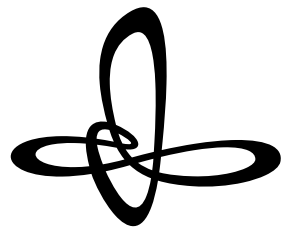


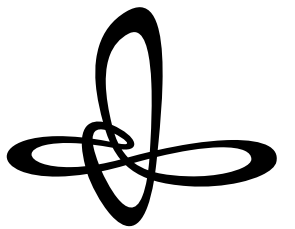


# The Ithra Story



**Inspiring  
Hearts.  
Enriching  
Minds.**





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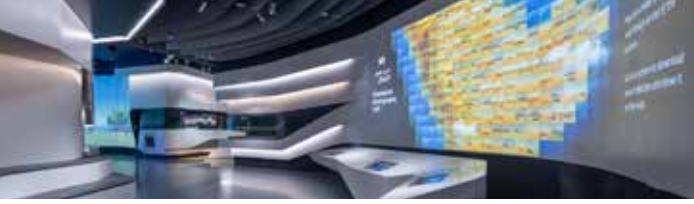
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# Welcome



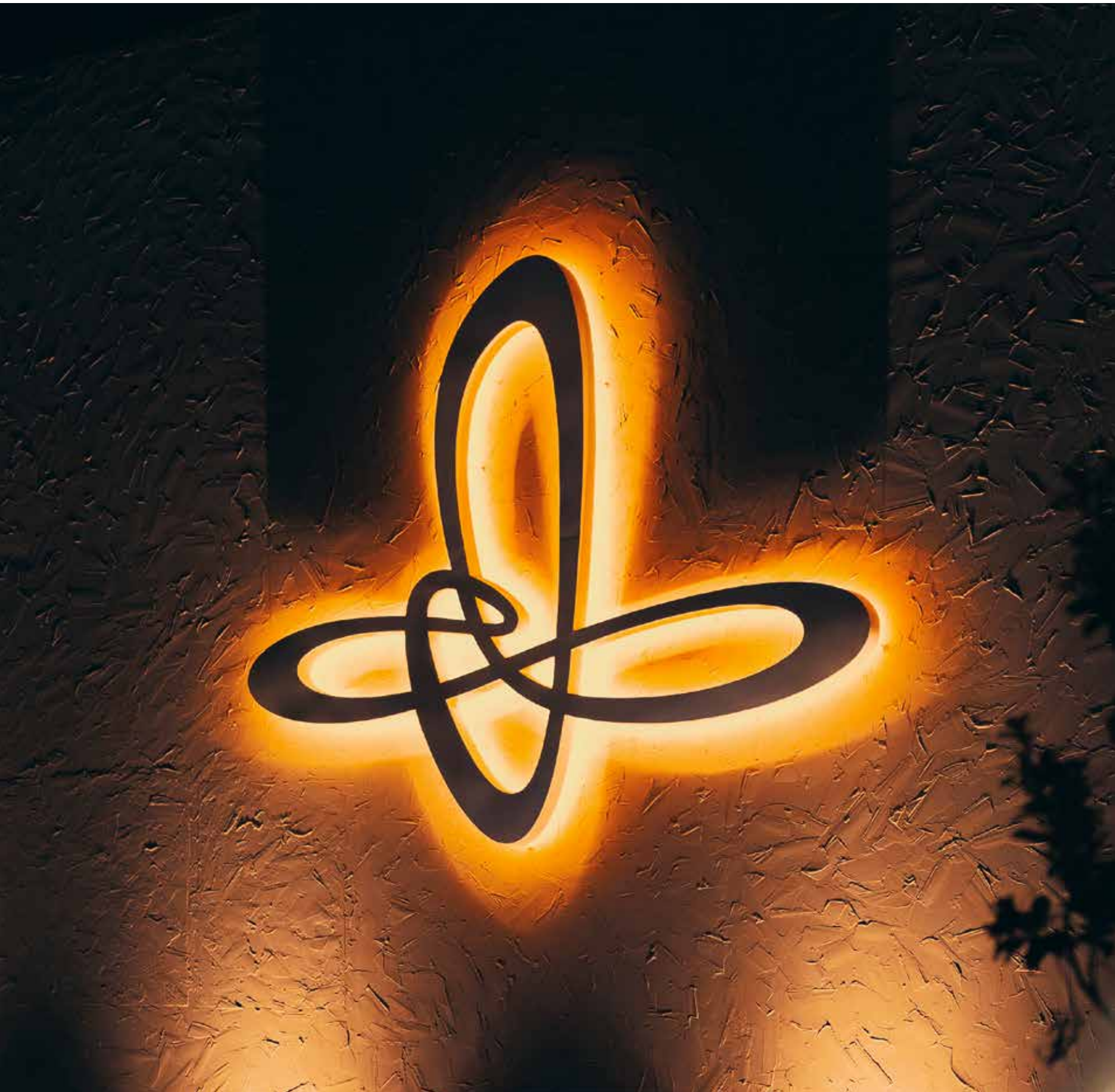


# Welcome to Ithra

The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture — otherwise known as Ithra, an Arabic word meaning “enrichment” — is one of Saudi Arabia’s most influential cultural institutions, a destination for people of all ages: the curious, the creatives, innovators, and the seekers of knowledge. It’s a place where challenging perspectives meet creativity and transformative ideas.

The energy produced by Saudi Aramco fuels the world and enriches people’s lives all over the globe. The company also realizes, though, that there is a different kind of energy that is necessary for communities to thrive — the energy that inspires hearts and enriches minds. At the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, that’s the energy we see every day: the spark of understanding in the eyes of a young reader in the library, the

creativity of a filmmaker as audiences view a movie in the cinema, the power of innovation in an entrepreneur in the Idea Lab, the awe in the performance of an actor on the stage in the theater. This is the energy of Ithra. We invite you to come here to experience it in person, to explore it in our programs, or to discover it through the offerings on our website. We invite you to take part in this journey.









# Our Story

Drawing inspiration from the vision of the Kingdom’s founder, Saudi Aramco has always been committed to making valuable contributions to the growth and prosperity of the nation, its communities, and its citizens.

From the time of the Concession Agreement that laid the foundation for Saudi Aramco back in 1933, the late King Abdulaziz bin Abdul Rahman Al Sa’ud sought to build an industrial and economic model that would meet the needs of the young Kingdom, and secure the nation’s prosperity, well-being, and development for future generations. When Well No. 7 — which would later be known as the “Prosperity Well” — struck oil in 1938 and began producing commercial quantities, it fulfilled the ambition of the Concession Agreement and set in motion the potential for the Kingdom’s prosperity. Throughout its existence, Saudi Aramco has been — besides one of the world’s pre-eminent energy companies — a provider of more than just crude oil and natural gas. In its early days, the company provided training and jobs, helped build the Kingdom’s infrastructure, and constructed schools and hospitals, among a wide variety of citizenship activities. On May 20, 2008, Saudi Aramco marked the company’s 75th anniversary with the laying of the cornerstone of its citizenship endeavors to accelerate human potential: The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture. Known as Ithra,

the Arabic word for “enrichment,” the project’s vision was to build a destination that would ignite cultural curiosity, stimulate the exploration of knowledge, and inspire creativity through the power of ideas, imagination and innovation. Seeking a unique and inspirational design, the company conducted a competition among leading architectural firms, which was won by Snohetta, a Norwegian company known for the design of many famous buildings around the world including Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the iconic library in Alexandria, Egypt. Snohetta’s entry featured a simple but powerful arrangement of “stones” that celebrated the interaction between rocks — as the source of oil that fuels the Kingdom — and the source of energy of a different kind, the power of imagination and creativity. In a symbolic ceremony on that day in May, the late King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Sa’ud placed a symbolic cornerstone for the project not far from the Prosperity Well. After its design was completed in early 2010, construction began later that year in August. Determination and perseverance kept the dream alive as the tower slowly emerged above the desert landscape.





