

DESERT X

A site-specific contemporary art exhibition in the desert.

The City of Palm Desert

Desert X 2025
Coachella Valley, CA
March 8 - May 11, 2025



WHAT WE DO

Desert X is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization made possible by the generous contributions of individuals and organizations who value contemporary art.

We create contemporary art exhibitions that engage with desert environments through site-specific installations by acclaimed and emerging artists from around the world.

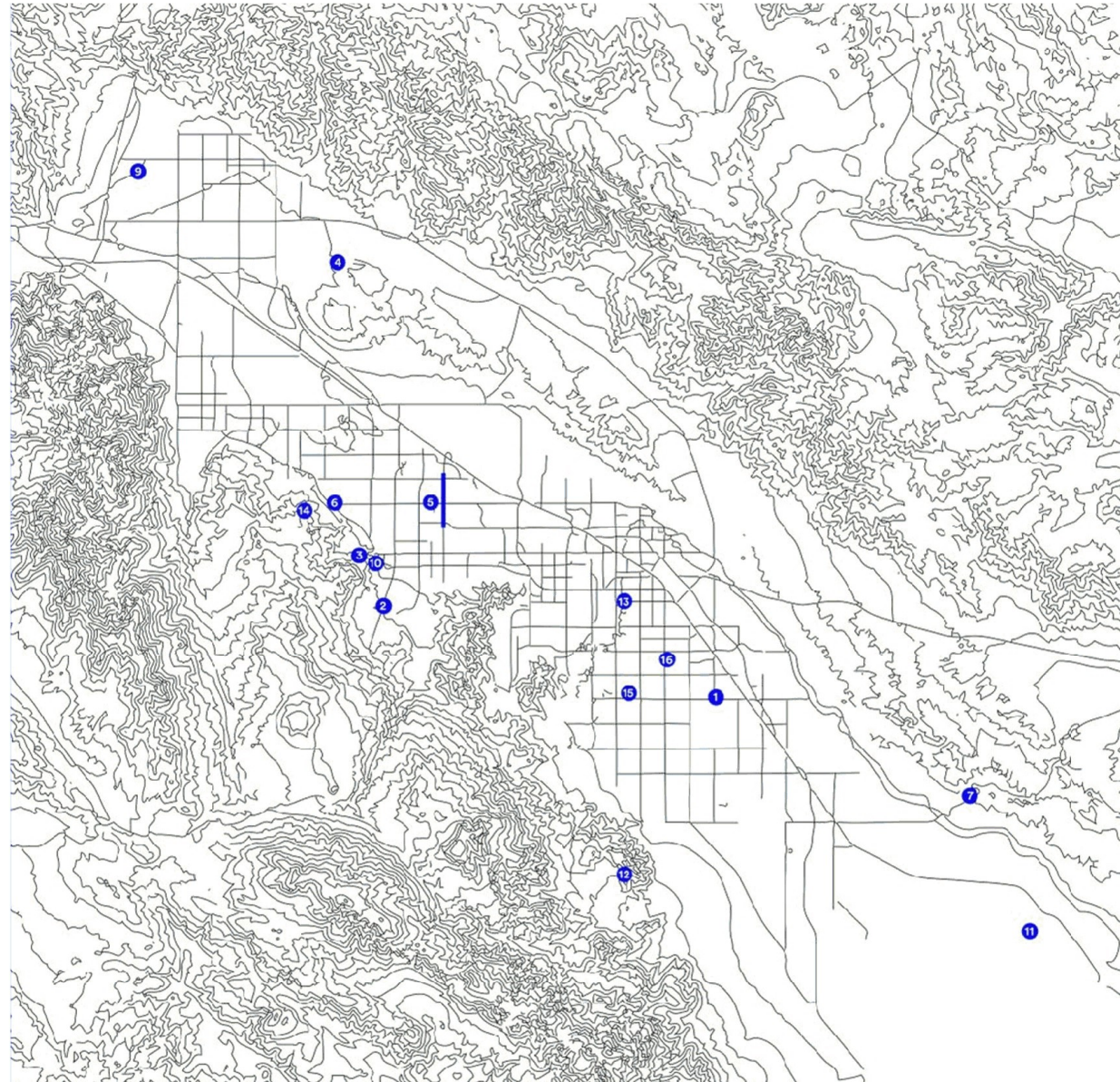
↗ [Read more about our Mission.](#)

Superflex, *Dive-In*, Desert X 2019. Photo by Lance Gerber.

Non-prescriptive and exploratory,
Desert X encourages discovery,
reflection, and connection.

Art becomes the road map which gives
voice to social, historical, and cultural
issues of desert communities.

Desert X 2017 map





Rana Begum, No. 1225 Chainlink, Desert X 2023. Photo by Lance Gerber.

‘THE LANDSCAPE IS CHANGING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, WHERE AN EXHIBITION CALLED “DESERT X” WILL BRING ART ACROSS THE COACHELLA VALLEY.’

