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CASE STUDY

HAYY JAMEEL: CULTURE'S MULTI-DISCIPLINARITY UNDER ONE ROOF

This case study is part of a project focusing on Investing in Culture, which is a collaboration of MBSC Case Centre and the Ministry of Culture. The case was developed by Dr Larissa von Alberti-Alhtaybat, Associate Professor of Accounting and Vice Dean at the Prince Mohammed Bin Salman College of Business & Entrepreneurship. It is intended to be used as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a management or administrative situation.

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HAYY JAMEEL: CULTURE'S MULTI-DISCIPLINARITY UNDER ONE ROOF

Abstract

Hayy Jameel is a multidisciplinary culture complex in Jeddah, established on the basis of a private sector-led initiative. It opened its doors in 2021 and hosts a range of cultural sector representatives under its roof. During its first year of operations, it welcomed 60,000 visitors, which represents about 20% of top 100 museums/galleries in the same year. It is the first of its kind in the Kingdom and provides a destination with an immersive experience in culture. People benefit as much as the community at large from engaging with art, fashion, food, design, film with different focal points, beyond more commercialised consumption. The space is multi-disciplinary, which means it caters to a range of culture-related activities. The case provides insights into the concept of a multidisciplinary complex, and the specific elements that create a unique experience.

Case Study

January 2023 – The building's front will soon undergo its annual façade change. After considering over 80 proposals,¹ the Façade Commission's jury chose Saudi-based artist Mohammad Alfaraj for the 2023 exhibit. Alfaraj is collaborating with others to create a 25-meter canvas on the building's front, which is crucial to the building's architectural design. The exhibit, titled 'The Face of the City,' will be on display on the building's front for the entirety of 2023. Alfaraj was the first artist to be selected through an open call by the Façade Commission's jury through a highly competitive and diverse process.

Hayy Jameel is Jeddah's cultural center, with its central façade prominently displayed. As Saudi Arabia's first multidisciplinary culture complex, it serves as a beacon for art and culture and has become a must-see attraction when visiting Jeddah, as noted by various publications during the Formula 1 2022 event.²

Hayy Jameel also empowers artists to maintain their independence in thought and creativity. Thus, it needs to remain financially sustainable but is independent enough not to cater to any specific

¹ Hayy Jameel's website.

² TTN worldwide website: **Tourism Opportunities during F1 in Jeddah.**

corporation's performance indicators. This allows artists the freedom to express their viewpoints and emotions freely.

In 2021, the museum welcomed 60,000 visitors during its first year of operation,³ a relatively lower number compared to the annual visitor count of well-established museums and galleries, which typically attract around 300,000 visitors. However, it is noteworthy that Hayy Jameel's first-year attendance is about 20% of the number of visitors in popular tourist destinations like Madrid and Tokyo.⁴

Exhibit I

Hayy Jameel Front



Source: Hayy Jameel website

Overview of Multidisciplinary Complexes

Centers that combine various art forms and cultures to create engaging experiences for visitors and active participants are called multidisciplinary complexes. Hayy Jameel is one such complex. Jameel Arts Center, Hayy Jameel's sister organization, also takes a multidisciplinary approach with its exhibitions, artist studios, library, and artisan café.⁵

There are various centers with similar concepts in different parts of the world, such as Hong Kong's Jockey Club Creative Arts Center,⁶ Australia's Campbelltown Arts Center,⁷ the Zeitgeist Multidisciplinary Arts Center in the US,⁸ Canada's Le Livart,⁹ India's Serendipity Arts,¹⁰ Korea's Pace

³ Data provided by Hayy Jameel.

⁴ Art Newspaper, visitor figures.

⁵ Jameel Arts Center website.

⁶ Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre.

⁷ Museums and Galleries of NSW website.

⁸ Zeitgeist Multidisciplinary Arts Centre website.

⁹ Le Livart website.

¹⁰ Serendipity Arts LinkedIn page.

Gallery,¹¹ Andorra's Taranmana Art Space,¹² and King's College in New Zealand even has a Performing Arts Center.¹³

Although their missions and goals may differ, various centers and networks share the idea of exchanging diverse art forms, cultural experiences, and creative leadership. For example, a group of artists and architects may collaborate on a project on sustainability in the future cultural space. Literature and culinary arts may be combined by exhibiting Korean poems while consuming special teas and tea-infused beverages.¹⁴ These multidisciplinary spaces aim to align art and culture,¹⁵ providing opportunities that benefit artists, visitors, and the public. By offering access to new experiences and education, these complexes become a focal point in their community. Hayy Jameel serves this purpose by bringing together the community in its neighborhood and the city. *“The idea was always to create different spaces for different art forms to emerge, allowing opportunities to cross-pollinate, not just by the artists themselves but for the audiences.”*¹⁶

Hayy Jameel's Inception

The Hayy Jameel Complex is a vibrant and diverse center for creativity and art, established as part of Art Jameel's initiatives. Along with the Arts Center in Dubai, *“Art Jameel supports artists and creative communities”* worldwide. Founded in 2003 alongside Community Jameel, *“the Jameel family philanthropies,”*¹⁷ Art Jameel manages multidisciplinary complexes in Dubai and Jeddah, collaborating with global partners to ensure their financial sustainability. These complexes provide vital platforms for artistic expression and creativity, contributing to the city's dynamic portfolio of cultural activities.