The public was introduced to Ithra’s story even before it was a fully functional building. A series of cultural outreach programs made their way across Saudi Arabia, and traveled as far as the United States of America as part of a cross-cultural Bridges program. Throughout 2013 and 2014, Ithra toured its large-scale pilot program, Ithra Knowledge, throughout the Kingdom that provided visitors insight into what the Center would be. It included sample programs of the completed Center — international and local exhibitions, international and in-house theater productions, STEAM programs, and art and creativity programs for all ages. More than 2 million people visited all four locations during the six-month period of operation, which was mainly staffed by more than 3,000 volunteers from across the Kingdom. Internationally, Ithra coordinated exhibitions of Saudi contemporary art, live performances and screenings of work by Saudi filmmakers, reaching another half a million people throughout 2015 and 2016. Eight years after King Abdullah had laid the symbolic cornerstone, the vision became

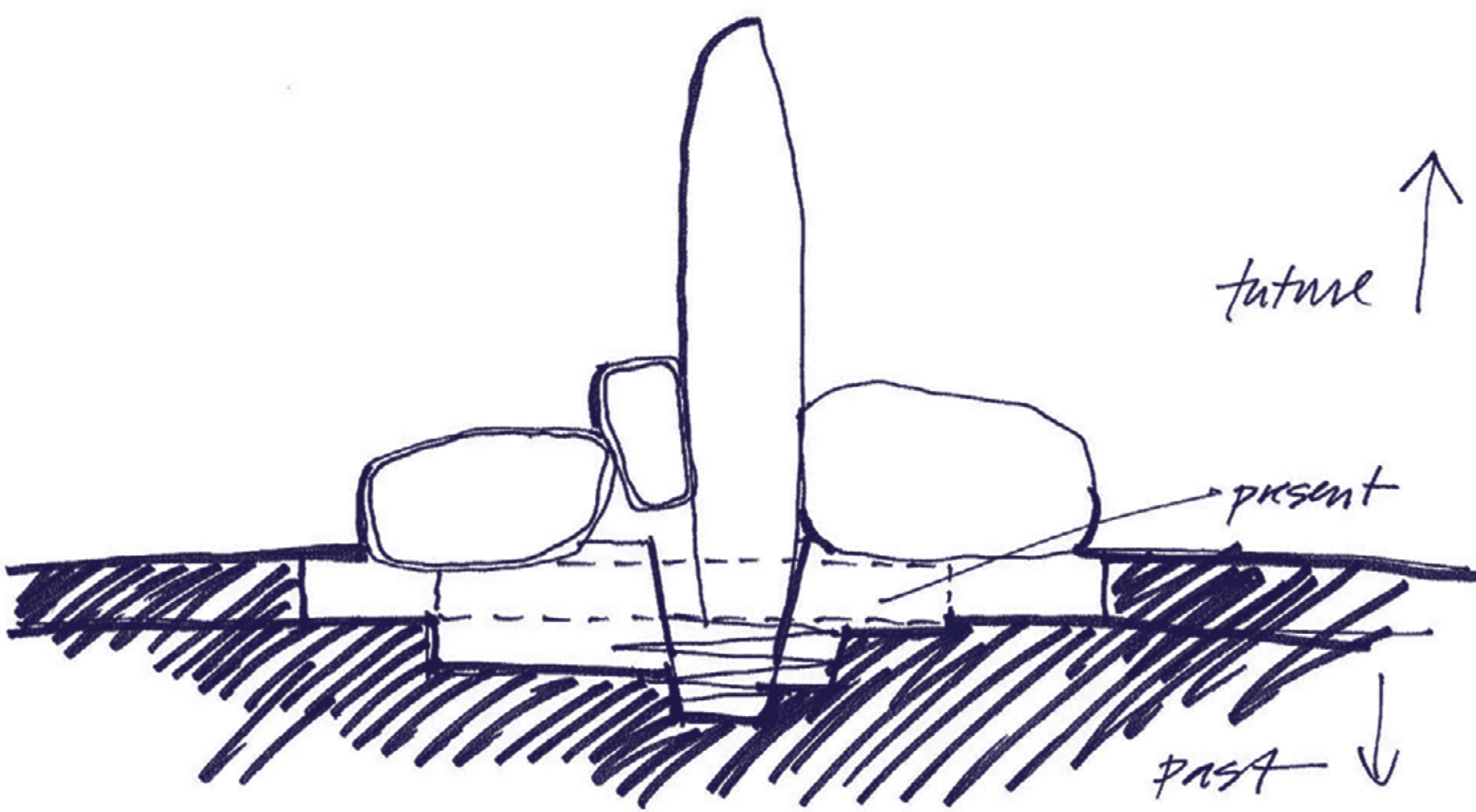
a physical reality with the inauguration of the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Sa’ud on December 1, 2016. Then, in June 2018, Ithra opened its doors to the public, cementing itself as one of Saudi Arabia’s most influential cultural destinations. Today, the Center houses museums that explore Islamic heritage, culture, identity, artistic talent, natural history and science; a theater for music, dance and visual performances; labs for ideas in technology and design; programs for youth in STEAM subjects and reading; one of the few art house cinemas in the region; and a library with a collection of more than 270,000 titles in Arabic and English arranged on four floors and covering an extraordinary variety of themes, topics and genres. Through a variety of impactful programs, the Center aims to inspire and enrich. Ithra is truly a place for all generations to enjoy and explore the human potential of hearts and minds.



# Purposeful Construction

- The Story of a Building







# The Story of a Building

From concept to realization, Ithra’s unique structure tells a deep-rooted story.