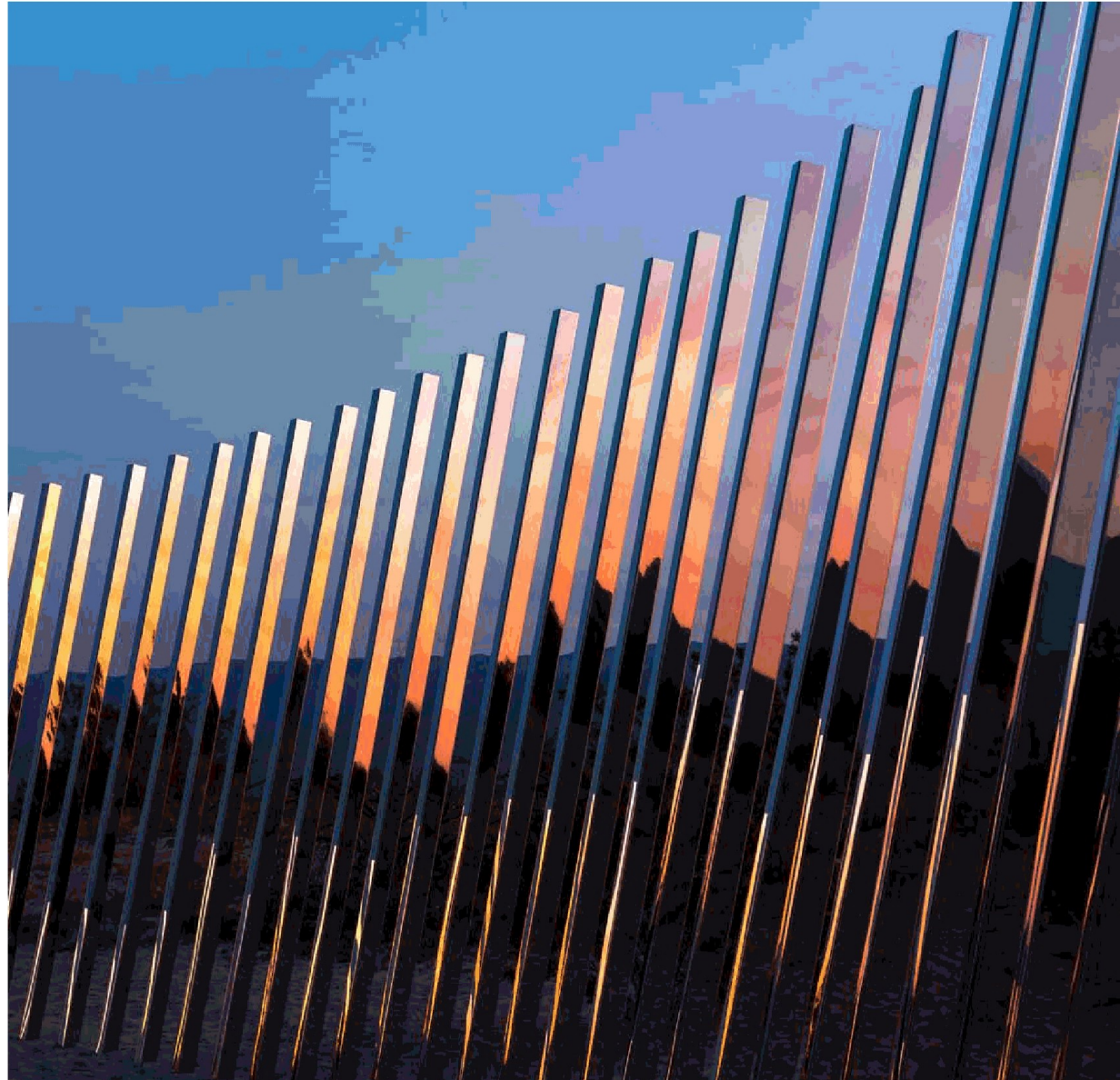
— Peter Bohler, *Vanity Fair*

DESERT X 2025

MARCH 8 - MAY 11, 2025

COACHELLA VALLEY, CA

Phillip K. Smith III, *The Circle of Land and Sky*, Desert X 2017.
Photo by Lance Gerber.



DESERT X 2025 CURATORIAL STATEMENT

In the Coachella Valley, where time unfolds in geological epochs and the wind weaves stories through ancient mountains, a profound reverence for the enduring spirit of this harsh yet resilient region emerges, challenging us to glean wisdom from its vast knowledge. Far from an empty expanse, the desert landscape acts as a canvas of real and imagined histories, narrating tales of displacement, sovereignty and adaptation superimposed over visible testaments of time.

Reflecting on the desert's deep time evolutions, the fifth edition of Desert X will delve deeper into nonlinear narratives of time, forming a space where ancestral wisdom intertwines and collides with contemporary visions for our collective future.



ABOUT THE CURATORS



KAITLIN GARCIA-MAESTAS Co-curator, Desert X 2025

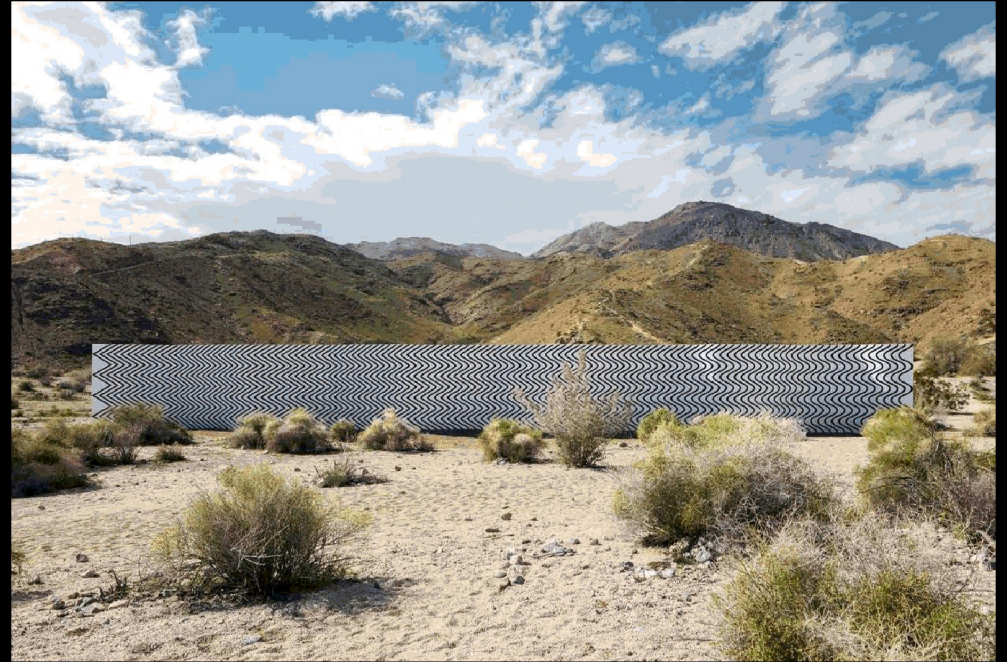
Kaitlin Garcia-Maestas is Curator and Director of Exhibitions at Socrates Sculpture Park in Queens, NY. Born and raised in New Mexico, her research and curatorial interests have primarily explored themes of displacement, decolonial resistance, and cultural hybridity in the United States and the Americas. For over a decade, she has been devoted to the advocacy and realization of large-scale, site-specific installations by BIPOC and emerging artists. Previously, Garcia-Maestas was Acting Curator of Visual Arts at the Momentary, the contemporary satellite space of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, AR. While at the Momentary she oversaw the artist-in-residency program and organized over a dozen exhibitions and outdoor installations, including site-specific projects. Prior to the Momentary, she held curatorial positions at the Denver Art Museum, the Biennial of the Americas, and MCA Denver.



