

Walls That Speak: JEDARIART Brings Qatar's Artistic Spirit to Chile and Argentina

30 November 2025 – Doha, Qatar: In a year defined by creativity without borders, Years of Culture and Qatar Museums' Public Art Department have taken JEDARIART, Qatar's beloved public art programme, on a new journey across Latin America. This November, the project arrived in Chile and Argentina, transforming public spaces into open-air galleries that celebrate friendship, hospitality, and the universal language of art.

Launched in 2020 under the patronage of Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, JEDARIART has reimagined how communities connect with art, bringing murals and installations into everyday life.

Walls of Valdivia Come Alive

Qatari artists Aisha Al Fadhala and Mubarak Al Malik joined forces with Chilean collaborators through a partnership with Edgar Endress, Professor at George Mason University, and a member of the Institute for Public Art (IPA). Together, they painted large-scale murals on the Municipality Building of Valdivia and the Architecture Department at Universidad Austral de Chile, filling its walls with symbols of Chilean nature and Qatari tradition.

Al Malik's mural, *Love and Hospitality*, captured the heart of this collaboration. Known for his use of the *battoollah*, the traditional face mask worn by Qatari matriarchs, Al Malik combined Qatari motifs such as the *mabkhara* (incense burner) with Chilean wildlife, featuring the strong-voiced and elusive *chucao* bird. He incorporated textile patterns worn by Qatari women alongside the *copihue* flower, uniting Valdivia's natural colours with Qatari designs to create an easy fusion of both cultures.

Aisha Al-Fadhala, known artistically as ALFA, worked with the University to develop a piece that reflects the culture and beauty of Valdivia. Often described as the gateway to Chilean Patagonia, Valdivia is surrounded by dramatic landscapes and stunning natural scenery, elements that deeply influenced her mural *A Sip of Cultures*.

Inspired by the region's mountains, sunsets, and intense colour palette, ALFA placed the traditional Qatari *ghawa* cup at the heart of the composition, encircled by Valdivia's natural motifs. Henna-inspired patterns, shaped by her research into textiles from the Los Ríos region, appeared across the design, merging Qatari and Chilean aesthetics. Additional elements included the *dandurria* bird soaring across the backdrop and delicate *chilco* flowers draping from the corners.

Buenos Aires Walls Welcome New Voices

A few days later, JEDARIART moved eastward to Buenos Aires, where two Qatari artists, Abdulla Alemadi and Abdulla Al Sallat, worked in an up-and-coming neighbourhood of Buenos Aires.

Alemadi's mural visualised the meeting of cultures at the centre of this exchange: beneath the shade of a date palm, Argentina's Sun of May, its national emblem, is draped in a Qatari *bisht*, sharing coffee and *mate*, the beloved herbal drink of Latin America, with the *rufous hornero*, Argentina's national bird. An empty chair was originally placed in the scene to invite viewers to join, symbolising welcome, generosity, and cultural connection. The mural then evolved into a true collaboration when Argentinian artist Lucho Montolivo, known as Olivo, joined the project. Olivo's contribution featured his signature character, a traveling boy. By incorporating this character, Olivo added a sense of wander and shared storytelling to the mural.

His fellow artist, Al Sallat, took a more introspective approach. His mural, titled *for the roses* is a deeply personal piece inspired by the Andalusian philosopher Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi. “It suggests that meaning lies not on the surface, but in what can be felt or understood by those who truly seek. Just as poetry reveals itself differently to every reader, this mural offers each viewer the chance to discover their own version of its story,” Al Sallat said.

A Dialogue in Colour

“JEDARIART has always been about creating conversations through art,” said Dimitrije Bugarski, Public Art Planning Specialist at Qatar Museums. “Through the Years of Culture initiative, we’re taking that dialogue beyond Qatar, allowing artists to immerse themselves in new environments and exchange ideas with local communities. These murals in Argentina and Chile are stories told through colour and form. They also help us deepen cultural and diplomatic ties, strengthening long-term relationships built through Years of Culture. We hope this creative exchange inspires further research, collaboration, and new opportunities for artists in the future.”

Since its inception, JEDARIART has redefined how art interacts with public life in Qatar, adorning schools, streets, and cityscapes. By extending this creative vision to Latin America, the project reinforces a key tenet of Qatar’s cultural diplomacy: that the most powerful connections are made through shared experiences.

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About Years of Culture

The Years of Culture initiative, chaired by Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, spearheads long-lasting cultural partnerships between Qatar and other nations. It exists to promote respect and understanding among diverse cultures and serves as a catalyst for bringing people together, nurturing connections, encouraging dialogue, and deepening understanding. At its heart, Years of Culture celebrates the power of cultural exchange, which enriches Qatar’s ties with partner countries beyond the dedicated year.

Each year is organised with support from Qatar and partner countries’ cultural institutions, ministries, foundations, and private and public sector partners, with assistance from Embassies in Qatar and abroad. Programmes are tailored to explore the unique nature of each partner country with a focus on cultural heritage, creative industries, social and economic development, and innovation.

Previous Years of Culture have included: Qatar-Japan 2012, Qatar-UK 2013, Qatar-Brazil 2014, Qatar-Türkiye 2015, Qatar-China 2016, Qatar-Germany 2017, Qatar-Russia 2018, Qatar-India 2019, Qatar-France 2020, Qatar-USA 2021, Qatar-MENASA 2022, Qatar-Indonesia 2023, and Qatar-Morocco 2024.

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