



Qatar and Indonesia Mark Deep Historic Ties in Yearlong Creative Exchange through Qatar Museums' [Years of Culture](#) Initiative

**Qatar-Indonesia** 2023 Year of Culture Explores Hidden Treasures from Indonesia in the Museum of Islamic Art and Lusail Museum Collections

26 February 2023 – Doha, Qatar – To mark the Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture, Qatar Museums is featuring some of the hidden treasures from Indonesia housed within its renowned collections and museums.

“The beautiful artefacts and poignant photographs on display at the Museum of Islamic Art and the Lusail Museum highlight the deep connection between Indonesia and **Qatari culture**,” said Aisha Ghanem Al Attiya, Director of Cultural Diplomacy for Qatar Museums. “We share so much in terms of religious heritage and appreciation for history with an eye towards the future. I am excited for the people of Qatar to learn more about this beautiful country through the stories told by these pieces.”

“Indonesia is the first Southeast Asian country to partner with the Years of Culture initiative, which is a testament to our historic connection and growing cooperation across many sectors,” said Indonesian Ambassador to Qatar His Excellency Ridwan Hassan. “This year will be a colorful celebration of what can happen when two cultures come together. I can’t wait for the people of Qatar and Indonesia to see it come to life.”

#### Museum of Islamic Art Collection

Following a recent facilities enhancement project and the reimagination and reinstallation of its permanent collection galleries, MIA introduced exciting new galleries dedicated to Southeast Asia, a subject not typically presented in an Islamic art museum. The galleries remind visitors that the region today is home to the largest Muslim community worldwide. Indonesian gold jewelry and textiles are among the objects on view.

The galleries also highlight the connection between different cultures through exhibits on the trade of commodities and the exchange of ideas across the Islamic World and beyond.

MIA Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs Shaika Nasser Al-Nassr explained that: “At MIA, we tell the story of the spread of Islam around the world and its influence on art and culture. The new MIA makes that story complete with the addition of galleries on the Indian Ocean region and Southeast Asia.”

#### Qatar Museums Collection

Describing the stories told through turn-of-the-century photographs of pilgrims from Indonesia to Mecca, which are part of the general Qatar Museums collection, as well as scenes of modern daily life of Muslims in Java and Jakarta, Dr. Giles Hudson, Curator of Photographs, said, "As Qatar Museums and its institutions explore the lasting impact of robust trade routes that carried people, objects, and ideas around the globe, these powerful images capture the spread and impact of Islam throughout the world and how it has influenced the way people interact to this day."

### Fascinating History

The photographs of pilgrims were taken by Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, a famous Dutch ethnographer, who was one of the first Europeans to visit and the first to photograph Mecca. He published his photos of the architecture and people of Mecca in 1888 as "Bilderatlas zu Mekka" (Photo-atlas of Mecca).

The Bilderatalas contains over a dozen photographic plates of pilgrims from Indonesia. These were taken in the garden of the Dutch consulate in Jeddah, which pilgrims from Indonesia passed through during a period when their country was still under Dutch colonial rule. The pilgrims are from diverse Muslim communities from all over Indonesia, including Sumatra, Java, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, the Moluccas, including Ambon.

### Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture

The full-year program for the Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture will feature a host of performances, exhibitions, sporting and culinary events, photography projects, residency and volunteer programs, and more. Inaugurated in 2012 by QM Chairperson Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Years of Culture initiative is an annual bilateral exchange that deepens the understanding between Qatar and another nation and its people through a year of cultural programming.

In a special focus this year based on Qatar's experience in developing its creative economy, the Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture will include an emphasis on projects that will enhance the creative industries in both countries with a focus on sustainable, long-term partnerships.

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### About Years of Culture

Culture is one of the most effective tools to bring people closer together, encourage dialogue, and deepen understanding between nations.

Under the leadership of its Chairperson Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Qatar Museums (QM) developed the annual "Years of Culture" initiative — an international cultural exchange that deepens understanding between nations and their people. Though formal programming lasts only one year, the ties of friendship that are strengthened and formed are long-lasting.

Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture has been developed in collaboration with leading organizations in Qatar, including Doha Film Institute, Education Above All, Katara Cultural Village, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qatar Charity, Qatar Cycling Federation, Qatar Foundation, Qatar Museums, Qatar National Library, Qatar Tourism, with assistance from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Qatar and the Embassy of the State of Qatar in Indonesia.

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, and Qatar-USA 2021. In celebration of its 10th anniversary, the 2022 Year of Culture celebrated the entire Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA) region as Qatar welcomed the world for the Arab region's first FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™.

#### About Qatar Museums

Qatar Museums (QM), the nation's preeminent institution for art and culture, provides authentic and inspiring cultural experiences through a growing network of museums, heritage sites, festivals, public art installations, and programmes. QM preserves, restores, and expands the nation's cultural offerings and historical sites, sharing art and culture from Qatar, the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (MENASA) region with the world and enriching the lives of citizens, residents, and visitors.

Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and led by its Chairperson, Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, QM has made Qatar a vibrant centre for the arts, culture, and education in the Middle East and beyond. QM is integral to the goal of developing an innovative, diverse, and progressive nation, bringing people together to ignite new thinking, spark critical cultural conversations, educate and encourage environmental stewardship and sustainable practices, and amplify the voices of Qatar's people. Since its founding in 2005, QM has overseen the Museum of Islamic Art and MIA Park, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, the National Museum of Qatar, QM Gallery Al Riwaq, QM Gallery Katara and the 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum. Future museums include Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar, Qatar Auto Museum, Art Mill Museum and the Lusail Museum.

Through its newly created Creative Hub, QM also initiates and supports projects—such as the Fire Station Artist in Residence, the Tasweer Qatar Photo Festival, the creative hub for innovation, fashion and design M7, and Liwan Design Studios and Labs —that nurture artistic talent and create opportunities to build a strong and sustainable cultural infrastructure.

Animating everything that Qatar Museums does is an authentic connection to Qatar and its heritage, a steadfast commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, and a belief in creating value through invention.

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