



**Misk  
Art Institute**  
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## **THE NEW MISK ART INSTITUTE, BASED IN RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, INAUGURATES ITS INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL PROGRAM**

**Announces Inaugural Year Engagements Including the  
First Saudi Participation at the International Architecture Exhibition  
of La Biennale di Venezia, Support for a Publishing Initiative of  
The Museum of Modern Art and a New York Arab Art Festival**

**New York, NY, January 29, 2018** — Ahmed Mater, Director of the Misk Art Institute, today announced the ambitious schedule of international exhibitions, programs and educational activities that this new Saudi cultural organization will undertake during its first full year in operation, in 2018. Recently established under the auspices of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud's Misk Foundation, the Institute is dedicated both to supporting grassroots artistic activity within Saudi Arabia and to encouraging cultural exchange around the world.

Glenn D. Lowry, Director of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and Jay A. Levenson, Director of the Museum's International Program, welcomed Mr. Mater and other representatives of the Misk Art Institute to MoMA for the announcement. As part of the event, Mr. Lowry and Mr. Mater revealed that the Misk Art Institute is supporting the publication of MoMA's upcoming volume, *Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents*.

Other major initiatives of the Misk Art Institute during 2018 will include:

- commissioning the first Saudi participation at the International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia
- following an international competition, the selection of architects to design the Institute's headquarters facility in Riyadh
- bringing young Saudi artists to California for a "Create and Inspire" educational exchange program
- and inaugurating a multi-venue, multidisciplinary New York Arab Art Festival in October 2018

Glenn D. Lowry said, "It is a pleasure for us to welcome the Misk Art Institute as it inaugurates an ambitious roster of international programs. This exciting new venture holds out the promise of a deepened and enriched artistic and scholarly exchange across traditions and cultures, in which MoMA is proud to play a role. We especially welcome the leadership of Ahmed Mater, himself an internationally recognized artist, as the Director of this important initiative."

Ahmed Mater said, “We are grateful to Glenn Lowry, Jay Levenson and the leadership and staff of MoMA for their warm hospitality as we announce the vision and international program of the Misk Art Institute, which includes our support of the publication *Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents*. When we talk about the Misk Art Institute – we are proposing and dreaming of an open platform, led by artists, from the ground up. The institute will comprise both spaces in Saudi Arabia and a series of projects regionally and internationally. These are foundations from which channels can be forged collaboratively with a new generation of artists, designers and thinkers – following processes and directions as novel as their creative output.”

### **International Programs in 2018**

The first Saudi participation at the International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia will be located in the Arsenale and will feature an exhibition commissioned by the Misk Art Institute under the theme of *Un/Design*. A response to the theme of *Freespace* announced by the Biennale Architettura 2018, *Un/Design* will explore the possibility of loosening the formality of the design process, leaving room for the accidental collisions that can result in an organic exchange among elements in space. A jury is currently in the process of selecting a project to showcase out of the 66 submissions received through an open call.

The New York Arab Art Festival, to be held over the course of two to four weeks in October 2018, will present a wealth of exhibitions, screenings, performances, educational programs, public art commissions, lectures and artists’ talks. Partner institutions will co-produce exhibitions and programs with the Misk Art Institute, or will host special projects under the Festival’s umbrella as part of their ongoing curatorial programs.

To help identify and invest in the next generation of creative leaders and cultural innovators in the Gulf, the Misk Art Institute and the Crossway Foundation have established “Create and Inspire” as a competitive program open to nationals and residents in Saudi Arabia. An open call to participate will be issued in March, and in late fall 2018 a total of 10 young artists will leave for California, where they will gain first-hand experience with leading tech companies, start-ups and artists’ studios. This inaugural program will become the foundation for a reciprocal “Create and Inspire” trip for young U.S. artists and innovators to Saudi Arabia in 2019.

### **Architects appointed to design Riyadh Headquarters**

Within Saudi Arabia, the Misk Art Institute has commissioned a new building to serve as its headquarters in Riyadh and has announced that Michele De Lucchi of aMDL, Skene Catling de la Pena and Factum Arte have been selected as the architects. Designed to support and encourage artistic experimentation and collaboration, the building will have facilities that include exhibition galleries, a film theater, spaces for meetings and education programs and test sites for the convergence of art and technology. The Institute also plans to operate a community-focused art center in Abha, the culturally rich capital of the Asir region of southwestern Saudi Arabia.

In a statement, aMDL, Skene Catling de la Pena and Factum Arte said, “Our team is honored and delighted to have been selected to help conceive and design the new Misk Art Institute complex in Riyadh. The project will demonstrate the Misk Foundation’s commitment to the creative arts in the Kingdom's cultural vision for the future of their society. For us it will be an opportunity to bring together many experiences and ideas that define architecture, art and its production. The emphasis will be on the sharing and communication of ideas and the vitality art can inject into society. Our intention is to work with the directors of Misk to develop a project rooted in the cultural history and natural environment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that will be recognized as one of the most progressive arts centers in the world. It will be a new type of artists' studio embedded within exhibition spaces and production workshops where new technologies and craft skills merge.”

Further information about the Misk Art Institute’s international program will be announced in the coming months.

### **ABOUT THE MISK ART INSTITUTE**

The Misk Art Institute is a new organization operating under the auspices of the Misk Foundation, established by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud as part of Saudi Arabia’s 2030 Vision program. Led by Saudi artist, Ahmed Mater, the Institute was created to encourage grassroots artistic production in Saudi Arabia and enable cultural diplomacy and exchange. Focused on establishing itself as an artist-centered cultural innovator, the Misk Art Institute will have its headquarters building in Riyadh, an artist residency focused centre in Abha, located in Saudi Arabia’s southwest region of Asir, and an international office in London. 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.

[www.miskartinstitute.org](http://www.miskartinstitute.org)

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