



Wanderlust Saudi
Welcome to Arabia



UNCOVER

Saudi

CULTURE & HERITAGE

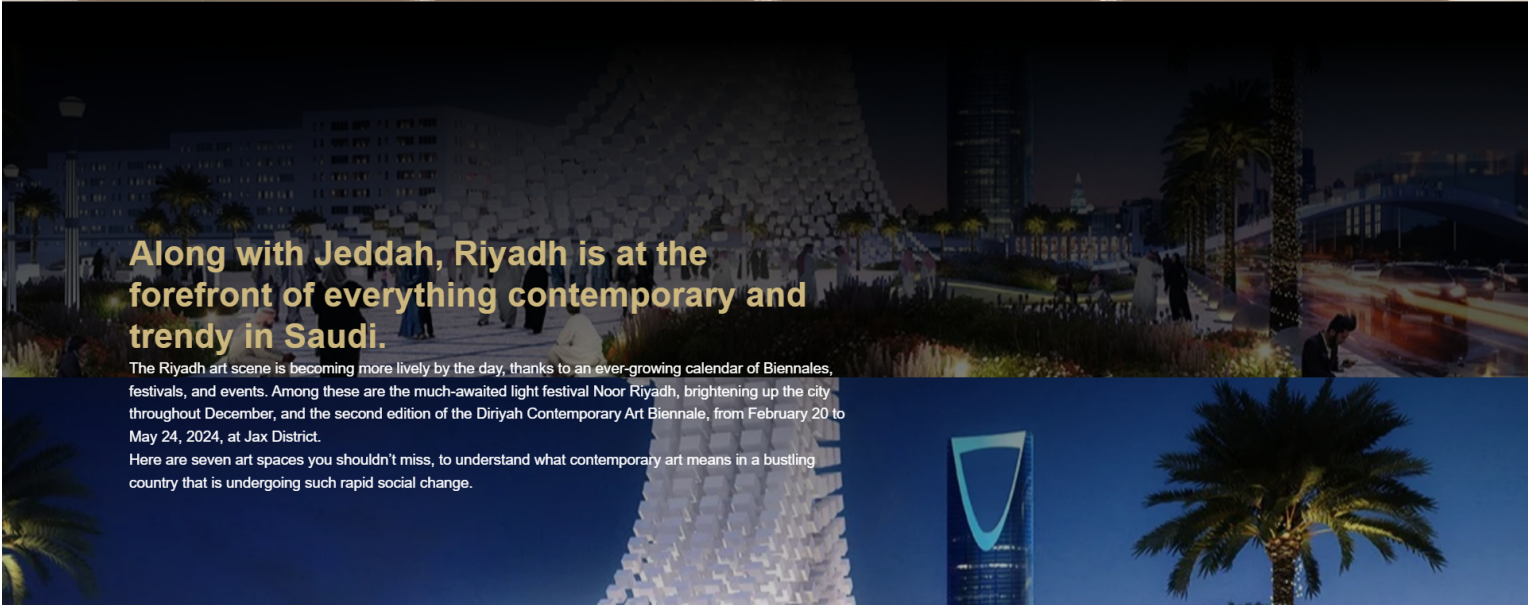
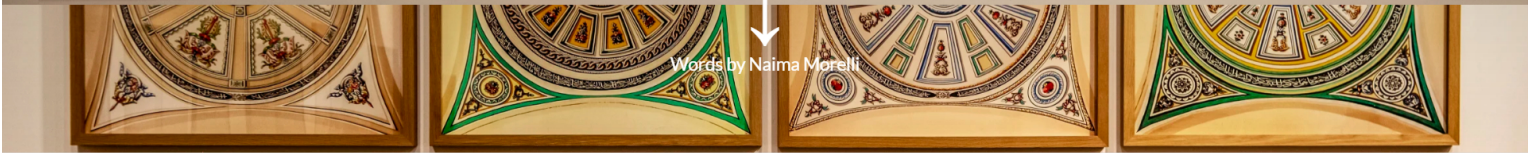


Best ways to experience art in Riyadh

Futuristic, cosmopolitan, avant-garde. New definitions are coined, as Riyadh keeps growing its ambition to become the new art destination for the Middle East.

