

VOGUE

ARABIA

FEBRUARY 2024

**CLASS OF
2024
MEET
THE NEW
STARS OF
ALRAWABI
SCHOOL
FOR GIRLS**

36.75 AED
40 SAR
40 QAR
10 USD

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ARABIA'S YOUTHQUAKE

**THE REGION'S CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND THE
PEOPLE CREATING CHANGE**

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ON THE COVERS

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39
BRIGHT
HORIZONS

A full-page photograph of a woman in a bright yellow dress walking across a vast desert landscape. The ground is covered with hundreds of small, conical sand pyramids of varying sizes, creating a rhythmic pattern of light and shadow. The woman is walking from left to right, her shadow cast long and dark on the sand. The sky is a deep blue with scattered white clouds. The overall mood is surreal and contemplative.

GOING

Acclaimed artist Jim Denevan takes his sand sculpting skills to Abu Dhabi. The result offers a circular sense of wonder

Photography FOUAD TADROS *Style* POLINA SHABELNIKOVA

Words AMANDA RANDONE

TO

GROUND

الفستان من
RABANNE: القرطبان
VANESSA من
POISON لـي BARONI
DROP الصفحة المقابلة
المعطف من MIU MIU

Dress, RABANNE;
earrings, VANESSA
BARONI at Poison
Drop **OPPOSITE**
Coat, MIU MIU





الكورسييه والتتورة
من SAY NO
الكولون من MORE
CALZEDONIA
القرطان من مقتنيات
منسقة الأزياء الصفحة
المقابلة المحمطف
الترنس من ALAÏA
الحناء من FENDI
القرطان من مقتنيات
منسقة الأزياء

Corset, skirt, SAY
NO MORE; tights,
CALZEDONIA;
earrings, stylist's own
OPPOSITE Trench
coat, ALAÏA; shoes,
FENDI; earrings,
stylist's own



الفسنان من
LOEWE | الصفحة
المقابلة الفسنان
من VIVA VOX؛
الحذاء والقرطان
من مقننات
مبسقة الأزياء

Dress, LOEWE
OPPOSITE
Dress, VIVA
VOX; shoes,
earrings,
stylist's own

Just off Abu Dhabi's busy Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Street, somewhere between the landmark entertainment hub that is Yas Island and Saadiyat's famed sanctuary of cultural institutions, is a lesser-known land bank with a steadily increasing profile: Fahid Island. While major residential and leisure development plans were announced last year, the island – one of 200 comprising the Abu Dhabi archipelago – has remained somewhat nondescript. That is, until the arrival of American artist Jim Denevan and his striking beach art in November 2023.

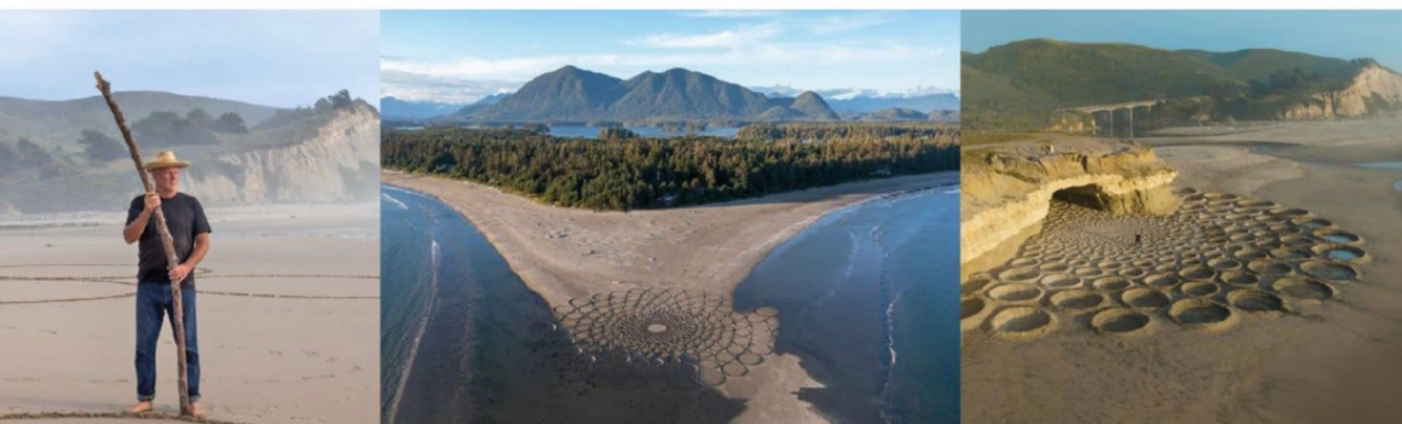
As part of a Public Art Abu Dhabi initiative known as Manar Abu Dhabi, Denevan – a

emirate's beautiful water landscapes, but also resonate with visitors long after the exhibition, prompting reflection on the bond that connects us to the earth beneath our feet and to each other, as well as on the role of public art in shaping our collective experiences."

