



## OASIS OF ARTS: AL-AHSA

**A**l-Ahsa has enriched the national cultural scene due to its ancient heritage, which allowed the UNESCO to declare 'Al-Ahsa Oasis' among the World heritage sites, and to its people, who interacted with civilizations, cultures and sciences since 6000 BC. Al-Ahsa is open to other cultures due to its location in the eastern Arabian Peninsula. Al-Ahsa is the largest natural palm oasis, connects with the ancient world civilizations in Mesopotamia, the Levant and the Indian subcontinent and bridges the Arabian Gulf states.

More than 3,000,000 palm trees in Al-Ahsa Oasis cast shadow over intellectuals and knowledge centers, supporting the cultural movement in the Governorate while the Saudi Vision 2030 strengthens integration among talent investment institutions and establishes cultural projects. As Al-Ahsa witnessed chapters of history, this allowed Al-Ahsa to be on the list of UNESCO World Human Heritage 2018, and the capital of Arab tourism in 2019. People settled in Al-Ahsa 6000 BC.

The first people lived there was the Canaanites, who displaced from the central Arabian Peninsula after being attracted by the fresh water springs. Among their descendants were the Phoenician, who were known with agriculture, irrigation, adventure, sailing and trade. The immigrant Chaldeans from Babylon lived in Al-Ahsa and founded a city near Al-Uqair named Al-Jahra, which was an important business center.

Throughout history, Al-Ahsa has maintained its cultural climate. Perhaps one of its most important intellectual traditions is the 'Houses of Literature and Cultural Councils'. Its programs have played active roles in spreading culture and hosting literary and intellectuals. During this year 2019, Al-Ahsa witnessed a cultural movement whose activities were distributed through packages of literary and artistic programs.

mony between colors and brushes were obvious with 50 art works. The Culture Authority devoted 17 art training courses during "Cultural Nights" event. The content of the event was characterized by cognitive enrichment as well as artistic and intellectual diversity. The event highlighted the chapters of Al-Ahsa Oasis culture and heritage. Group of poets from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States delivered poems at Ibrahim Palace as



### Artistic diversity

"Al-Ahsa Literary, Summer Time and Culture," under this theme, Al-Ahsa Literary Club has developed 30 programs within its cultural, literary and community activities, in line with institutional efforts towards inclusiveness and diversity in order to promote intellectual mobility in the Governorate, and to meet the wishes of the community. The programs varied in their target audience of both sexes, and addressed the heads of thought and literature according to a specialized method, while the space was larger for the youth category and focused on values and positive behavior towards the exploitation of time and the safe use of technical means as well as the engagement in volunteering work.

"Family and Children" is a prominent theme in the club's programs as the club recognizes the importance of safe family environment, as well as the right guidance for children. The theater, cinema, visual arts, and music were the identity of the activities of the "Cultural Nights" last March, which were organized by the General Authority for Culture at King Abdullah Environmental Park. On the stage, two plays entitled "Transit" and "One Thousand and a Half Night (for Children)" were held, while a number of Saudi films were presented.

In another location on the activities ground, the har-

part of "Poetry Nights" organized by King Abdulaziz International Cultural Center.

The "Land of Civilizations" project in Jabal Qarah (12 kilometers from the administrative capital of Al-Ahsa, Hofuf, with a maximum height of about 1,000 meters) has added diversity to the nature of the historical place. The site, which includes a museum and theaters, hosted weekly cultural events. Al-Ahsa celebrated in May its choice of the Arab tourism capital for 2019. As many as 15 children were enrolled in the art programs which began last July. The children were trained on theatrical skills and self-confidence while facing the audience.

Al-Ahsa Museum of Antiquities plays a major role in activating the tourist and cultural movement. On an area of 40,000 square meters, the Museum hosts about 1400 artifacts that tell the history of the Oasis. The museum opened in 1984 is responsible for the maintenance and protection of important historical sites, in addition to facilitating the process of recording and surveying these sites. It is worth mentioning that the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage in Al-Ahsa is working on the establishment of Al-Ahsa Regional Museum with a cost of more than SR44,000,000. Al-Ahsa has 28 public and private museums, including the Allegiance Museum and the Museum of Arabs and Caliph.—KUNA

There are several heritage sites in Al-Ahsa Governorate, including Jawatha settlement, Jawatha mosque (which is one of the first mosques in Islam), Dughat Al-Gharash site (which is more than 600 years old), Ibrahim archaeological palace, Sahoud, Mahiris, Abu Jalal, Al-Hazm palace, Al-Uqair port, Al-Qarah mountain, Al-Qaysariya market, and the old neighborhoods such as Al-Mubarraz. The heritage sites also includes Al-Amiriya School (which was built in 1360H), and Bayt Al-Mulla (in which the people of Al-Ahsa pledged allegiance to King Abdulaziz in 1331H, and is considered one of the most famous landmarks that witnessed the most prominent events before and during the unification of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia).

