



UNCOVER

Saudi

CULTURE & HERITAGE

The best art galleries to visit in Jeddah

Charming heritage meets Arab futurism in the Saudi city-port of Jeddah. To get a glimpse into both its ancient soul and modern life, there is no better way than to visit its art galleries...

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It's not by chance that Jeddah was chosen to host the first Islamic Arts Biennale in 2023, the world's most significant showcase of works of Muslim art.

Locally, it's easy to see how the glittering Red Sea inspires creativity and, given Jeddah's proximity to Mecca, Islamic spirituality is another major influence on local artists. Beyond its stunning historical district, Jeddah is home to a variety of contemporary art spaces. Not only are these spaces celebrating the work of Saudi artists and developing a creative community locally, but they're also engaging with trends in the international art world. Here are the art spaces you absolutely shouldn't miss...

Hafez Gallery

A strong player in the international art system since 2014, Hafez Gallery is a quiet, large space with a garden, tucked in the alleyways of Jeddah, in an area with a few cafés and bookshops. Bridging local talent and global exploration, Hafez Gallery's founder Qaswa Hafez is on a mission to spread knowledge about Saudi art globally, while broadening its influence in the local community.

That's why the gallery mixes shows from a range of established artists from across the Arab world, from Syria to Egypt, Sudan to Lebanon, with shows by high-profile international artists.



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ATHR Gallery

As soon as you walk into the clean space of ATHR gallery, you get hit by a sense of dynamism and experimentation. Playing a pivotal role in building the contemporary art scene in Saudi, the gallery presents both young and established artists from Saudi and the Arab region.

Their programme is rich and comprises international residencies, special commissions, international group exhibitions, and symposia. Their founders, Hamza Serafi and Mohammed Hafiz conceived the gallery in 2008, back when Saudi public initiatives for art were not yet in motion. Back then, ATHR started fostering a sustainable art scene open to the world.



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Saudi Center for Fine Arts

This centre is really a testament to the interest of people from Jeddah in the development of art, be it a hobby or a future career path in the arts.

A true community hub, this institution offers courses in chiaroscuro drawing, watercolour painting, and fashion design, and it caters to both adults and kids. Craft is not disregarded here either, as the glass, copper, fabric paint, and ceramic workshops are heavily attended. Besides cultivating art education and nurturing the creative spirit of locals, since its inception, the Saudi Center For Fine Art has hosted several exhibitions and has a permanent exhibition in the hall.



4

Dar Safeya Binzagr

Walking in the neighbourhood of Harat Al-Sham, right down the large King Abdullah Road, you will encounter a beautiful space that will overturn your perspective on Saudi art as a male-dominated environment.

Dar Safeya Binzagr is indeed dedicated to the work and life of Safeya Binzagr, the author of what is considered the Hijazi Mona Lisa, and the woman who pioneered Saudi art.

The space is her family home-turned-museum, and has retained a very domestic, welcoming feeling. Here you'll find a collection of the artist's work, as well as heritage artefacts, from clothing, tableware, and furniture, that will have you catapulted into the Jeddah of the old days.



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Hisham Binjabi Studio and Workshop

To get a taste of the official art with regal approval, head to the studio and workshop of an artist loved by kings and royalty beyond the Arab world: Hisham Binjabi.

The painter earned his reputation as a top-notch portraitist at the tender age of just 14 when he painted a portrait of the late Saudi King Faisal. This not only kickstarted commissions all over the world but also pushed him to open his gallery in Jeddah's old city back in the 1970s. Here, alongside his work, he exhibited artworks and sculptures by Saudi and foreign artists.



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Medad Art

Medad Art is located in Alsharafeya, a residential suburb known as Little India, filled with eateries serving curries, rotis, and spiced tea.

Through the maze of shops selling jewellery and colourful textiles, you will find this gallery which is the go-to place to acquire unique art pieces, whether it is oil or acrylic paintings, assemblage sculptures or smaller paper works. This gallery supports and develops young artists by holding events, exhibitions, and activities based on timely themes. They recently hosted a show celebrating female artists and a fashion show.



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Nesma Art Gallery

Located in the residential Al-Rawda neighbourhood, this is a large space devoted mostly to painting and sculpture with a preference for abstract art. Artistic photography is a medium that is less explored by Saudi artists at the moment, but this is also welcomed here.

This gallery was established by the Nesma Holding Group, a technology and energy company with the goal of supporting the local art community and artists. Indeed, beyond the exhibition space, you'll also find Nesma Art Gallery's studio, which provides burgeoning artists a creative space with a variety of tools for art making.



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Art Jameel

Art Jameel is a small artistic oasis which exudes an irresistible air of calm and hyper-cool. Its immaculately white and architecturally beautiful building – designed by Studio Waiwai – hosts a number of initiatives, ranging from contemporary art and architecture to photography exhibitions.

Conceived as a dynamic, creative, community hub, the space has been created to balance art appreciation and relaxed discussion. You can easily grab a drink and chill on the yellow chairs in the middle of the courtyard while chatting about the show you just saw.

The space is a branch of the Dubai gallery founded by the Jameel family of philanthropists. Spending time at Art Jameel, be it to pour over the latest exhibition or simply have a drink, leaves you with the feeling of participating in the most pressing discourses in the Gulf art scene and beyond.



