience for all



Workshop
Space



Kids Play
Area



Cinema



Theatre



Library



VIP
Lounge



F&B
Options

THE EXHIBITION WILL FEATURE:

50+
Contemporary
Works

18+
Institutions
Loaning Artifacts

40+
Participating
Artists

50+

Works that will be
seen for the first time
(new commissions)

20+

Pieces that have
never been exhibited
(objects)

4 galleries and **1** satellite exhibition (AIMadar),
2 pavillions and **1** grand canopy



280
Artifacts



239
Saudi
Artifacts



40+
International
Artifacts

The biennale is divided into two complementary parts: a series of gallery spaces and an experience between the Western Hajj Terminal's canopy. It will be free of charge, accessible to all.

Islamic Arts Biennale 2023

CURATORIAL TEAM

Four distinguished curators:



DR. SAAD ALRASHED
Leading Saudi scholar
and archaeologist



DR. OMNIYA ABDEL BARR
Architect and historian of
Islamic art and architecture.
The Barakat Trust Fellow at
the Victoria and Albert
Museum in Cairo, and the
Head of Development at the
Egyptian Heritage Rescue
Foundation



DR. JULIAN RABY
Director Emeritus of the
National Museum of Asian
Art, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington DC



SUMAYYA VALLEY
Islamic Arts Biennale Artistic
Director, Principal of
Counterspace, and Honorary
Professor of Practice, UCL

DBF Advisory Committee:

Dr. Venetia Porter –
Curator of Islamic
and Contemporary
Middle Eastern Art at
the British Museum

Sara Alireza –
Head of Education
Committee of Jeddah
Arts Festival 21,
39 & member of
Saudi Art Council

Hamida Alireza –
Founder of The
Barakat Trust, and
board member of The
Barakat Trust's Academic
Advisory Committee

Mohammed Edrisi –
Islamic Art expert,
worked on the Arabic
Calligraphy Gallery in
Medina in cooperation
with the British Museum,

Dr. Stefano Carboni –
Museums Commission
CED, former curator of the
Department of Islamic Art
at The Metropolitan
Museum of Art

PUBLIC PROGRAM

The Islamic Arts Biennale will feature a vast array of public programs (talks, workshops, panels and many other activities) that bring together local, regional and international experts and speakers to share insights and experience.



117

Education workshops



10+

Daily school visits



5+

Masterclasses



13

Creative arts and
crafts experiences



6

Worldwide
activations



25+

Talks and
Panels

Public Program Themes:

The public program will cover various themes taking the past into the future, including how the cultural heritage and legacy of the Muslim world informs contemporary society, including:

The culture behind the art – how sharing, exchange and inspiration between the Islamic world and other world cultures has continually fostered creativity and growth

Islamic arts from within - how the arts of the Islamic world are intrinsically linked to what it means to be a Muslim

Islamic arts in professional practice - what it means to curate, collect, preserve and teach the arts of the Islamic world today

Schools Program and Performance – a rich, memorable and enjoyable program that will further enrich the social and cultural fabric of the Kingdom

Public Program Partners:

Culinary Arts Commission of Saudi Arabia Ministry of Culture, Al-Balad Art Residency program, Misk Art Institute, King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra), Arts Al Ula, Bagri Foundation, Samsung

ALMADAR

AlMadar is an innovative platform where collections and connections meet.

As a satellite exhibition to the Islamic Arts Biennale (IAB), AlMadar aims to engage with international and local institutions, organizations and individuals in order to encourage the development of a comprehensive and far reaching network, and develop a multi sectoral program.

AlMadar aspires to become a global reference and repository for thought provoking dialogue, exchange of practices and innovative research around Arts and Culture from the Islamic world.

In the inaugural edition of AlMadar, DBF is bringing together 12 institutions from around the world from Europe, North and West Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.

Never before have such a mix of institutions come together in one place and one exhibition - and it is emblematic that it is taking place in Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam.

DBF intends to be the forefront leader of bringing more and more institutions together in further iterations of the Biennale, all of these collaborations with institutions are not meant to necessarily be a one-off collaboration, the intention is to keep developing the network to create a comprehensive platform around Arts and Culture from the Islamic world.

