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## Issue 2

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May 2016

### Fire Station Artist in Residence

*A hub for creativity*

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### American Artists in Qatar

*A cross-cultural exchange of ideas*

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### Generations of Qatari Talent

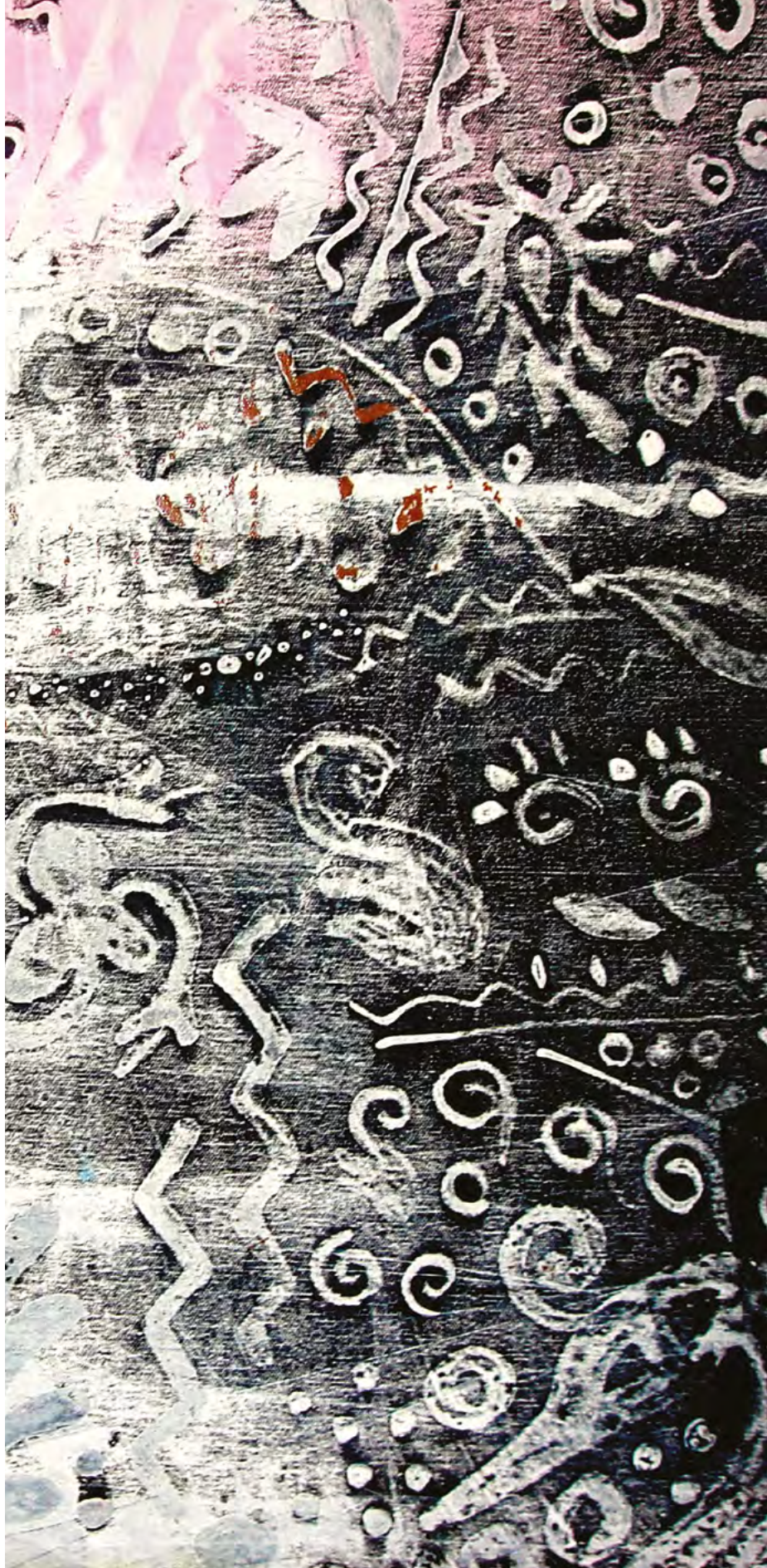
*Inspired by the past, looking  
towards the future*

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Embassy of the State of Qatar  
in Washington, D.C.

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## *Foreword*

# A few words from the Ambassador

In a world that often seems to be dominated by conflict and division, it is essential that we take time to appreciate shared values. That is one of the most powerful effects of art. By embracing the universally recognized passion inspired by art, and celebrating the diversity of artistic and cultural expression around the world, we can all realize our common humanity and address the misunderstandings that drive us apart.

Culture is defined by people and their communities. If the ultimate goal of international politics is to forge partnerships among governments, the goal of cultural diplomacy is to make friends among communities of people around the world.

So much of the beauty of cross-cultural engagement is its ability to transcend borders, bridge the differences between individuals, groups and nations, and bring together our pasts, presents and futures.

Coming into my third year serving as Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the United States, I am delighted to see so many thriving artistic and cultural connections between Qatar and the U.S.

In this second issue of *Q*, we offer you a taste of some of these connections, from American artists displaying their talents in Qatar to Qatari organizations sharing their unique perspective with American audiences.

Some Qatari traditions – such as pearl diving – may seem exotic, but are actually a part of our shared culture that is reflected on the banks of the Tennessee River!

*Q* also gives an inside view of Qatar's long-held affinity and appreciation for art in its most diverse senses, showing how people across the country are blending Qatar's ancient traditions with our thriving modernity.

Art is intrinsic to our national identity as Qataris. Public art, seen in so many places across Qatar, is as old as human history and acts as a reminder of shared artistic values to passers-by. At the end of 2015, I was delighted to introduce a Plexiglas candy statue, in the colors of Qatar's national flag, outside of our Embassy. The statue is not merely a decoration to admire, but is a testament to civil life and to our cultural heritage.

In a further celebration of ongoing artistic exchange between the State of Qatar and the United States, I am honored to serve as the Diplomatic Chair of the Phillips Collection 2016 Annual Gala, themed "Arabesque: Patterns of Beauty East-West, A Salute to Qatar." The work of the Phillips Collection and their educational initiatives aligns perfectly with Qatar's goal of enlightening the next generation to become culturally aware global citizens. We are excited for so many Washingtonians and other guests to experience Qatari art and culture at the Gala, and to enjoy the ensuing Contemporaries Bash, themed "Dreaming of Doha."

While we continue to strengthen our relations with the United States in the traditional fields of business and trade, security and defense cooperation, and education exchange, we hope that this issue of *Q* demonstrates how shared artistic and cultural engagement can be just as potent in bringing our two great nations together.

I sincerely hope you enjoy the magazine, and are inspired to create and share an artistic expression of your culture with your friends and neighbors around the world.

*Mohammed Jaham Al-Kuwari,*

*Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the United States*







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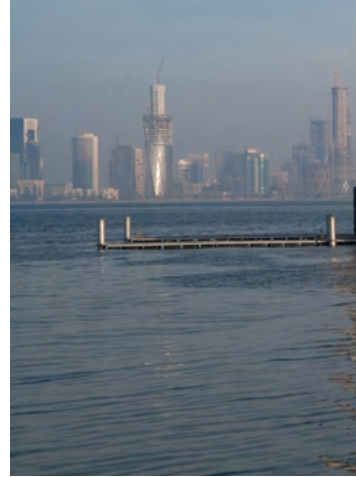
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Fire Station Artist in Residence: A Hub for Creative Exchange

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QM is helping Qatar find its own distinctive voice in today's global cultural debates.

## An Investment in Art: *Qatar Museums*



**Q**atar Museums (QM) connects the museums, cultural institutions, and heritage sites in Qatar and creates the conditions for them to thrive and flourish. It centralizes resources and provides a comprehensive organization for the development of museums and cultural projects, with the long-term goal of creating a strong and sustainable cultural infrastructure for Qatar.

