Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka opens

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Words Foster and Partners.

Photography Foster and Partners and Nigel Young.

The pavilion’s massing recalls the organic shapes of traditional Saudi villages.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Pavilion for Expo 2025 Osaka has opened to the public. Designed by Foster + Partners and located on the Yumeshima waterfront, the Pavilion creates a spatial experience that echoes the exploration of Saudi

Arabian towns and cities, while providing a setting for immersive engagement that connects visitors with the undiscovered wonders of the Kingdom.

The highly sustainable and inclusive Pavilion has been designed with its legacy in mind as the project aims to achieve the Japanese green building rating system's highest level (CASBEE S) and will be net zero operational carbon.

Luke Fox, Head of Studio, Foster + Partners, said: "We are delighted to see the Saudi Pavilion open to the public and ready to welcome its first visitors on an epic journey of new discovery. The project is a celebration of Saudi Arabian culture, evoking the wonderful streetscapes and captivating natural landscapes that define the Kingdom. Every element has been carefully considered to create a one-of-a-kind experience that is highly sustainable and accessible to everyone."

Visitors enter the Pavilion through the forecourt, planted with native Saudi Arabian flora, and travel through narrow streets that lead to the Saudi Courtyard, which is the beating heart of the scheme. The Courtyard allows for moments of quiet reflection during the day and transforms into a venue for performances and events at night. From here, visitors are invited to explore a 'village' of meandering streets, with windows and doorways into a series of immersive spaces, designed in close collaboration with Journey (59 Productions and Squint/Opera). The project honors the Saudi's architectural heritage, evokes a sense of place, and provides visitors with a glimpse into the daily life and urban fabric of the Kingdom's streets.

The landscaped forecourt acts as a barrier to protect the pavilion from harsher northerly winds.

The pavilion creates a spatial experience that echoes the exploration of Saudi Arabian towns and cities.

Tony Miki, Partner, Foster + Partners, added: “The Saudi Pavilion is also designed to create meaningful connections between the visiting public and Saudi Arabia’s incredible artists and musicians. By engaging all of the senses, the space allows visitors to experience the national transformation of Saudi Arabia. It is its own urban microcosm that carefully balances tradition and heritage with modern technologies, which is shaping the Kingdom’s future. We have worked closely with Journey to ensure that the immersive digital content is holistically integrated within the architectural design.”

Leo Warner, Director of Journey, said: “The unique partnership with Foster + Partners, whereby our team were embedded with the master architecture practice from the very start to the very end, enabled a unique way of conceiving and delivering a pavilion that both platforms the people of Saudi Arabia to tell their own story and delivers a unique approach to nation-branding in an Expo environment. It was their vision, openness and collaborative methodology that facilitated this unique partnership.”

Above and below photographs: Visitors are invited to explore a ‘village’ of meandering streets, with windows and doorways into a series of immersive spaces.