NEVILLE WAKEFIELD Artistic Director

Neville Wakefield is a postmodern writer and curator interested in exploring the ways in which art behaves outside of institutional contexts. As senior curatorial advisor for PS1 MoMA and curator of Frieze Projects, he gained a reputation for challenging the conditions that shape art in both commercial and noncommercial contexts. Explorations of time and space have been a signature part of his practice. He has worked extensively with international institutions, including the Schaulager in Switzerland, where he curated the Matthew Barney retrospective *Prayer Sheet with the Wound and the Nail* one of the first shows to juxtapose the work of a contemporary artist with that of half a millennium before. Space as it relates to landscape and land art led him to co-found *Elevation1049*, a site-specific biennial in Gstaad, Switzerland, while also shaping the recurring *Desert X* exhibitions in the Coachella Valley region of Southern California of which he is Founding Artistic Director. He has also been instrumental in the development and success of *Desert X AlUla*, taking place in AlUla northwest Saudi Arabia, home to the country's first UNESCO World Heritage Site, Hegra along with numerous other initiatives aimed at promoting art in the Gulf region.

DESERT X 2025 & PALM DESERT



Claudia Comte, *Curves and Zig Zags*, Desert X 2019. Photo by Lance Gerber.

Every exhibition, the city of Palm Desert supports Desert X in a multitude of ways and we are so appreciative of your support.

Desert X would like to continue this invaluable municipal partnership for Desert X 2025 and are planning to showcase the city's natural beauty and welcoming community spirit by hosting installations, programming, and more in Palm Desert.

Pia Camil, *Lover's Rainbow*, Desert X 2019. Photo by Lance Gerber.

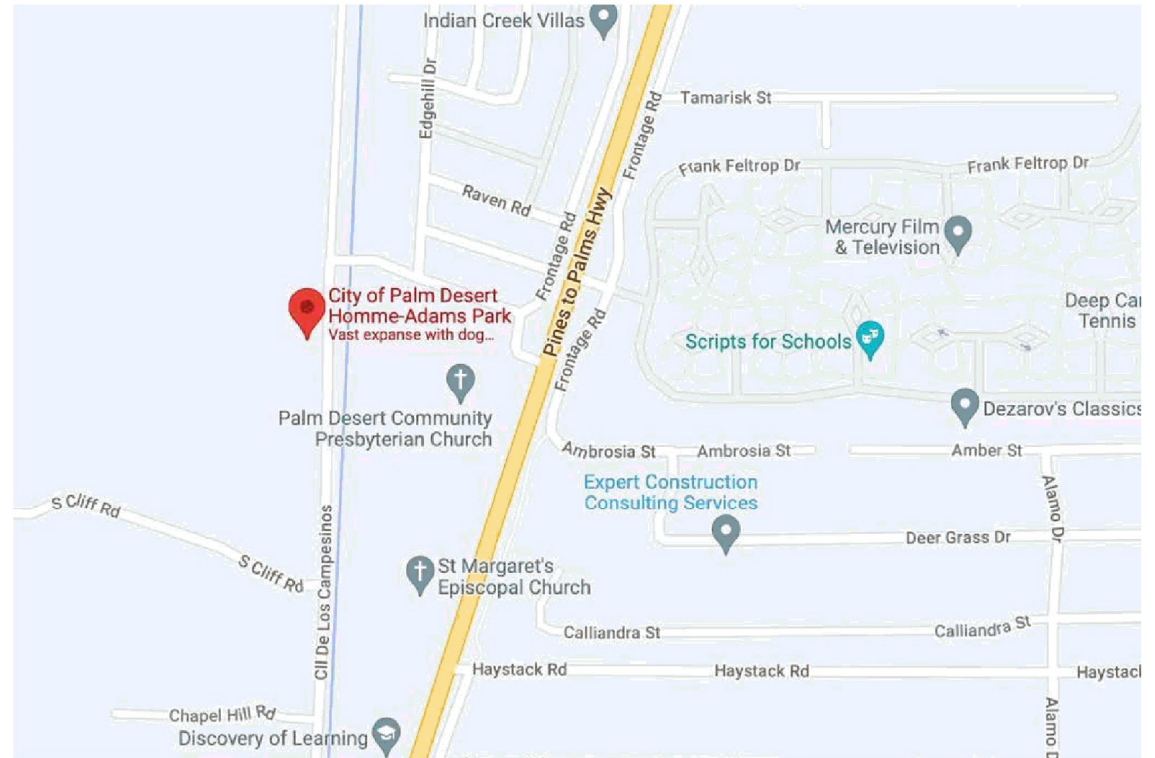


PROPOSED LOCATIONS

For Desert X 2025, we propose to use this site for an art installation.

