



With Music, Film, and Cuisine, Qatar Celebrates the Beginning of the Qatar-MENASA 2022 Year of Culture

Qatar Dignitaries and Representatives of the MENASA Region Gather for Opening Ceremony Held in Qatar Museum's Fire Station

Renowned Composer, Singer, and Songwriter Dana Al Fardan Performs

5 March 2022 – Doha, Qatar – With the participation of Her Excellency, Lolwah Rashid Al-Khater, Assistant Foreign Minister of Qatar, officially inaugurated the Qatar-MENASA 2022 Year of Culture at an opening ceremony on the evening of Thursday 3 March, welcoming leaders from the nation and dignitaries representing countries from across the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia to an exceptional evening of music, film, and cuisine, held in the courtyard of the Fire Station. The celebration extended into the following day, 4 March, when members of the public were also invited to attend Doha Film Institute film screenings and musical performances by renowned Qatari composer, singer and songwriter Dana Al Fardan and others.

Marking the beginning of a year of specially curated museum and art exhibitions; film, music and food festivals; and other cultural exchanges taking place between Qatar and other nations across the MENASA region, the two-day opening event was hosted by Qatar Museums.

Qatar introduced its Year of Culture initiative in 2012 under the leadership of Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums, partnering each year with a different nation for a series of cultural exchanges designed to bring the world to Qatar and the best of Qatar to the world. On the tenth anniversary of the initiative, in anticipation of welcoming the globe for the Qatar FIFA 2022 World Cup, Qatar is partnering with countries and communities from: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Bhutan, Egypt, India, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Maldives, Morocco, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Welcoming the guests to the opening ceremony, Her Excellency, Lolwah Rashid Al-Khater, Assistant Foreign Minister of Qatar said, "This year, our people will have the opportunity to strengthen their bonds in a deeper and more meaningful way, through a series of exhibitions, performances, festivals and cultural exchanges. I believe the Qatar-MENASA 2022 Year of Culture will showcase the culmination of a long and significant history of initiatives created by the Qatari people, while acting as the cornerstone for a new and important phase in MENASA's cultural understanding."

Aisha Ghanem Al Attiya, Director of Cultural Diplomacy, Qatar Museums said, "This wonderful evening is just a sampling of what is to come in the months ahead, as everyone opens their eyes, ears, hearts, and minds to one another through a host of specially curated exhibitions, performances, festivals, and cultural exchanges. Presented in-person in Qatar and virtually throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia regions, the events of this extraordinary Year of Culture celebrate the heritage and innovations that we share throughout the MENASA region."

The opening ceremony featured musical performances curated by Dana Al Fardan, Qatar's renowned composer, singer and songwriter. In addition to performing her own compositions, she brought the guests the music of Tunisian vocal star Mehdi Ayiachi, the world-renowned MAqam Ensemble, master percussionist George Oro, and the students in the Arab Percussion Ensemble of the Qatar Music Academy. Throughout the evening, guests were invited to view a program of short films from Qatar and the MENASA region developed with the support of the Doha Film Institute. The cuisine for the evening commenced with an appetizer by award-winning Palestinian chef Sami Tamimi, followed by flavors from areas across the MENASA region.

- End -

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.

In celebration of its 10th anniversary, the 2022 Year of Culture will offer programming from the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA).

The Qatar-MENASA Year of Culture 2022 will include countries and communities from: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Bhutan, Egypt, India, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Maldives, Morocco, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Qatar-MENASA Year of Culture 2022 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 Football Association, Qatar Foundation, Qatar Museums, Qatar National Library, Qatar National Tourism Council, Qatar Olympic Committee, Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, with assistance from Doha-based embassies of participating countries.

The Qatar-MENASA 2022 Year of Culture is supported by Qatar Airways.

Previous Years of Culture have included: Qatar-Japan 2012, Qatar-UK 2013, Qatar-Brazil 2014, Qatar-Turkey 2015, Qatar-China 2016, Qatar-Germany 2017, Qatar-Russia 2018, Qatar-India 2019, Qatar-France 2020, and Qatar-USA 2021. Past sponsors include Vodafone, Qatar Gas, Shell, Ooredoo, Shangri-La Hotel and Resorts, Lulu Group International, Qatar Financial Centre, Qatar Petroleum, and ExxonMobil.

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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 Tasweer Qatar Photo Festival. Future projects include the soon to open 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum, and Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar.

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 and the creative hub for innovation, fashion and design M7—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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