

## Arts

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## A chain-link mosque and hyper-real human-animal sculptures feature amid Vancouver Biennale's public-art lineup this summer

by Janet Smith on June 7th, 2018 at 12:27 PM

Ajlam Gharem's *Paradise Has Many Gates* is headed to Vanier Park.

Look for a huge, chain-link mosque-like structure to rise in Vanier Park as [Vancouver Biennale](#) 2018–2020 launches its latest citywide public-art festival.

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With past events, the every-two-years "open-air museum" has brought the city startling landmarks like Yue Minjun's *A-Maze-Ing Laughter* at English Bay, Ai Wei-Wei's *F Grass* at Harbour Green Park, and Marcus Bowcott's *Trans Am Totem* at Quebec Street and Milross Avenue.

Now, with the curatorial theme called re-IMAGE-n, the latest installment opens June 20 with Saudi artist [Ajlan Gharem](#)'s *Paradise Has Many Gates* at the park. The cagelike building was first erected in the desert outside Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 2015, and when it's put in place here, it will be meant as a communal space that welcomes people of all faiths and is free from Islamophobia.

*Paradise Has Many Gates* will host Weaving Cultural Identities, in which First Nations weavers and graphic artists collaborate with local South Asian, Central Asian, and Middle Eastern Muslim communities, and will host an open Sunset Picnic in the Park on Multicultural Day, June 27.

Elsewhere, in early July, watch for the Biennale to bring to life several projects along the south side of the False Creek seawall. Vancouver-based Maskull Lasserre's *Acoustic Anvil: A Small Weight to Forge the Sea* hits Leg In Boot Square, with a three-by-seven-metre monolithic sculpture resembling the forger's tool, and paying tribute to the almost vanished industrial history of False Creek. Complementing that effort, Leg In Boot Square will host a series of classic black-and-white films of the industrial era in collaboration with the Biennale's film program, CineFest LIVE, throughout the summer.

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Patricia Piccinini's *The Young Family*.

The Vancouver Biennale is also making its first foray into unconventional interior spaces with an exhibit of Melbourne artist **Patricia Piccinini**'s wrinkled, fleshy and freakily lifelike animal-human sculptures at East Hastings Street's century-old Patricia Hotel. Piccinini has been making jaws drop for hundreds of thousands of viewers all over the world, starting with the massive, udder-sporting, turtlelike hot-air balloon, Skywhale, that she floated Canberra for its centenary to a 2016 Sao Paulo exhibit that became that year's biggest contemporary-art show on the planet, drawing 1.4 million viewers.

*Curious Imaginings* brings her hybrid creatures to the Patricia for a 90-day ticketed exhibit in September, allowing visitors to look her unusual creations straight in the eyes and provoking ideas about bio-technology, genetic engineering, and humankind's ethical limits.

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