33°42'23.9"N 116°23'55.5" W

Homme-Adams Park
72500 Thrush Rd
Palm Desert, CA 92260
United States

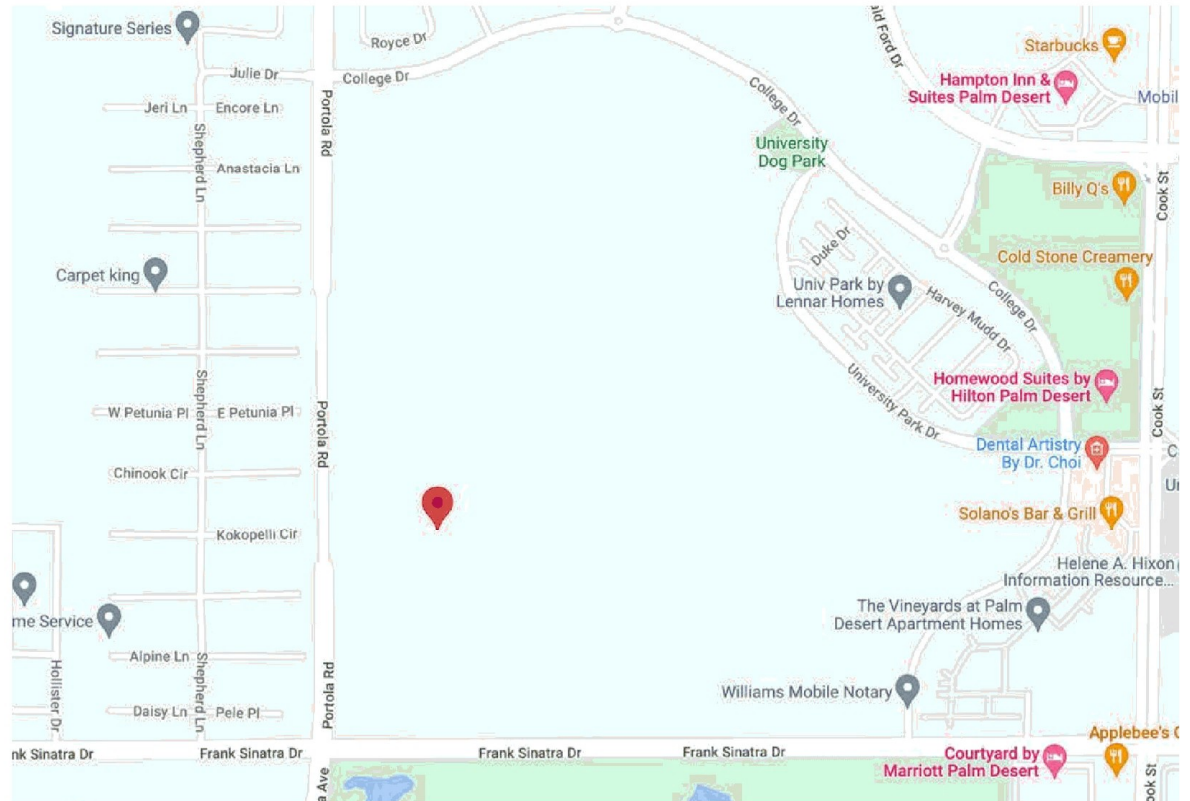


PROPOSED LOCATIONS

For Desert X 2025, we propose to use this site for an art installation.

33°46'33.3"N 116°22'07.3" W

74184 Portola Rd
Palm Desert, CA 92211
United States



SELECTED PROPOSALS

KAPWANI KIWANGA

b. Hamilton, Canada, 1978

Kapwani Kiwanga's work traces the pervasive impact of power asymmetries by placing historic narratives in dialogue with contemporary realities, the archive, and tomorrow's possibilities. Research-driven, her work is instigated by marginalised or forgotten histories and articulated across a range of materials and mediums. Kiwanga co-opts the canon, turning systems of power back on themselves, and thus developing an aesthetic vocabulary that she describes as "exit strategies," works that invite one to see things from multiple perspectives so as to look differently at existing structures and find new ways to navigate the future.



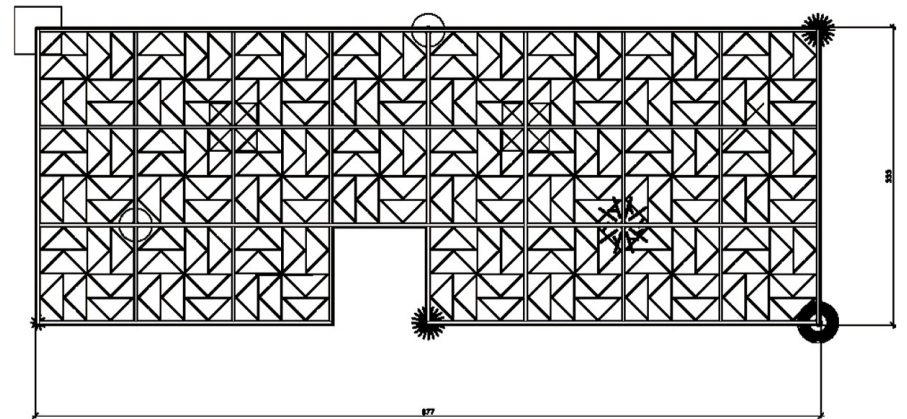
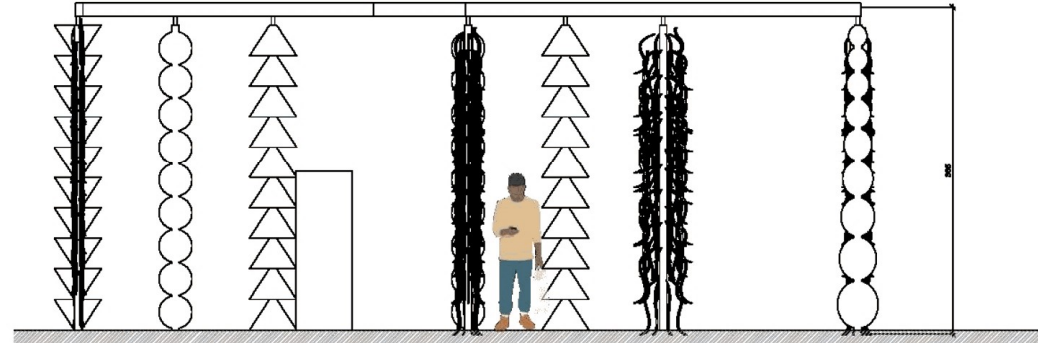


