

COMMERCE

Christie's opens for business in Saudi Arabia

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The country is quickly rising as a luxury locale. Image credit: Christie's

By ZACH JAMES FOR LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

British auction house Christie's has been granted a commercial license in Saudi Arabia, expanding its presence in the Middle East.

To oversee the region's operations, the company announced the appointment of Nour Kelani as managing director on Sept. 17. Based in Riyadh, Ms. Kelani will focus on building the collector community within the Kingdom, specifically within the fine art and luxury sectors, on behalf of Christie's.

"Christie's is honored to be welcomed to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and we look forward to supporting ongoing cultural plans for the region while continuing to celebrate its hugely talented artists," said Anthea Peers, president of Europe, Middle East and Africa at **Christie's**, in a statement.

"Christie's has had active Saudi Arabian clients for many years, living there and around the world, and that client base is ever-growing within the Kingdom," Ms. Peers said. "It has been a long-term business plan to progress by seeking a commercial license to operate in the Kingdom, and we are privileged to now be able to do so."

"The appointment of Nour Kelani as Managing Director in the Kingdom represents a pace, scale, and ambition of growth across sectors which in turn makes this the moment for Christie's to partner and collaborate further in Saudi Arabia."

New horizons

Ms. Kelani has a wealth of experience within the Middle Eastern art sphere.

In the past, the executive has overseen leading contemporary arts organization Ayyam Gallery in Dubai, U.A.E., also managing her own industry consultancy and serving as an advisor to high-profile collectors and several international luxury brands within the market.

Now, she helps to lead Christie's Saudi Arabian expansion.



The auction house has been active in the Middle East for nearly 20 years. Image credit: Christie's

"I am delighted to be joining Christie's, known for its innovative business approach combined with an incredible heritage and world-leading expertise," Ms. Kelani said, in a statement.

"I look forward to building on my connections with collectors, institutions and others in the art ecosystem in the region to further expand on the foundations that Christie's has already put in place."

Per recent luxury reports, Saudi Arabia boasts a young and ambitious population, which is pushing the Kingdom towards the front of the world's high-end experiential scene ([see story](#)).

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