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Adham Arts Center

We usually think about art spaces as intimidating temples, and this keeps a part of the population from visiting. But with Adham Arts Center, the feeling is to step into a space created by the people for the people.

No wonder their motto is "This is every artist's home." What's more, Adham is located in the most democratic of places: the mall. More specifically Salma Commercial Center in the middle of the city.

The center is devoted to spreading the interest of the Saudis in art, setting up exhibitions that cater to both art professionals and rookies, as well as providing a library, a shop, and even a recycling workshop.

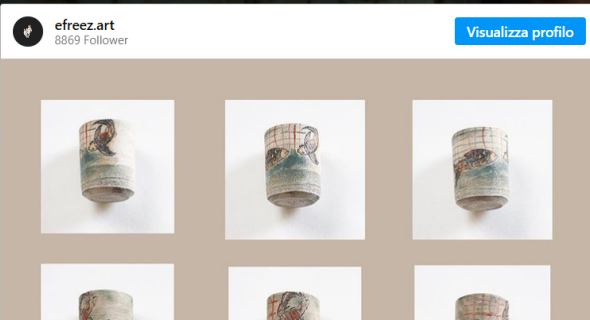


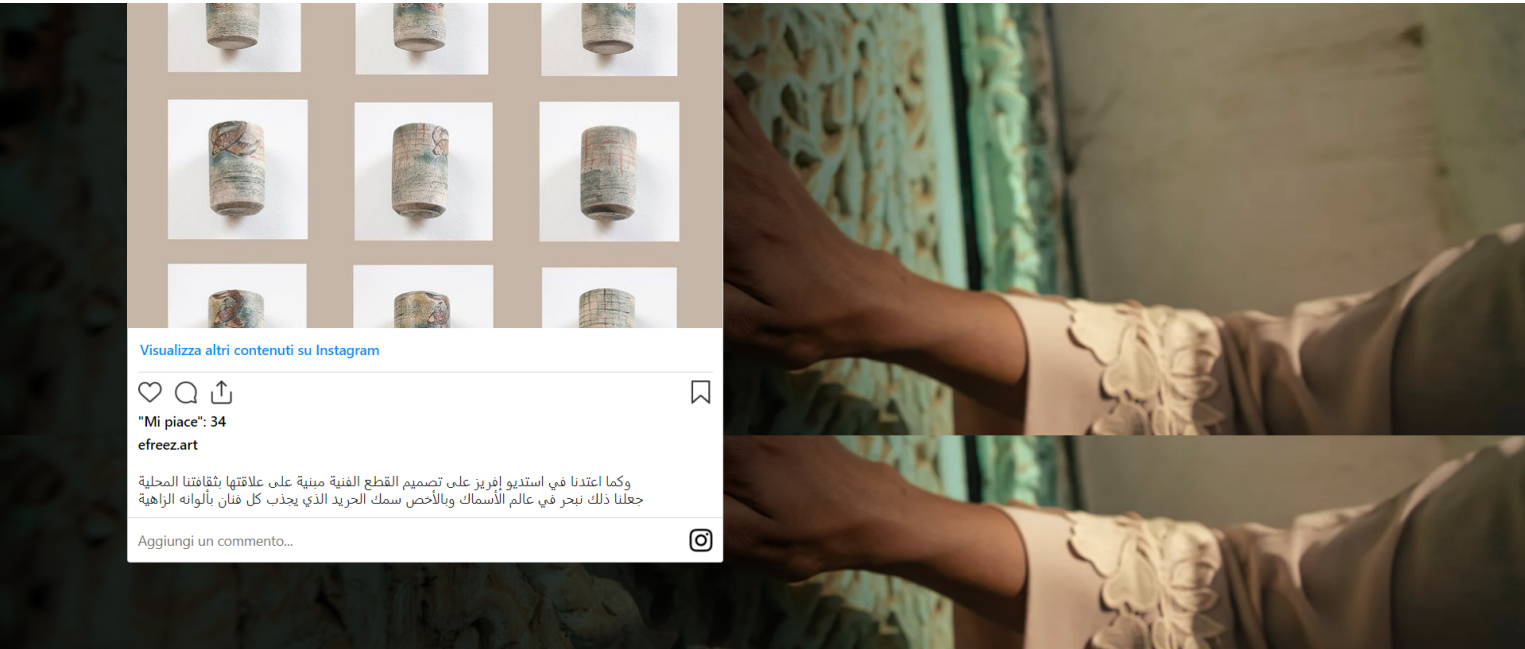
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EFREEZ Art Studio

Because of its elegant design and hip vibe, you might mistake EFREEZ Art Studio for an arts and crafts space in Melbourne, Australia – the worldwide capital of artistic ceramics and crafts. But no, you're simply witnessing Jeddah's modern arts scene, where creative souls are free to express themselves.

Since 2015, the studio has specialised in trendy handmade objects, from jewellery to ceramics, lavender brooches, statement vases, and rustic cups. That's how this boutique-meets-art-gallery space is effectively promoting arts and crafts while allowing each piece to tell a different narrative, where an eye for detail is at the core of everything it does.





Practical Information



Visas



Getting there & around



Local customs



Weather



FAQ

Is English spoken in Saudi?



What's the currency of Saudi?



What's it like travelling in Saudi as a female?



What's the time difference in Saudi?





Want to see more of Saudi?

We've given you a taster of what Saudi is really like, now it's time for you discover the country in greater detail and plan your own Arabian adventure there...

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