



formafantasma shapes curved planes into a continuous passage at diriyah biennale 2026

art [connections: +1020](#)



FORMAFANTASMA SHAPES A CONTINUOUS SPATIAL JOURNEY

The third edition of the Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale is on view until May 2nd, 2026, at the JAX District, unfolding across Diriyah's former industrial zone with **exhibition design** by Formafantasma, which treats space itself as a continuous passage. Titled *In Interludes and Transitions*, the **exhibition** brings together 68 artists from more than 37 nations, with over 25 new commissions, and positions movement as a method.

Formafantasma's exhibition design reworks the raw industrial architecture of JAX into an environment of color and curved planes. Across 12,900 square meters of halls, courtyards, and terraces, walls bend and passages open, guiding visitors through the biennale as if following a score. The scenography avoids monumentality in favor of rhythm, encouraging a bodily awareness of movement that mirrors the curatorial emphasis on itinerancy.





Trương Công Tùng, *The State of Absence... Voices from Outside* (2020–ongoing). Photo by Alessandro Brasile, courtesy of the Diriyah Biennale Foundation | all images by Alessandro Brasile, courtesy of the Diriyah Biennale Foundation

DIRIYAH CONTEMPORARY ART BIENNALE 2026 ACTIVATES JAX DISTRICT

Led by Co-Artistic Directors Nora Razian and Sabih Ahmed, the **biennale** frames the world as a set of overlapping processions. The curatorial concept draws from a colloquial Arabic expression that speaks to cycles of encampment and journey, using it to think through migration, transmission, and transformation across time. Rather than fixing histories in place, the exhibition allows them to circulate through sound, gesture, and collective memory, tracing how the Arab region has long been shaped by flows of people, trade, and ideas.

Musicality plays a central role in the 2026 edition, foregrounding oral and aural knowledge as carriers of social history. This approach is embodied in *Folding the Tents* (2026), a specially commissioned procession by Saudi artist Mohammed Alhamdan. Moving through Wadi Hanifah and the JAX District, the work culminates in a performance by the Miniawy Trio, exploring how an ancient collective practice adapts within contemporary electric and digital cultures.

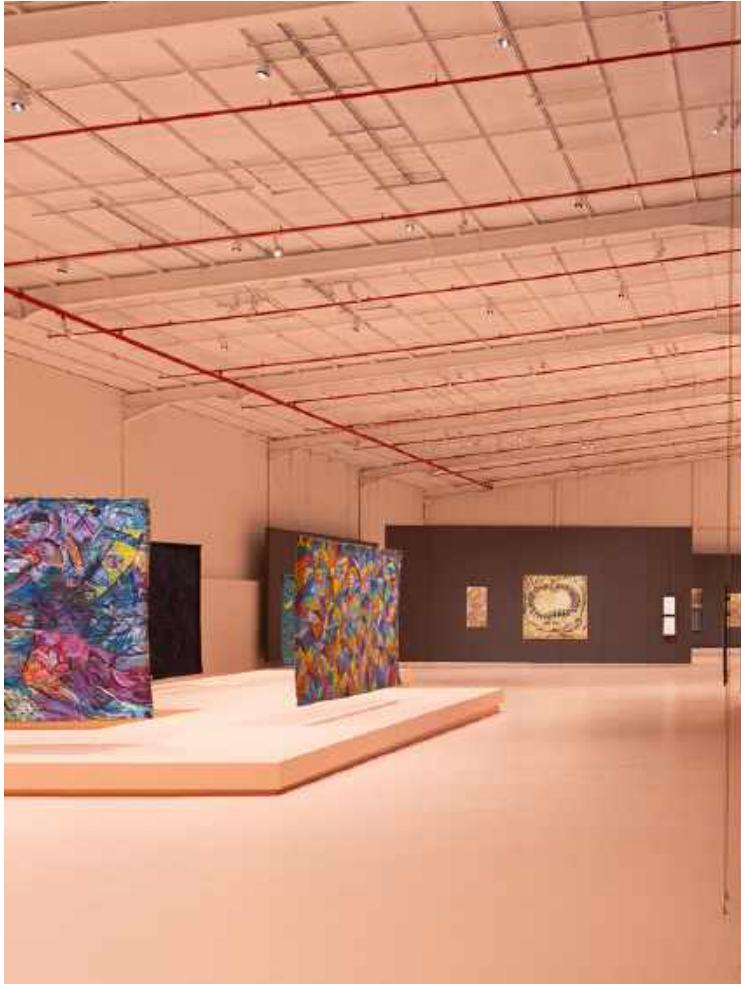
Organized by the Diriyah Biennale Foundation, the exhibition reflects an ongoing effort to use JAX as both a production site and a meeting ground. As Razian and Ahmed note, thinking of the world in procession allows cultural forms to be understood through routes, rhythms, and relations rather than fixed origins.