Designed by the Norwegian architectural firm Snohetta, the Center was designed as a collection of "stones" symbolizing unity. The stones lean on one another to create solidarity. They also illustrate how the various disciplines explored in the Center all depend on one another to stand strong. Just as the arrangement of the stones and the location of the Center are symbolic, the building was designed with a purposeful expression of time: Underground, where the archive and museum gallery spaces are located, represent the past; the ground floor, where performances take place, represents the present; and the tower, along with the library and Idea Lab, is where ideas take shape, representing the future. A testament to ingenuity and pioneer engineering, Ithra is unique in its appearance. Stainless-steel tubes, intricately formed and individually curved, create a stunning steel skin that covers the exterior of the building and many of its internal walls. Air flows around the tubes, providing insulation from the desert environment surrounding the Center, while the tubes themselves

keep the building itself shaded. The Center is set in a landscaped oval of greenery between freeways and desert, visible for miles in all directions. The futuristic aspects of the building are complemented by an ancient construction technique: rammed earth. The rough rammed earth exposed on the interior of the building provides a fireproof, soundproof and well-insulated space utilizing highly compressed natural materials such as sand, clay and aggregate sourced from the lands of the Kingdom. The complex includes a four-floor library, 18-floor Ithra Tower, three-floor Idea Lab, Energy Exhibit, five-gallery museum, 315-seat cinema, 900-seat performing arts theater, 1,500-square-meter Great Hall, a Children’s Museum, and a mosque. Ithra is considered a green building, constructed using sustainable and environmental materials and methods, in line with the international certification standards of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). Ithra is certified as a LEED Gold structure.





Stainless steel tube fabrication at a factory in the Czech Republic.



Each of the 75,000 steel tubes has a unique QR/serial code identifying its exact location on the building.











# Ithra's Pillars

- Creativity
- Culture
- Knowledge
- Art
- Community

3

Ithra's progressive initiatives, programs and activities are based on five specific pillars: creativity, culture, knowledge, art and community. All pillars move in parallel paths to achieve three specific strategic goals – develop creative skills, nurture and promote local talent, and support content production – and position Ithra as a major platform for fostering creativity and cultural exchange both in the Kingdom and the rest of the world.

**Creativity**  
**Culture**  
**Knowledge**  
**Art**  
**Community**



Ithra is on a mission to uncover talent, to encourage and inspire creativity, and to provide minds of all ages with the tools they need to be innovative and feel empowered. Ithra also strives to help transform ideas into marketable and competitive products for local and global markets, by providing the latest in world-class technologies.





Ithra seeks to expand horizons through informed dialogue and cultural exchange on the local and global scene. The Center does this by attracting diverse talents and experts from around the world and presenting them to the Saudi people. In return, Ithra presents the rich Saudi culture and artistic heritage to the world, building dynamic bridges of communication with the global cultural community.



# Culture





Teaching and lifelong learning are essential practices in a knowledge-based society. By establishing educational platforms for exchanging ideas, nurturing minds and developing creative capabilities, and by making research and scientific resources available, the Center is investing in future generations and creating scientifically and creatively advanced communities.



# Knowledge





Ithra offers artists of all disciplines an inspirational environment where they can explore, work and hone their skills. By continuously creating new ways of bringing diverse Saudi and international talents together to spark new ideas, Ithra strives to instill a passion for art in all its forms.





Ithra seeks to engage the public and build a culture-based society in the Kingdom through its diverse workshops, training programs and activities. At the core of its operations is the spirit of volunteerism, which Ithra encourages to help to foster personal skills and offer valuable professional experience that will help young people to thrive in today's competitive market.

# Community





# Ithra's Spaces

- Plaza
- Great Hall
- Museum
- Children's Museum
- Cinema
- Theater
- Library
- Ithra Tower
- Idea Lab
- Energy Exhibit
- Ithra Mosque
- The Source

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# Plaza



# Plaza

## A place of wonder

Ithra's vast Plaza is both grand and welcoming, setting the scene for your experience with an architectural design based on life, art and philosophy.

The Plaza is the Center's main hub, the place where the five "stones" come together. Its transition points are marked by rust-colored vertical panels with patterns that reflect the history of the Arabian Peninsula and act as symbolic gates.

The space is defined by three main elements, each unique aesthetically and conceptually, complementing each other to create a visual masterpiece: rammed earth walls, exposed concrete columns and twisted columns of structural glulam timber.

The rammed earth walls surround and define the space of the Plaza. Made of the most ancient building materials known to man – sand, clay and aggregate – these materials are used in the most modern application of the rammed earth technique also used to build the Great Wall of China. It entails a 30cm layer of the special proportionated mix being compacted to only 5cm, resulting in a visually striking wall comprising layers of soil compacted upon each other. This wall also links the Center to its environment and the wider Saudi Arabia, as some of the materials used in the mix were extracted from the building site while the rest was collected from around the Kingdom.

With the Plaza being underground, a forest of architecturally exposed concrete columns support the Center's monosurface. Triangular at the base, they develop a fourth side as they rise, culminating in a trapezoidal shape where the column meets the ceiling. This unique design creates the illusion that the columns are twisting, adding visual appeal.

The final element is the glulam wooden columns that support 'The Source' glass, which defines the gallery space. These 25m one-piece columns twist 90 degrees from the base to the top, a feat of design not easily achieved as this curve entails a very unnatural behavior for wood. Furthermore, the size of the timber adds a majestic quality. While the curves expose different angles to what lies beyond, keeping the visitor intrigued, they serve a practical purpose by determining how much light enters the galleries from various levels.







# Great Hall



# Great Hall

## A symphony of lights

Walking into the Great Hall is like entering a sparkling jewelry box.

The Great Hall's copper ceiling and walls, intricately decorated with delicate geometrical patterns, demonstrate great craftsmanship. The brilliant sheen of the copper, a hint at natural light and contrasting dark floors, together create an atmosphere of tranquility and wonder.

A sparkling space of immense size, Ithra's magnificent Great Hall hosts world-class exhibitions, events and experiences from around the world, highlighting Ithra's role as a global platform and a cultural beacon for the Kingdom. Ithra has showcased numerous international art exhibitions in this space, including Edvard Munch's **Landscapes of the Soul** and **Leonardo Da Vinci's Codex Atlanticus Through Time and Space**. The hall also hosted the Arab Summit in 2018 for the first time in Saudi Arabia, attended by HM King Salman and other Arab leaders. It was also the venue for the Fikr Conference in 2019, as well as many other cultural events and activities.

Outside the Great Hall, thousands of plants cover the walls of Ithra's Cultural Oasis, a peaceful space where visitors can relax on white marble-stepped seating designed in the style of a Roman amphitheater, surrounded by huge remote-controlled umbrellas. This open oasis was designed to moderate the temperature year-round regardless of the weather.









