



Issue 1

December 2016

Great British Festival Qatar

*A celebration of
Qatari-UK relations*

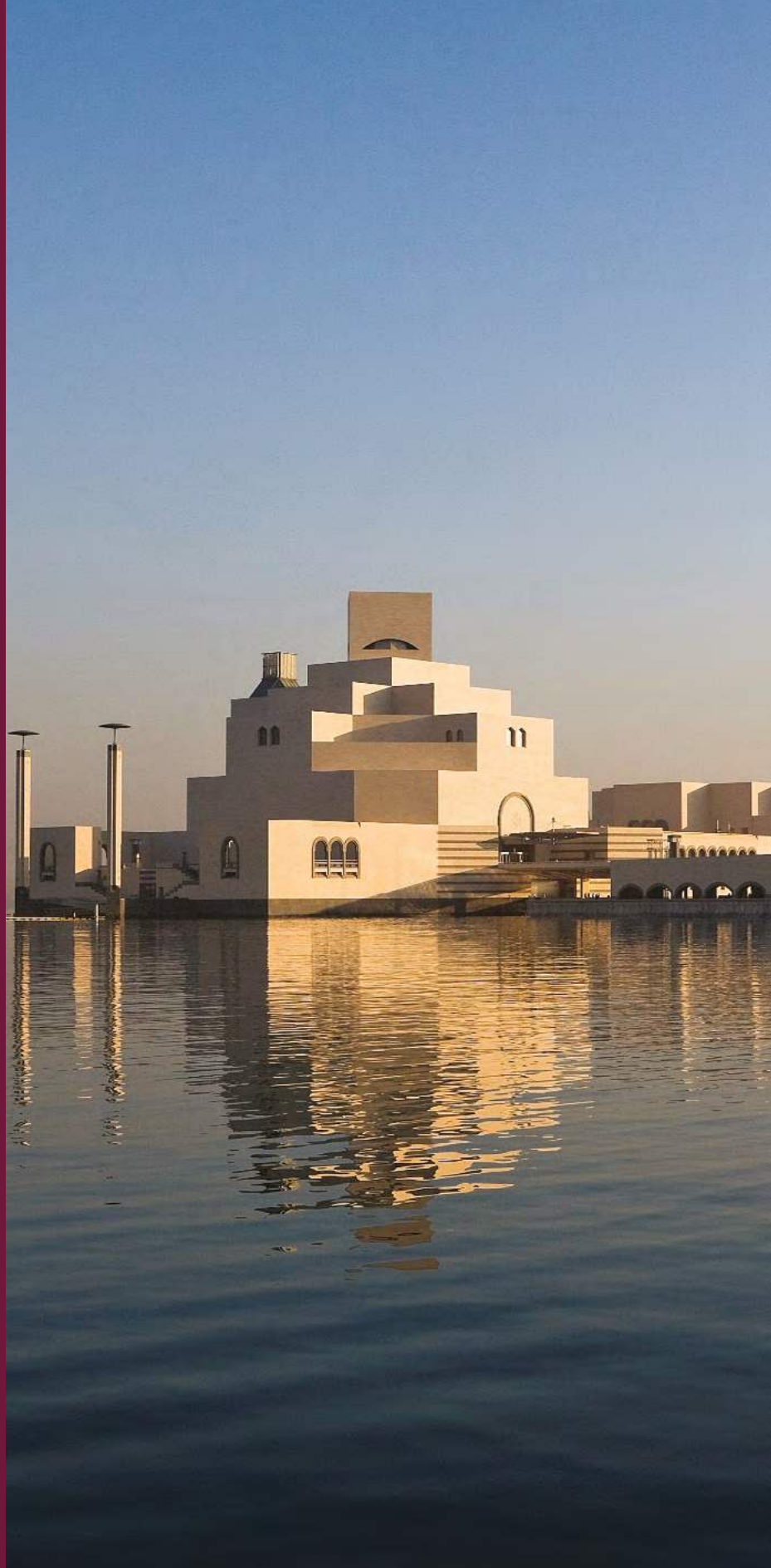
Generations of Qatari Talent

*Inspired by the past, looking
towards the future*

British Architects in Qatar

A cross-cultural exchange of ideas

Embassy of the State of Qatar
in the United Kingdom





Issue 1

Art in Qatar

FOREWORD

Page 06

QATAR AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

Page 32

THE QATARI EMBASSY IN THE UK

Page 74

CREDITS

Page 78

AN INVESTMENT IN ART: QATAR MUSEUMS

Page 10

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF QATAR: HERITAGE MEETS INNOVATION

