

COACHELLA

COACHELLA VALLEY MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL

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Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival 2023 Art Program debuts several large-scale, immersive art works as renowned music Festival opens to the public

Four new artists and designers from around the world make their mark on iconic landscape over two weekends – April 14-16 and April 21-23, 2023



Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival 2023 installation view of Maggie West, *Eden*, photo by Lance Gerber, courtesy Coachella

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Indio, CA, April 14, 2023—**The Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival** opens today revealing a program of art installations by nine international artists, designers and collectives.

The newly-commissioned, sculptural works by **Kumkum Fernando**, **Vincent Leroy**, **Güvenç Özel**, and **Maggie West** lend color, light and alternate perspectives to the charged atmosphere and act as fresh, colorful and architectural beacons that transform the iconic Coachella landscape at various times of day and night.

From totemic figures that rise across the expanse of the Empire Polo Field to playful, floating mobiles and photographic-based installations and digital interventions, the massive installations by a selected roster of creative talent complement structures like *Spectra*, the seven-floor architecturally-inspired pavilion, **Robert Bose's** quarter-mile long kinetic *Balloon Chain*, and **Don Kennell's** *Mustang*.



Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival 2023 installation view of Kumkum Fernando, *The Messengers*, photo by Lance Gerber, courtesy Coachella

The Messengers by Kumkum Fernando, comprises three monolithic figures, which appear at first as giant robots or action figures. But his “idols” — arranged in a row to create a colorful gathering place — pack volumes of meaning into their larger-than-life forms. The Sri Lankan artist, who lives and works in Vietnam, draws inspiration from the vivid colors of South Asian art and architecture, particularly Tibetan and Hindu temples, as well as from folk tales filled with gods and demons that resonate from his youth. In his practice, he collects objects, patterns, and items containing different iconography and reimagines them as contemporary art objects. “Whenever I travel, I collect and document,” he says. “I have a library that I go through at different points in time. When I put them together, I often see unexpected things. I made a series of work completely out of window grills, another series from patterns from Persian rugs, and another from temple patterns. One day, I was arranging objects, and they appeared to form a figure. Then I thought I should make figures with these patterns.” The three figures at Coachella soar to between 65 and 80 feet, each standing on plinths with a base of steps where visitors can gather around the idols. Each idol is accompanied by a self-penned poem.



Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival 2023 installation view of Vincent Leroy, *Molecular Cloud*, photo by Lance Gerber, courtesy Coachella

With ***Molecular Cloud***, the Paris-based French artist Vincent Leroy imagines molecular clouds in the form of light, glossy inflatable objects floating above the vast green field of the festival. The artwork slowly changes, forming strange and organic shapes that reflect the surrounding revelry. As you move closer to the massive mobiles, the ground, people, and sky appear in *Molecular Cloud's* reflective surfaces in a phantasmagorical spectacle that plays with your perception and detaches you from reality. Leroy, who oscillates between the real (natural) and virtual (artificial), is interested in experimenting with the phenomena of perception. Movement is almost always his focus — the kind of movement, he says, that “inspires life, amazement, and a permanently shifting viewpoint.” Leroy slows this movement to uncover and magnify the gaps that often go unnoticed in today’s frenetic pace and performance. With *Molecular Cloud*, ripples, reflections, superimpositions, and the play of light plunge us into another dimension — light and airy, dreamlike, and meditative.



Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival 2023 installation view of Güvenç Özel, *Holoflux*, photo by Lance Gerber, courtesy Coachella

Los Angeles–based artist and architect Güvenç Özel engages the spectrum of human experience, from the physical to the virtual. His 60-foot-tall *Holoflux* is a portal to a broad digital ecosystem of ever-changing forms that you experience throughout the day. At night, the reflective surfaces of the sculpture’s spherical forms become lighting features, pulsating bright colors rather than reflecting the environment. Indeed, *Holoflux* is a hypermedia object with flickering lights, projections, graphics, and changing color schemes that cycle through different identities. From a distance, it appears as a sculpture, and it becomes architecture as you approach. The nighttime projections of real-time video showing the festival action create an effect in which the sculpture appears to become invisible, and then reappears. “I consider myself a cyber physical architect and a critical technologist,” Özel says. “Cyber physical, meaning the work covers cyberspace and physical environments and the interaction between the two. Critical technologist, meaning engaging with new technological tools — their meaning, their impact in our social interactions, their impact on our environmental and political considerations, and how we can create more meaningful and engaging experiences to enhance the way that we socialize and communicate with each other.”