درب صور  
الأبطال  
Champions  
photography  
trail

# Museum



# Museum

## A journey through time

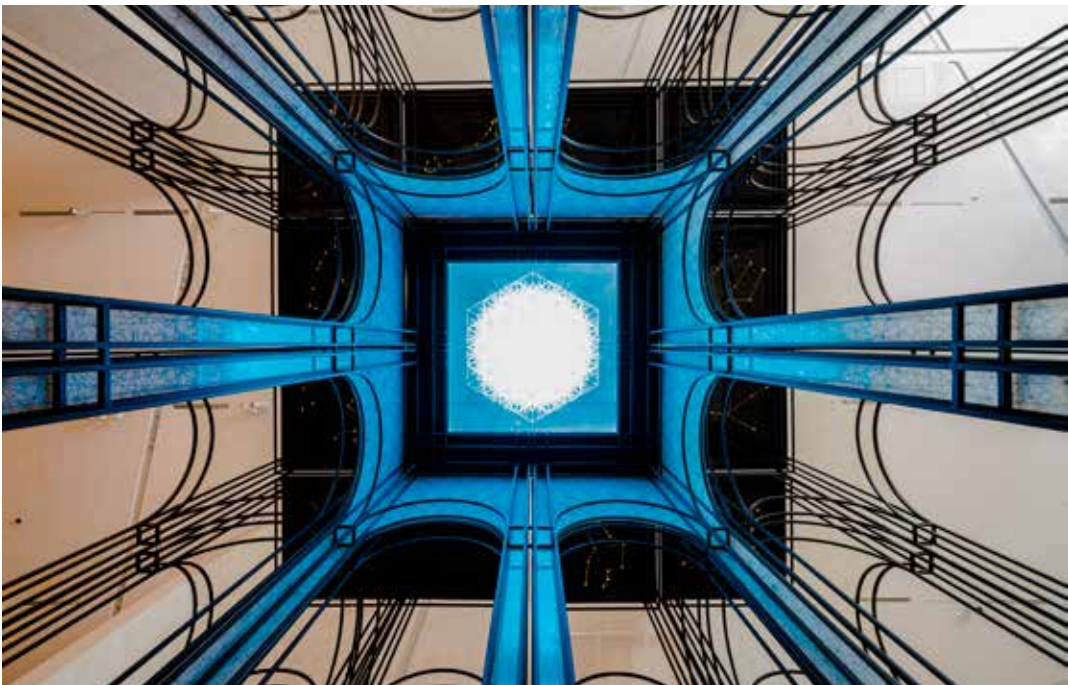
Ithra's Museum works to bridge the past with the present, and the present with the future, all the while engaging with world cultures and honoring Saudi Arabia's rich heritage and cultural history.

During a journey through Ithra's Museum — 6,000 square meters in total — you can explore five different eras in carefully designed galleries equipped with state-of-the-art interactive screens and high-tech audio and video systems.

When you walk into the Funoon Gallery, you are greeted by the dynamic changing world of modern and contemporary art masterpieces. Down the ramp in the Ajyaal Gallery you can explore the Kingdom's rich civilization and heritage. Then you enter the world of the Kunooz Gallery, brimming with valuable treasures and rare Islamic heritage pieces spanning 14 centuries. In the Rehlaat Gallery, you will witness the history of the Arabian Peninsula rooted in humanity's collective memory, and you can immerse yourself in the Peninsula's diverse wildlife, the legacy of the desert and its people.

Furthermore, Ithra's underground Archive Gallery contains Saudi Aramco's most historically important materials relating to the history of oil in the Kingdom. Here, thousands of valuable documents, manuscripts and irreplaceable historical objects are maintained in special climate-controlled rooms. An audiovisual presentation complements displays of archeological tools that retell the story of oil from the very beginning – from the first excavation records to the gold currencies used in the past, photographs and much more.

The Ithra Museum also offers engaging sessions, insightful lectures and specialized tours to create an enriching experience for visitors of all ages, alongside educational programming including talks, courses and workshops.







# Children's Museum



# Children's Museum

## A world of fun for future scientists

Is there anything more wonderful than seeing a child's face light up in amazement and awe?

Within the Ithra Children's Museum, the first of its kind in the Kingdom, young minds can enjoy a vibrant world of integrated, interactive experiences that stimulate, inspire and enrich. It offers children exciting and immersive opportunities for exploration and discovery.

Housed within the museum is a small Roman amphitheater, a space for young minds to reflect, think, ask questions and engage in dialogue.

The Eco-Lab encourages the natural curiosity of children, who are invited to experiment while learning about the environment and physics. The Islamic Arts Hall teaches the beauty and richness of Islamic art through geometric patterns, abstract designs, language and calligraphy. Our World educates about different cultures from around the world, while the Story Cave ignites creativity and imagination by giving children a chance to act, dress up and star in their own production. On the museum's mezzanine, children up to age 5 can discover, learn and play in five themed zones.







# Cinema



# Cinema

## A dynamic window into life

As one of the first in Saudi Arabia, and one of the few art house cinemas in the Middle East, the Ithra Cinema has been the springboard for many great talents in the Kingdom's fast-evolving filmmaking industry.

A masterpiece of design, the cinema's unique ambience is mesmerizing, with captivating kaleidoscopic lines intertwining in beautiful geometric shapes across the ceiling. This state-of-the-art screening venue promises an unforgettable escape into the world of film.

Its role goes beyond selecting and screening films. It is a permanent platform that helps the Saudi film industry flourish by hosting, in cooperation with the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts in Dammam, annual film festivals for Saudi productions and curating original films for public viewing, showcasing Saudi work and participating in international festivals. Furthermore, Ithra's Cinema is establishing itself as a production house for independent cinema in the Kingdom, with several films already under development.







# Theater



# Theater

## A balcony overlooking the world

When you take your seat in Ithra's Theater, prepare to see the world unfold on stage.

The circular structure of the Ithra Theater takes its cue from some of the world's most spectacular opera houses. Its 900 seats are strategically positioned at different levels, giving each member of the audience a panoramic view of the performance.

On this stage, artists from East and West deliver experiences that delight and inspire audiences. With its elegant curtains, high-tech lighting and sound systems, and generous backstage space, the Theater is a venue for hosting major local and international productions.

The Ithra Theater offerings transcend the physical space. The Center leverages its in-house expertise and strategic partnerships to advance talent development both on and off-stage.







# Library



# Library

## A literary banquet accessible to all

Ithra's Library is a vibrant learning and study space designed to inspire an open exchange of ideas and cultures through its vast book collection.

Ride the escalator to the Library's floors of words, into a world of more than 270,000 titles in Arabic and English. On the first floor of the Kingdom's first digitally integrated library is a stimulating array of books for children and teens. On the second floor are poetry collections and literature. The third floor is devoted to books on philosophy, science, technology and the arts, while the fourth floor is all about history, geography and biographies.

The first of the Library's 51 columns welcome visitors to the space with a phrase from the Holy Qur'an on the infinity of knowledge. The others feature illuminated marble plaques engraved with the verses of 50 Arab poets of different ages and eras, and in different styles of exquisite Arabic calligraphy.

To bring words to life, the Library hosts talks and discussion panels, and offers spaces dedicated to research, reading clubs and book signings, all of which seek to inspire and nourish a love of reading.







# Ithra Tower



# Ithra Tower

## A center of innovation

The Ithra Tower has become an iconic symbol for knowledge in the Kingdom.

A bold architectural landmark, the tower is 18 stories high and visible for miles. As you get closer, the sleek engineering and design of the tower becomes apparent, such as the stainless-steel tubes of its façade, which allow air currents to flow throughout and form an insulator against the natural elements and harsh desert environment.

Inside, the Ithra Tower buzzes with a constant state of intellectual debate, contemplation, training and development.

This all-inclusive space is where the Kingdom's young talented minds meet with global experts in literature, art and science workshops to have open conversations and share and develop ideas.









# Idea Lab



# Idea Lab

## Where new ideas are imagined and made

The keystone of creativity and innovation.