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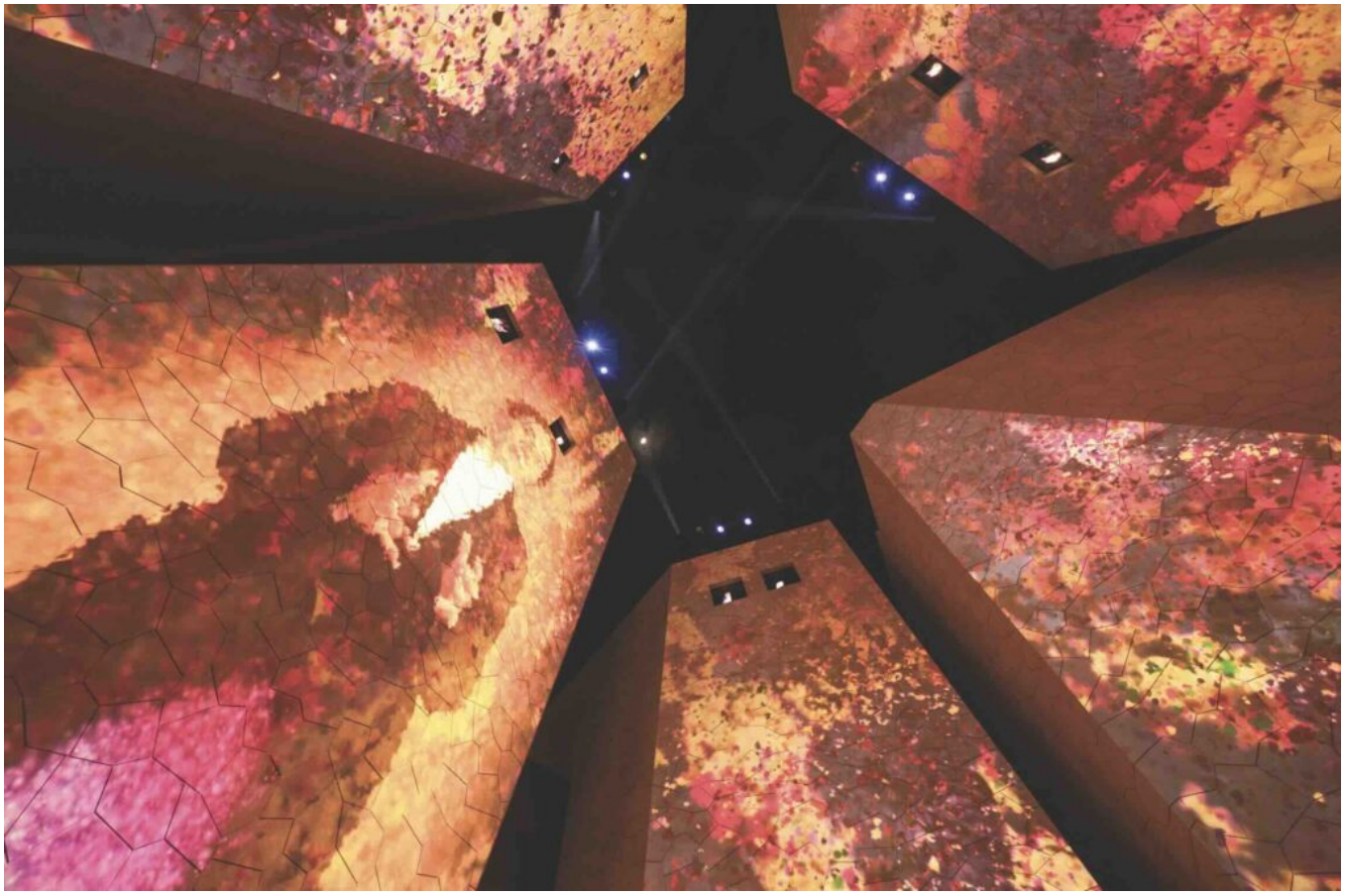
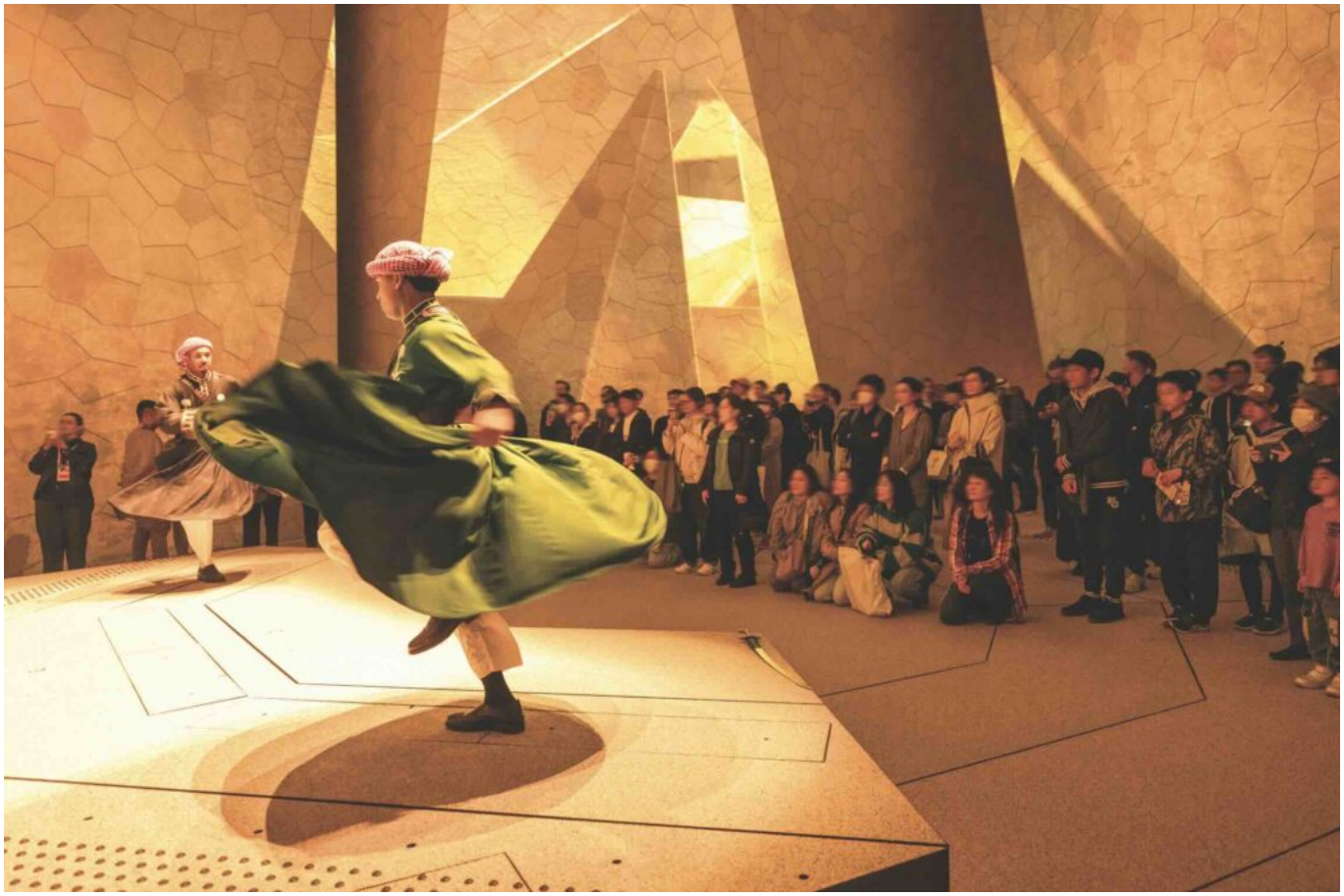
The Saudi Pavilion’s massing recalls the organic shapes of traditional Saudi villages. The practice’s design developed these concepts and has been carefully crafted using computational fluid dynamics simulations, to allow cool winds from the west into the streets during the height of summer. In the cooler months of April and October, the landscaped forecourt acts as a barrier to protect the pavilion from harsher northerly winds.

The Osaka Expo 2025 will be held until October 13, 2025, at Yumeshima Island.



Top and center photographs: Immersive spaces have been designed in close collaboration with Journey (59 Productions and Squint/Opera).



The courtyard transforms into a venue for performances and events at night.