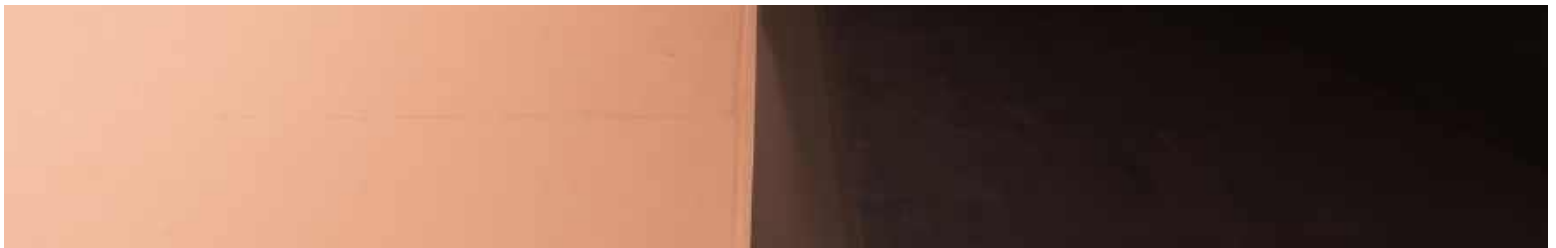


front; Pio Abad, Vanwa (2023/2026), background right; Kamala Ibrahim Ishag, Blues for the Martyrs (2022), Lady Grown in a Tree, 2017, background left; Pacita Abad, Asian Abstractions (1983-92)



front left; Kamala Ibrahim Ishag, Procession (Zaar), 2015, background right; Mohammad Al-Ghamdi, Untitled (c. 2000), Untitled (c. 2000), Untitled (2018)





