

Manar Abu Dhabi Reveals Artist Line-Up for Second Edition

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Gen de Art

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Organised by the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), the 2025 edition will

feature 15 artists and collectives from 10 countries, whose light-based works will illuminate the Emirate

across four key locations.



Iregular, CONTROL NO CONTROL, 2012. Photo courtesy of Iregular

• Under the theme ‘The Light Compass’, Manar Abu Dhabi will bring together 15 Emirati and international artists and artist collectives from 10 countries to illuminate the Emirate with light-based installations.

- ***DRIFT, Pamela Poh, Lachlan Turczan, Khalid Shafar and others will introduce bold perspectives and innovative approaches to light-based art.***
- ***Serving as the anchor location for Manar Abu Dhabi, Jubail Island will showcase 15 largescale installations and performances by artists including Shaikha Al Mazrou, Iregular, Ezequiel Pini (a.k.a. Six N. Five) , and Encor Studio.***
- ***For the first time, Manar Abu Dhabi will extend to Al Ain, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where visitors can explore eight installations along the Al Qattara and Al Jimi Oasis***
- ***At Souq Al Mina, KAWS will unveil a work featuring an illuminated COMPANION reclining on its back and lifting a lit moon in its hands.***
- ***Five Emirati artists are featured in this edition, showing across Jubail Island, Al Qattara Oasis and Al Jimi Oasis.***
- ***Organised by the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), the second edition of the Manar Abu Dhabi will take place in Al Ain from November 1, 2025 to January 4, 2026 and Abu Dhabi from November 15, 2025 to January 4, 2026.***
- ***Manar Abu Dhabi is part of the Public Art Abu Dhabi initiative, DCT Abu Dhabi's ongoing commitment to enhancing the emirate's urban fabric through public art.***
- ***Further details on the accompanying programme will be shared in due course.***

Abu Dhabi, UAE – October 14, 2025: Organised by the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi

(DCT Abu Dhabi), Manar Abu Dhabi is a public light art exhibition that aims to foster creativity while celebrating the emirate's diverse landscapes. For its second edition, Manar Abu Dhabi will bring together 15 Emirati and international artists and artist collectives from 10 countries, featuring 23 works spanning site-specific light sculptures, projections, and immersive installations.

Drawing on the Gulf's ancestral relationship with light, this edition unfolds under the theme 'The Light Compass', presenting contemporary artworks that explore light as both guide and medium in bridging its navigational and poetic dimensions. Curated by Khai Hori, Artistic Director, and co-curated by Alia Zaal Lootah (Curator), Munira Al Sayegh (Curator), and Mariam Alshehhi (Assistant Curator), Manar Abu Dhabi 2025 will take place across four key locations: Jubail Island, Souq Al Mina, and for the first time, Al Ain, with dedicated trails across Al Qattara and Al Jimi Oases, celebrating Abu Dhabi's unique ecosystems

and cityscapes.

Manar Abu Dhabi 2025 will run from 1 November 2025 to 4 January 2026 in Al Ain and from 15 November 2025 to 4 January 2026 in Abu Dhabi.

Jubail Island

Located between Yas Island and Saadiyat Island, Jubail Island will be the anchor location for Manar Abu Dhabi 2025. Celebrated for its natural landscape and unique biodiversity, visitors can wander along the sprawling boardwalks that meander through the mangroves and engage with 15 installations thoughtfully integrated throughout the island. Highlights include:

- **EDEN** (2025), a large-scale outdoor installation by Malaysian artist Pamela Poh (b.1991, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) featuring steel structures and suspended glass spheres illuminated at night, creating a contemplative space for stillness and reflection
- Inside a dome-like structure, **UNFOLD** (2025) by multidisciplinary studio DRIFT (est. 2007, the Netherlands) transforms visitors' biometric data into unique, ephemeral flowers and soundscapes through a generative algorithm, creating a continuously evolving audio-visual experience, while **WHISPERS** (2025) features a sea of delicate dancing lights that respond to the subtlest currents of air and movement, forming a shifting, luminous terrain. Alongside a captivating drone performance **WIND OF CHANGE**, (2025) with hundreds of drones moving across the Island's mangroves in choreographed motion, evoking a sense of growth, renewal and connection
- Emirati sculptor Shaikha Al Mazrou's (b. 1988, Sharjah. Lives and works in Dubai) **CONTINGENT OBJECT** (2025), a striking 30-metre circular land art installation that transforms over time as water crystallises into a salt disc, creating an ephemeral landmark amid the mangroves
- Montreal-based digital art studio Iregular (est. 2010. Based in Montreal, Canada) will activate the Island with four interactive installations; **AS WATER FALLS** (2022), **FACES** (2022), **CONTROL NO CONTROL** (2012), **FORTUNES** (2024) that utilise artificial intelligence, sensors and data visualisation to explore how we navigate shared spaces, creating a living map of our collective presence

