



الهيئة العامة للاستثمار  
SAUDI ARABIAN GENERAL INVESTMENT AUTHORITY  
SAGIA



## Saudi Artists Launch World Tour at the Global Competitiveness Forum 2010

The Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) has invited "Edge of Arabia", an innovative initiative promoting and empowering contemporary artists from Saudi Arabia, to launch its international world tour at the 2010 Global Competitiveness Forum (GCF), to be held in Riyadh from January 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> under the patronage of The Custodian of the two Holy mosque's King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz.

As an official partner SAGIA collaborated with Edge of Arabia in developing a multidisciplinary program for the GCF, which will include an art exhibition, press conferences, book signings with curators and artists, and dedicated art workshops with local schoolchildren.

Edge of Arabia's participation at the GCF, which is being sponsored by the Abdul Latif Jameel Co. Ltd represents the launch of a historic world tour that will showcase Saudi artists across Europe, the Middle East, America and Asia over the next four years. The tour builds on landmark exhibitions in London (2008) and Venice (2009) and aims to create positive and sustainable cultural dialogue between Saudi Arabia and the rest of the world.

As an investment promotion agency, tasked in part with achieving rapid and sustainable economic growth for Saudi Arabia, SAGIA recognizes an opportunity to harness the country's creative capabilities and is actively involved in an effort to mobilize the positive impact culture and creativity can have on economic, social and human development. This partnership with Edge of Arabia represents one of several cultural initiatives SAGIA is proactively developing within the Kingdom. According to the SAGIA Governor, His Excellency Amr Al-Dabbagh, "We are using resources dedicated to developing strategic cultural initiatives for the Economic Cities to stimulate artistic and cultural activity that will foster innovation and lead to social and economic prosperity for the Kingdom."

By partnering with Edge of Arabia, SAGIA is supporting a grassroots movement of artists who have been able to foster their creative energy and are creating a global platform for positive dialogue. This project now aims to send a powerful and positive message around the world, amplifying the voices of a new generation of Saudi artists, and investing in the Kingdom's creative potential at a crucial moment in the region's recent history.



WORLD TOUR HEADLINE SPONSOR

ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL CO. LTD.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

**PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT: January 26<sup>th</sup>, 12 noon**

GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS FORUM

KINGDOM TOWER

RIYADH

### Participating Artists at GCF 2010

Shadia & Raja Alem (Jeddah), Mohammed Farea Ali (Riyadh), Ahmed Mater Aseeri (Abha), Abdulaziz Ashour (Jeddah), Ayman Yossri Daydban (Jeddah), Manal Al-Dowayan (Dhahran), Abdunasser Gharem (Khamis Mushait), Yosef Jaha (Makkah), Mahdi Al Jeraibi (Makkah), Maha Malluh (Riyyadh), Ali Al-Ruzaiza (Riyadh), Faisal Samra (Bahrain) and Noha Al-Sharief (Jeddah).

### Edge of Arabia Programme 2010

**Riyadh, 23-26 January 2010:** World Tour Launch, GCF. Edge of Arabia will launch the World tour with an exhibition, international media announcement and series of school workshops at SAGIA's 2010 Global Competitiveness Forum in Riyadh.

**Dubai, 17-20 March 2010:** Integrated Participation, Art Dubai. At the region's premier art event, Edge of Arabia will present a programme of events including artists' talks, film screenings and workshops. These events will be consolidated in a dedicated 'Edge of Arabia' section in the Art Dubai catalogue and a stand within the fair.

**Berlin, June-August 2010:** A major Edge of Arabia exhibition will open in one of Europe's leading cultural cities, to coincide with the Berlin Biennale.

**Istanbul, November-December 2010:** Edge of Arabia will conclude 2010 with a major exhibition in partnership with the European Capital of Culture and the Contemporary Istanbul art fair.

## Partners & Sponsors

**World Tour Headline Partners:** Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA)

**World Tour Headline Sponsor:** Abdul Latif Jameel Company Ltd

*'We are delighted to support Saudi Artists to participate in this timely and important project. We are especially pleased to be sponsoring these exhibitions whose educational focus allows new and often young international audiences to better understand and engage with contemporary culture and heritage from Saudi Arabia.'*

**Fady Jameel**

**Saudi Education Programme Sponsor:** Bab Rizq Jameel (ALJ Community Services Programmes)

### **Project Partners:**

Saudi Arabian Ministry of Culture & Information

British Council

Arab British Centre

### **Gallery Sponsors:**

Athr Gallery, Jeddah

Cuadro Gallery, Dubai

Hewar Gallery, Riyadh



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**For further details of the project please visit:**

[www.edgeofarabia.com](http://www.edgeofarabia.com)

[www.sagia.gov.sa](http://www.sagia.gov.sa)

## EDGE OF ARABIA BACKGROUND

Edge of Arabia has established itself as a pioneering and historically important project that promotes Saudi artists around the world and challenges negative perceptions of Saudi cultural achievement.

