

For Immediate Release

**MISK ART INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES *REFRAME SAUDI* VIRTUAL REALITY EXPERIENCE AND EXHIBITION IN NEW YORK DURING SAUDI CROWN PRINCE'S VISIT**

- Phillips New York will host US premiere of “Reframe Saudi” virtual reality documentary film
- Accompanying exhibition includes works by leading Saudi Arabian contemporary artists

**New York (March 26, 2018)** — The recently established Misk Art Institute today announced the opening of *Reframe Saudi*, a four-day contemporary Saudi art exhibition that features a new virtual reality (VR) documentary, in New York. On the occasion of the Saudi Crown Prince’s visit to the United States, this groundbreaking exhibit and VR experience illustrates the continuing story of change in Saudi Arabia.

The Institute, part of the Misk Foundation, the non-profit foundation established by H.R.H. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to empower Saudi youth, will launch the U.S. premiere of the *Reframe Saudi* VR film together with the exhibition at Phillips New York, 450 Park Avenue, on **Monday, March 26. The press premiere will take place from 1pm-3pm.** The exhibition will continue until Thursday, March 29, and is open from 10am–6pm, daily.

*Reframe Saudi* is a VR documentary film directed by Italian filmmaker Matteo Lonardi and produced by CULTURUNNERS that explores Saudi Arabia from the perspectives of a new generation of contemporary artists. As the country enters a new phase socially and economically, the film transports viewers to the studios of artists between Jeddah, Abha and Riyadh. Each of them, through their work, reflects on a different aspect of this transformative historical time.

The accompanying exhibition will feature major works by 27 artists from across the Kingdom. It includes the presentation of the specially commissioned Al-Qatt Al-Asiri mural paintings by women artists from southern Saudi Arabia. This specific tradition of collective mural painting was inscribed on UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2017. The exhibition also features a curated display of portrait photographs and a behind the scenes film about the making of *Reframe Saudi*.

**Ahmed Mater, Director of the Misk Art Institute**, said:

“We are thrilled to bring the *Reframe Saudi* film, along with some of the best contemporary Saudi art, to New York during the visit of H.R.H. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Collectively, the documentary and exhibits demonstrate how art and the creative industries are an integral part of the change that is transforming Saudi Arabia.”

Mater continued, “Misk Art Institute, like the Misk Foundation more generally, works to empower the young Saudi population to unleash its talent. We do this at home, but vitally, by encouraging international cultural exchange and diplomacy, also abroad. It is essential at this time that Saudi

artists engage with audiences around the world, as they are here in New York, to help to tell the continuing story of change in Saudi Arabia”.

**Saudi writer Ali Moghawi** who resides in New York and led the Al-Qatt Al-Asiri mural paintings project, said:

“For decades, reviving Al-Qatt Al-Asiri traditional art was no more than a dream. Now, we witness the realization of this dream as we are provided with an international platform where we can share it and provide art lovers and enthusiasts with the opportunity to behold the beauty of this ancient art and delve into its shapes, colors and geometric angles. Today we are with Misk, in New York, presenting Asiri art to the world. This is a new testament of our leadership’s confidence in this historic art and flexibility to embrace development and present it to the world in the best manner.”

**Saudi artist Fatimah Fayaa** said:

“For many years I have been working on Asiri art in collaboration with many creative artists who are equally committed and passionate about this art. Today, I am very happy with Al-Qatt Al-Asiri traditional art being recognised as an artistic heritage and it will be protected by entities who appreciate its historical cultural and artistic value. I look forward to cooperating with these entities to further preserve and spread this art around the world. This is a great achievement by Misk Art Institute and all those who have been dedicated to this spectacular art of Asir.”