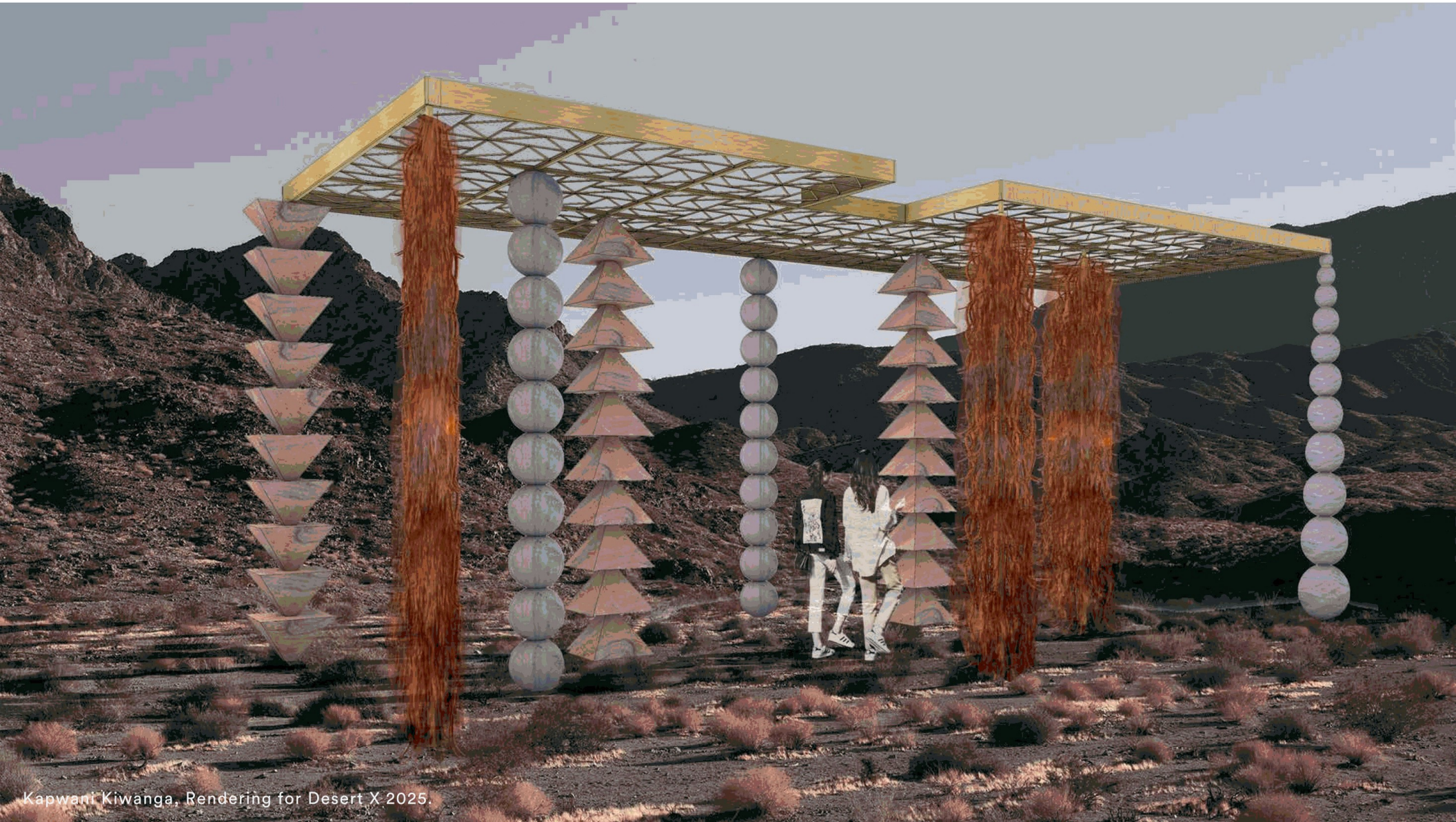
Kapwani Kiwanga, *pink blue*, Baker-Miller pink paint, white paint, fluorescent lights, blue fluorescent lights, 2017.



Kapwani Kiwanga, *Retenue*, Capc Musée d'art contemporain, 2024.

Kiwanga proposes a sculpture evoking a pavilion and inspired by the lines and volumes of the desert's mid-century modernism. A roof lattice of triangles hovers above the heads of visitors, casting shadows on the surrounding environment. The roof is supported by columns made from the natural materials and forms found in the region. The composition of the lattice references a quilting pattern known as "Flying Geese," one of the quilt designs said to have been used along the Underground Railroad to communicate coded messages to those fleeing slavery. Citing this contested history, the sculpture provides place of speculation to imagine spaces of rest, freedom, and safety.





Kapwani Kiwanga, Rendering for Desert X 2025.

