

Art Jameel and British Council announce the recipients of the inaugural Anhar: Culture and Climate Platform, the Arab world's first programme to fund and nurture the role of the arts in addressing the climate crisis

July 9, 2024 – Today, [Art Jameel](#), and [British Council](#) are pleased to announce the recipients of [Anhar: Culture and Climate Platform](#). Launched through an open call in October 2023, Anhar is a three-tiered grants programme aimed at artists, collectives and institutions based in the Arab world. The open call attracted proposals from 25 countries and awarded grants to 19 recipients from 13 countries. Awarded projects range from artists working with sparrow nests in Iraq and prickly pear plants in Lebanon to major decarbonising initiatives, such as community gardens in Palestine and Morocco and solar-powered lighting in Syria.

The grants, totalling **£311,540 (US\$394,528)**, are categorised into three tiers: **Tier 1:** granted to seven artists, creative practitioners, collectives or collaborative ventures in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, Iraq and Kuwait via climate-related projects that raise community awareness. The selected proposals cover a wide range of themes—from architectural design and environmental degradation, industrial pollution and climate change through to shipwrecks and the future of food. **Tier 2:** awarded to seven organisations and venues engaged in efforts to reduce carbon and waste footprint through decarbonisation strategies and investments in renewable energy infrastructure across North Africa and the Levant. **Tier 3:** awarded to support five collaborations between UK and MENA-based artists or cultural organisations aiming to develop large-scale artistic responses to the climate emergency. Projects selected propose thorough public programmes, commissions, publications, film screenings and workshops.

Proposals were evaluated by juries of experienced international practitioners, curators and climate specialists, who collectively noted the particularly innovative and creative ways in which the culture sector is addressing themes of sustainability, and the potential these projects have to engage the public, transform cities and environments, preserve and enhance traditions, and offer new thinking and original solutions.

The outcome of extensive dialogue between a network of regional arts and ecology practitioners, Anhar launched ahead of the UAE's hosting of the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP28). This major commissioning programme supports new works and community projects by individual practitioners, as well as grassroots cultural institutions implementing practical solutions to reduce their carbon emissions and waste. Anhar embodies Art Jameel and the British Council's shared commitment to sustainability and environmental awareness by supporting diverse, community-centric cultural activities.

Regional Arts Director of British Council Amany Abu Abouzeid commented “Anhar: Culture and Climate Platform embodies the British Council's firm belief in and commitment to

the role of the arts in tackling global challenges; climate change being at the forefront. Anhar is a collaborative effort with Art Jameel, signifying our commitment to engaging with key regional stakeholders. It aims at contextualising the climate crisis and supporting arts organisations, collectives and individual artists to engage with communities and like-minded artists and civil society organisations in the region and the UK tackling the climate crisis issue and expressing the different voices and local contexts. Our programmes aim to encourage and support long-term, nurturing, mutually beneficial connections and collaborations among artists and arts organisations in the region as well as between the region and the UK. We congratulate the recipients and look forward to the outcomes of the projects and to the enriching experiences, artistic expression, community outreach and collaborations.”

Director of Art Jameel, Antonia Carver, said: “Working together with the British Council and a network of eco-minded colleagues, we asked ourselves, what is the role of the arts in addressing the climate crisis? And what can we do, specifically from and in our region? Anhar harnesses the great breadth and power of creative imagination, commitment and ingenuity in the Arab world and supports projects that range from innovative artworks to compelling educational initiatives and mass events via deeply practical decarbonising solutions with long-term impact. We congratulate the awardees and look forward to nurturing and following the development of these incredible projects throughout the year ahead and beyond.”

Notes to Editor

Tier 1: Artists and Collectives

Anhar granted seven Tier 1 awards, totalling £1,000 to £5,000 (\$1,000 to \$6,000), to artists, creative practitioners and small collectives or collaborative ventures focusing on climate-related projects that raise community awareness.

The recipients are:

Al-Wah’at Collective (Spain/Lebanon/Palestine)

Al-Wah’at is an artist research collective committed to fostering communal practices in ecologies typically considered hostile and barren through field and archival research that utilises local materials and image-making. Their proposal titled ***Wild Hedges*** examines the ecological and socio-political complexities of the prickly pear cactus and its phytophagous cochineal insect across multiple geographies, communities and temporalities. By examining the material possibilities of both inhabitant and host, Al-Wah’at seeks to nurture practices of care amidst environmental changes.