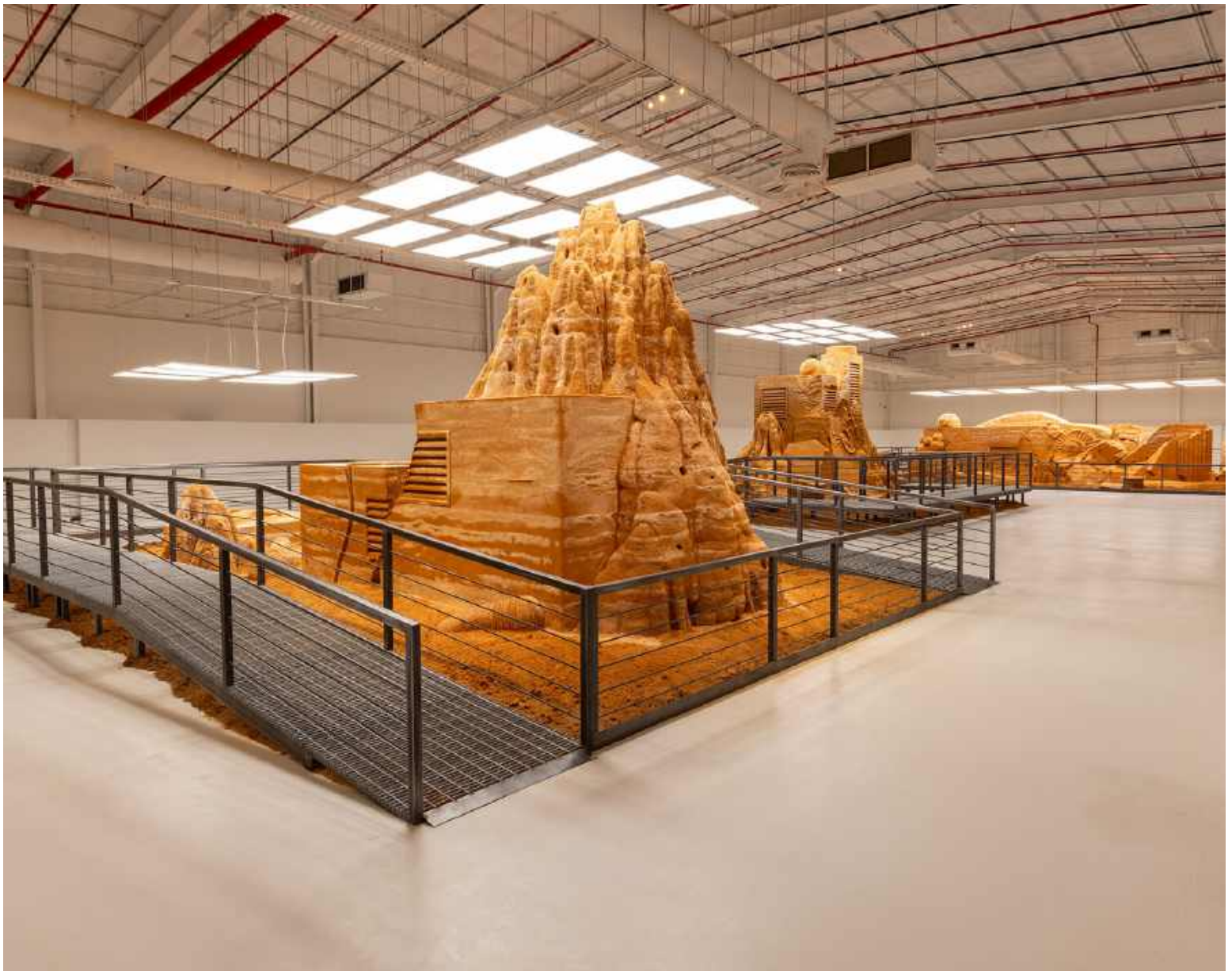
left; Pacita Abad, Asian Abstractions (1983–92), right; Nour Mobarak, Dafne Phono (2024)



left; Karan Shrestha, sweet water rising (2026), a flow disrupted; realigns (2022–ongoing), cloud babies (2023), right; Moshekwa Langa, Collapsing Guide II (2000–03)



Théo Mercier, House of Eternity (2026)



Théo Mercier, *House of Eternity* (2026)





Daniel Lind-Ramos, Ambulancia (2020) [Ambulance (2020)] (2022-23)



left; Guadalupe Maravilla, Disease Thrower: Purring Monster with a Mirror on Its Back (2022), La alegría del fuego (The Joy of Fire) (2023), Popusa (Retablo twin) (2023), El Boquerón (Retablo) (2023), Una vez me salvó la vida un pez (Retablo) [Once a fish saved my life (Retablo)] (2024), right; Shadia Alem, Transformation – Jinniyat Lar (1996/2026)



left; Lulua Alyahya, Untitled, (2024), Untitled (2026), right; Abdelkarim Qassem, The Final Scene (2017)





Petrit Halilaj, *Very volcanic over this green feather* (2021)



Dineo Seshee Bopape (*Raisibe*), *Matrices: thelletjang: Sedibeng, it comes w the rain* (2026)



Nancy Mounir, Solh (2023/2026)



Yussef Agbo-Ola [Olaniyi Studio], AGBA: 8 Stone Cave (2026)





Oscar Santillán, Anthem (2026)

project info:

name: In interludes and transitions (في الحِلِّ والترحال)

event: Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale 2026 | @biennale_sa

location: JAX District, Diriyah, Saudi Arabia

exhibition design: Formafantasma | @formafantasma

dates: January 30th – May 2nd, 2026

co-artistic directors: Nora Razian and Sabih Ahmed

organizer: Diriyah Biennale Foundation

associate architect and exhibition designer: Sammy Zarka | @sammyzarka

lead partner: Lexus

principal partner: Saudia Airlines

thomai tsimpou | designboom (605)

feb 03, 2026

KEEP UP WITH OUR DAILY AND WEEKLY