

## Exploring Historical Cultural Connections through Fashion: National Museum of Qatar and M7 Showcase Qatari-Moroccan Fusion in Design

**Doha, Qatar – 4 December 2024** – The National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) has unveiled a unique showcase inspired by the opening of Mohammed Benchellal's new exhibition at the museum. The showcase celebrates the deep-rooted and evolving fashion trends of Qatar and Morocco and the sustainable nature of many traditional practices – a focus that has once again re-emerged within the fashion industry. This display is presented in collaboration with M7, Qatar's creative hub for fashion and design, as part of the Qatar-Morocco 2024 Year of Culture.

The showcase explores the historical and contemporary connections between Qatari and Moroccan cultures through fashion, with a focus on sustainable garment-making practices. Highlights include a traditional wool *daffah* (cloak) from the NMoQ collection, adorned with intricate hand-stitched Zari designs. This piece demonstrates the transformation of the *daffah* from a practical garment into an object of cultural beauty and adornment.

In addition, as part of the collaboration with M7, Qatari designer Mashael Al Naimi, founder of the Mhefhef brand, created a modern interpretation of the Bisht that will also be on display. Her creation—a handwoven Tusar silk abaya inspired by the architectural elegance of Morocco's Kasbah Gate—reimagines the Bisht with contemporary sophistication while paying homage to its heritage.

Mooza Salem Al Kuwari, Assistant Curator for Early History and Archaeology at NMoQ who oversaw the creation of the showcase, said, "Our objective in creating this showcase was to bridge the past and the present, connecting time-honored garment-making techniques with modern design sensibilities. It also highlights how sustainable practices and cultural exchange have endured through generations, embodying shared values between Qatar and Morocco."

As part of the Qatar-Morocco 2024 Year of Culture, this showcase helps visualize the historic and enduring connections that persist among different peoples and cultures spread across geographies. The Year of Culture initiative brings together people from different nations through cultural dialogue, collaborative projects, and legacy programs that extend beyond the formal programming year. The Qatar-Morocco 2024 partnership marks the first time Qatar's Year of Culture has focused exclusively on a North African country.

The showcase will remain at NMoQ until 18 January 2025, inviting visitors to experience the intersection of heritage, innovation, and sustainability within the Qatari and Moroccan fashion landscapes.

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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. Though formal programming spans one year, the lasting impact continues through legacy projects.

The Qatar-Morocco 2024 Year of Culture is developed in collaboration with leading organizations in Qatar with counterparts in Morocco and with assistance from the Moroccan Ministry of Youth, Culture, and Communication, Qatar's Embassy in Morocco, and the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Qatar.

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, and Qatar-Indonesia 2023.

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**About the National Museum of Qatar**

The National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) preserves and celebrates the history of Qatar. It engages with its present and inspires the country's ambitions for the future. The Museum, which opened in March 2019, gives voice to the country's culture and heritage through artefacts, oral histories, music, films, and artworks. The NMoQ takes the visitor on an immersive and multisensory journey of its 1.5 km thematic and chronological galleries. The iconic building, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, is inspired by the desert rose and comprises of large interlocking disks of different diameters and curvatures that surround the restored historic palace of the late Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani, ruler of Qatar (1913 – 1949). Sheikh Abdulaziz Al Thani serves as director.

**About M7**