KIMSOOJA

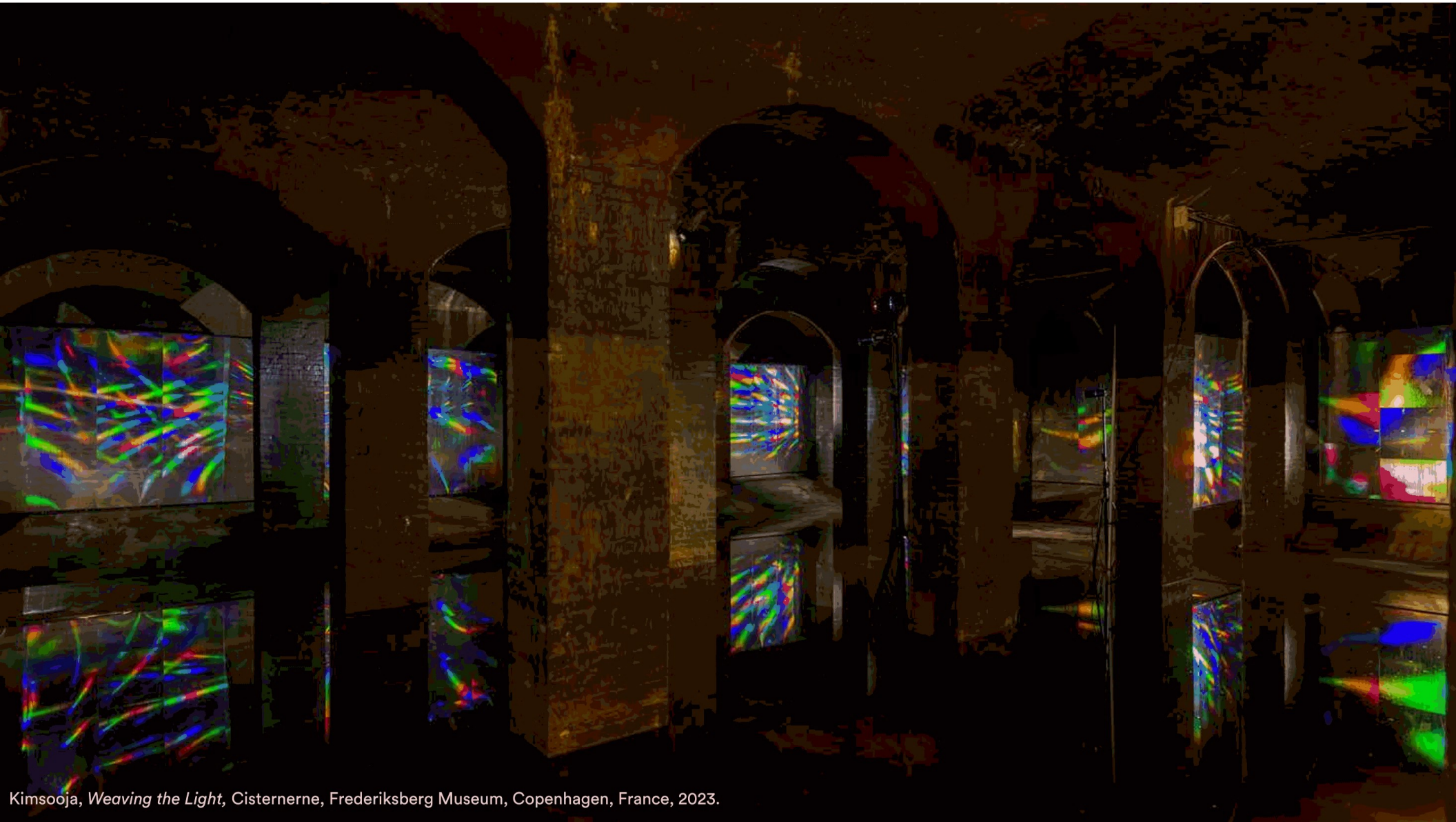
b. Daegu, Korea, 1957

Kimsooja explores the totality of life and art, transcending distinctions of medium and form through works of painting, by sewing, installation, performance, video, light and sound. Her adoption of “non-doing, non-making” as an aesthetic framework inform her longstanding engagement with various media and methodologies, driving her persistent questioning of art and humanity in conceptual, contemplative aesthetics and humanism.





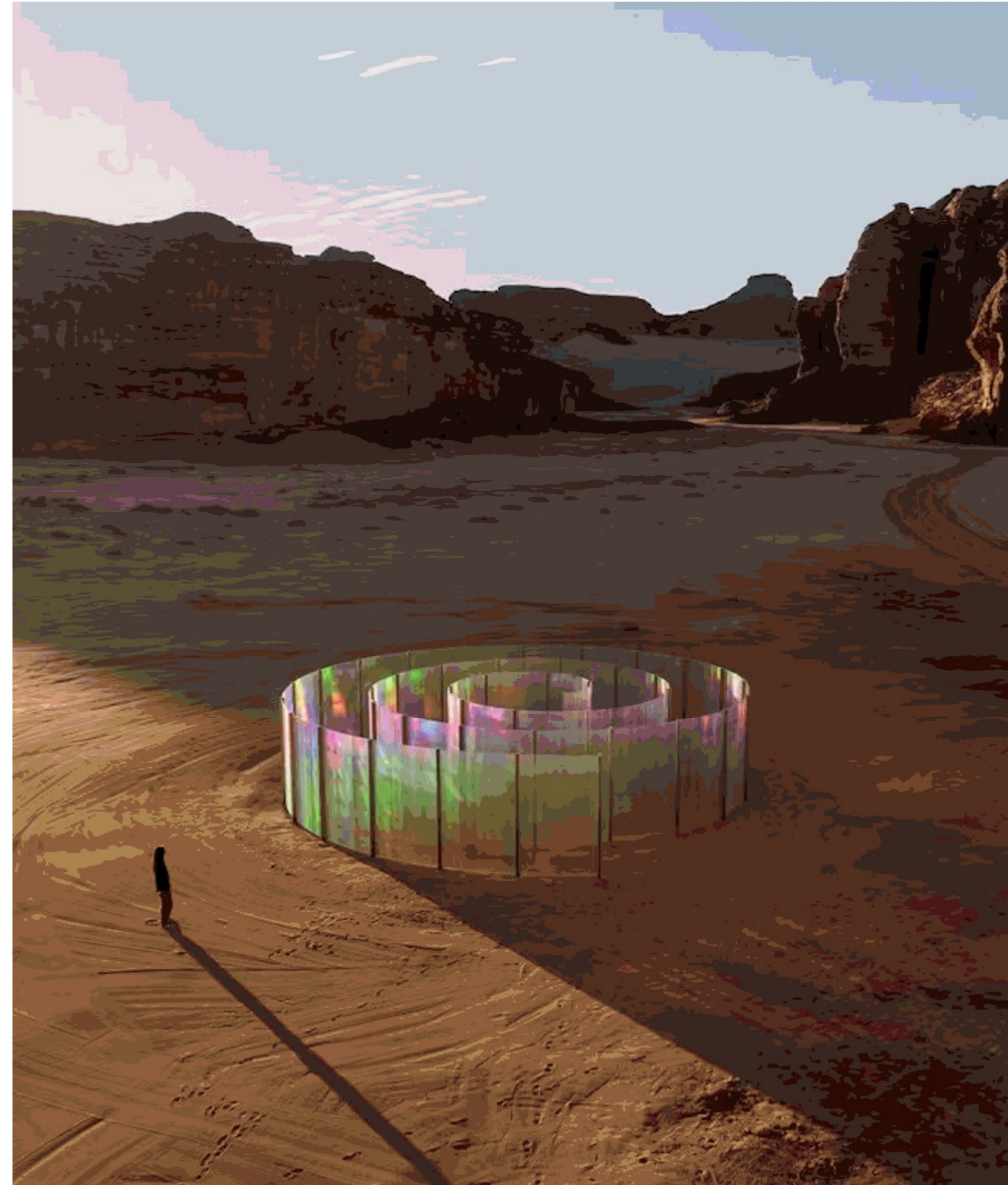
Kimsooja, *To Breathe*, Marie de Saint-Ouen station, Saint-Ouen-sur-Seine, France, 2023.