Page 12

MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART: TRADITIONAL INSPIRATION, MODERN ARCHITECTURE

Page 14

MATHAF: AN ARAB PERSPECTIVE ON MODERN ART

Page 18

SHEIKH FAISAL BIN QASSIM AL THANI MUSEUM

Page 20

PROFILE: HER EXCELLENCY SHEIKHA AL MAYASSA AL THANI

Page 22

FIRE STATION ARTIST IN RESIDENCE: A HUB FOR CREATIVE EXCHANGE

Page 26

YOUSEF AHMAD: STORY OF INGENUITY

Page 30

2

Transcending Borders: Qatar and the UK

QATAR GOODWOOD FESTIVAL

Page 34

THE GREAT BRITISH FESTIVAL
QATAR

Page 36

THE BRITISH LIBRARY — QATAR
FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIP

Page 38

BRITISH ARCHITECTS IN QATAR

Page 40

3

Qatari Lifestyle: Merging Tradition with Modernity

PEARL DIVING: A CELEBRATION OF
TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Page 46

FALCONRY: KEEPING THE
TRADITION ALIVE

Page 48

THE DHOW'S PLACE IN QATARI
FISHING AND CULTURE

Page 50

PRESERVING QATAR'S
EQUESTRIAN TRADITION

Page 52

CAMEL RACING: A UNIQUE
QATARI EXPERIENCE

Page 54

SOUQ WAQIF: THE SOCIAL HEART
OF DOHA

Page 56

KATARA CULTURAL VILLAGE:
AN INSPIRED VISION FOR ART AND
CULTURE

Page 58

4

Beyond the Museums

WORKING IN CONCERT:
THE QATAR PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

Page 62

GENERATIONS OF
QATARI TALENT

Page 64

CELEBRATING WORLD
CULTURES THROUGH FILM

Page 70

AL ZUBARAH: CLUES TO A
CULTURAL PAST

Page 72



Foreword

A few words from His Excellency

I have been honoured to be the Qatari Ambassador to the UK for over two years now. In that time, I have seen the already strong relationship between our two countries continue to grow and diversify.

This relationship is based on universal values that are shared across our cultures. At the same time, our societies have evolved from very different traditions. These overlaps and contrasts create a strong space for intercultural dialogue.

This magazine explores that space. So often our bilateral ties are described in economic and political terms, but we wanted to showcase the artistic passions and cultural endeavours that Qatar and the UK share and enjoy.

Anyone who has spent time in Doha will know the value we place on fostering and preserving our culture and the arts. The bustling Souq Waqif is a cornerstone of our cultural heritage, while the Museum of Islamic Art houses a world-class collection of Islamic masterpieces in one of Qatar's most awe-inspiring buildings.

Living in the UK, I have seen a similar appreciation and respect for the arts. Every year millions of people from around the world visit the UK, and tour the many remarkable museums and galleries. From the Natural History Museum in London to the Tate Liverpool, there is so much this country has to offer.

But what is particularly exciting to me is where these roads cross—whether through the Qatar Foundation's work with the British Library to preserve the history and culture of the Gulf, or Lord Norman Foster's designs for the largest proposed venue for the 2022 World Cup. You can find Qatar's creative spirit in the UK, and the UK's innovative designs in Qatar.

We are thrilled to share these stories, and many more, in the first edition of our Embassy's Q Magazine.