IWLab (Syria, based in Syria and Spain)

IWlab is a multidisciplinary laboratory co-founded by Syrian artists and educators Iyas Shahin and Wesam Al Asali that explores cultural and architectural design research, education and practice. **Mansaj**, an extension of the lab's exploration of Syrian crafts, centres on plant harvesting, preparation and production ecologies, examining how traditional art forms adapt to climate degradation and droughts. Documenting reed weaving and straw plate making across Damascus and southern Syria's urban, domestic and artisanal landscapes, **Mansaj** highlights existing practices and potential innovations on an architectural scale.

Saif Fradj (Tunisia)

Saif Fradj is a Tunisian artist and co-founder of the Bouma and South of Ajdabiya collectives. His multidisciplinary work explores the fragility of reality through themes of strangeness, national borders and identity in a neo-colonial context. His proposal, **A Pomegranate Falls**, examines the interplay of environmental degradation, industrial pollution and climate change in Gabes, Tunisia, focusing on the destructive impact of factory phosphate byproducts since the 1970s.

Wissem El-Abed (Tunisia)

Wissem El-Abed is a Tunisian visual artist originally from the Kerkennah Islands, whose works span image-making, installations, and assemblages. Through his multidisciplinary practice, El-Abed illustrates the transformative changes of our current era that shape relationships of otherness and conditions of mobility. **Island Gauze Station** is a symbolic Noah's Ark, an architectural sculpture built partly from local shipwrecks in the El Abassia region of the Kerkennah Islands, which are currently threatened by rising sea levels. This ark, whose name invokes acts of dressing, repairing, and generational healing, will invite visitors to rethink their relationship with nature and consider the collective role we must play in addressing the climate crisis.

Broudou (Tunisia)

Broudou is a multidisciplinary learning collective dedicated to artistic research on ecology, agriculture and food. Working alongside researchers, farmers and artists, **Broudou School** explores the future of food from a decolonial, ecological, alternative and feminist perspective through a range of public engagements in collaboration with the artist residency and project space Mouhit in Tunis.

Halgurd Ahmed Mohammed (Kurdistan Region, Iraq)

Halgurd Ahmed Mohammed is a Kurdish contemporary visual artist and lecturer at the Sulaimani University's College of Fine Arts in Iraq. His artistic practice is concerned with the use of Kurdish, English and Islamic texts within a Middle East art context, as well as shedding light on environmental issues facing both the Kurdistan Region and Iraq. **Sparrow Project** is one such initiative, which will see Mohammed design and install sparrow nests on the outer walls of school buildings. By bringing students and the public closer to this indigenous bird population,

the artist hopes to cultivate a deeper appreciation for Iraq's biodiversity and foster a heightened sense of social and environmental responsibility.

Mohammed Alkouw (Kuwait)

Mohammed Alkouw is a Kuwaiti photographer who employs analog photography, illustration and archival materials to explore themes of liminality, transience and the ever-present impact of the historical on contemporary life. ***Seasonal Territories*** is a photographic research project that delves into the evolution of Bedouin desert life, focusing on changes in tent structures as a result of colonial legacies and a dwindling connection to generational desert adaptation knowledge. It examines the ecological impact of urbanisation and human activities on arid landscapes, promoting dialogue on the balance between tradition and sustainability.

Tier 2: Organisations and Venues

The seven recipients for Tier 2 grants, ranging from £5,000 to £10,000 (\$6,000 to \$12,000), are cultural organisations initiating efforts to reduce carbon and waste footprint through decarbonization strategies and investments in renewable energy infrastructure.

The recipients are:

Dar Onboz (Lebanon)

Dar Onboz is a Lebanese publishing house and multi-disciplinary creative platform that produces high-quality Arabic books for readers of all ages, along with storytelling performances, plays, films, songs, educational tools, games and exhibitions. The **Dar Onboz Cultural Space** in Beirut is a multidisciplinary venue celebrating regional tales, art, crafts, and heritage through a diverse youth-focused cultural engagement program. Dar Onboz is now working to further equip this green space, sustainably built and furnished, with solar energy and ecological appliances.