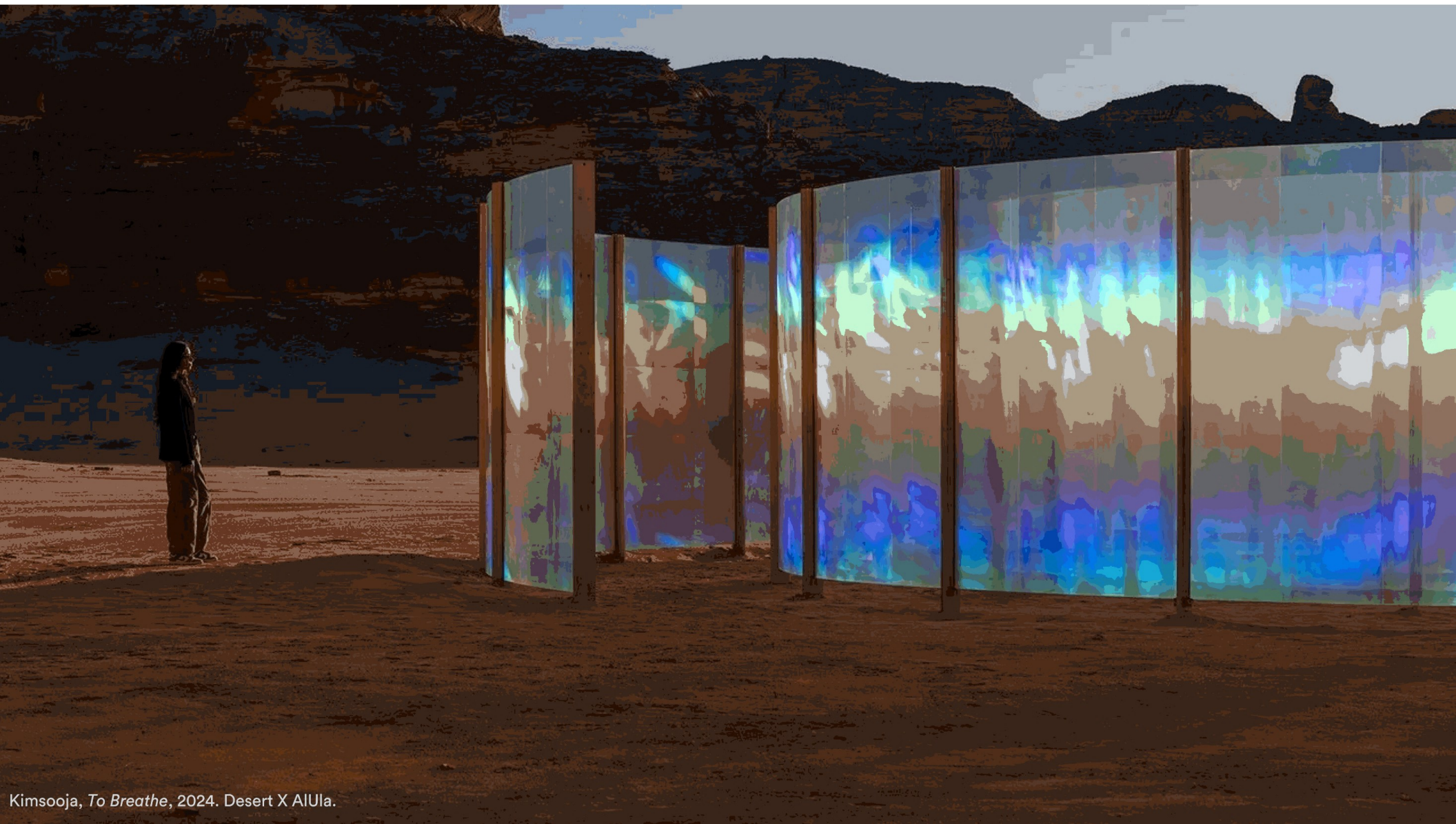


Kimsooja, *Weaving the Light*, Cisternerne, Frederiksberg Museum, Copenhagen, France, 2023.