Under the patronage of His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and led by its Chairperson, Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, QM is consolidating Qatar's efforts to become a vibrant center for the arts, culture, and education in the Middle East and beyond.

Since its foundation in 2005, QM has overseen the development of the Museum of Islamic Art, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Al Zubarah World Heritage Site Visitor Center, and Fire Station Artist in Residence.





| *Museum of Islamic Art, Doha.*

Future projects include the launch of the highly anticipated National Museum of Qatar and the 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum.

### Art from Within

QM is committed to advancing Qatar’s future generation of arts, heritage, and museum professionals. At its core lies a commitment to nurturing artistic talent, creating opportunities, and developing the skills to contribute to Qatar’s emerging art economy.

Through a multifaceted program and public art initiatives, QM seeks to push the boundaries of the traditional museum model—creating cultural experiences that spill out onto the streets and involve the widest possible audiences. Through a strong emphasis on originating art and culture from within and fostering a spirit of national participation, QM is helping Qatar find its own distinctive voice in today’s global cultural debates.

### These ambitious projects are helmed by the Qatar Museums Board of Trustees:

H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin  
Khalifa Al Thani,  
*Chairperson*

H.E. Sheikh Hassan bin Mohammed Al Thani,  
*Vice Chairman*

H.E. Abdulla bin Khalifa Al-Attiya

Ms. Marie-Josée Kravis

H.E. Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiya

H.E. Sheikh Abdul Rahman bin Saud Al Thani

H.E. Dr. Mohamed Abdul Raheem Kafoud

Mr. Dominique de Villepin

Mr. Mansour Al Khater



| *National Museum of Qatar.*





# National Museum of Qatar:

## *Heritage Meets Innovation*

**T**he new National Museum of Qatar showcases an innovative design by renowned architect Jean Nouvel while paying homage to an important historic monument. Inspired by the desert rose crystal, the interlocking disc design seems to grow organically around the Old Palace—now restored as the heart of the new National Museum of Qatar.

Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani, today considered the father of modern Qatar, originally built the Old Palace as a Royal Family residence and seat of government. After 25 years at the center of Qatar's political leadership, the building was converted into the National Museum of Qatar in 1975.

Just as its architecture reflects, the new Museum will give voice to Qatar's heritage while celebrating its future. Visitors will learn about ancestors and the formation of early cities, as well as the modernization of Qatari society. Exhibitions will combine historic objects and contemporary influences, opening up dialogues around the impact of rapid change. The space will become a thriving hub for the public, students, and museum professionals.

The restoration of the Palace aims to set a new standard for the treatment of historic buildings and architectural conservation, both in Qatar and across the region.



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The Museum  
of Islamic Art  
has set out to  
transform Qatar  
into a cultural  
capital of the  
Middle East.

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| *Museum of Islamic Art, Doha.*

# Museum of Islamic Art:

## *Traditional Inspiration, Modern Architecture*

**A**n iconic feature of the Doha skyline, the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) is the flagship project of Qatar Museums (QM). Inspired by elements of Islamic architecture, Pritzker Prize-winning architect I.M. Pei designed the imposing limestone structure. The museum's main building—topped with a domed atrium within a central tower—juts 60 meters (more than 195 feet) into the Arabian Gulf. Rising five stories from the sea, the building connects to an adjacent education wing and a large central courtyard.

The MIA's permanent collection occupies two floors in the museum's main building. It includes manuscripts, ceramics, metal, glass, ivory, textiles, wood, and precious stones from three continents. The first floor provides visitors with an introduction to some of the greatest works of Islamic art

before examining the tradition's major themes—calligraphy, pattern, science, and figural imagery. The second floor follows the journey of Islamic art from 7th century Arabia to 19th century Turkey, via the palaces of Córdoba, the bustle of medieval Cairo, and the mountains of Afghanistan.

### More than a Museum

The MIA includes other impressive resources, including:

**Library collection.** With more than 10,000 books in Arabic, English, and regional languages, the MIA Library is an ideal place for school groups, students, and researchers to learn about the arts of Islamic civilization.

**Park peninsula.** MIA Park is an expansive area developed as an additional element to the museum, providing a space where visitors

can relax and partake in cultural, educational, and social activities.

**Landmark sculpture.** Qatar's tallest public art installation punctuates the grassy park. American artist Richard Serra constructed the landmark sculpture—measuring 24 meters (more than 80 feet) in height—from seven steel plates arranged in a heptagonal shape to reflect the significance of the number seven in Islamic culture. See page 32 for more information about Serra's work.

Through safeguarding collections of Islamic art and showcasing extraordinary exhibitions, MIA shares knowledge and spreads curiosity, understanding, and joy.

Under the leadership of its Chairperson, Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Museum of Islamic Art has set out to transform Qatar into a cultural capital of the Middle East.





| *Museum of Islamic Art, Doha.*





| *Planispheric Astrolabe* Safavid, Iran (Kerman) 17th century. Artist: Hasan Husni Al Husayni Al Kirmani. Brass, gilded and engraved.



| *Museum of Islamic Art, Doha*



| *Gallery view, Museum of Islamic Art.*

# Mathaf:

## *An Arab Perspective on Modern Art*

**M**athaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art opened in 2010 in a renovated school building in Doha's Education City. The museum's collection offers a rare comprehensive overview of modern Arab art, representing the major trends and production sites from the 1840s through present day. Co-owned by Qatar Museums and Qatar Foundation, the Mathaf Collection now holds more than 9,000 works, making it the world's largest specialized collection of its kind.

Through major exhibitions—both historical and experimental—and large-scale education programs, Mathaf serves as a center for dialogue, a facility for research, and a resource for fostering creativity. Mathaf hosts solo and group exhibitions by regional artists, as well as events that explore and celebrate modern and contemporary art. The museum also presents exhibitions that situate the Arab world in a larger art context.

Together, such programs bolster Mathaf's mission to engage the local and international community, encourage research and scholarship, and contribute to the cultural landscape of the Gulf region, the Middle East, the Arab Diaspora, and beyond.



| Manal al-Dowayan, *Suspended Together*, 2011. Fiber glass printing, dimensions variable.



| View of *Selections from the Collection*, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, June 1–August 31, 2013. Photo by Leonore-Namkha Beschi.



| Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art. Museum exterior with Adam Henein's *Al-Safina* ('The Ship') in the foreground.



# Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani Museum:

## *A Journey Through Time and Place*



| Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani Museum, Qatar.

**T**he Sheikh Faisal Museum's distinctive exterior of local stone and traditional turrets make the building itself a collector's piece. Designed to display artifacts collected by Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim bin Faisal Al Thani, the building's return to historic Qatari architecture resonates against modern-day Doha.

Sheikh Faisal is dedicated to preserving and promoting Islamic heritage for the people of Qatar and its international visitors. Since opening, the museum has expanded to include new facilities for research and education, as well as state-of-the-art entertainment resources.

Four themed collections—Islamic Art, Qatar Heritage, Vehicles,

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**Everyone can find something that fascinates and delights in this treasure trove.**

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and Coins & Currency—comprise more than 15,000 pieces from four continents. Everyone can find something that fascinates and delights in this treasure trove of fossils, scriptures, Islamic textiles, ancient figurines, vintage cars, and rare coins—as well as the world's largest private collection of armory.

In 2010, the Ministry of Art, Culture, and Heritage selected the Sheikh Faisal Museum as one of Qatar's cultural landmarks. As such, the museum aims to promote arts and heritage wherever possible and gladly welcomes visiting exhibitions.

## Profile:

# *Sheikha Al Mayassa Al Thani*

Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani has played a pioneering role in the fields of culture, education, and outreach, spearheading and supporting a number of local and international organizations.

