



Desert X to Celebrate 10 Years as a Leader Expanding the Legacy of Land Art

With a tenth-anniversary exhibition scheduled to open October 2027, the organization ushers in a new chapter, growing its team and the global dialogue around art, landscape and community.



(l-r) Agnes Denes, *The Living Pyramid*, Desert X 2025; Nicholas Galanin, *Never Forget*, Desert X 2021. Donate to the LANDBACK GoFundMe. (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/landback>); Torkwase Dyson, *Liquid A Place*, Desert X 2023. Images courtesy of artists and Desert X. Photos by Lance Gerber

Palm Springs, California (November 13) – Desert X, one of the leading commissioners of site-responsive contemporary art in the United States and globally, will celebrate ten years of advancing the legacy of land art. Over the past decade, the organization has commissioned more than 100 artists and welcomed over two million visitors, all convening around the transformative power of art in dialogue with landscape. As it looks ahead to its sixth exhibition in the Coachella Valley and tenth worldwide, Desert X announces new details for this milestone edition that marks the beginning of an ambitious new chapter for the organization.

Opening October 30, 2027 through May 7, 2028, this tenth-anniversary edition will signal a pivotal evolution for Desert X, broadening both its season and its vision. By shifting its opening to the fall and extending programming through the winter and spring, Desert X embraces a model that allows for deeper engagement with the desert's shifting light, climate, and ecology—inviting audiences to experience transformations across time and terrain. This expanded seasonal framework signals the organization's ongoing growth as a global leader in site-responsive art and its plans to venture into new regions.

Embracing a new paradigm, Desert X will adopt a more focused geographic footprint while commissioning works that are temporal, responsive, and evolve in dialogue with

the desert itself. By aligning with the desert's natural rhythms and overlapping with the region's major cultural moments – including the Palm Springs International Film Festival, Modernism Week, Frieze Los Angeles, and the Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival – Desert X deepens its role as a cross-disciplinary platform bridging art, culture, and community. In doing so, Desert X expands the legacy of land art for a new generation and transforms the desert from a site of intervention into one of exchange. The works will emerge, change, and dissolve in tandem with the land itself, while foregrounding diverse perspectives and embedding sustainability as a core curatorial principle.

The organization also looks forward to presenting **Desert X AIUla, opening January 16 through February 28, 2026**, returning for its fourth edition. This year's theme, *Space Without Measure* will mark flourishes of imagination, from flowering utopias to previously inconceivable vistas, and sound corridors. Desert X AIUla 2026 will showcase a dynamic mix of Saudi and global artists, under the vision of **Artistic Directors Neville Wakefield** and **Raneem Farsi**, and two yet to be announced guest curators reflecting the region's long history of cross-cultural exchange.

*"Over the past decade, Desert X has evolved from an idea into a movement," said **Susan Davis, President and Founder of Desert X.** "Each edition has expanded our reach and deepened our relationships with artists, audiences, and communities across the Coachella Valley and the world. As we enter our next decade, the same spirit of thoughtfulness, dialogue and delight that has guided us since our founding, will continue."*

*"In its first ten years, Desert X became a living experiment in how art can shape our understanding of place," said **Jenny Gil, Executive Director of Desert X.** "The next decade is about deepening that work – rethinking how we collaborate, how we share space, and how we make art an intrinsic part of the public imagination."*

The tenth anniversary exhibition of Desert X will be curated by **Artistic Director Neville Wakefield** and **Kaitlin Garcia-Maestas, who joins the organization as Curator.** This deepens Wakefield and Garcia-Maestas's partnership and builds upon years of dialogue exploring how art can respond to – and reshape – landscape, history, and connection. Wakefield and Garcia-Maestas curated Desert X 2025, and in 2022 curated *A Divided Landscape at the Momentary*, where artists interrogated the narratives of the American West through new forms of storytelling and spatial intervention.

"Changing the ways in which we experience, see and talk about art is fundamental to Desert X's mission. Establishing new paradigms also involves evolving our own, and as we prepare for the

2027 exhibition, I'm grateful to Kaitlin Garcia-Maestas for adding continuity to the journey of change," said **Neville Wakefield, Artistic Director of Desert X**.

*"Having spent the past two years deepening my understanding of the Coachella Valley as co-curator of the previous edition, I'm excited to embark on this next chapter," said **Kaitlin Garcia-Maestas, Curator of Desert X**. "The tenth anniversary marks an important moment to honor Desert X's significant role in shaping the dialogue around contemporary land art, while also challenging ourselves to broaden its potential as a platform that fosters conceptually rich collaborations within an ever-evolving landscape and community."*

In announcing the new format and goals for 2027, Jenny Gil also announced the appointment of **Melissa Netecke** in the role of **Director of Development**. Netecke joins the organization with 15 years of experience leading partnerships and business development across the global art and luxury sectors. Most recently Netecke was head of business development at 291 Agency. Prior to that assignment she was Global Head of Partnerships at Art Basel, forging long-term collaborations with major luxury and lifestyle brands. At Art Basel she helped to launch new initiatives including Art Basel Cities and the fair's Paris edition.