His Excellency Yousef bin Ali Al Khater,
Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the United Kingdom
Twitter @Amb_AlKhater





1

Art in Qatar

Page 10

An Investment in Art: Qatar Museums

Page 12

National Museum of Qatar: Heritage Meets Innovation

Page 14

Museum of Islamic Art: Traditional Inspiration, Modern Architecture

Page 18

Mathaf: An Arab Perspective on Modern Art

Page 20

Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani Museum: A Journey Through Time and Place

Page 22

Profile: Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa Al Thani

Page 26

Fire Station Artist in Residence: A Hub for Creative Exchange

Page 30

Yousef Ahmad: Story of Ingenuity

Qatar Museums is helping Qatar find its own distinctive voice in today's global cultural debates.

An Investment in Art

Qatar Museums



Qatar Museums (QM) connects the museums, cultural institutions, and heritage sites in Qatar and creates the conditions for them to thrive and flourish. It centralises resources and provides a comprehensive organisation for the development of museums and cultural projects, with the long-term goal of creating a strong and sustainable cultural infrastructure for Qatar.

Under the patronage of His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and led by its Chairperson, Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, QM is consolidating Qatar's efforts to become a vibrant centre for the arts, culture, and education in the Middle East and beyond.

Since its foundation in 2005, QM has overseen the development of the Museum of Islamic Art, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Al Zubarah World Heritage Site Visitor Centre, and Fire Station Artist in Residence.



| Museum of Islamic Art, Doha

Future projects include the launch of the highly anticipated National Museum of Qatar and the 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum.

Art from Within

QM is committed to advancing Qatar's future generation of arts, heritage, and museum professionals. At its core lies a commitment to nurturing artistic talent, creating opportunities, and developing the skills to contribute to Qatar's emerging art economy.

Through a multifaceted programme and public art initiatives, QM seeks to push the boundaries of the traditional museum model—creating cultural experiences that spill out onto the streets and involve the widest possible audiences. Through a strong emphasis on originating art and culture from within and fostering a spirit of national participation, QM is helping Qatar find its own distinctive voice in today's global cultural debates.

These ambitious projects are helmed by the Qatar Museums Board of Trustees:

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Khalifa Al Thani,
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Mr. Mansour Al Khater



| *National Museum of Qatar*



National Museum of Qatar

Heritage Meets Innovation

The new National Museum of Qatar showcases an innovative design by renowned architect Jean Nouvel, while paying homage to an important historic monument. Inspired by the desert rose crystal, the interlocking disc design seems to grow organically around the Old Palace—now restored as the heart of the new National Museum of Qatar.

Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani, today considered the father of modern Qatar, originally built the Old Palace as a Royal Family residence and seat of government. After 25 years at the centre of Qatar's political leadership, the building was converted into the National Museum of Qatar in 1975.

Just as its architecture reflects, the new Museum will give voice to Qatar's heritage while celebrating its future. Visitors will learn about Qatar's ancestors and the formation of early cities, as well as the modernisation of Qatari society. Exhibitions will combine historic objects and contemporary influences, opening up dialogues around the impact of rapid change. The space will become a thriving hub for the public, students, and museum professionals.

The restoration of the Palace aims to set a new standard for the treatment of historic buildings and architectural conservation, both in Qatar and across the region.



The Museum
of Islamic Art
has set out to
transform Qatar
into a cultural
capital of the
Middle East.

Museum of Islamic Art

Traditional Inspiration, Modern Architecture

An iconic feature of the Doha skyline, the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) is the flagship project of Qatar Museums (QM). Inspired by elements of Islamic architecture, Pritzker Prize-winning architect I.M. Pei designed the imposing limestone structure. The museum's main building, topped with a domed atrium within a central tower, juts 60 metres into the Arabian Gulf. Rising five storeys from the sea, the building connects to an adjacent education wing and a large central courtyard.

The MIA's permanent collection occupies two floors in the museum's main building. It includes manuscripts, ceramics, metal, glass, ivory, textiles, wood, and precious stones from three continents. The first floor provides visitors with an introduction to some of the greatest works of Islamic art before examining the tradition's major themes—calligraphy, pattern, science, and figural imagery. The second floor

follows the journey of Islamic art from 7th century Arabia to 19th century Turkey, via the palaces of Córdoba, the bustle of medieval Cairo, and the mountains of Afghanistan.