**A**s Chairperson of Qatar Museums (QM), she guides the vision for future museums and cultural projects, with the aim of transforming Qatar into a leading cultural and education center in the region and around the world. In this role, H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa oversaw a constellation of museums, developed international projects, and made significant purchases for the Qatari national collections.

As she notes, “most contemporary art is provocative.” Bold public commissions—including Richard Serra’s lofty abstract sculpture 7 and Damien Hirst’s *The Miraculous Journey*, a monumental 14-part bronze sequence depicting a developing fetus—show her dedication to bringing pieces that stimulate debate and artistic engagement to Qatar.

### **Bridging East and West**

The Museum of Islamic Art, the flagship project of QM, embodies Qatar’s vision of bridging East and West, as well as past and present. “Art and culture is a religion we can all practice,” she says. “People have said, ‘Let’s build bridges,’ and frankly, I want to do more than that. I would like to break the walls of ignorance between East and West. Art is very powerful because it has no boundaries and you don’t need to belong to any country or religion



| *Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani*

**“Art has always  
been our culture and  
part of our identity”**

Sheikha Al Mayassa Al Thani





| *Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani attends the Chinese Art of Silk exhibition opening*



| *Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani attends What About the Art? Contemporary Art From China*



| *Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani attends The New York Times Art for Tomorrow Conference*



or social class. It brings people from all walks of life together to talk about an idea.”

In addition to her work on cultural initiatives, H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa is the Chairperson for Reach Out To Asia (ROTA), a philanthropic non-governmental organization aiming to improve primary and secondary education in Asia. She is also the Chairperson of the Doha Film Institute, empowering people through film and new media, educational workshops, and grassroots festivals. “Art has always been [Qatar’s] culture and part of our identity.”

### Much-Deserved Recognition

Sheikha Al Mayassa was named the most influential person in art on ArtReview’s Power 100 in 2013 and prominently appears on the TIME 100 and Forbes’ the World’s 100 Most Powerful Women lists. In 2015, the Sheikha was awarded the StellaRE prize, established by Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo of the Italian contemporary art foundation bearing her name.

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**“Art is very powerful because it has no boundaries and you don’t need to belong to any country or religion or social class. It brings people from all walks of life together to talk about an idea.”**

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She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Political Science and Literature from Duke University in the United States in 2005. While at Duke, she served as Vice President of the International Association, Vice President of Hiwar (an organization to promote political dialogue), and a delegate to the Model United Nations. During her 2003–2004 school year, she studied at the University of Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne and the Institut d’Études Politiques de Paris. She also studied post-graduate public administration at Columbia University.

# The New York Times

## *Art for Tomorrow Conference*

**H**ow can true artistic creativity be harnessed for social and economic wellbeing? What is the collector's civic responsibility in the Digital Age? Are the boundaries between art and other creative disciplines more blurred than ever before?

This year's New York Times Art for Tomorrow Conference raised these and other critical issues—and their impact on the creative cities of tomorrow.

The 2016 Technology, Creativity, and the City theme brought together world-famous artists and architects, leading museum directors, urban developers, policymakers, and financiers. Together, they explored the complex relationships between the digital world and the creative process, the nature of creativity, and its impact on developing cities and nations.

Set against Doha's striking cityscape, the 2016 New York Times Art for Tomorrow Conference featured Qatar Museums Chairperson Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, The New York Times Chairman and Publisher Arthur O. Sulzberger Jr., performance artist Marina Abramovic, and artist Jeff Koons.





## Fire Station Artist in Residence:

# *A Hub for Creative Exchange*

**R**edesigned as a hub for the local art community, the Fire Station will house a rolling nine-month Artist in Residence program. Chosen artists will have the opportunity to collaborate with fellow artists, benefit from weekly mentoring sessions, and attend all exhibitions and lectures. A springboard for emerging artists, the program will encourage interaction among local artists, academia, the community, and the flourishing art scene in Qatar.

Under the supervision of Qatari Architect Ibrahim Al Jeidah, Doha's former Civil Defence headquarters is under renovation, with special care to preserve many of its original features, including the building's façade. The original station, built in 1982, was used for 30 years until the last fire engine rolled out in December 2012.

The renovated building will provide 24 artist studios and exhibition space. New public spaces will include a café, restaurant, bookshop, art supply shop, cinema, and artist facilities. The public gallery at the Fire Station, called the Garage, is dedicated to new talent. Here, artists in residence will display the fruits of their labor.







| *The Fire Station.*



| *Artists at work in the Fire Station.*













# 2

## *Transcending Borders: Art in Qatar and the U.S.*

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Richard Serra's East-West/West-East

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VCUQatar: Inspired Innovation

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# Richard Serra's *East-West/West-East*



| Richard Serra, *East-West/West-East*

**T**he Qatari desert now gives rise to sculptor Richard Serra's second art installation in the Gulf nation. Set in a natural corridor formed by opposing gypsum plateaus, *East-West/West-East* spans more than a kilometer across the Brouq Nature Reserve. A series of four steel plates, each of which soars more than 14 meters (over 45 feet) toward the sky, aligns perfectly with its surrounding topography. Serra, known for producing large-scale, site-specific sculptures around the world, took cues from the natural environment while making sure visitors could see and explore all four plates from either end of the sculpture.

Serra's first public artwork in the Middle East, called 7, was installed at the Museum of Islamic Art Park in 2011. Commissioned by Qatar Museums, the landmark sculpture measures more than 24 meters in height, making it the tallest public art installation in Qatar—and the tallest Serra has created to date. Constructed from seven steel plates arranged in a heptagon shape, the work celebrates the scientific and spiritual significance of the number seven in Islamic culture. Serra found inspiration for the striking sculpture in the region's towering minarets.



| Richard Serra East-West/West-East Qatar Museums Collection© Rik Van Lent Qatar

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| Statue by Laurence Jenkell outside the Embassy of the State of Qatar in Washington, D.C.

## Public Art: *A Tool of Diplomacy*

Art is an intrinsic part of the Qatari identity. While public art has ancient roots, today it works as a powerful instrument of both diplomacy and cross-cultural understanding.

**S**ince late 2015, the colors of the Qatari flag have shone brightly on a Plexiglas candy statue outside the Embassy of the State of Qatar in Washington, D.C., aiming to inspire cross-cultural discourse and compassion.

As a universally-understood part of human nature, art is capable of breaking down the barriers that exist between cultures and peoples. Qatari diplomats are proud to display the new sculpture outside of their Embassy: the white and maroon piece serves as a reminder to visitors that cultures around the globe share the same artistic values.

During the statue's unveiling ceremony in 2015, Ambassador Mohammed Al-Kuwari stated, "In Qatar, we showcase works all over the country by talented individuals, both local and internationally renowned artists. As Ambassador, I can strongly affirm that art is part and parcel of diplomacy. Diplomacy that neglects to include art is doomed to disappointing failure."

The statue, which was designed by acclaimed French artist Laurence Jenkell, will permanently reside outside of the Embassy in Washington, D.C. The building's newest addition demonstrates shared values and principles between peoples of the world, while serving as a testament to both civil life and Qatari cultural heritage. Public art exists all across the globe, and with this new statue, Qatar hopes to advance the belief that art and diplomacy are a truly inseparable entity.



Art Exchange:  
*American Artists  
in Qatar*





| Tony Smith, *Smoke* 1967 (fabricated 2010) Doha Exhibition & Convention Center.

## Tony Smith

Tony Smith was one of the most influential artists of the 20th century. A sculptor, painter, and architect who apprenticed with Frank Lloyd Wright, Smith reached critical acclaim for his large-scale geometric sculptures. He exhibited this new form of sculpture for the first time in 1964. In 1967—after making the cover of *TIME* magazine as “Master of the Monumentalists”—he became an overnight sensation around the world. In 1998, a major retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art introduced Smith’s daring work to a new generation of viewers. Smith died of a heart attack in 1980, at the age of 68.