Think Tangier (Morocco)

Think Tangier is a multi-disciplinary non-profit cultural platform promoting culture, creativity, innovation, and knowledge exchange within Tangier, Morocco. The organisation convenes artists, researchers, entrepreneurs, and local communities to foster dialogue on urban development and cultural policies. Think Tangier is currently transitioning its venues into more carbon-neutral spaces by adopting eco-friendly lighting, environmentally friendly art materials, and waste minimization practices.

The Wonder Cabinet (Palestine)

The Wonder Cabinet is a Bethlehem-based production facility and cultural space that brings together people and initiatives through experimental projects and productions encompassing the visual and sound arts, artisanship, design, architecture, food, research, and education. The most recent addition to its community spaces is **the Wonder Cabinet Community Garden**, aimed at reducing the organisation's environmental footprint through the development of surrounding green areas. Open to all for study, work and leisure, the garden is envisioned as a stage for future cultural and educational initiatives. The project also seeks to investigate the role of grassroots cultural bodies in advancing social and urban sustainable development in territories affected by territorial fragmentation, land theft, and military occupation.

Tarkib (Iraq)

Tarkib is a Baghdad-based platform that unites artists and cultural practitioners dedicated to promoting emerging local artists through research, training, and the production and presentation of contemporary art. The platform's **Bait Tarkib** is being developed into a flagship creative art centre, exemplifying holistic, sustainable, and environmentally friendly living and working. Their project will create and showcase strategies for responsible production and consumption.

Yabous Cultural Centre (Palestine)

Yabous is a non-governmental Palestinian organisation that established the largest cultural centre in Jerusalem, offering a venue for celebrating and sharing cultural traditions and fostering artistic interaction. Their **Enlighten Yabous: Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Initiative** aims to enhance the centre's energy efficiency by conducting an energy audit and investing in energy-efficient appliances and LED lighting, reducing their environmental impact and operational costs.

Balloon Organization (Syria)

Balloon is a collective of passionate young individuals from humanitarian and civil society backgrounds. Based in Raqqa, they are dedicated to bringing joy and resilience to conflict-affected children and communities by creating safe spaces for learning, healing, and economic empowerment. **Project Carbon Negative Raqqa** aims to foster sustainable urban lifestyles by enhancing environmental literacy and eco-thinking. The project will support three civil society organisations with solar energy systems, train 90 young environmental activists, and launch a guide to carbon footprint reduction. Additionally, it will involve the community in tree planting, park rehabilitation, and the creation of an environmental awareness mural, all supported by a social media advocacy campaign.

Touria and Abdel Aziz Tazi Foundation (Morocco)

The Touria and Abdelaziz Tazi Foundation is dedicated to promoting creation and culture through its multidisciplinary cultural space, L'uZine, in Casablanca. **Muchtale** is a rooftop garden at L'uZine, established to tackle the city's ecological challenges and scarcity of green

spaces. This innovative project aims to enhance urban green infrastructure and raise environmental awareness, especially among the younger population. By providing a hands-on environment that merges sustainable practices with artistic expression, Muchtale will educate a wider audience on local environmental challenges while incorporating sustainable artistic practices.

Tier 3: UK-MENA Partnerships

Five Tier 3 grants of £25,000 to £50,000 (\$30,500 to \$70,000) were awarded to support collaborations between UK and MENA-based artists or cultural organisations aiming to develop large-scale artistic responses to the climate emergency.

The recipients are:

Mosaic Room x Beirut Art Center: (UK/Lebanon)

The Mosaic Room is a leading London-based contemporary arts space that facilitates collective learning, idea exchange and support for emerging and established contemporary artists from the Arab world and beyond. Their collaboration with the Beirut Art Center in Lebanon through ***War-torn Ecologies: Resistant Worlds*** has yielded a multidisciplinary artistic programme that provides new and critical Global South perspectives within the current climate crisis discourse for UK and global audiences. Driven by a constellation of emerging practitioners, the programme delineates the impact of historical and contemporary aggression on Middle East ecologies. The collaboration will also support work in Lebanon addressing the acute ecological challenges faced there.

