

Project: Desert X AlUla 2024 Visitor Centre

Team: KWY.studio

Size: NA

Location: ALULA, SAUDI ARABIA



Feature:

Project - KWY.studio's Desert X AlUla 2024 Visitor Centre embraces the rugged desert canyon landscape of AlUla, Saudi Arabia with a strikingly minimal design that highlights the natural geological formations. Located at the end of a narrow canyon, the building's position and spatial organization are directly informed by the cul-de-sac site nestled between towering rock cliffs.

The centre's understated form defers to the surrounding scenery, with a monolithic presence that appears carved from the stratified canyon walls. A carefully choreographed processional sequence guides visitors from the arrival deck through compressed prismatic vestibules into an open courtyard oriented 45 degrees from the main axis. This rotation creates intimate spaces that frame diagonal views of the sublime desert panorama.

While the angled courtyard establishes a sense of enclosure, cut-outs and a circular oculus intentionally reveal glimpses of the sky and craggy landscape beyond. The thoughtful journey culminates on the West side with an uninterrupted vista across the desert floor through a mirrored vestibule that expands the sense of depth.

KWY.studio's refined design deftly balances exposure to and protection from AlUla's extremes. The Desert X AlUla 2024 Visitor Centre offers a tranquil spatial experience that elevates an appreciation for the region's dramatic natural environment through a nuanced interplay of solid, void, light and shadow.

Design Team - Founded in 2009 in Berlin and Los Angeles, KWY.studio is a multidisciplinary platform that investigates the nature of collaboration through specific projects. Led by

principal Ricardo Gomes, the firm takes a process-oriented approach, beginning each commission with in-depth dialogue and analysis among invited specialists from diverse creative fields.

This inclusive methodology results in unexpected and imaginative design solutions that challenge conventional boundaries. KWY.studio's projects emerge from the synthesis of diverse perspectives, with recent collaborators ranging from artists, writers, and curators to educators, designers, and fellow architects.

The firm's portfolio demonstrates a keen ability to imbue projects with conceptual narratives that respond to the unique contextual Parameters of each site and program. KWY.studio's designs deftly negotiate complexities with refined, meticulously detailed expressions that elevate the sensory experience of architecture.

With a talented staff including Luise Marter and Rui Neto, among others, KWY.studio exemplifies an accurate, professional approach that pushes the boundaries of what architecture can be through interdisciplinary exploration and seamless collaboration. Their work positions the practice at the vanguard of contemporary architectural design.