This complex is intended for the community and includes various creative initiatives: a museum called Hayy Arts, Hayy Learning for Education, Hayy Studios, Saudi Arabia's first independent cinema, Fena Hayy, a multipurpose space for performances and workshops, and Saha, the central courtyard.¹⁸

Hayy Jameel was conceptualized in 2014 and finally opened its doors in 2021.¹⁹ It aims to bring together art, music, film, and architecture and provides additional space to external collaborators. The building features a courtyard in the center, surrounded by two levels inspired by the Greek word

¹¹ Pace Gallery Seoul website, Expanded Arts Complex.

¹² Visit Andorra website.

¹³ King's College NZ website.

¹⁴ Pace Gallery Seoul website.

¹⁵ Le Livart website.

¹⁶ Gulf Insider: Inside Saudi Arabia's first independent cinema and film community center.

¹⁷ Art Jameel's website.

¹⁸ Hayy Jameel's website.

¹⁹ Arab News: Hayy Jameel multidisciplinary arts center opens to the public in Jeddah.

"agora," meaning gathering space. It incorporates aspects of light, courtyards, and a blank canvas façade.²⁰

This establishment aims to assist and empower diverse artists and cultural expressions by offering exhibition and performance areas and featuring Hayy Cinema. Accomplished architects have expertly designed the space.

When the idea for the complex was first conceived, there needed to be a Ministry of Culture to organize the cultural sector. Managing a multidisciplinary complex without this support was expected to be challenging.²¹ However, the team behind Hayy Jameel was already experienced in managing the Jameel Arts Center in Dubai and had some know-how. Since the inception of the Ministry of Culture, initiatives like Hayy Jameel have become even more vital. The importance of culture in improving quality of life has been emphasized, making it critical to support the expression of art and culture in any way possible. As a tangible manifestation of these developments and objectives, Hayy Jameel is an essential contribution to the Saudi cultural landscape.

Hay Jameel's Operations

Hayy Jameel comprises various sections, including Hayy Arts, Hayy Cinema, Hayy Learning, Fena Hayy, Hayy Explorers, Hayy Studios, Saha community yard, and Hayy Residents.²²

Hayy Arts is the official exhibition space that showcases changing exhibitions of Saudi and international artists with a museum-like quality. Meanwhile, Hayy Cinema is Saudi Arabia's first independent cinema that provides a venue for local and international films without box office performance expectations. Hayy Learning is a platform that allows the Hayy community to benefit from the experiences and insights gained from all other Hayy activities. Fena Hayy is the community space in the Hayy building, *"a 427 sqm multidisciplinary space for the community: a 'white canvas' that can host various events, from fashion shows and farmer's markets to private gala dinners and conferences."*²³ Hayy Explorers is an interactive space for children to have immersive cultural experiences. Hayy Studios *"are dedicated spaces for artists' residencies and participatory projects. Hayy Studios includes Studio 1, 2, and 3, and The Darkroom."*²⁴ Throughout the year, different artists reside in the studios. Additionally, Hayy residents make use of the available spaces at Hayy Jameel. Residents are a *"set of pioneering, homegrown creative enterprises that range from contemporary*

²⁰ ArchDaily Hayy Jameel Cultural Center / Waiwai.

²¹ Conversation with the deputy director.

²² Hayy Jameel's website.

²³ Hayy Jameel's website.

²⁴ Hayy Jameel's website.

art and performance to design and publishing, culinary institutes, new cafes, and eateries.”²⁵ Notably, “Hayy Jameel is built to bring together the broadest range of creative disciplines in one neighborhood.”²⁶

Hayy Jameel's revenue-generating activities include renting out space to residents. The complex carefully selects residents whose businesses align with its mission and operate within the cultural domain, including visual arts, culinary arts, fashion, design, and performing arts. The current residents are Akthr: Art Gallery (an expansion of Jeddah's Athr Gallery), Homegrown: Concept Store, Riwaq Dahr: Design Studio, Aysh Academy: Baking Academy, Al Mohtaraf: Design House, Sofia's Bistro: Dining and Culinary Arts, and Fennec: Community Theatre Company.²⁷

Hayy Jameel is a place that fosters collaboration and innovation, welcoming residents, institutions, individuals, and organizations with fresh ideas and entrepreneurial spirit.²⁸ These partnerships are a testament to the dynamic and familial atmosphere of the community. While Hayy Jameel generates revenue from residents and external entities, it is also financially supported by Art Jameel, a philanthropic organization of the Jameel family.

Multidisciplinary Complex Initiatives: Outlook

Since the Ministry of Culture launch, navigating the cultural landscape has become more accessible due to its tremendous impact.²⁹ One significant development is the enactment of laws. Licenses for galleries and their spaces were introduced, which is crucial in breaking down previous barriers. The Ministry also identified gaps, such as the need for multiple licenses for multidisciplinary complexes like Hayy Jameel and worked on providing them. Additionally, the complex serves as a platform for Ministry-organized events, including photography and visual arts exhibitions.

To progress further, conducting a private sector needs assessment and identifying any areas that require attention is essential. Additionally, it is crucial to provide capacity building for those working in the cultural sector. Training programs in various locations offer valuable opportunities to gain insight into how cultural organizations and institutions are managed and supported in other areas. These programs also allow colleagues within the same field to exchange ideas and experiences, as they may have few opportunities to meet outside of exhibition openings. Lastly, it is essential to ensure the sector's sustainability. While government funding is necessary, more is needed for complete self-sustainability. Funds and donors commonly provide financial support for arts and cultural centers to

²⁵ Hayy Jameel's website.

²⁶ Hayy Jameel's website.

²⁷ Hayy Jameel's website.

²⁸ Hayy Jameel's website.

²⁹ Conversation with the deputy director.

support cultural initiatives that may not have mass appeal but are vital for preserving cultural concepts - which aligns with Hayy Jameel's mission.