

Tunisian-Ukrainian artist wins prestigious Ithra Prize at Diriyah Biennale

Saudi Arabia



Nadia Kaabi-Linke's 'E Pluribus Unum – A Modern Fossil,' the winning artwork of the 4th edition of the Ithra Art Prize, displayed at the inaugural Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale. (Courtesy: SPA)

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The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture 'Ithra' based in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, unveiled Nadia Kaabi-Linke's 'E Pluribus Unum – A Modern Fossil,' the winning artwork of the 4th edition of the Ithra Art Prize, at the inaugural [Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale](#) on Saturday.

One of the most significant art prizes in the Arab world, the Tunisian-Ukrainian artist Kaabi-Linke received a \$100,000 grant to bring her proposal to life.

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Kaabi-Linke's artwork takes a reflective look at one of the effects of the pandemic and the decline in commercial air traffic, which raises questions about how humanity measures progress and economic growth.



Kaabi-Linke's monumental work consists of 19 canvases depicting the cracks in a sign bearing an arrow, a symbol associated with the aviation industry and with economic growth. (Courtesy: SPA)

‘E Pluribus Unum – A Modern Fossil,’ is a monumental work consisting of 19 canvases depicting the cracks in a sign bearing an arrow, a symbol associated with the aviation industry and with economic growth, and makes the viewers reflect on their priorities.

“Ithra’s goal is to ignite cultural curiosity, stimulate knowledge exploration, and inspire creativity, while encouraging the development of original content across several creative fields, with an emphasis on the arts,” said Farah Abushullaih, Head of Ithra Museum.

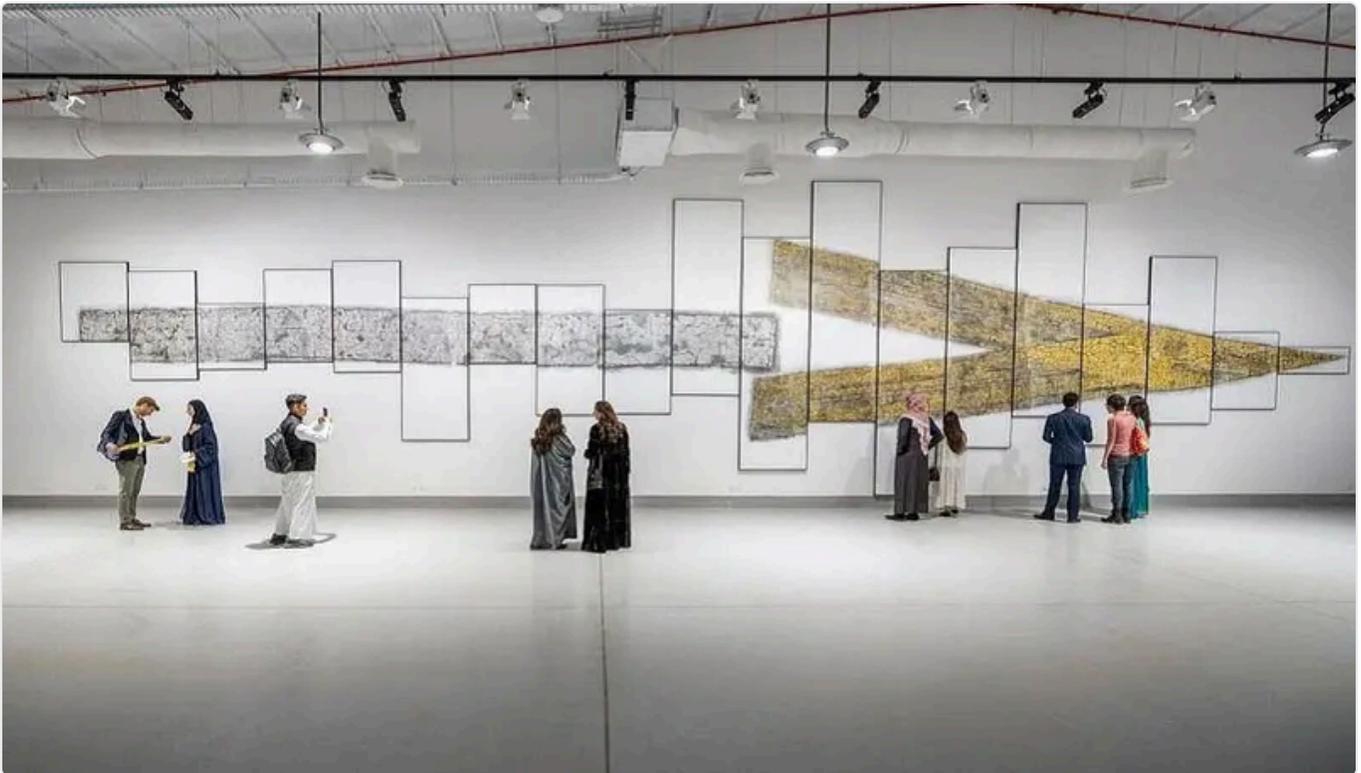
“Ithra’s Museum works to bridge the past with the present, and the present with the future, all the while engaging with world cultures and honoring Saudi Arabia’s rich heritage and cultural history,” she said, adding: “The Ithra Art Prize is proof of this commitment to support and develop the creative landscape in the Kingdom and beyond. We are delighted to share Kaabi-Linke’s winning artwork with the world for the first time, and proud to be able to expose talent from the Arab world on an international platform.”



The Ithra Art Prize winning work is displayed at the Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale, which runs until March 11, 2022. (Courtesy: SPA)

Kaabi-Linke, a Tunisian-Ukrainian conceptual artist based in Berlin, said: “The Ithra Art Prize empowered me to get over boundaries in a way I never thought possible to date.”

“In the end, I can say that I have produced one of my most complex and detailed paintings in about two months, but different from previous works, this piece is almost 20 meters long. This unique experience was as challenging as rewarding in the end. Thank you, Ithra Art Prize, for bringing this project to life. I know it is in the best hands now,” Kaabi-Linke added.



The Ithra Art Prize winning work after its display at the Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale will be added to Ithra’s permanent collection. (Courtesy: SPA)

Kaabi-Linke studied fine arts in Tunis and holds a PhD from the Sorbonne in Paris. She grew up in Tunis, Kyiv, Dubai, and Paris, and has exhibited widely in several renowned global art institutions, including at New York’s Museum of Modern Art and the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

The Ithra Art Prize was originated as a competition for Saudi and Saudi-based contemporary artists. This is the first year the competition opened up to artists from 22 Arab countries and presented at the Kingdom's first biennale, Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale organized by Diriyah Biennale Foundation. Ayman Zedani (Mēem, 2018), Daniah Al Saleh (Sawtam, 2019) and Fahad bin Naif (Rakhm, 2020) previously won the prize.

The Ithra Art Prize winning work is displayed at the Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale, which runs until March 11, 2022, after which it will join Ithra's prestigious permanent collection.

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