

Qatari Artist Ghada Al Suwaidi Designs Pierre Gasly's Helmet for Formula 1® Canadian Grand Prix as Years of Culture Continues Global Art-Sport Collaboration

23 May 2026 - Montreal, Canada and Doha, Qatar: For the second year running, Qatar's Years of Culture initiative has teamed up with Pierre Gasly of the BWT Alpine F1® Team to bring contemporary art into the high-speed world of Formula One. The concept revolves around inviting artists from around the world to design helmets for select races, transforming one of the most-watched sporting platforms into a space for cultural storytelling.

At the upcoming Formula 1® Canadian Grand Prix, Gasly will debut a helmet designed by Qatari artist **Ghada Al Suwaidi**—a layered work that reflects her signature style: playful, culturally rooted, and unmistakably contemporary. The helmet marks the opening of this year's creative series and highlights Qatar's commitment to elevating emerging voices on international stages. Further artist collaborations are planned for races in Mexico City and Doha, extending the initiative's global reach across the Qatar Canada and Mexico 2026 Year of Culture.

A graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar, Al Suwaidi has built a practice that moves easily between large-scale murals, illustration, and digital work. Her projects often draw on everyday life in Qatar, from nostalgia, neighbourhoods, to shared visual memories, reinterpreted through bold colour and contemporary form. She's previously contributed to international platforms like the *World Wide Walls* street art festival and national initiatives including *Posts of Qatar*, bringing local narratives into public space.

Her design for Gasly's Montreal helmet reflects this multidisciplinary approach, translating her distinctive visual language onto a new medium that will be seen by millions of fans worldwide. Translating that language onto a Formula 1® helmet, a compact, highly technical object seen by millions, adds a new layer of complexity. But it also reinforces the point of the collaboration: culture is everything.

Al Suwaidi explained her excitement about being part of the project, "I've followed this collaboration since the beginning, so being part of it feels a bit surreal. What excites me most is the scale—knowing something so personal will be seen by millions, in a completely unexpected setting. A helmet moves so fast, but I hope it still makes people pause, even for a second, and wonder about the story behind it. That moment of curiosity is where connection starts. It reminds us that creativity, nature, and visual language are things we all share, no matter where we're from."

For the Qatar Grand Prix later this year, Gasly will wear two additional helmets designed by artists from Canada and Mexico, aligning with the three-country partnership and reinforcing the initiative's emphasis on shared storytelling and cultural exchange across borders.

The collaboration underscores how Years of Culture continues to harness sport as a powerful platform for cultural diplomacy, connecting audiences beyond traditional cultural spaces and introducing new voices through unexpected and high-profile moments. By integrating artistic expression into global sporting events, the initiative creates opportunities for artists to engage with international audiences while reinforcing the role of creativity in building lasting human connections.

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About Ghada Al Suwaidi

Ghada Al Suwaidi is a versatile Qatari artist and illustrator whose practice spans large-scale murals and digital works, blending traditional cultural references with a bold, contemporary visual language. A graduate of VCUarts Qatar, where she earned a BFA in Graphic Design, her work is rooted in storytelling, often drawing on themes of local nostalgia, everyday life, and the visual identity of Qatar.

Al Suwaidi has been selected for prominent public art initiatives, including the internationally recognised *World Wide Walls* mural festival, where she created a mural in Doha's Mina District as part of a global roster of artists. She also contributed to the nationwide *Posts of Qatar* project, designing one of the *Goalposts of Qatar* installations (*Freej – Qatar*), exhibited at Souq Waqif, which celebrates the country's heritage, neighbourhoods, and cultural memory.

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. At its core, Years of Culture is a portal for making connections across various sectors, including cultural heritage, creative industries, social and economic development, and innovation, 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.

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, Qatar-Morocco 2024, and Qatar Argentina and Chile 2025.

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