It is the first project of its kind and is playing a significant role in enhancing international cultural relationships and developing creative industries within Saudi. Edge of Arabia launched in October 2008 at London's SOAS Brunei gallery showcasing the work of 16 Saudi Artists from Jeddah, Makkah, Riyadh, Dhahran, Abha and Khamis Mushait. In June 2009 Edge of Arabia traveled to the 53rd Venice Biennale, *'the most important and prestigious event on the international contemporary visual arts calendar'*. The presence of Edge of Arabia at the Venice Biennale created a powerful platform for showcasing Saudi art around the world.

As a direct result of Edge of Arabia, participating artists have been invited to exhibit internationally and, for the first time, significant numbers of works by Saudi artists are being included in prestigious museum collections, publications and high profile auctions.

## EDGE OF ARABIA TRACK RECORD

- A record breaking **23,000 people** visited the exhibitions in Venice and London with over 3 million seeing advertising campaigns on the London Underground and Venice Vaperettos.
- Edge of Arabia in Venice was seen by **over 2000** of the art world's most prestigious museum curators, journalists, gallerists and artists.
- Over **200 schools** in the UK and Italy are using Edge of Arabia educational resources in the classroom.
- The Edge of Arabia book is the first and currently **only comprehensive book** on Saudi contemporary art.
- The Edge of Arabia website received over **1,000,000 visits** in its first year.
- Edge of Arabia in London described as **'the best cultural event we've had for 15 years'** by the Director of the University of London.
- In Venice, William Lawrie, Head of Sales for Arab, Iranian & Turkish art, Christies, exclaimed, **'Edge of Arabia was the best display of the Middle East at the 53rd Venice Biennale'**.
- The project generated significant **media coverage** and unanimously positive reviews from the international press including BBC World, Der Spiegel, La Repubblica, Canvas Magazine, Metro, Sharq al Awsat and Nafas art magazine.

# SAGIA BACKGROUND

## OVERVIEW

Founded in 2006 by SAGIA, the GCF is an annual gathering of top business figures, political leaders, renowned academics and journalists which has quickly become the leading international event focused on the subject of Competitiveness issues. The theme for GCF 2010 will be "Sustainable Competitiveness" with discussions based on recent developments in the global economy and the role of governments and private sector entities in addressing the challenges, incentives and requirements for sustainable competitiveness.

SAGIA, the official investment promotion agency of the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is responsible for promoting direct investment into the Kingdom (promoter), working to foster improvements in its investment environment (facilitator) and managing its Economic Cities (regulator). The Economic Cities are mega projects launched by the Saudi Government taking the form of cities developed completely by the private sector with the aim of creating competitive environments for doing business and attracting foreign and domestic direct investment.

To date SAGIA has launched four Economic Cities in Saudi Arabia (King Abdullah Economic City in Rabigh, Prince Abdulaziz bin Musaid Economic City in Hail, Knowledge Economic City in Madinah, and the Jizan Economic City) with a total expected investment value of more than US\$ 60 billion.

On 16/5/1427 H, the Council of Ministers delegated the responsibility of supervising Saudi Arabia's Economic Cities to SAGIA (resolution number 124). SAGIA's mission lies in positioning Saudi Arabia among the top ten most competitive nations by 2010 through the creation of a pro-business environment, knowledge-based society, and by developing new, world-class "Economic Cities".

In order for Saudi Arabia to realize this goal, it must achieve rapid and sustainable economic growth, capitalizing in part on the energy and transportation sectors because of the country's competitive advantage as a global energy capital and a hub between East and West. However, our efforts to foster economic growth are not limited to these sectors and we recognize an opportunity to harness Saudi Arabia's creative capacities towards economic development.

### **Creative Industries at SAGIA**

Building on the outcome of reports such as UNCTAD's "Creative Economy Report 2008", SAGIA is leading an effort to mobilize the positive impact culture and creativity can have from an economic, social and human development perspective.

The "Cultural Strategy", currently under development, will include policy recommendations on how best to nurture existing creative industries, in addition to identifying and promoting underdeveloped opportunities in the creative economy.

## *Vision*

To stimulate artistic and cultural activity that will contribute to social and economic prosperity in Saudi Arabia, through developing target creative industries and defining and implementing strategic cultural initiatives.

## *Mission*

To further realize SAGIA's strategic goals through developing creative industries that foster creative and innovative talents, attract and retain a knowledge generating society and contribute to a better quality of life in the Economic Cities.

For additional information on SAGIA, the Economic Cities, Saudi Arabia's competitiveness ranking, the cultural strategy, or the Global Competitiveness Forum, please contact:

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