Denevan's interpretation of this missive was a vast, hand-sculpted composition that evolved from his drawing of a circle. Well-versed in the medium of sand, the Californian transformed almost one square kilometer of Fahid Island into his most ambitious project to date: 10 concentric rings made up of more than 400 pyramids and orderly piles rising from the ground. Reaching heights of 27 meters, the installation is visible from the highway, the

are entering another world entirely as they cross an iron bridge to the desert-like environs of the installation, the city skyline fading from view. Considering the work from one of its observation mounds is like metamorphosing into a giant overlooking the pyramids of Nuri, or perhaps the dusty surface of Mars. If it were not for the shadow of a plane overhead or the glimpse of the turquoise waterfront, one can lose themselves while wandering the valley of Denevan's beguiling sand sculptures, which begin as larger conical forms that become smaller and sharper as they get closer to the work's center. At night, thousands of solar lanterns offer yet another lens through which to see this part of Abu Dhabi.

"Each piece will enhance our experience of the emirate's beautiful water landscapes, resonating long after"



seasoned surfer and founder of the traveling supper club Outstanding in the Field – was commissioned to transform one of the emirate's many natural vistas into an immersive art experience. Guided by the theme of *Grounding Light*, Denevan's installation is titled *Self Similar* and is among 35 site-specific works inviting audiences to experience the city's coastal areas and biodiversity in new ways.

"[Manar Abu Dhabi] is an exhibition that marries the elements of nature, water, and light art to create a one-of-a-kind experience unique only to Abu Dhabi," said the initiative's co-curator Reem Fadda when it was first announced. Fadda also serves as the artistic director of Public Art Abu Dhabi. "Each piece will not only enhance our experience of the

peaks of its largest structures emerging in the horizon. That mystique is part of what made the artwork special, even more so once its intricate, impermanent geometry was seen up close.

"Exploring *Self Similar* reveals a construction of scale, relation, the tiny and the giant simultaneously speaking of sameness and radical difference," Denevan says in a statement about the project. "Towering clouds, a breath of air, tiny grains of sand, tall mounds and mountains, wind and weather systems, drops and bodies of water, pyramids, small and large... as I shape these forms, an invitation is made, it emerges. An 'entering into' takes place. A centering."

For those who accept Denevan's invitation, entering into *Self Similar* feels as though they

Departing Fahid Island, visitors leave the immersive experience not just with sand up to their ankles or perhaps even a pebble or two between their toes, but with the very sense of oneness with the earth's topography that *Grounding Light* seeks to achieve by using the vibrant land of Abu Dhabi as its canvas.

"While appealing to audiences across the Abu Dhabi community and beyond, we especially aim to inspire the young minds who are our future," says His Excellency Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism in Abu Dhabi. "Through this immersive experience, we hope to encourage imagination, sense of wonder, and appreciation for our beautiful natural environment."

الفيسيتان من
SPORTMAX: الحذاء
BLACK SUEDE من
STUDIO
Ounass: الفرطان من
JACQUEMUS
CLOUDSET

*Dress,
SPORTMAX;
shoes, BLACK
SUEDE STUDIO
at Ounass; earrings,
JACQUEMUS
at Cloudset*







الجاكيت والسندوت
والثوب والحقازم من
PRADA المصنعة
المقابلية المصنعة
من MIU MIU

Jacket, shorts,
skirt, belt, PRADA
OPPOSITE
Coat, MIU MIU

الفينيتان من MRS
KEEPA: الحذاء من
PRADA الصفحة
المقابلة الفينيتان
والقرصان من LOUIS
VUITTON

Dress, MRS KEEP A;
shoes, PRADA
OPPOSITE Dress,
earrings, LOUIS
VUITTON







الفسيتان من FENDI؛
الحذاء من مقننات منسقة
الأزياء: القمصان من
VANESSA BARONI
لدي POISON DROP
المقابلة الفسيتان من
VALENTINO

Dress, FENDI; shoes,
stylist's own; earrings,
VANESSA BARONI at
Poison Drop **OPPOSITE**
Dress, VALENTINO

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Jreissati **HAIR** Anastasia
Alawadhi **MAKEUP**
Manuel Losada
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Yehia Bedier **STYLE**
ASSISTANT Alex
Novatorov **HAIR**
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