



*“Qatar — a Thriving Hub for Creatives — Spotlight on Artists
Qatar-MENASA 2022 Year of Culture supports regional talent finding their voice in Qatar*

5 July 2022 – Doha, Qatar – Over the past decade, Qatar has cemented its cultural vision by creating a space to explore, build, and understand cultures from around the Middle East and the wider North Africa and Southeast Asia regions. The Qatar-MENASA 2022 Year of Culture has been the foundation for a new and important phase in cross-cultural collaboration this year. The Year of Culture events, presented in Qatar as it welcomes the world as host of the region’s first FIFA World Cup Qatar™, celebrate the shared heritage and beauty of the MENASA region.

During what also marks the 10th year anniversary of the Years of Culture initiative, programming will showcase a thoughtful focus on regional narratives told through the eyes of its public.

Aisha Ghanem Al Attiya, Director of Cultural Diplomacy, Qatar Museums said, “The MENASA region is one of the most diverse in the world, giving rise to powerful civilisations, incredible innovations and cultural breakthroughs. This global heritage is our legacy that unites us all. Today it permeates through the creative industries in Qatar and among our neighbours and we want to empower people from the region to share their stories, passion, and progress in their own words.”

Qatar has invested in building an infrastructure that supports creatives throughout their journey, including in cultural hubs like the Fire Station, Liwan and M7, with the purpose of connecting artists, providing them with opportunities, and offering them exposure. Read on to get to know some of the Qatar-grown regional talent and their projects.

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Majdulín Nasrallah (Palestinian) is a creative whose work spans a wide range of disciplines. She uses both art and design as tools to challenge current systems and constructs, provoke critical thought, and stimulate discussion. Her work often deals with the dialogue and interactivity between the human body and the built environment, tackling notions of physical space and objects in relation to the human experience through a variety of mediums and scales.

Recent work by Nasrallah: “Balance Bench” is an interactive public artwork that tackles the notion of psychological and physical boundaries on both an individual and social scale. The seat’s unstable and divided form is emblematic of the social, cultural, and political barriers between people. Visitors activate the seat as they balance it through collective effort. One person cannot sit alone – the seat only balances when four people are interacting and co-operating. Since each person’s movements affect the stability of the other, they all inevitably become aware of the significance of one another’s presence.

Othman Khunji (Bahraini) is an interdisciplinary conceptual artist. His work ranges across the fields of product, and interactive installation design. His areas of interest are social behaviors, triangulating how the relationships between religion, culture, and society can be expressed through the language of design. His interactive creations invite a reawakening and exploration of social justice issues that will establish platforms for dialogue in the hope of generating new progressive schools of thought. Othman's studies include his latest publication, RITUALS, Our Past, Present & Future: Glimpses of Islamic Enrichment and its accompanying collection, The Five Pillars of Islam which has been acquired by HE Sheikha Al Mayassa Al-Thani. His work has been showcased in Paris, Milan, Richmond, London, Berlin, St. Petersburg and all over the Middle East.

In his own words: *"Qatar brings together people from all backgrounds where they can engage in open dialogue on different social justice issues that my artworks address."*

Hadeer Omar (Egyptian) is a new media artist, designer, and educator. Her research explores cultural identity and memories, the self, and narratives through immersive XR media and technologies, graphics, photography, A/V performances and video art installations.

In her own words: *"In Doha, we're based on communities that are completely different from each other, but with our very own expectations. Working in Qatar made me feel freer when it comes to what I want to talk about, even how I present my identity. The culture is growing so much here when it comes to the art scene; we're pioneers; because whatever we're doing, we're amalgamating experiences."*

WHERE YOU CAN SEE THEM NEXT:

Majaz: Contemporary Art Qatar
16 September 2022 – 25 February 2023
Location: Masrah Almaared, Mathaf
Part of Qatar-MENASA 2022 Year of Culture

The Fire Station: Artist in Residence will celebrate young local and regional talent in *Majaz: Contemporary Art Qatar*, on view from September 16, 2022, through February 25, 2023. The Artist in Residence Alumni Exhibition will celebrate five years of the Artist in Residence (AIR) programme at the Fire Station and the flourishing art scene in Qatar. In January 2021, the Fire Station invited 14 AIR alumni to participate in a six-month-long programme to develop new works for this exhibition. An additional 25 AIR alumni will be featured in the exhibition, where they will showcase works in a variety of disciplines including painting, sculpture, and new media, and explore different perspectives and reflections to unveil personal, cultural, and global concepts. The works will be displayed in dialogue with each other highlighting elements of storytelling. The exhibition is curated by Saida Al Khulaifi Acting Head of Residency Programs and Amal Zeyad Ali, Exhibitions Coordinator at the Fire Station.

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Maryam Al Majid (Qatari-Indian) comes from a diverse background and mix of two very rich cultures – Qatar and India. From an early age, she has been influenced in many ways by both countries and its values.

In her own words: "I come from a diverse background and mix of two very rich cultures – Qatar and India. Since childhood, I was exposed to both cultures and values by my parents and stories passed on to me. I feel the strongest connection to both countries which remain to be a source of inspiration whenever I create."

Haytham Sharrouf (born in Venezuela and raised in Lebanon) is an interior architect, graphic designer, and artist. Sharrouf is always looking to explore uncharted territories to produce eccentric and visually challenging art objects that go beyond traditional art practices. He will take part in the Fire Station Artist in Residence alumni exhibition in September.

In his own words: "I came to Doha because of the Fire Station Artist in Residence program. Doha inspired me to embark on a new multidisciplinary series of artwork in which I try to capture hidden souls of people, architecture, and the city itself. For me, Doha is enough."

WHERE YOU CAN SEE HIM NEXT

Doha Dreams

8 June 2022 – 31 August 2022

Location: M7

On view as part of the *Doha Dreams* pop-up presented at the conclusion of M7's Zwara Program. The Zwara Program is a yearly programme that invites creatives from various design disciplines to explore exhibitions, archives and collection and then respond to a design brief. The selected designers were tasked to reimagine luxury and aesthetics through the lens of a local contemporary designer inspired by the recently held *Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams* exhibition. As an artist as well as an architect, Haytham was inspired by the light and spiritual experience of the floral environment that the *Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams*. The *Butterfly: Cocoon of Life - Art Installation* is the perfect combination of a skirt and a headpiece designed to create artefacts that can illuminate natural experiences, in this case butterflies being attracted to the floral garden of Dior.

Like Dior, designer Maryam Al Majid was inspired by her own life and history when she created *Sparrow of the Sea*. Maryam's diverse background and mix of two very rich cultures - Qatar and India are reflected in her displayed jewellery design. Within her designed chocker, the wings of the golden sparrow represent India, while the pearls recall Qatar, creating a piece that is both beautiful and deeply meaningful.

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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.

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 Tourism, 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, 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum, and Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar, which is currently under development.

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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