Ithra's meticulously designed Idea Lab is the ideal environment to fuel the imagination to create new products or develop unprecedented innovations. It is an inspirational space for generating ideas and developing them into functional and marketable products that solve real-world problems. Inside the lab, ideas are turned into innovative realities that can change lives while supporting the growth of the Kingdom's creative ecosystem.

The interior of the Idea Lab combines functionality and modern design. It features minimalist design, making use of natural woods and fabric walls to cocoon the smallest of Ithra's 'stones.' The lab's three floors each have their own function and specialty that come together to drive the creativity process. On the first floor, Do Tank, you will find a library of more than 1,600 material samples. The second floor, the Show Tank, comprises an exhibition space with an auditorium where you can present and discuss ideas, while the third floor, Think Tank, is dedicated to idea development sessions and practical workshops.









# Energy Exhibit



# Energy Exhibit

## Homage to natural resources

‘The story of oil...’

This dynamic exhibition building offers a remarkable immersive and interactive experience, telling the story of how oil was formed millions of years ago.

A surge of blue light, walls that resemble sea waves, and a giant jellyfish that hangs from the ceiling all help set the scene. You then enter a world of 3D displays and interactive elements to learn about the discovery of oil in the Kingdom, and how Saudi Aramco was first established. Attention is focused on the Prosperity Well from which first flowed the energy that helped develop the Kingdom.

Aramco established the Energy Exhibit decades ago to inform visitors about the history and science behind oil. It was first established in September 1954 as a traveling exhibit called the Mobile Oil Exhibit. The Energy Exhibit building's history dates back to 1963, as the Oil Exhibit Center. Through the years, it has been moved to different locations, and was once the only museum in the Kingdom's Eastern Province. It became a vital, popular community favorite, and hosted thousands of school field trips. Now updated and transformed, it is a place of surprises and awe-inspiring interactive displays for all visitors – educating them about the pioneering moments of the oil industry as well as the latest energy technologies, placing energy in a global context.









# Ithra Mosque



# Ithra Mosque

## Inspiration and contemplation

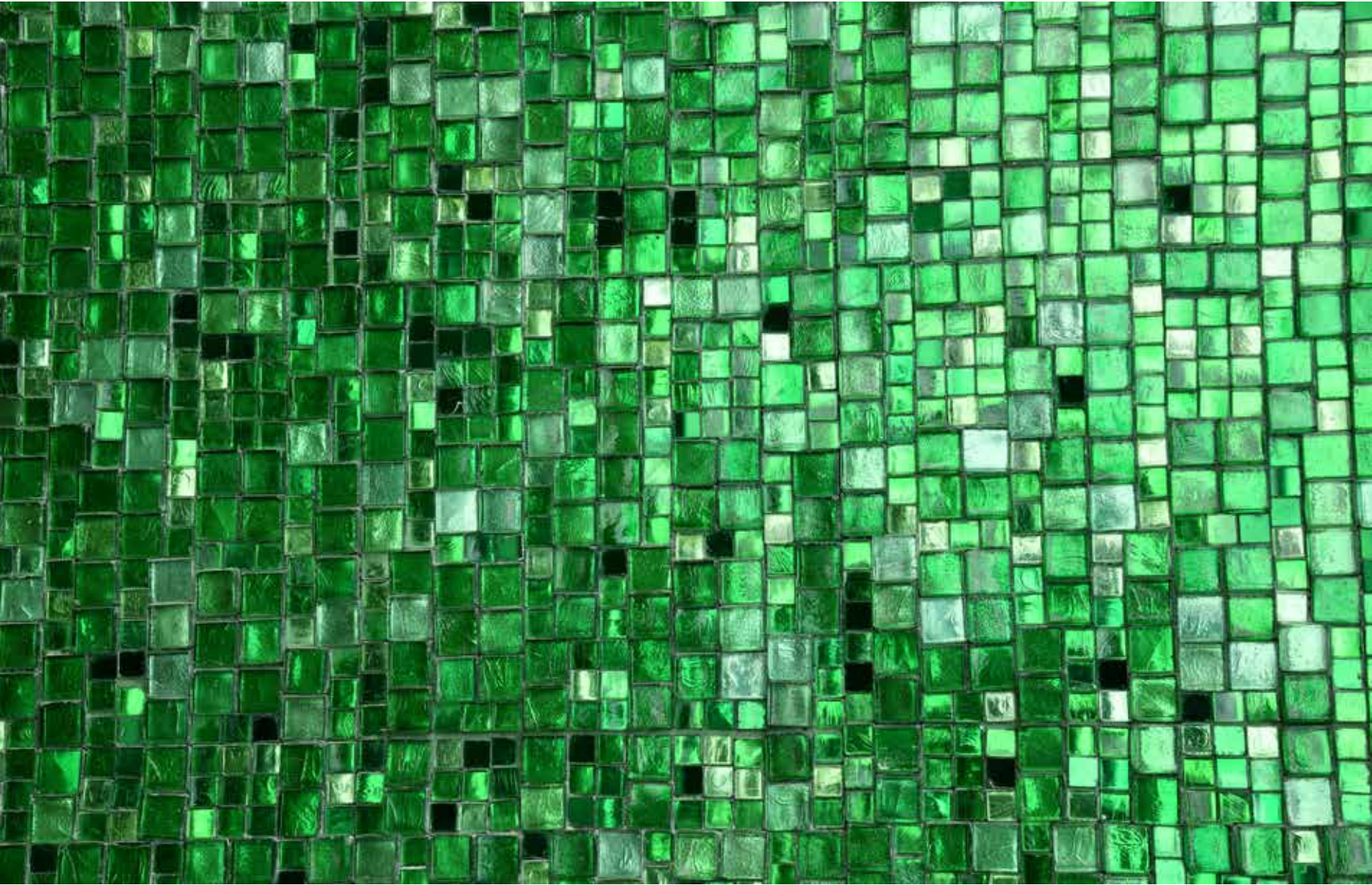
The Ithra Mosque invites worshippers into a space for contemplation and prayer like no other. The mosque is designed to have its own unique identity while complementing the Center. It was designed with a new take on the traditional norms of mosque shape and design.

The design of the mosque was inspired by the Hajj: one of the largest annual religious gatherings of humanity in the world. The exterior lines of the building are inspired by the paths which believers take as they progress on their way through the pilgrimage. The male and female sections of the mosque are separated by a partition composed of 99 steel columns, inspired by the steel piping which surrounds Ithra and alludes to the 99 names of Allah.

The inside of the building features a skin with a mosaic surface inspired by emeralds, designed to evoke the traditional color of Islam.

The design of the chandelier is derived from the geometrical shapes in traditional Islamic art and emulate a floating cloud with a modular design of mirrors, crystals and glass.