A continuation of kimsooja's work for Desert X AIUla 2024, this sculpture is a glass spiral through which light reflects, refracts, and traverses, echoing the conceptual and geometrical formation of the desert landscape. Coated with a film, the glass is a translucent canvas that functions as a prism. Visitors partake in a contemplative performance by walking through and gazing at the shifting light spectrums that render visible vibrations of colors normally invisible to the naked eyes. In Kimsooja's words, "it is a walk in and out of a contained yet open spiral path that unfolds an abstract 'lightscape' – at once a drawing, a painting, and a sculpture."

Kimsooja, *To Breathe*, 2024. Desert X AIUla.





Kimsooja, *To Breathe*, 2024. Desert X AIUla.

DESERT X BY THE NUMBERS



Eduardo Sarabia, *The Passenger*, Desert X 2021. Photo by Lance Gerber.

**“DESERT X IS MORE THAN JUST AN
ART EXHIBITION – IT’S A JOURNEY
INTO OUR BELIEFS AND OUR
PERCEPTION OF THE WORLD.”**

— Liddy Berman, *Architectural Digest*

OUR AUDIENCE

The culturally curious from near and far and from diverse socio-economic backgrounds come in person, online, and virtually.

- 87% of in-person attendees are 25 – 54 years old.
- 50 media outlets attended live press conference held in Palm Springs on March 3, 2023.
- International visitors represent over 25 countries, including Mexico, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Spain, Saudi Arabia, India, and Ghana.

Torkwase Dyson, *Liquid A Place*, Desert X 2023. Photo by Lance Gerber.



DIGITAL INFLUENCE

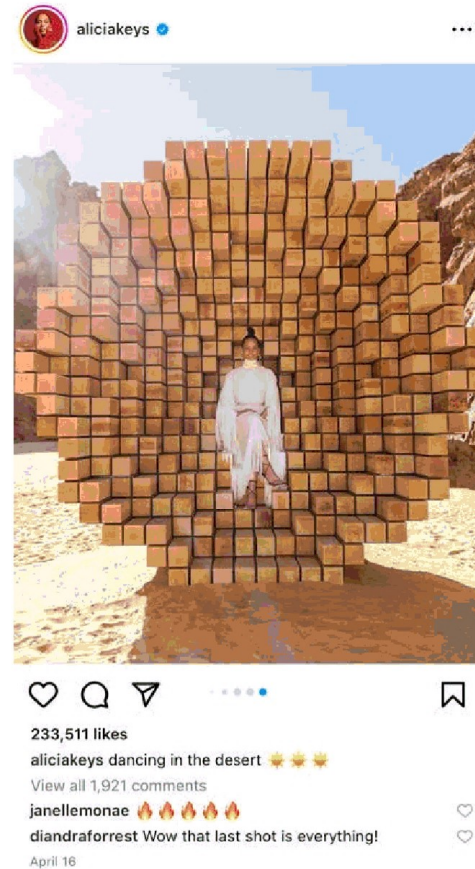
Our digital footprint has experienced organic and exponential growth since its inception in 2017.

- @ 138,000+ social media followers
- 🌐 1.1M annual visitors to desertx.org in 2023
- 📡 5.7B online media impressions
- ✂️ 100,000+ app downloads

Average # of likes per post: 2,000
Average # of views per story: 1,000

Top cities that interact with Desert X:
Los Angeles, New York City, San Diego,
Palm Springs, and London.

Top countries:
United States, Saudi Arabia, Mexico,
United Kingdom, and Canada.





At the Desert X biennial, “Sleeping Figure,” by the artist Matt Johnson, is made of decommissioned shipping containers, the same kind used in the freight trains running behind his project. Coley Brown for The New York Times

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

Desert X Finds Roots in the Region

Almost all the artworks in the Coachella Valley biennial are socially engaged and site-specific.

EDITORIAL COVERAGE

- 6.7 billion global media impressions combined
- 5.7 billion online impressions
- 7 million print impressions
- 1 billion broadcast impressions
- 8.9 million outdoor billboard impressions

Notable media outlets include:

Vanity Fair, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, ARTnews, Forbes, Artnet News, Desert Sun, Marie Claire, Telemundo, Frieze Magazine, Palm Springs Life, Cultured, Open Spaces Magazine, Art Forum, and Condé Nast Traveler.

➤ [2023 exhibition media report.](#)



EDUCATION

Desert X has engaged over 4,500 of K-12 public school students from throughout the Coachella Valley since 2017.

During each exhibition, we offer field trips from local school districts and invite students to explore and experience the exhibition in person. We also provide in-class and after school art curriculum, student mentors and internships, and workforce development, and an end of year student exhibition.

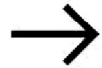
Since 2023, Desert X partners with over 10 DSUSD schools to provide after-school learning opportunities on an annual basis.

Superflex artist Rasmus Nielsen collaborating with video teacher Joe Martin and Palm Desert High School students.

KEY DATES

2025

JANUARY 2025



Participating Artists Announced

FEBRUARY 2025



Exhibition Installation Period

MARCH 6, 2025



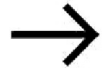
Exclusive Opening Artists Dinner (80 VIPs and Artists)

MARCH 7, 2025



Press & VIP Opening (200 VIPs, Press, and Artists)

MAY 9, 2025



Closing Celebration Programs
(500 VIPs, Partners, Artists, and Guests)

MAY 10, 2025



VIP Closing Reception (150 VIPs and Artists)

PAST SPONSORS

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COACHELLA VALLEY MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL

DIPTYQUE
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& SWIM CLUB



CHRISTIE'S



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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge and honor the Cahuilla people, who are the traditional custodians of the land where Desert X takes place.

We respect the Cahuilla culture and identity which has been bound up for generations with the land upon which we live, learn and create.

Photo by Lance Gerber.

DESERT X IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO VALUE CONTEMPORARY ART.

DESERT X IS A 501(C)(3) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION; EIN 30-0852223. CONTRIBUTIONS ARE FULLY TAX-DEDUCTIBLE TO THE EXTENT OF THE LAW.

**THANK YOU.
GRACIAS.**

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