Other artists featuredOther artists featured on Jubail Island include Ezequiel Pini (a.k.a. Six N. Five) (b.1985, Buenos Aires. Lives and works in Barcelona, Spain); Christian Brinkmann (b.1989. Lives and works in Hamburg, Germany); Kirsten Berg (b.1969, Berkeley, California, USA); Encor Studio (Est. 2016, Switzerland); and

Lachlan Turczan (b.1993, Los Angeles, USA);

For its debut in Al Ain, Manar Abu Dhabi will transform Al Qattara and Al Jimi Oases—green sanctuaries nestled within the city’s desert topography, sustained by ancient aflaj irrigation systems—with dedicated trails of light-based installations that reflect on the enduring bond between water, light, land, and life.

Al Qattara Oasis Trail

Al Qattara Oasis Trail presents three artworks, with each installation responding to the oasis’ landscape

and heritage:

- Returning to Manar Abu Dhabi, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer (b. 1971, Mexico City. Lives and works between Montreal and Quebec, Canada) will present two works: **TRANSLATION STREAM** (2023), which presents poems by contemporary Emirati poets Nujoom Alghanem, Khalid Albudoor, and Adel Khozam as a slow stream of letters, inviting visitors to trace this enduring flow of consciousness and translation as shown in the inaugural edition. Alongside **PULSE CANOPY** (2025), a hovering canopy of light that responds to the visitor’s heartbeat, upon placing their hand beneath a sensor which in turn activates ten beams of light that begin to pulse in rhythm.

- Stretching over 70 meters within a historic building, Emirati designer Khalid Shafar (b. 1980, Dubai, UAE) presents **SADU RED CARPET** (2025), reinterpreting Sadu, a traditional weaving technique within the United Arabi Emirates, and inscribed on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, into a pixelated pattern of light and bricks, seamlessly blending traditional craftsmanship

with modern design.

Al Jimi Oasis Trail

Boasting a dense canopy of palm trees, the Jimi Oasis Trail invites visitors to continue their journey through the oasis and encounter five artworks:

- Installed within the courtyard of a historic house, **CYCLE OF CIRCLES** (2025) by multidisciplinary Emirati artist Ammar Al Attar (b. 1981, Ajman, UAE) is a photographic series of five self-portraits captured while the artist rode a bicycle in a circular path. Presented sequentially in lightboxes, the work transforms the act into a meditative performance connecting body, space and time.
- Emirati artist Maitha Hamdan (b.1989, Abu Dhabi, UAE) presents **BREATH OF THE SAME PLACE** (2025) two light-based installations inspired by the Oasis environment. Centered on a six-metre Acacia nilotica tree, sensor-activated illuminated ropes that cascade from its branches respond to visitors' movements, creating a harmonious energy with the surrounding nature and history. In addition to tied ribbons that sway in the wind, producing a subtle, rustling sound as they catch and reflect the glimmer of the evening light.
- Dubai-based Emirati architect Abdulla Al Mulla (b.1990, UAE) presents **GUIDING DRAPES** (2025), an architectural installation inspired by the luminous decorations that adorn Emirati brides' houses before and after the wedding. Shown in a historic site, the work evokes the sense of joy and celebration, while recreating the atmosphere of a celebratory communal space.
- **FLORAL RESONANCE** (2024), an interactive audiovisual installation by Christian Brinkmann (b.1989, Hamburg, Germany), where visitors' interactions with a living plant, placed at the centre of the installation, generate a multi-sensory experience, both physical and digital, through a shifting display of 3D scans of surrounding plants on a dynamic digital canvas. The work also features at Jubail Island.

Souq Al Mina

Set against the city skyline of Mina Zayed (Zayed Port), **KAWS** (b. 1974, Jersey City, USA) with long-time partner AllRightsReserved presents **KAWS: HOLIDAY Abu Dhabi**, featuring an illuminated COMPANION, the artist's signature character, reclining on its back and lifting a lit moon in its hands. First unveiled in Shanghai in August 2024, the monumental sculpture now arrives in Abu Dhabi, set within the bustle of Souq Al Mina among passing ships and steady shore activity. The work draws a clear line to the moon that once guided seafarers, joining maritime memory to a contemporary scene, linking art, culture, and navigation under the night's wide sky.

Alongside the exhibition, a schedule of public talks, workshops and performances will be offered to visitors over the course of the exhibition. More information on the public programme will be released soon. For more information on the participating artists in Manar Abu Dhabi 2025, please refer to the Annex.