# The Source



# The Source

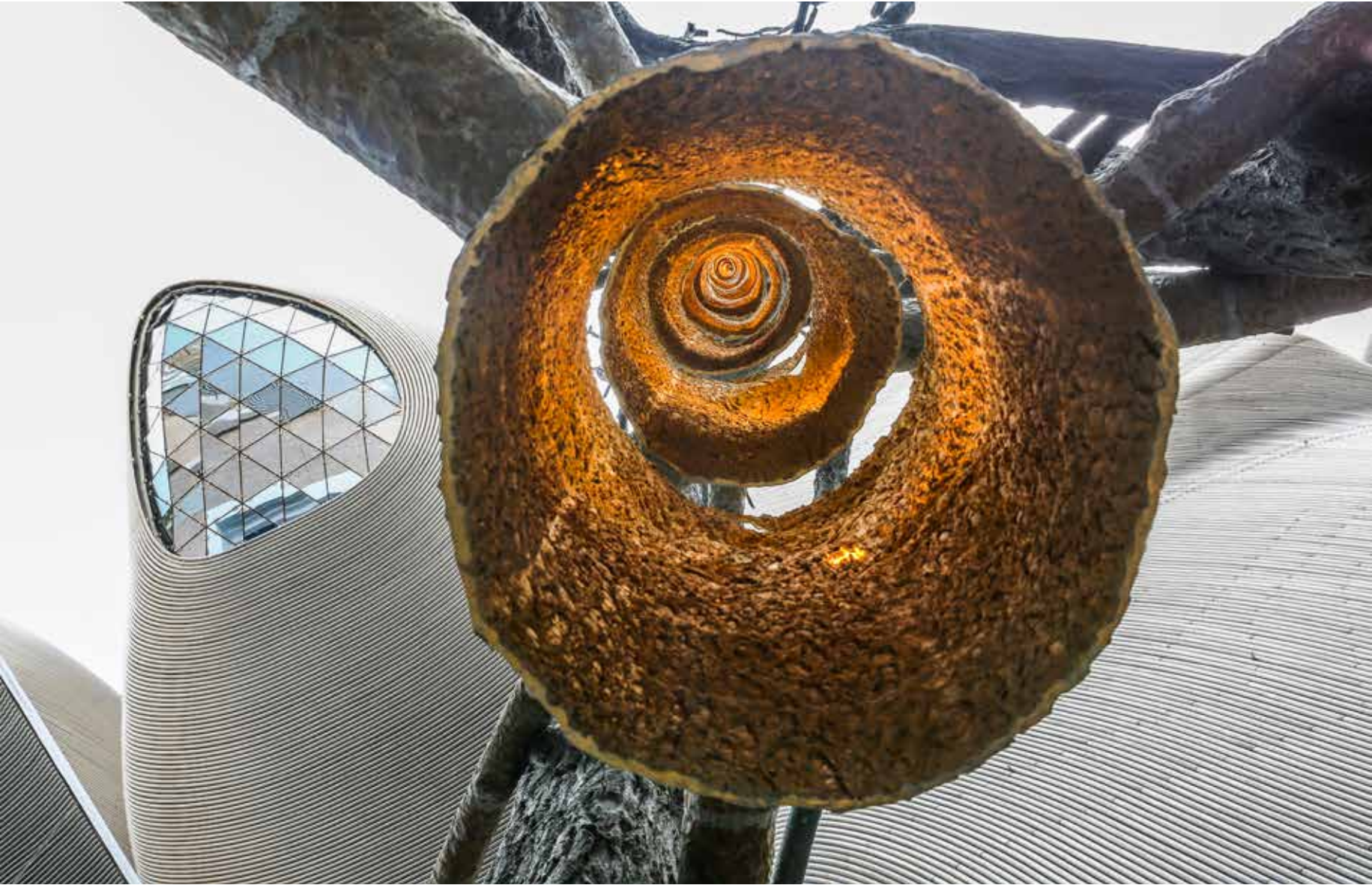
## Where the past meets the future

A monumental sculpture, titled Source of Light, by renowned Turin-based artist Giuseppe Penone, celebrates the history, creativity and energy that is at the heart of Ithra.

The Source is located at the heart of the Plaza. It forms a four-sided basket-like structure clad in a timber and glass screen. The space features a monumental sculpture, titled Source of Light, by renowned Turin-based artist Giuseppe Penone, celebrating the history, creativity and energy that is at the heart of Ithra.

The sculpture connects the earth below to the sky above, forming a symbolic link. The 90-foot-tall work consists of three towering bronze trees that "grow" from the base of "The Source," symbolizing the nearby Prosperity Well. The towering bronze trees are supported by the branches of a fourth larger tree, which is divided into hollow sections, forming a telescope-like viewing space that projects up toward the sky and appears to levitate above the pool at its base. This central tree creates an open interior space and golden shaft of light for visitors gazing upward.







# Ithra's Programs

- Tanween
- iRead
- Saudi Film Production Support Program
- Ithra Art Prize
- Cultural Content Production
- Ithra Outreach
- Ithra Cultural Majlis
- Ithra Academy
- Volunteering

5



# Tanween

## A World of Creativity

Tanween, Ithra's creativity and innovation festival, is the first and largest creative platform in Saudi Arabia, exploring culture, science, entrepreneurship and the arts. Tanween tackles an original and impactful theme each year, and creates extraordinary – and accessible – opportunities for innovation, interactions and open conversations through a program of seminars, talks, art exhibitions, theater performances, masterclasses and training workshops.

A platform for the latest ideas and innovations from the Kingdom and the world, Tanween is a program for creative industry professionals, as well as aspiring talents. It brings together innovative ideas and professionals from across the Kingdom, the region and the globe to further creativity.













# iRead

## Reading as a Way of Life

The iRead program — open to all, regardless of age, gender or academic level — was developed to create a new generation of readers for the knowledge economy and to promote Arabic publications and literature. Launched in 2012, iRead encourages reading and nurtures a culture of literature by offering programs that raise awareness of the importance and benefits of reading. The program was created with a goal to inspire 1 million new readers by 2030.

The program is based on three key elements:

- The Reader of the Year award is aimed toward students in public education and granted to the student who writes the best description and critical reception of books read during the academic year.
- Reading Ambassadors is part of an annual competition among teachers to promote a culture of reading among their students. Ithra celebrates the best teacher and bestows on them the title of "Ambassador."
- Content Creators is a competition open to Saudi citizens and residents interested in making and enriching Arabic content. The program contributes to the creation of original Arabic content, with a special focus on book reviews. Furthermore, it serves to identify emerging authors and assists them in publishing their literary works. The inaugural competition drew 861 participants, with Shaima Al Kathiri named the winner.





# Saudi Film Production Support Program

## The Nation Through the Eyes of its Filmmakers

Ithra makes significant contributions to the development of the Saudi film industry — nurturing and promoting Saudi talent, screening movies, hosting talks and workshops, and celebrating aspiring Saudi filmmakers. It is also helping Saudi filmmakers in the country, where cinema has only recently started to emerge, to develop an informed taste for artistic films and position the Kingdom firmly in the movie scene locally and internationally.

Film production and funding are two of the hardest challenges facing innovative filmmakers, so Ithra organizes an integrated production program for the benefit of professional directors and amateurs alike. This program helps filmmakers turn their dreams of producing feature films, short films and documentaries, into reality.