Scroll down to read

Words by Naima Morelli



Along with Jeddah, Riyadh is at the forefront of everything contemporary and trendy in Saudi.

The Riyadh art scene is becoming more lively by the day, thanks to an ever-growing calendar of Biennales, festivals, and events. Among these are the much-awaited light festival Noor Riyadh, brightening up the city throughout December, and the second edition of the Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale, from February 20 to May 24, 2024, at Jax District.

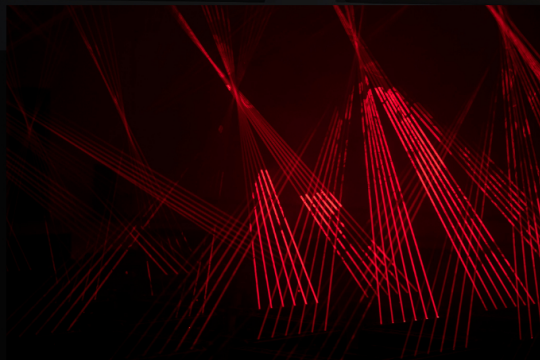
Here are seven art spaces you shouldn't miss, to understand what contemporary art means in a bustling country that is undergoing such rapid social change.



Jax District

Redesigned according to Richard Florida's model of art industries, Jax is the Saudi response to Beijing's 798 Art District and Singapore's Gillman Barracks. The former forgotten industrial area just outside of Riyadh has become today one of the most exciting creative areas of Riyadh. The place has always had a lot of potential, being close to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Al-Turaif. That's why it has been chosen as the home to the Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale.

As you walk through the district, you see mural paintings that represent Saudi's expressive faces, or pivotal moments from the local art history, realized by artists such as Mohammed Abdu and Talal Maddah. The sensation is of a hive of creativity, with exhibition spaces, artists' studios, art galleries, and workshops always open to visitors. Contributing to the country's larger vision, Jax is definitely a platform to enhance Saudi's growing arts ecosystem, while keeping pace with international trends.

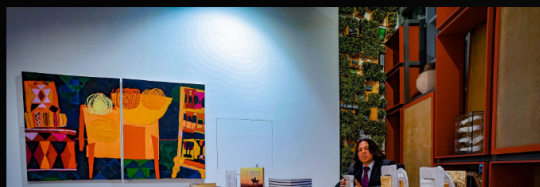


2

Naila Art Gallery

Beyond the red door of Naila's Art Gallery, there is a treasure trove. A mandatory spot for a Riyadh gallery tour, this space has established itself as a bridge between local and international art scenes since its very inception in 2012. Comprising two large spaces within the gallery, Naila has hosted over 300 exhibitions by both established and emerging Saudi artists, including Abdullah Al Marzook, Ahlam Al Shedoukhy, and Shrouq Bnt Fahad, and regional artists like Kuwait painter Maha Alaskar.

Determined to provide the international public with new perspectives on the Arab world, Naila recently developed a prestigious collaboration with the Parisian Institute du Monde Arabe, for the major traveling exhibition, '25 Years of Arab Creativity'.



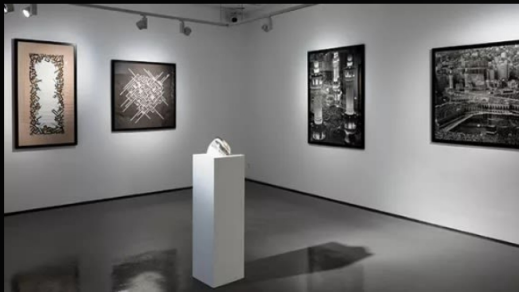


3

Mono Gallery

Sleek and elegant, Mono Gallery was founded by Saudi businessman Momen Al-Muslimani in 2018 in order to expand his own cultural interests, and those of his fellow citizens. The gallery is showcasing a mix of multidisciplinary Saudi and Middle Eastern talents and is making its mark at art fairs as well, with works exploring photography, geometry, and architecture.