The Los Angeles–based artist Maggie West has created one of the world’s largest 3-D photography installations, reproducing her floral photographs on 20 steel structures, each covered with wood and vinyl, ranging from 6 to 56 feet tall. To create *Eden*, West photographed a variety of plants, each in two color schemes: warm (a combination of peach, gold, white, or pink) and cool (shades of blue, teal, indigo and lavender). She uses lighting, not Photoshop, to color her photographs. “By photographing familiar objects with multicolored lights, my work helps viewers look closer at some of the nature they might take for granted — like the texture of the snake plants and the stamens in the centers of the lilies,” says West. The high-resolution images appear on vinyl sheets, the warm palette on one side of each

sculpture and the cool palette on the other. After dark, the sculpture comes alive with mapped projections onto the sculptures that create a vibrant light show that adds an extra colorful dimension to these already vibrant images.

“Surprise encounters with these outsized projects in the middle of the valley, surrounded by music and the collective energy of the crowd has become a much-anticipated shared experience at the Festival, and some of the works have been woven into the archetypal imagery of Coachella,” commented **Paul Clemente**, who manages the art program for the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival. “The arts program has evolved significantly since inception and the participants, who come from around the world and from Southern California are well-respected in their fields, presenting extraordinary and thoughtful works in a setting where they can inspire, inform, and invite direct engagement with art and current social and cultural themes and ideas. It is a unique aspect of this Festival, and we really endeavor to carry that spark into the community with adjacent school programs and our on-site Coachella Arts Studios.”

Curatorial Advisor **Raffi Lehrer** added, “In selecting projects from around the world, our intention is to bring together artists, architects and designers whose practices invite participation, inclusion, and transformation. We strive to create a multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural program that reflects our audience and the many performing artists that grace the stages of the festival. The resulting works will become icons — part of the identity of this year’s show. These installations act simultaneously as way-finding markers, points of congregation, and most importantly, accessible entry points for all show-goers to experience art.”

Do LaB, the Los Angeles-based creative team that reimagines venues into fantastical and interactive experiences inspired by human connection, authenticity, and environmental sustainability returns with their *Warrior One* stage.

Raices Cultura, a grassroots arts and culture nonprofit organization founded and led by Coachella Valley-based multidisciplinary artist, educator and executive director **Marnie L. Navarro**, recruited and mentored 20 youth from the East Valley cities of Coachella, Indio, Mecca, Thermal, and La Quinta who built an art installation for the festival campground based on their shared approach to theme and aesthetics.

The women-led **Coachella Art Studios** provides a safe, immersive and inclusive space for Festival goers to explore their creativity and express themselves. Founded in 2008, and produced by LA-based public art program specialist **Sarah Scheideman** as an arts and crafts tent, the Coachella Art Studios have expanded to a 5,000 square foot studio space with the help of former festival art program participant and Coachella Valley artist **Sofía Enriquez** and a team of local creatives. Colorful and thoughtfully designed to be approachable, participants use sustainably-sourced clothing, clay and other materials to create and transform clothes, make jewelry and accessories, formulate their own blends of aromatherapy. and draw from live models.

WHEN Held two consecutive weekends, **Friday, April 14 - Sunday, April 16** and **Friday, April 21 - Sunday, April 23, 2023**

WHERE Empire Polo Club

81-800 Avenue 51, Indio, CA 92201

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PRESS KIT

ABOUT GOLDENVOICE

Goldenvoice, creators of Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival and Stagecoach: California's Country Music Festival, operates successful Los Angeles and Bay Area music venues including the Fonda Theatre, The Roxy Theatre, El Rey Theatre, The Novo, Shrine Auditorium & Expo Hall, The Regency Ballroom and The Warfield. Goldenvoice holds exclusive booking deals at Brookside at The Rose Bowl, Santa Barbara Bowl, Mountain Winery and Frost Amphitheatre. They also have produced events such as Desert Trip, Camp Flog Gnaw Carnival, Day N Vegas, Just Like Heaven and many more. Beginning as an independent punk rock promoter in the early 1980s, Goldenvoice grew to be the preeminent alternative promoter in Southern California by forging strong relationships with both bands and music fans. Currently, Goldenvoice promotes over 2,000 concerts a year in California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, Alaska and Canada plus recently adding North American tours to their growing list of accomplishments. For additional info, please visit www.Goldenvoice.com.

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