# Ithra Art Prize

## Celebrating Contemporary Arab Art

The Ithra Art Prize was launched in 2017. In its first three editions, the Art Prize was awarded and unveiled annually at Art Dubai to a Saudi or Saudi-based contemporary artist identified through an open call by a selection committee comprised of Saudi as well as international experts. In 2021, Ithra announced that the prize was expanding to include all 22 Arab countries, and a new partnership with the Ministry of Culture through its Ad-Diriyah Biennale Foundation.

The winners of the Ithra Art Prize are granted funds up to \$100,000 in commission of a singular work of art that will be showcased to a global audience. The winning artwork also joins Ithra's permanent collection. Artist Ayman Zedani was the winner of the first edition of the Prize, Daniah Al Saleh won the second edition, Fahad bin Naif won the third edition and Nadia Kaabi-Linke was the winner of the fourth edition.





# Cultural Content Production

## A Champion of Local Talent

Ithra contributes to the development of the Kingdom's cultural and creative industries with a robust program that encourages and supports the creation and curation of original content across different disciplines and media. Aligned with the wider Vision 2030, the Center encourages, enables and inspires Saudi creatives and showcases their work as they become a vital part of the Kingdom's growing talent-focused creative economy.

The program answers the audiences' need for diverse media by exposing visitors to original content – both homegrown and imported – while providing a platform for audiences to engage with material spanning the creative ecosystem, from Creative Solutions to Tanween, the Idea Lab, art open calls and opportunities in literature and film.

This initiative also bolsters the availability of Arabic language content locally, regionally and globally. Ithra addresses the deficit of Arabic language content by advancing the translation of existing material as well as the creation of original content in Arabic, including written material, visual media and performances.

Hundreds of submissions were received as part of the commissioning phase of the initiative, demonstrating the appetite for and presence of local talent.





# Ithra Outreach

## Beyond its Building

Ithra travels to the far ends of the Kingdom to nourish and inspire the nation's individuals, and extends that engagement to global citizens through the Bridges program.

Even before Ithra's landmark building was completed, Ithra touched the lives of many people across the Kingdom with rich and diverse educational outreach programs that have become their own roaming cultural hubs of knowledge sharing.

To date, Ithra's Outreach program has visited more than 40 cities in the Kingdom, benefiting tens of thousands of students who have participated in Ithra programs delivered under the guidance of trainers and teachers.

Ithra's Bridges program is a manifestation of the Center's role in building bridges between the Kingdom and the rest of the world. It consists of a series of creative and impactful activities that provided a platform for more than 50 Saudi artists to participate in international exhibitions, including shows at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Brooklyn Museum.





# Ithra Cultural Majlis

## Join the Conversation

At Ithra's dynamic discussion tables, intellectuals, thinkers and writers gather during Ramadan to discuss a diverse selection of cultural and philosophical topics that open minds and enrich thoughts.

The Majlis aims to create an open space for dialogue, to question, discuss and exchange opinions and ideas about issues impacting the reality of today's Saudi people. You are invited to get involved in the conversations and discussions, share your views, and listen to the opinions of fellow Saudi citizens, residents and visitors.





# Ithra Academy

## Talent Development

Ithra launched the Ithra Academy in 2021. A first for the Kingdom, it offers scholastic training programs tailored to various audiences, to provide long-term exposure to the creative and cultural industries.

The platform promotes creativity, art and leadership through a learning environment that enables ambitious individuals to develop their skills and experience. The Academy features a set of courses carefully designed to provide a rich experience and knowledge specialized in a creative, informed and practical way by the pioneers of innovation in the cultural and creative sector.









# Volunteering

## Talent Development

The concept of volunteering is deeply rooted in Ithra's culture. It goes far beyond a desire to engage and enrich our visitors, or simply give them opportunities to participate and learn. The Center's philosophy is based on the belief that volunteering is one of the manifestations of citizenship and a path towards a stronger sense of belonging and identity, both being pivotal pillars of Saudi society.

Ithra has become a beacon of volunteerism by inspiring thousands of young Saudis to meet and exchange ideas, as well as develop their communication, professional and creative skills. More than 8,500 volunteers have devoted more than 483,000 hours in service of the community. It demonstrates the true spirit of Ithra.

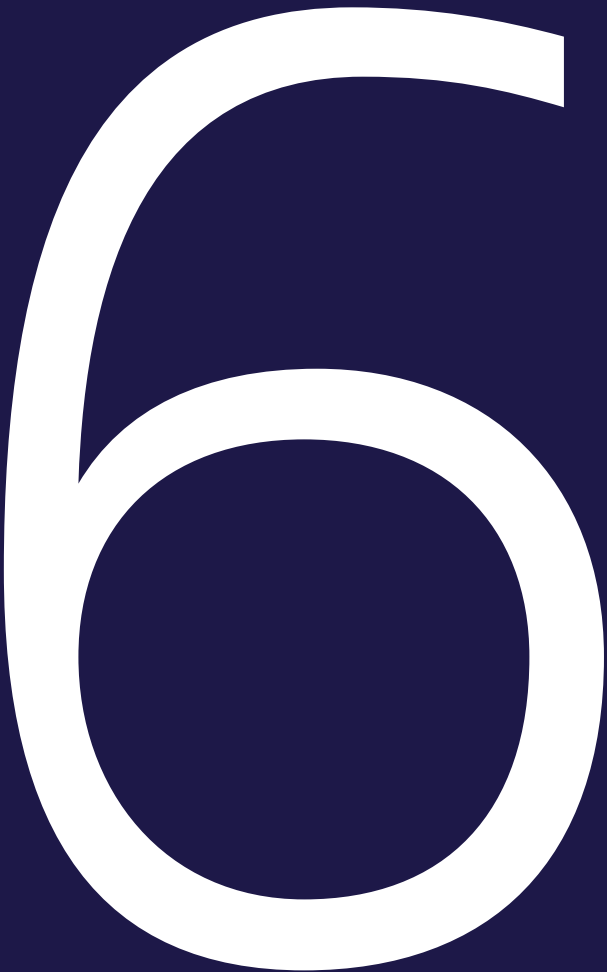
Ithra was officially accredited and certified in 2021 as the first entity by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development to develop and manage professional volunteering programs and services in Saudi Arabia. Ithra accomplished all of Edama's standards and achieved the highest level that enables an organization to reach the optimal application of the standard. Edama is a committee authorized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development to evaluate the volunteering groups within the Kingdom.





# Ithra's Achievements

- Ithra's Awards
- Ithra's Milestones
- Ithra by Numbers





Ithra is dedicated to contributing to the development of Saudi society and the Kingdom's creative industries. One of the Center's biggest achievements is making a difference in the lives of the Kingdom's people. Looking back over the years, the idea of a cultural center has morphed into an impactful destination like no other and became the beating heart of the Kingdom's cultural and creative ecosystem. Ithra is encouraged to achieve even more going forward.