Smith designed *Smoke* in 1967. A replica of the two-tiered aluminum sculpture now enchants passers-by in its new outdoor home at the Doha Convention and Exhibition Center. The 24-foot high sculpture—a combination of geometric components, including five tetrahedrons and forty-five extended octahedrons—reflects the artist’s fascination with the morphology of organic shapes such as crystals and honeycombs.



Louise Bourgeois' large steel spider, rising approximately 9 meters (nearly 30 feet) in height, stands as an ode to the artist's mother, who worked as a weaver in France.

| Louise Bourgeois, *Maman*

## Louise Bourgeois



Louise Bourgeois is a renowned French-American artist and sculptor. Although abstract, her work is autobiographical and expresses themes of betrayal, anxiety, and loneliness. *Maman* is Bourgeois' most famous and iconic sculpture. The large steel spider, rising approximately 9 meters (nearly 30 feet) in height, stands as an ode to the artist's mother, who worked as a weaver in France. The sculpture enjoys worldwide popularity and has been on exhibit in such cities as London, Paris, Geneva, Buenos Aires, and St. Petersburg.

## Tom Otterness



Born in Kansas in 1952, Tom Otterness has exhibited his work at Marlborough Gallery in New York, John Berggruen Gallery in San Francisco, and other important contemporary art galleries. His most recent exhibition, *Metal on Paper*:

*Silverpoint, Copperpoint & Steelpoint Drawings*, opened at Marlborough in September 2015. His works are included in many collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Guggenheim Museum in New York, and the Museo Tamayo in Mexico City. He was elected a member of the National Academy in 1994.

Qatar Museums (QM) commissioned Otterness to create *Other Worlds* for the new Hamad International Airport in Qatar. Spread throughout three locations in Passenger Terminal C, the series of eight interactive bronze sculptures invite visitors to the airport to engage, climb, and play within the sculptural playgrounds. One of the artist's largest public projects to date, the monumental series stands as part of QM's effort to "extend art beyond its traditional museum model and into public spaces."

Qatar Museums (QM) commissioned Otterness to create *Other Worlds* for the new Hamad International Airport in Qatar.



| Tom Otterness, *Other Worlds* 2012 Bronze.



# VCUQatar:

## *Inspired Innovation*

Through a partnership with Qatar Foundation, Virginia Commonwealth University established a campus in Qatar to offer students the opportunity to earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in the thriving capital city of Doha.

**V**CUQatar's four-year BFA program in Fashion Design gives students a distinctive opportunity to blend the rich history of Arab culture, fashion, and traditions with the fashion industry of the 21st century.

Through the intensive curriculum, students learn that fashion design is far more than crafting beautiful clothing—it's also learning how to develop a fashion collection, from concept to completion.

Aspiring designers are encouraged to look beyond the traditional restrictions of fashion to scrutinize clothing as it responds to lifestyle, sculptural practice, performance, movement, costume, and art. And they do it all at VCUQatar.





Students at VCUQatar can also choose from BFAs in Graphic Design, Interior Design, and Painting & Printmaking, or a BA in Art History. All BFA students start their respective programs with a one year Art Foundation program.

The multidisciplinary Art Foundation program exposes students to a wide variety of methods and tools, research strategies and ways of thinking. The program encourages self-discovery and promotes relevant exchange and dialogue, setting students up for a successful creative development experience during their time at VCUQatar.

A Master of Fine Art in Design is also offered.







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## *Qatari Lifestyle: Merging Tradition with Modernity*

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Souq Waqif: The Social Heart of Doha

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Katara Cultural Village: An Inspired Vision for Art and Culture

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# Pearl Diving:

## *A Celebration of Traditional Culture*

Every year in May, dhow boats appear just off the coast of Qatar, bobbing peacefully on the calm, blue-green Gulf water. The boats carry pearl divers, who intermittently descend to the seabed and rise with loads of pearl producing clams.

**T**hese divers are part of the annual Senyar competition, which commemorates Qatar's prominent pearl diving past. The team that collects the most clams wins the competition and a \$100,000 prize, but they don't open the clams—preserving the pearls and the local ecosystem.

Prior to the discovery of oil in Qatar, pearl diving was one of the country's main sources of income, and demand for pearls around the world kept the industry bustling.

### Opening Qatar to the World

The job was not always safe, as divers faced myriad challenges: trips at sea that sometimes lasted six months, lack of fresh water,

predators known to attack humans, and more. Divers tied weights to their feet to reach the seabed quickly and ropes to their waists to return to the surface. The most adept divers could stay under water for over two minutes, and to this day pearl divers continue to free dive, often unaided by advanced equipment.

But overcoming the challenges paid off—the sought-after pearls supported a large segment of the country's economy for many years, selling across the globe, from India to Europe and everywhere in between.

### Honoring a Maritime Tradition

With the discovery of oil, the country grew less dependent on pearl diving. And with the advent of Japanese

artificial pearls in the 1930s, the industry lost its profitability.

However, the tradition of pearl diving remains an important part of Qatari history. Many families depended on it for decades, and—with many Qataris born and living near the coast—the sea has remained a prominent fixture in daily life. Thus, the annual Senyar was established to keep this vital aspect of Qatar's cultural history alive.

When you visit Qatar today, you may not see too many dhow boats trolling the sea for pearls, but you will experience a rich, vibrant culture—one that thrived for many years thanks to the hard work of pearl divers.



| *Cultured Pearls. Underwater Diving*

## Did you know?

Pearl diving was also a flourishing industry in the United States. Much like Qataris, divers in the Tennessee River gathered freshwater mussels in the hopes of finding pearls, which were sold throughout the Americas and Europe. And, much like in Qatar, the U.S. pearl industry has declined significantly in recent years. Almost all pearls from the United States are now man-made, though there are still some active pearl divers in the Tennessee River.





| *Falcon Souq, Doha, Qatar*

Today, the training of these birds of prey has been turned into an art form.



| *A falcon.*

# Falconry:

## *Keeping the Tradition Alive*

**F**alconry has always been a beloved sport in Qatar, dating back to its roots in the ancient Bedouin societies of the Arabian Peninsula. Hunters trained the falcons to pursue migratory birds, which served as a primary source of meat in these cultures.

Though the practice at one time reached across the Middle East and Europe, it is now practiced principally in Qatar and other Gulf countries.

### Falconry Today

As Qatar has rapidly modernized, so too has the sport of falconry. Today, the training of these birds of prey has been turned into an art form, with many trainers spending hours a day with hooded falcons on their arm.

Serious falconers must be well-equipped for their ventures into the desert, making modern falconry gear as impressive as the determination needed to excel at it. Hunters use large, custom 4x4 vehicles to transport their birds and even have specialist GPS locators to track the birds.

These falcons are extremely well cared for, with dedicated veterinary clinics and pharmacies available to them. The most valuable falcons are even issued their own passports to protect them from smuggling or theft.

### Celebrating Tradition

Qatar hosts a variety of festivals honoring and celebrating falconry, including the Qatar International Falcons and Hunting Festival, which saw its seventh annual iteration earlier this year. Though most participants come from the Gulf region, many travel great distances to join.

Although falconry has changed considerably over the centuries, it remains an important part of the Qatari national identity. And while Doha locals no longer depend on the birds for sustenance, the falcons, still sold in the city's Souq Waqif, help bond modern citizens to their rich cultural history.

A photograph of a traditional wooden dhow boat on the water. The boat's mast and rigging are visible on the left. In the background, the modern skyline of Doha, Qatar, is visible across the water under a clear sky. The title of the article is overlaid on the top right of the image.

