

Qatari Artist Unveils New Minneapolis–St. Paul Mural Inspired by Legacy of Qatar-USA 2021 Year of Culture

16 December 2025 – Doha, Qatar: Minneapolis–St. Paul has a new splash of colour on its skyline, and it comes from halfway around the world. Qatari contemporary artist Mubarak Nasser Al-Thani has completed a large-scale mural in the Twin Cities, offering a fresh take on some of the area’s most familiar landmarks inspired by repeating patterns popular in Middle Eastern design.

The mural features a stylised mix of Minneapolis–St. Paul icons, including the historic Foshay Tower, Stone Arch Bridge, IDS Center, Wells Fargo Tower, the Cedar complex, and the Minnesota State Capitol, all reimagined through Mubarak’s minimalistic, geometric style. The result is a colourful visual map of the metro area’s architectural identity.

“As an artist rooted in Doha but now working in Minneapolis, I view every city through the lens of cultural exchange, merging my eastern heritage with a new western skyline,” Mubarak said. “My aim with this mural is to reflect the architecture of the Twin Cities through shapes and colours that carry both Qatari influences and Midwestern spirit. Qatar’s Years of Culture initiative brought me to the U.S. in 2021 to create street art in San Francisco during the Qatar-USA partnership and I am happy to continue that journey in Minneapolis.”

Al-Thani, who splits his time between Doha and Minneapolis where he is pursuing a second MFA in painting and with a minor in sculpting at the Minneapolis College of the Arts and Design (MCAD), is known for deconstructing urban landscapes and reassembling them through stacked forms, cultural motifs, and rhythmic sequences. His work spans painting, mixed media, and public art, with previous exhibitions in New York, Geneva, Saint Petersburg, and Doha. He has completed residencies at Doha’s Fire Station and the International Studio & Curatorial Programme in New York.

For this mural, Mubarak set out to capture the character of the Midwest, its sense of openness, its open skyline, and its steady architectural rhythm, while weaving in the eastern motifs that define his artistic language. His signature broken sequences and repeating patterns draw from Arabian aesthetics, creating an unexpected conversation between the Middle East and Minnesota.

The mural’s colour palette and smooth texture were intentionally chosen to complement the surrounding red-brick buildings, many of which were constructed using sediments from the Mississippi riverbed. Blocks of exposed “sky” in the design echo the soft red tones of the river itself, flowing nearby.

The mural is the newest addition to the legacy of the Qatar-USA 2021 Year of Culture that continues to connect Qatar with communities far beyond the region.

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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

YEARS OF CULTURE الأعوام الثقافية

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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