# Ithra's Awards

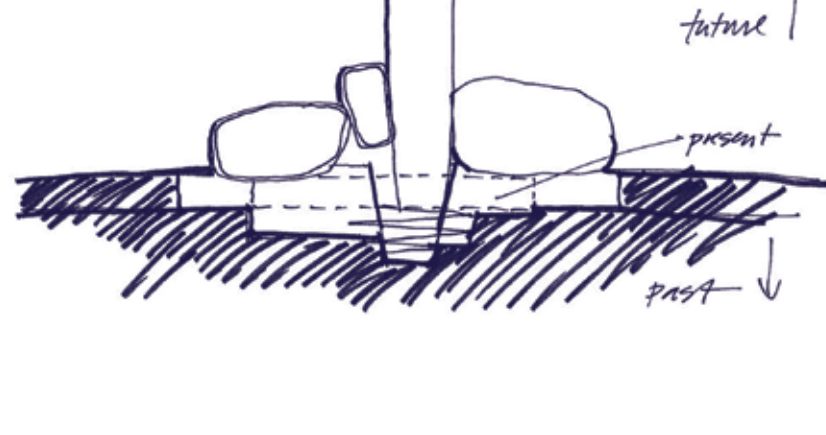
Ithra has received more than 20 cultural awards

- **2021 National Cultural Awards:**  
Cultural Institution Award (From Ministry of Culture)
- **2021 National Award for Supporting Volunteerism in the Private Sector:**  
(1st Place)
- **2021 MarCom Awards:**  
Digital Team Achievement (Platinum)
- **2021 Accreditation of National Volunteering Standard (EDAMA)**
- **2021 MarCom Awards:**  
Pro Bono (Platinum)
- **2020 MEPRA Awards:**  
Best Arts & Culture Campaign (Silver)
- **2019 Saudi Aramco Excellence Award:**  
Tanween/ Ithra Creativity season
- **2019 Transform MENA Awards:**  
Best Use of Audio Branding (Gold)
- **2019 Transform MENA Awards:**  
Best Visual Identity in Educational Sector (Silver)
- **2019 Transform MENA Awards:**  
Best Creative Strategy (Bronze)
- **2019 ACI Excellence in Concrete Construction:**  
Best Overall Excellence Award
- **2019 ACI Excellence in Concrete Construction:**  
Mid-Rise Building Category (1st Place)
- **2019 New York Festivals TV & Film Awards:**  
Joud - Feature Film Category (Silver)
- **2018 TIME magazine 100 Greatest Places to Visit**
- **2014 Saudi Aramco Excellence Award:**  
Ithra Knowledge Program
- **2014 Saudi Aramco Excellence Award:**  
Ithra Youth Program
- **2013 WISE (World Innovation Summit for Education) Award:**  
Ithra Youth Program



## 2006 – 08

- The birth of Ithra (the idea) (2006)
- Architectural competition launched (2007)
- King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Sa'ud lays the symbolic cornerstone at Saudi Aramco's 75th Anniversary celebration (2008)



## 2010

- Construction commences (August)



## 2011 – 15

- Creative Solution Project initiated (2011; Keystone, now called the Idea Lab)
- Ithra sponsors the first Saudi pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2011)
- Pilot outreach programs launched — Ithra Youth initiatives: iRead and iSpark (2012)
- Ithra Knowledge Program launched (2013)
- First Ithra Creativity Forum held (2013)
- The Pure Colors exhibition, brought to the Ithra Knowledge Program by the Centre Pompidou of France, showcased 20 unique masterpieces by international artists, including a work by Pablo Picasso (2013)
- Ithra hosts the inaugural Global Knowledge Society Forum (2013)
- Ithra hosts the Saudi Film Festival (2015)



## 2016 – 17

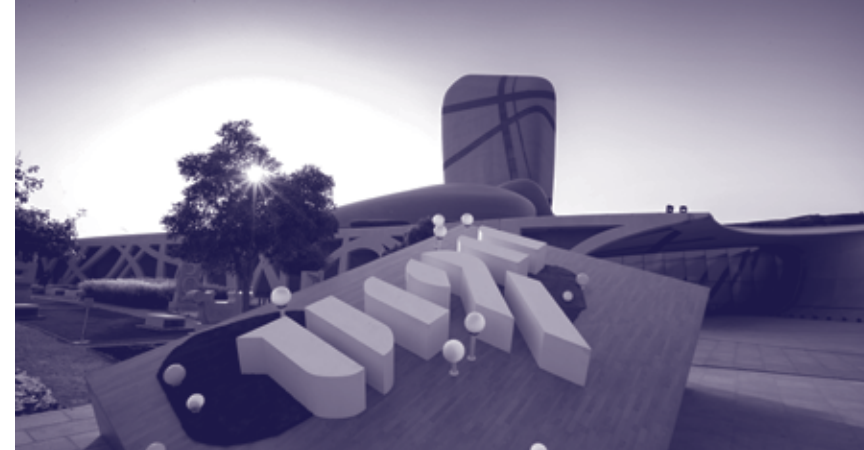
- Ithra Royal Inauguration with King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Sa'ud (December 2016)
- Ithra programming commences: Ithra Art Prize, Southern Border Initiative, Bridges, Ithra Volunteering Program (March 2017)
- Soft opening of Ithra components (December 2017)



# Milestones

## 2018

- Ithra hosts the Arab Summit (April)
- Ithra public opening (June)
- Inaugural theater performance, featuring the Mariinsky Orchestra (June)
- Time magazine names Ithra one of the 100 Greatest Places to Visit (August)
- Tanween: Ithra's creativity and innovation festival launched (October)
- Gold LEED Certification achievement (November)



## 2019

- International art exhibitions held in the Great Hall: Leonardo Da Vinci Codex Atlanticus Through Space and Time exhibition (March) and Landscapes of the Soul Munch exhibition (June)
- Ithra Membership Program launched (March)
- Source of Light sculpture installed (May)
- Ithra welcomes its 1 millionth visitor (October)
- Ithra hosts the Fikr Conference (December)



## 2020

- Ithra Content Initiative launched (January)
- Ithra partners with Misk to lead the Y20 Engagement Group as part of the G20 (January)
- Ithra Annual Gathering (February)
- Ithra Cultural Days opens (February)
- Ithra Connect launched (March)
- Ithraeyat Magazine launched (March)
- Ithra and Misk host the Y20 Engagement Group global summit (October)
- Shatr AlMasjid: The Art of Orientation exhibition opens (October)



## 2021

- Creative Solutions program launched (February)
- COVID-19 exhibition opens (March)
- Terra exhibition opens (May)
- Seeing & Perceiving exhibition opens (June)
- Short Play Contest launched (August)
- Learning Beyond Conference held (September)
- Digital Wellbeing program Sync launched (September)
- Ithra Academy launched (September)
- Islamic Art Conference titled Mosque: Innovation in Object, Form and Function Conference opens (November)





# Ithra

## by Numbers

Visitors	2 million
Global Outreach	500,000+
Creative Products	500+
Number of Ithra Volunteers	8,500+
Volunteer Hours	483,000+
Titles in the Library	300,000+
Programs	20,000+
Exhibitions by Ithra Museum	20
Stage Shows	35
Films produced	20+



The Ithra story wouldn't be complete without the dedication and support of so many.

A special thanks is owed to every member of the Ithra family - all staff, partners, participants and volunteers, past and present, who contributed to the Ithra story.

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