# The Dhow's Place in Qatari Fishing and Culture

Even today, dhows and their distinctive lateen sails remain a common sight off the coast of Doha. Qatar, with its reliance on the sea, has a long history with these ocean cruisers.

Typically spotted in the Arabian Gulf and Red Sea, dhows are believed to have originated from Persia or the Indian sub-continent. And they're unique: unlike most wooden boats, dhows are bound together with rope, not nailed together—making them particularly durable even when carrying heavy loads.

Dhows have been used for a variety of purposes throughout Qatari history. Many completed commercial journeys as far as Madagascar or the Gulf of Bengal; others made pearl diving ventures in the Gulf.

One of their primary uses, though, was providing sustenance to the Qatari people through fishing. Fishermen would venture out daily, returning with fresh catches to sell on the beach. Beached dhows drew crowds from coastal towns, and as Doha developed, a permanent fish market replaced the practice of selling directly on the beach.

Although fishing techniques improved—from the rudimentary fish traps used centuries ago to the large fishing nets we see today—dhows remained the boat of choice.

Of course, many Qataris also enjoy taking a cruise on these traditional boats, as modern dhows have become a vessel of leisure. Tourists can even dine aboard a dhow, complete with a view of the Corniche brilliantly reflected in the bay waters.

For a country so closely linked to the sea, Qatar has always enjoyed a special relationship to dhows, from their economic significance in the country's early days to their cultural importance today.







| Arabian race horses and trainers awaiting the start of the horse show in the outskirts of the city, Doha, Qatar







# Preserving Qatar's Equestrian Tradition

**A**n inspired vision and a passion to preserve and perpetuate the Arabian horse led His Highness the Father Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani to establish Al Shaqab in 1992. In honor of his ancestor, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani, he built this breeding farm and equestrian center at the landmark battle site, where more than a century prior, the battle that led to Qatar's independence was fought and won.

Within an amazingly short period of time, Al Shaqab bred three world champion stallions: Gazal Al Shaqab, Al Adeed Al Shaqab, and Marwan Al Shaqab. Today, champion offspring of these stallions enhance the pedigrees of Arabian horses throughout Qatar and around the globe.

With these successes, Al Shaqab stands as a tribute to the Arabian horse and Qatar's long tradition of equestrian excellence. The range of equine disciplines and programs that Al Shaqab promotes ensures that the cultural legacy and appreciation of the Arabian breed will endure for generations.





# Camel Racing: *A Unique Qatari Experience*



## Did you know?

Racing camels can reach speeds up to 40 mph.



| Camel Racing

Camel racing is a hallmark of Qatari culture. It remains a prominent attraction today in the small hamlet of Al Shahaniya, home of Qatar's popular camel racetrack. At the Al Shahaniya racetrack, an hour's drive from downtown Doha, visitors can view the fiercely competitive and highly expensive domestic and international tournaments.

But the tradition has evolved. Now, remote-controlled jockeys direct the camels on the course in a unique clash of modern and ancient sport. The small robot jockeys are clothed in colorful racing silks, riding the lanky creatures across the sands to the delight of locals and tourists alike.

The regular flow of camels to and from the track during the race season doesn't quite compare to the more than 6,000 camels that participated in the Al Shahaniya festival last year. Prizes included golden and silver daggers, with the sword of His Highness the Emir awarded to the winner of the final event: His Highness the Emir's Main Race.

Although professional camel racing started in Qatar in 1972, the sport is a pillar of tradition, and the racetrack is a must-see for any Doha visitor.



| Camel Racing



# Souq Waqif:

## *The Social Heart of Doha*

**M**uch like a bazaar, a souq is an open market. And Souq Waqif in Doha has served people for centuries as the place to trade wool and animals for other goods and daily necessities. Over time, the souq fell into disrepair and risked ruin before a decision to preserve the historical site in 2004. The souq was then completely renovated and restored according to traditional Qatari architectural techniques.

As one of the last historical souqs still standing in the Gulf, Souq Waqif sees swarms of tourists daily who come to shop, dine, and experience a cultural tradition. Locals also come to purchase traditional goods.

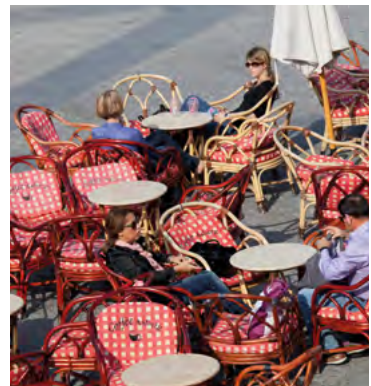
Get lost in the labyrinth of alleyways and you'll find anything from spices and rugs to traditional clothes, cashmere, pets, and perfume.



| Souq Waqif, Doha, Qatar



| Traditional rugs at Souq Waqif



| Souq Waqif, Doha, Qatar





| Souq Waqif, Doha, Qatar

# Katara Cultural Village:

## *An Inspired Vision for Art and Culture*



| Katara Mosque

The Qatar Museums (QM) Gallery is a venue for public art projects in Katara Cultural Village. Founded in 2010, the gallery serves as a platform for Qatar's emerging museums to present their collections and projects. The gallery also hosts exhibitions for local and international artists. Its wide range of exhibitions—including photography, archaeology, art, sports, architecture, and sculpture—make the QM Gallery Katara a place to encounter a broad local and international audience.

Keeping pace with the emerging global culture, Katara Cultural Village is Qatar's largest and most multidimensional cultural project. It is a place where people come together to experience the cultures of the world. With beautiful theaters, concert halls, exhibition galleries, and cutting-edge facilities, Katara aims to become a world leader for multicultural activities.

In line with the goals set forward by the Qatar National Vision 2030, Katara serves as a guardian to the heritage and traditions of Qatar while spreading awareness about the importance of every culture and civilization. As such, Katara hosts many international, regional, and local festivals, workshops, performances, and exhibitions.





| Katara Amphitheatre, Doha, Qatar

## Gandhi's Three Monkeys



| Subodh Gupta, *Gandhi's Three Monkeys*

Indian artist Subodh Gupta's signature style uses objects of daily life, such as household kitchenware and bicycles, in his artwork. Visitors to Katara Cultural Village will find his stimulating triptych—an homage to Mahatma Gandhi's three wise monkeys—hard to ignore. Gupta assembled steel and worn brass utensils to form the heads of a soldier, a terrorist, and a man wearing a gas mask. The halting sculpture embodies the Japanese proverbial principle to “See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.”







# 4

## *Beyond the Museums*

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Working in Concert: The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra

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Celebrating World Cultures Through Film