The Wapping Project x Sharjah Art Foundation x Mariam Alnoaimi (UK/UAE/Bahrain)

The Wapping Project is a platform for the continuous development of ideas and people that has supported creatives for over forty years. Registered in England, it works through commissioning and production of new works in collaboration with international partners. Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF) is an advocate, catalyst and producer of contemporary art within the Emirate of Sharjah and the Gulf, in dialogue with the international arts community. Mariam Alnoaimi is a Bahrain-based artist whose practice examines questions around cartography, cognitive mapping, the built and natural environment, identity and storytelling. Commissioned for Sharjah Biennial 16, ***the Water that Asked for a Fish*** is an audio-visual installation by Alnoaimi that looks at bodies of water within the Gulf through a cultural, social, scientific and ecological lens.

Dima Srouji (Royal College of Art – UK) x Ahmad Nabil (The Fiction Council – Palestine) x Emilie Glazer (University College London – UK)

Representing the Royal College of Art (RCA) in London is Palestinian architect and visual artist Dima Srouji. Alongside British Anthropologist Emilie Glazer, with Palestinian artist and co-founder of the Jerusalem-based Fiction Council Ahmad Nabil, they are working to revive ancient Palestinian legends and myths of water and sky through the **Rain Collectors**. By staging interactive gatherings at five archaeological sites in Palestine, as well as a subsequent film, website and publication, the artists will not only foreground the ancient Palestinian spiritual and emotional relationship to water but highlight its ongoing weaponization in occupied territories.

Thiss Studio x CLUSTER (UK/Egypt)

Thiss Studio, a London-based team of architects who challenge the conventions of the built environment, in collaboration with the Cairo Lab for Urban Studies, Training, and Environmental Research (CLUSTER), have launched **Localizing Climate Change: Creative Engagement in Community Parks**. This series of Arts-in-Parks interventions will serve as a response to the increasing commercialization of Cairo's green spaces. Interactive events such as concerts, exhibitions, and film screenings, alongside hands-on sustainable design workshops, and the erection of an upcycled Eco-Tower that will serve as a performance and event space, all aim to communicate critical themes related to climate challenges facing today's cities. Along-the-Line, CLUSTER's ongoing urban program and public installation developed with support from the British Council, will be activated throughout the project's run.

CCA Glasgow x The Mothership Tangier (UK/Morocco)

Centre for Contemporary (CCA) in Glasgow have collaborated with the Mothership Tangier, an experimental eco-campus for growing, making, and learning natural dyes and indigenous traditions to expand their global network of community growers through the **Glasgow Seed Library**. This urban seed initiative collaborates with community gardens and local organisations to offer open-pollinated, climate-adapted vegetable, herb, and flower seeds to people from all walks of life. The library offers accessible learning opportunities on food production, agroecology, and seed autonomy through its public engagements, building solidarity towards global climate and social justice.

- ENDS -

For further press information about 'Anhar: Culture and Climate Platform', please contact Razan Kaloti at the British Council on Razan.Kaloti@britishcouncil.org, or Ruba Alsweel of Art Jameel on ruba@artjameel.org (not for publication).

To learn more, please visit: www.artjameel.org

Social Media

The British Council: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter

Art Jameel: Instagram @art_jameel | Facebook Art Jameel | Twitter @Art_Jameel

-ENDS-

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide. We do this through our work in arts and culture, education and the English language. We work with people in over 200 countries and territories and are on the ground in more than 100 countries. In 2022–23 we reached 600 million people.

About Art Jameel

[Art Jameel](#) supports artists and creative communities. Founded and supported by the Jameel family philanthropies, the independent organisation is headquartered in Saudi Arabia and the UAE and works globally. Art Jameel's programmes – across exhibitions, commissions, research, learning and community-building – are grounded in a dynamic understanding of the arts as fundamental to life and accessible to all.

Art Jameel's two institutions – Hayy Jameel, a dedicated complex for the arts and creativity in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and [Jameel Arts Centre](#), an innovative institution for contemporary art and ideas in Dubai, UAE – are complemented by digital initiatives plus collaborations with major institutional partners and a network of practitioners across the world.

Read Art Jameel's [Sustainability Charter](#).