More than a Museum

The MIA includes other impressive resources, including:

Library collection

With more than 10,000 books in Arabic, English, and regional languages, the MIA Library is an ideal place for school groups, students, and researchers to learn about the arts of Islamic civilisation.

Park peninsula

MIA Park is an expansive area developed as an additional element to the museum, providing a space where visitors can relax and partake in cultural, educational, and social activities.

Landmark sculpture

Qatar's tallest public art installation punctuates the grassy park. American artist Richard Serra constructed the landmark sculpture—measuring 24 metres (more than 80 feet) in height—from seven steel plates arranged in a heptagonal shape to reflect the significance of the number seven in Islamic culture.

Through safeguarding collections of Islamic art and showcasing extraordinary exhibitions, MIA shares knowledge and spreads curiosity, understanding, and joy.

Under the leadership of its Chairperson, Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Museum of Islamic Art has set out to transform Qatar into a cultural capital of the Middle East.



| *Museum of Islamic Art, Doha*



| *Planispheric Astrolabe Safavid, Iran (Kerman) 17th century -
Hasan Husni Al Husayni Al Kirmani*



| *Gallery view, Museum of Islamic Art*



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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

Mathaf

An Arab Perspective on Modern Art

Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art opened in 2010 in a renovated school building in Doha's Education City. The museum's collection offers a rare comprehensive overview of modern Arab art, representing the major trends and production sites from the 1840s through to present day. Co-owned by Qatar Museums and Qatar Foundation, the Mathaf Collection now holds more than 9,000 works, making it the world's largest specialised collection of its kind.

Through major exhibitions—both historical and experimental—and large-scale education programmes, Mathaf serves as a centre for dialogue, a facility for research, and a resource for fostering creativity. Mathaf hosts solo and group exhibitions by regional artists, as well as events that explore and celebrate modern and contemporary art. The museum also presents exhibitions that situate the Arab world in a larger art context.

Together, such programmes bolster Mathaf's mission to engage the local and international community, encourage research and scholarship, and contribute to the cultural landscape of the Gulf region, the Middle East, the Arab Diaspora, and beyond.



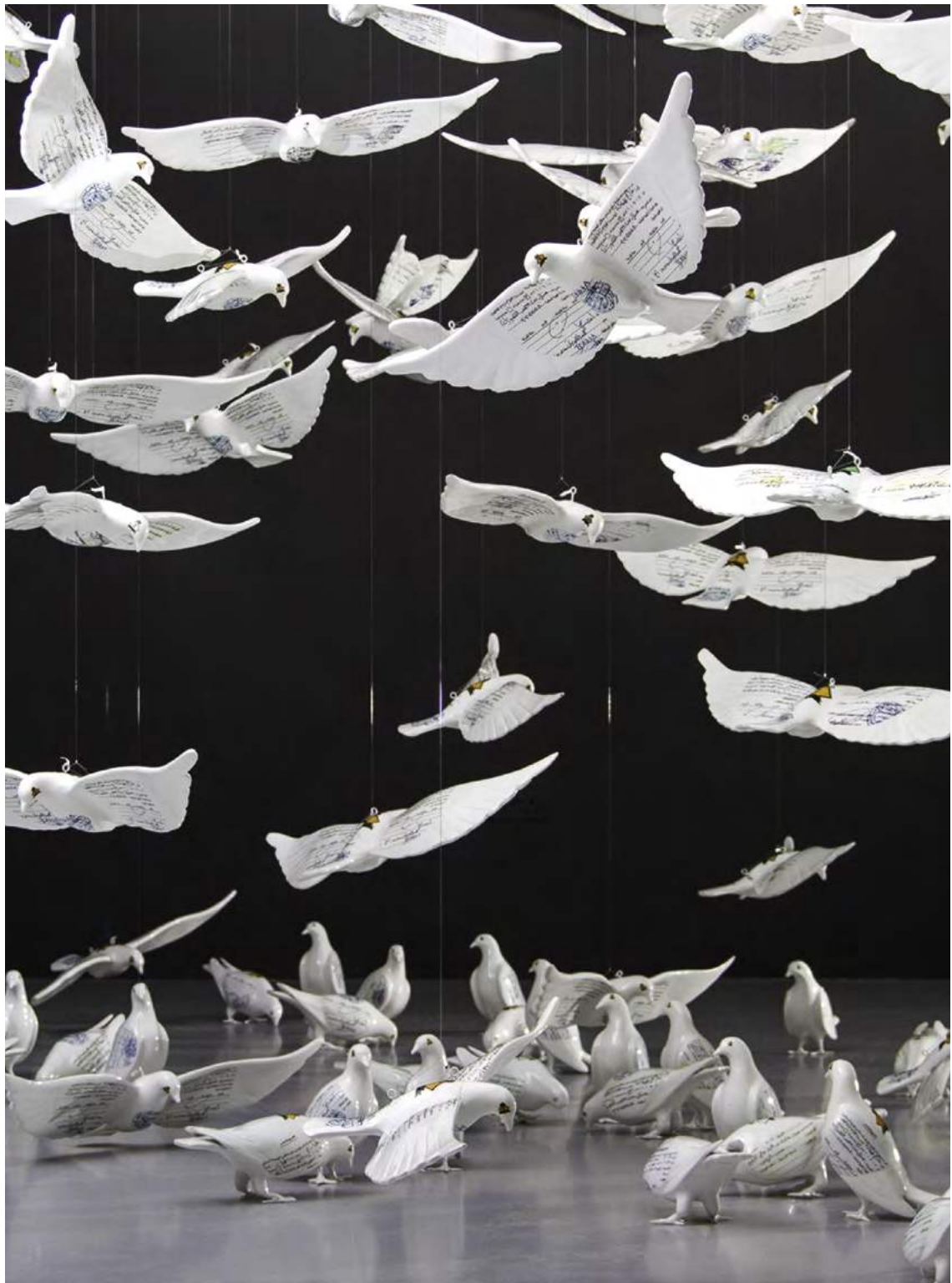
| Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art. Museum interior