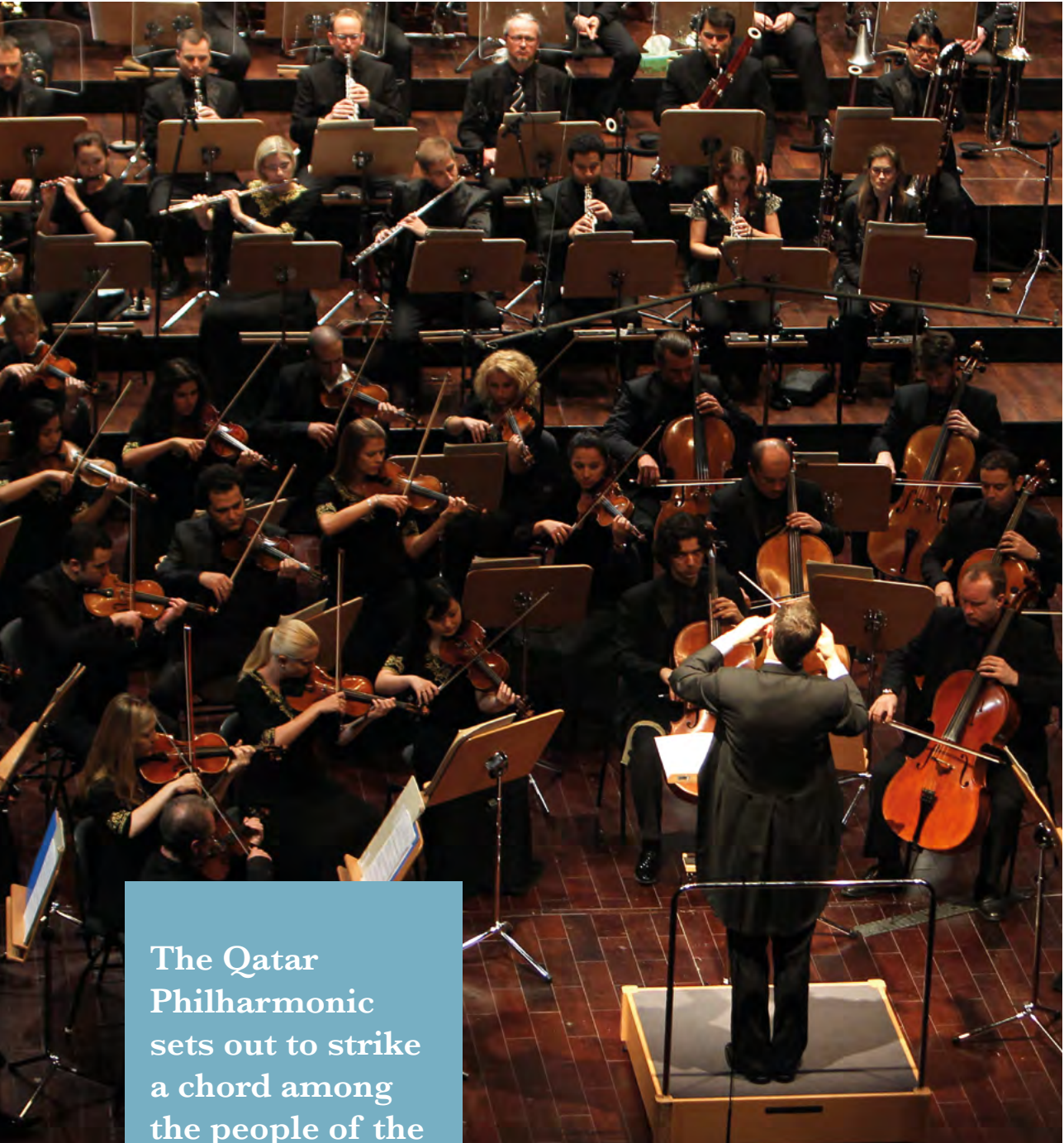
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Al Zubarah: Clues to Cultural Past

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The Qatar  
Philharmonic  
sets out to strike  
a chord among  
the people of the  
Arab world.

| Conductor Alastair Willis (C) leads the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra. Getty images



## Working in Concert:

# *The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra*



| *The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra perform before the opening night film 'Amelia' at the Museum of Islamic Art during the 2009 Doha Tribeca Film Festival on October 29, 2009 in Doha, Qatar. Getty images.*

**H**er Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned founded the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra in 2007. Its goal: to perform and promote Western and Arab music that would inspire the children and adults of Qatar and the Arab world to create and enjoy music.

The 101-member orchestra held its Inaugural Concert, conducted by Lorin Maazel, on October 30th, 2008. Since then, the Qatar

Philharmonic has grown to offer some 40 programs a year at its home in the Katara Opera House, which opened with the world premiere of Marcel Khalifé's Rababa Concerto in December 2010.

### On the Road

Touring performances have taken the orchestra from Doha to the Royal Albert Hall in London, the Syrian Opera House in Damascus, the Kennedy Center in Washington,

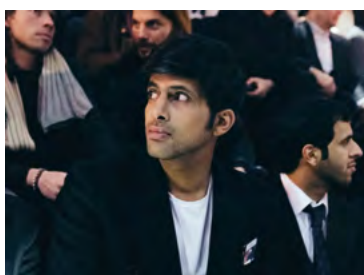
D.C., and beyond. Other notable performances include the United Nations General Assembly, the 50th anniversary of OPEC at the Vienna Konzerthaus, and the opening of the Katara Cultural Village Amphitheatre with music by Vangelis and the voices of Angela Gheorgiu and Roberto Alagna.

While the Philharmonic sows the seeds of symphonic music in the Arab region, it also provides a platform for music from around the globe. World premieres have included Marcel Khalifé's Symphony of Return, Jean-Charles Gandrille's Violin Concerto, Abdalla El-Masri's Oud Concerto, Rami Khalifé's Chaos for Piano and Orchestra, and Requiem and Houtaf Khoury's Angel of Light Piano Concerto.

The Philharmonic is a member of Qatar Foundation, which supports Qatar on its journey from a carbon economy to a knowledge based economy by unlocking human potential.

# Generations of Qatari Talent

## Mubarak Al Thani



Mubarak Al Thani is a Qatari artist and graphic designer, and founder of Blessed, a high-end pop culture brand making men's clothing.

Al Thani's designs embody the very essence of Qatar, and Qatari and Arab culture.

"Everything across the country is an inspiration I incorporate into the brand – the famous architectural designs, the old fabrics used in tents, the nature, the flora and fauna of the desert. The logo on our polo shirts is a camel, the ultimate desert animal."

"We use a lot of geometric designs to reflect the historic and modern buildings that also use these patterns. Islamic history in the region, Islamic calligraphy – all these things help shape my work."

Launched in Qatar in early 2015, Blessed has big goals. "My designs aren't just for Qataris – they're for everyone. I would love to branch out into the United States. Taking Blessed to Fashion Week around the world, New York, Paris, that's the dream in the near future."

"I want my designs to show that the Middle East is about so much more than problems and crises. We have great artistic potential, beautiful architectural and fashion work. This is the future."

Al Thani sees a bright future for fashion design in Qatar.

"I'm the only menswear designer in Qatar at the moment, as most of the market is focused on women's fashion, but I see this changing soon. We're already branching out and will be launching our first fragrance this year. A new generation of Qataris are developing smaller brands, and using Instagram and other social media to share them with the world. I'm looking forward to the competition!"





| *Work by Ali Hassan*

## Ali Hassan

Multi-award winning Qatari artist Ali Hassan has been practicing his craft in Qatar since the early '70s, and is now inspiring a new generation.

Since his time developing Arabic calligraphy on Qatar's first magazine, Hassan has exhibited his work in New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Atlanta, Paris, London, Berlin and Tokyo, as well as all across the Middle East. He has worked with UNESCO, been featured in the world's top hotels and galleries, and designed the logo for the 2010 'Doha Capital of Arab Culture'.

He passionately believes in Qatar's distinctive cultural identity as a source of inspiration for artists.

"Every country's culture is unique and Qatar's art culture is uniquely Qatari. Any creativity in Qatar must reflect the Qatari identity, or what it means to be Arab, or the essence of Islam. There's everything here – the Museum of Islamic Art, Katara, the Qatar National Museum, sports, hospitality, shopping! Doha has a fantastically international character. It's all here in our art."

Hassan is currently working on a project for Hamad International Airport that reflects Qatar's desert landscape.

"Qatar is fostering an environment for creativity. Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa's leadership is taking Qatar's artistic community into the future. It's authentic.

It's in the art, architecture, and music. It's done great things for the country."

He has high hopes for the next generation of Qatari artists.