On March 21, the Misk Art Institute held a pop-up exhibition and dinner reception in the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C. and is also arranging cultural events and meetings as part of the Crown Prince’s visit in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

For more information, please visit <https://miskartinstitute.org/events/reframe-saudi-vr-experience-exhibition>

**ENDS**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

If you are interested in attending the press premiere on Monday 26 March between 1pm–3pm, please contact:

- Yassaman Ali, Phillips, [yali@phillips.com](mailto:yali@phillips.com) / +1 212 940-1200

If you would like to discuss interviewing the artists, or representatives of Misk Art Institute, please contact:

- John Slinger, Consulium, [jas@consulum.com](mailto:jas@consulum.com) / +44 7584 034 605
- Abdulrahman Alsahami, [a.alsahami@misk.org.sa](mailto:a.alsahami@misk.org.sa) / +1 571 267 9523

**IMAGES OF ARTWORK BEING DISPLAYED**

Images are available using this link: <https://tinyurl.com/y8lmms6c>

## **ABOUT MISK ART INSTITUTE**

Misk Art Institute is a new cultural organization operating under the auspices of the Misk Foundation, established by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. Led by Saudi artist, Ahmed Mater, the Institute was created in 2017 to encourage grassroots artistic production in Saudi Arabia and enable cultural diplomacy and international exchange. Focused on establishing itself as an artist-centered cultural innovator, Misk Art Institute will have its headquarters in Riyadh and an artist residency focused center in Abha, located in Saudi Arabia's southwest region of Asir. The Institute's program will incorporate exhibitions and events, artist-led communications and an arts education program aimed at training and investing in the career development of young artists. Please visit [www.miskartinstitute.org](http://www.miskartinstitute.org) for more information about the Institute's 2018 program including publications, an education program aimed at young Saudi artists and international participations in London, Paris, New York, Dubai and the first ever Saudi National Pavilion at the 16th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale Di Venezia.

## **ABOUT MISK FOUNDATION**

Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Foundation (the Misk Foundation) is a non-profit philanthropic foundation established by H.R.H. Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman to discover, develop and empower Saudi youth to become active participants in the knowledge economy. Misk specifically focuses on four key areas: education, creative and digital media, technology, and culture and arts. Misk pursues this agenda both through its own programs, and through partnerships with local and global organizations. <https://misk.org.sa/en/>

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKER**

Matteo Lonardi is an Italian photographer, journalist and director based in New York. Originally from Milan, he graduated from Columbia Journalism School in 2014. Since 2010 Matteo has been documenting artists around the world through photography, video and Virtual Reality. He is currently head of CULTURUNNERS media, directing and producing documentaries for online outlets and television. His written, photographic and video work has appeared in international publications including the BBC, Creative Time Reports, The Guardian, La Stampa, The Huffington Post and Il Corriere Della Sera.

## **FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT THE ART WORK ON DISPLAY AT PHILIPS**

- **AL-QATT AL-ASIRI MURAL PAINTINGS**

We are proud to present the first New York showing of two specially commissioned Al-Qatt Al-Asiri mural paintings by women artists from southern Saudi Arabia. This tradition of collective mural painting was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2017.

In Asir, women traditionally paint the walls of their house in vibrant colors. The paintings express a long and intimate relationship between peoples and their natural environment, presenting complex scenes narrating the stories of their family, culture, environment, rituals and agriculture. They are an important part of the cultural heritage of Asir. Over the past

decades, many of the older paintings have been in the danger of being damaged or destroyed. The disappearance of these historical paintings leads to irrecoverable loss of the testimonies of Saudi women's creative brilliance, social development and their contribution to the writing of the history of the region generation after generation.

- **Work by the following Saudi artists is on display**

**ARTISTS**

Fatimah Hassan, Dana Awartani, Rashed Al Shashai, Ahmad Angawi, Ajlan Gharem, Saeed Salem, Amr Alnagmah

**AL-QATT AL-ASIRI MURAL ARTISTS**

Amira Al-Almai, Arwa Mohammed Alzehr, Fatemah Faya Yaqub, Fatima Yahya, Fatimah Hassan, Fawzeiyah Mohammed Barzyq, Halimah Moshabab Assiry, Jameelah Mater, Jamelah Ali Alsoghayer, Jewaher Mater, Mahdi, Nala Ali, Nawarah Abdolrahman Moghawi, Ohud Ebraheam Moghawi, Reem Mater, Safia Ahmed, Salehah Abdulazeaz Alraqde, Salehah Yahay Alalmai, Salha Al-Qahtani, Sharifa Ayed, Zaina Al-Shahrani, Zohrah Faya Yaqub