Mono Gallery's focus is often on female artists, both Saudi, such as Reem Al-Faisal, Lulwah Al-Homoud, Tarfah Al-Saud, and Kholood Al-Bakr, and from the region, like emerging Egyptian artist Amani Mousa. The work of the gallery is also educational, with seminars, symposiums, talks, and even film evenings dedicated to the masters of art, sparking an interest amongst locals that will translate eventually into Saudi collectorship.



4

L'Art Pur Gallery

In 1999, at the time that L'Art Pur Gallery was founded, Saudi was still a country closed to tourism, and in great need of growing cultural and artistic awareness. By founding the Art Pur Gallery and foundation that same year, Princess Adwa bint Yazid Al Saud was one of the first to create a museum-style platform for art initiatives, exhibitions, and cultural exchange to take place in Riyadh. Comprising an educational department with advanced art programs and workshops, l'Art Pur Gallery is today one of the most established and respected art venues in Saudi, chosen by embassies and international art institutions as their favourite location for exhibitions.





5

Lakum Artspace

The slogan for Lakum Artspace is 'an artspace for all', and in fact this multifunctional contemporary gallery was born out of the idea to foster the growth of an art community. The feeling of walking in the space is that elitism is left at the door, as Lakum's engaging exhibitions are meant to be visitor-friendly and approachable. Beyond its spacious exhibiting space, Lakum has a rich library, a curated shop, and a café where art enthusiasts meet to let a pleasurable atmosphere inspire informal, organic, nurturing discussions about art. A supportive platform for art professionals and art enthusiasts, this hub reflects Saudi's vision to have the art scene organically grow.

6

Ahlam Studio

When she founded Ahlam Studio, Saudi artist and collector Ahlam Alshedouky had a vision to create "a muse-worthy space." She drew on her own rich experience as an artist and businesswoman to meaningfully engage with the local art scene.

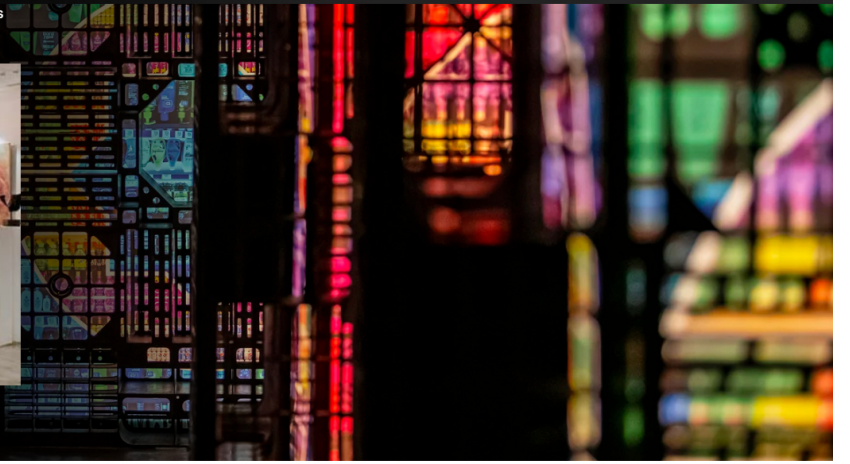
The studio is in Olaya Street, in the lively downtown Riyadh and has become a gathering point for local creatives and art enthusiasts to share ideas and learn about artistic growth and development. A firm favourite on Saudi's ever-growing art scene, the gallery space is dedicated to rotating temporary exhibitions, while the rest of the building hosts a permanent collection. Beyond the shows, Ahlam Gallery also publishes, researches, curates, and collaborates with different art institutions.

7

Hewar Art Gallery

Take the elevator to the 52nd floor of the popular Kingdom Tower, in Riyadh centre, and let yourself be surprised by the variety of shows taking place at Hewar Art Gallery. Whether you'll encounter video art or painting, one thing is for sure: you won't be disappointed. 'Hewar' means dialogue in Arabic, since the space was founded in 2005, it held the vision to contribute to the cultural discussion in the country.

Back then the art world was not much developed yet, so the gallery has been wearing many hats, organising shows, holding discussions on the modern masters of Arabic art, sponsoring young talents and encouraging collectors through art consulting, as well as archiving documents and publications about the local art production.



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?



Saudi
Welcome

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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