"Having taught at Virginia Commonwealth University and Qatar Foundation, I've seen firsthand that the next generation is in good hands. Studying art in Qatar used to be uncharted territory; now young men and women are studying really diverse subjects at Qatar Foundation's Education City and other universities. The investment in education is amazing for our arts scene. This next generation is something special."







| *Work by Ali Hassan*



| *Work by Ali Hassan*

**“Qatar is fostering an environment for creativity. H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa’s leadership is taking Qatar’s artistic community into the future.**

Ali Hassan



| Work by Ali Hassan



## Wadha Al-Sulaiti



Wadha Al-Sulaiti is a Qatari artist, and a pioneering figure of Qatar's grassroots art scene.

"What was simply a hobby for me in school became an opportunity to express myself, and then became a life's work at the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage."

A board member of the Qatar Fine Arts Society and a former artist-in-residence at Qatar Museums' Fire Station, she helped renovate the old Civil Defense building to turn it into a place for artists to create.

"I think Qatar is a story of opportunity. It is a unique place where what is traditional and what is modern co-exist in harmony. There's a lot to look forward to."

Since her first exhibition in 2005, Al-Sulaiti has showcased her work all over Qatar, the Middle East, and in global artistic hubs such as Paris.

She is one of a number of renowned international artists to have her work displayed in Qatar's Hamad International Airport – paintings Heritage 2 and Heritage 3 are in place to welcome international travelers from across the world to Qatar.

"It is a dream one day, as is for any artist, to have my work featured in the US."



| Work by Wadha Al-Sulaiti



| Work by Wadha Al-Sulaiti





“I think Qatar is a story of opportunity. It is a unique place where what is traditional and what is modern co-exist in harmony. There’s a lot to look forward to.”

Wadha Al-Sulaiti

| Work by Wadha Al-Sulaiti





# Celebrating World Cultures Through Film

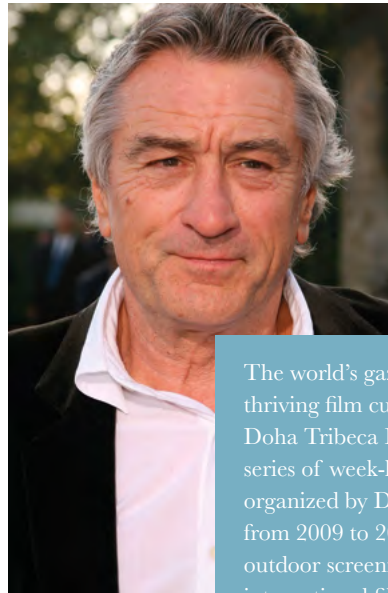
Film has the power to change hearts and minds. That's what drives the Doha Film Institute (DFI), Qatar's hub for film appreciation and education.

Worldwide cultures are celebrated in year-round screenings that range from restored masterpieces to documentaries ripped from today's headlines.

The DFI is also building a dynamic film industry in Qatar by nurturing regional storytellers whose work is global in scope. These rising talents develop and produce original stories for the web, television, radio, and theaters. They mature alongside the veterans in DFI's in-house film production unit who collaborate with foreign filmmakers.

Acclaimed filmmaker Mira Nair saw the value of the DFI instantly. After partnering on the production of the political thriller *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, she continued the collaboration by bringing emerging East African filmmakers to the DFI for intensive training.

The DFI has also co-funded prominent films such as Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*, which was produced by Salma Hayek Pinault and based on the celebrated poems of Lebanese-American poet Kahlil Gibran.



| Robert De Niro

The world's gaze fell on Qatar's thriving film culture during The Doha Tribeca Film Festival, a series of week-long film festivals organized by DFI and held annually from 2009 to 2012. Indoor and outdoor screenings of Arab and international films, including multiple world and international premieres, were held at Katara Cultural Village in Doha. Attendees included world-famous actors Kevin Spacey and Robert De Niro.



The annual Ajjal Youth Film Festival builds on the DFI's history of community-based programming. Ajjal, which means "generations" in Arabic, invites people to discuss cinema through interactive events. A week of workshops, tournaments, exhibitions, and screenings empower and inspire the region's youth.

| Holly Carter, Jayshree Janu Kharpade, guest and Doha Film Institute Resident Filmmaker and Programmer Chadi Zeneddin attend the Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet* Red Carpet on Day 6 of the second Ajjal Youth Film Festival on December 6, 2014 in Doha, Qatar. Getty images



# Al Zubarah: *Clues to Cultural Past*

Al Zubarah reveals invaluable clues to Qatar's cultural identity.

**R**ecently named a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Qatar's Al Zubarah is considered one of the best-preserved historic merchant towns in the Gulf region. Founded in the mid-18th century, the abandoned coastal town sits about 100 miles northwest of Doha.

Once a thriving center of pearling and international trade, Al Zubarah rose to become the country's largest and most important merchant town. Its success attracted the attention of other Gulf powers and repeated attacks ensued. In 1811, Al Zubarah was burned to the ground and never fully recovered. The town was abandoned by the mid-20th century.

With the help of local and international archaeologists and scientists, the site of Al Zubarah—and the visitor center in the nearby fort—provides important clues to Qatar's cultural identity. The 60-hectare archaeological site includes remains of houses, mosques, large fortified buildings, and a market. Such archaeological evidence offers invaluable insight into the history of the pearl trade and the development of the modern Gulf region.



| Closeup of the main entrance door, Zubarah fort, Qatar



| The rectangular eastern tower of Zubarah fort, Qatar



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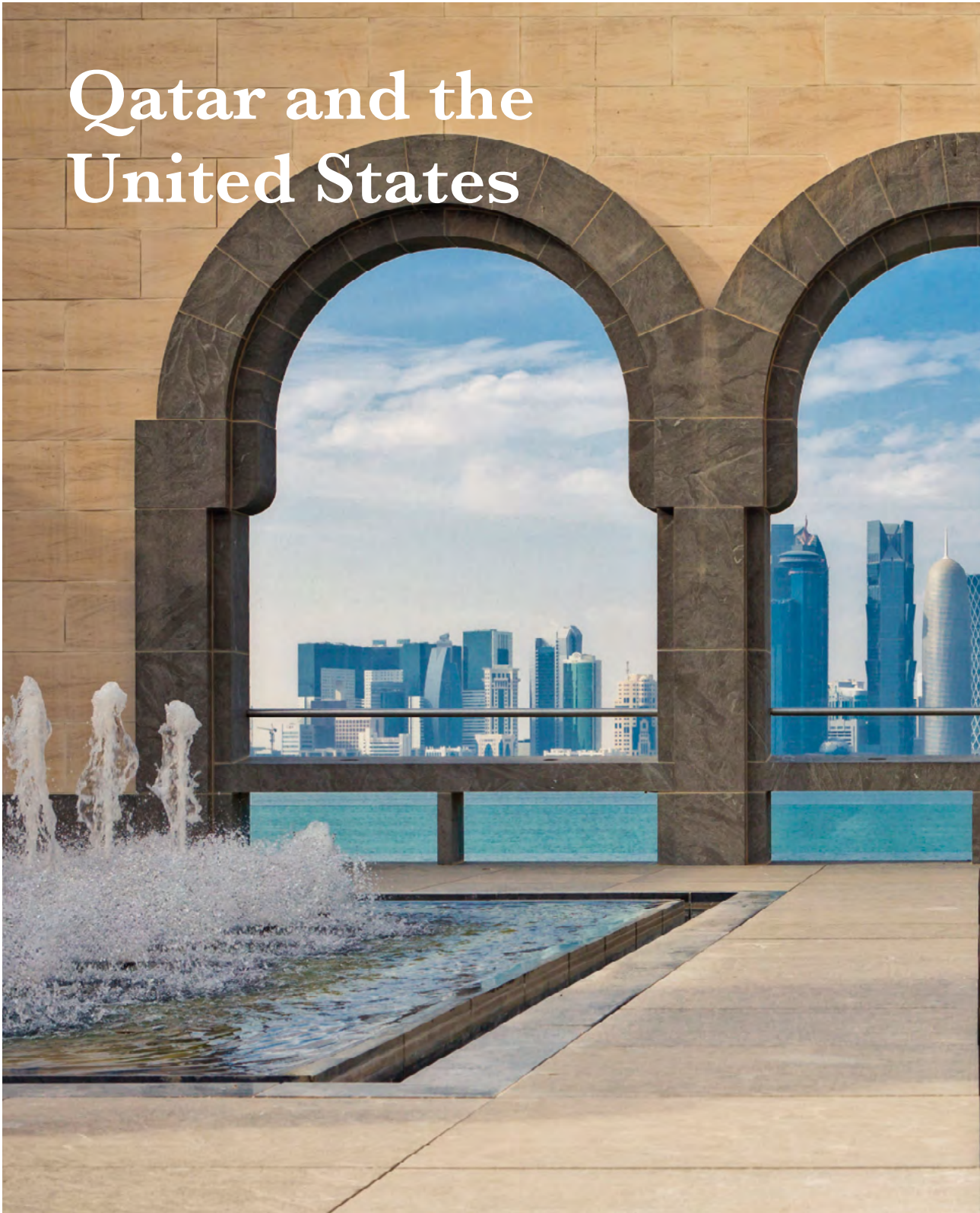
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# Qatar and the United States