From its inception in 2017, Desert X has presented five exhibitions in the Coachella Valley, and since 2020, has partnered with Arts AIIUa for three editions in AIIUa, Saudi Arabia. Commissioning over 130 artists for these exhibitions, Desert X has become one of the largest commissioning bodies of site-responsive, public art globally. As it enters its second decade, Desert X remains dedicated to creating new pathways for artists and audiences to engage with the desert, its histories, and its future.

Further partners, programming, and commissioned artists will be announced over the coming months.

Notes to Editors

Desert X Coachella

Public Exhibition Dates: October 30, 2027 – May 7, 2028

Opening Weekend Celebrations: October 28 – 31, 2027

Press Preview: October 29, 2027; timings and details to be announced

For media accreditation and further inquiries about Desert X Coachella, please contact:

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For images and more information, download our press kit [HERE](#).

Desert X AIUla

Public Exhibition Dates: January 16 – February 28, 2026

For media accreditation and further inquiries about Desert X AIUla, please contact:

Zoe Shurgold

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Acknowledgement of Native Land

We acknowledge the Cahuilla People as the original stewards of the land on which Desert X takes place. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work with the Indigenous people in this place. We pay our respect to the Cahuilla People, past, present and emerging, who have been here since time immemorial.

About Desert X

Desert X is produced by The Desert Biennial, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, conceived to produce recurring international contemporary art exhibitions that activate desert locations through site-responsive installations by acclaimed international artists. Its guiding principles include presenting public exhibitions of art that are open and free to the public and respond meaningfully to the conditions of desert locations, the environment, Indigenous communities, and promote cultural exchange. Desert X is committed to education and public programming with a robust series of initiatives that expand the breadth and depth of the organization's engagement with the surrounding community. The exhibitions provide a platform for artists from around the world to address ecological, cultural, spiritual, and other existential themes.

From its inception in 2017, Desert X has presented five exhibitions in the Coachella Valley. In 2020, the organization began to engage with exhibitions outside the United States and helped establish Desert X AIUla in the desert of Saudi Arabia. The exhibitions to date have explored new configurations of site-responsive work by more than 100 artists from North America, South America, South Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa creating a new paradigm for the presentation and experience of art and welcoming an audience of over 2 million.

Desert X is free and open to all and is funded by its board of directors and an international group of individual donors, foundations, and sponsors.

Follow Desert X on our [website](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Vimeo](#).

Download the Desert X mobile app for [iOS](#) or [Android](#).

#DesertX | #DX27

About Kaitlin Garcia-Maestas

Kaitlin Garcia-Maestas is a curator and writer based in New York City. Born and raised in New Mexico, her curatorial practice is rooted in a sustained inquiry into the notion of site. Working across indoor and outdoor spaces, she engages artists in site-responsive and collaborative processes that explore the social conditions of land, place, and identity.

Most recently, she served as Curator and Director of Exhibitions at Socrates Sculpture Park in Queens, NY, and as Co-Curator of Desert X 2025 in the Coachella Valley, CA. At Socrates, she oversaw the exhibition program, curatorial initiatives, and the Socrates Annual Artist Fellowship, a longstanding program supporting early-career artists in the realization of ambitious public artworks along the New York City waterfront. Notable exhibitions at Socrates include *Suchitra Mattai: We are nomads, we are dreamers* (2024) and *Mary Mattingly: Ebb of a Spring Tide* (2023).

Previously, Garcia-Maestas was Acting Curator of Visual Arts at the Momentary, the contemporary satellite of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, AR, where she developed a robust exhibition program centered on site-responsive and architectural interventions. During her tenure, she organized more than a dozen exhibitions and outdoor commissions by artists including Matthew Barney, Wendy Red Star, Xaviera Simmons, Nicholas Galanin, and Tavares Strachan, as well as major exhibitions such as *Yvette Mayorga: What a Time to Be* (2022), *A Divided Landscape* (2022, co-curated with Neville Wakefield), *Diana Al-Hadid: Ash in the Trade Winds* (2021), and *In Some Form or Fashion* (2021). From 2008 to 2018, she lived in Denver and held curatorial positions at the Denver Art Museum, MCA Denver, and the Biennial of the Americas, where she now serves on the board.

About Melissa Netecke

Melissa Netecke is a growth and development leader with over 15 years of experience in the contemporary art world, building globally recognized cultural initiatives and partnerships.

As Director of Development at Desert X, Melissa oversees strategic growth and partnerships for the internationally acclaimed exhibition worldwide. Prior to joining Desert X, she served as Head of Business Development at 291 Agency, where she led commercial projects for leading contemporary artists worldwide.

Previously, during her decade-long tenure as Global Head of Partnerships at Art Basel, Melissa spearheaded the strategic expansion of the fair's global partnership portfolio across Hong Kong, Basel, Paris, and Miami Beach. She developed landmark collaborations with brands including

UBS, Audemars Piguet, BMW, Ruinart, La Prairie, and Louis Vuitton, among others. She also played a key role in launching major new initiatives such as Art Basel Cities: Buenos Aires, Intersections (the Art Basel podcast), the Art Basel and UBS Global Art Market Report, and the fair's first retail collaboration, as well as the development and launch of Art Basel Paris.

Melissa holds a Master's Degree in Nonprofit Management from The New School in New York City and a B.A. in Rhetoric and Writing from the University of Texas at Austin. She regularly advises cultural organizations on partnership, strategy, and sustainable growth.