**Q**atar is an independent state in the southern Arabian Gulf. Diplomatic relations with the United States were established in 1972; in the same year, Qatar's first diplomatic mission in Washington, D.C. opened.

The relationship between the two countries has always been friendly, highly productive, and reciprocal.

Qatar is home to many Americans, and the United States is both Qatar's largest foreign investor and its largest source of imports. Qatar-U.S. relations are growing continuously in multiple areas: economic, political, military, educational, and cultural.

Qatar has been increasing its investments in the United States over many years, creating thousands of jobs across America. These include partnerships with numerous American companies, such as ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, and Raytheon. Qatar has also made notable real estate investments, such as the CityCenterDC project in Washington, D.C.

From 2011 to 2014, United States exports to Qatar almost doubled from \$2.8 billion to \$5.2 billion. Direct investment between Qatar and the United States has also grown dramatically, with more growth expected following the Qatar Investment Authority, Qatar's sovereign wealth fund, opening its first office in the United States. Qatar plans to invest \$35 billion in the United States over the next five years.

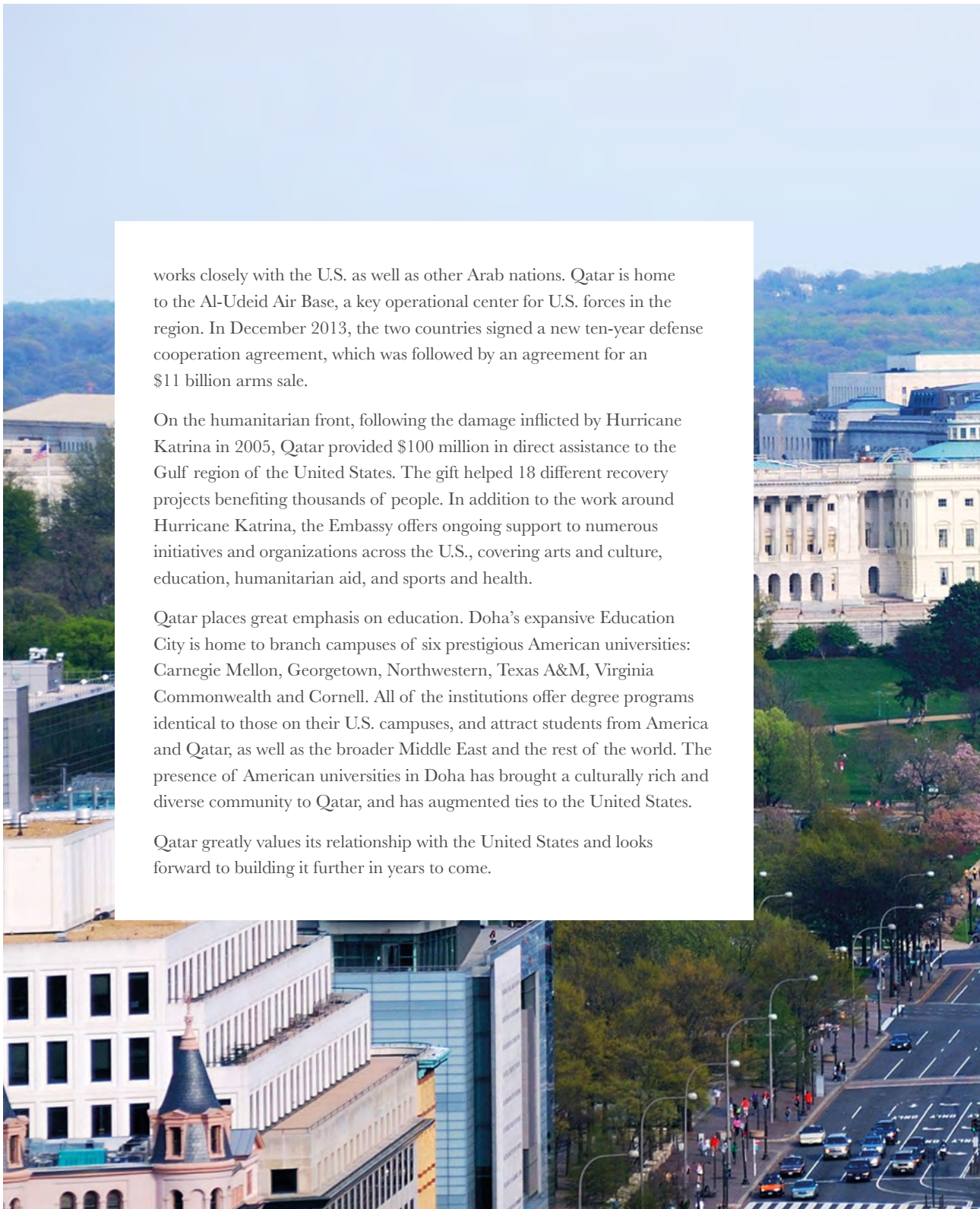
Qatar is a close ally of the United States and a strong advocate of building a peaceful, prosperous, and stable Middle East. Qatar is committed to supporting the U.S.-led coalition to defeat terrorists in Syria and Iraq, and

works closely with the U.S. as well as other Arab nations. Qatar is home to the Al-Udeid Air Base, a key operational center for U.S. forces in the region. In December 2013, the two countries signed a new ten-year defense cooperation agreement, which was followed by an agreement for an \$11 billion arms sale.

On the humanitarian front, following the damage inflicted by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Qatar provided \$100 million in direct assistance to the Gulf region of the United States. The gift helped 18 different recovery projects benefiting thousands of people. In addition to the work around Hurricane Katrina, the Embassy offers ongoing support to numerous initiatives and organizations across the U.S., covering arts and culture, education, humanitarian aid, and sports and health.

Qatar places great emphasis on education. Doha's expansive Education City is home to branch campuses of six prestigious American universities: Carnegie Mellon, Georgetown, Northwestern, Texas A&M, Virginia Commonwealth and Cornell. All of the institutions offer degree programs identical to those on their U.S. campuses, and attract students from America and Qatar, as well as the broader Middle East and the rest of the world. The presence of American universities in Doha has brought a culturally rich and diverse community to Qatar, and has augmented ties to the United States.

Qatar greatly values its relationship with the United States and looks forward to building it further in years to come.









***Photos Courtesy of:***

*Muneera AlFuhaid*

*Qatar Tourism Authority*

*Museum of Islamic Art, Doha*

*Qatar Museums*

*Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha*

With thanks to *Ambassador Mohammed Al-Kuwari*

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Issue 2

Embassy of the State of Qatar in Washington, D.C.

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