| View of Selections from the Collection, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha - Photo by Leonore-Namkha Beschi



| Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art. Museum exterior with Adam Henein's *Al Safina* ("The Ship") in the foreground



| Manal al Dowayan, *Suspended Together*, 2011 - Fiber glass printing

Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani Museum

A Journey Through Time and Place



| Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani Museum, Qatar

The Sheikh Faisal Museum's distinctive exterior of local stone and traditional turrets make the building itself a collector's piece. Designed to display artifacts collected over the years by Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani, the building's return to historic Qatari architecture complements modern-day Doha. Sheikh Faisal is dedicated

to preserving and promoting Islamic heritage for the people of Qatar and its international visitors. Since its opening, the museum has expanded to include new facilities for research and education, as well as state-of-the-art entertainment resources.

Four themed collections—Islamic Art, Qatar Heritage, Vehicles, and Coins & Currency—comprise

Everyone can find something that fascinates and delights in this treasure trove.

more than 15,000 pieces from four continents. Everyone can find something that fascinates and delights in this treasure trove of fossils, scriptures, Islamic textiles, ancient figurines, vintage cars, and rare coins—as well as the world's largest private collection of armoury.

In 2010, the Ministry of Art, Culture, and Heritage selected the Sheikh Faisal Museum as one of Qatar's cultural landmarks. As such, the museum aims to promote arts and heritage wherever possible and gladly welcomes visiting exhibitions.



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Profile

Her Excellency

Sheikha Al Mayassa Al Thani

H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani has played a pioneering role in the fields of culture, education, and outreach, spearheading and supporting a number of local and international organisations.

As Chairperson of Qatar Museums (QM), she guides the vision for future museums and cultural projects, with the aim of transforming Qatar into a leading cultural and education centre in the region and around the world. In this role, H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa oversaw a constellation of museums, developed international projects, and made significant purchases for the Qatari national collections.

As she notes, “Most contemporary art is provocative.” Bold public commissions—including Richard Serra’s lofty abstract sculpture 7 and Damien Hirst’s *The Miraculous Journey*, a monumental 14-part bronze sequence depicting a developing foetus—show her dedication to bringing pieces that stimulate debate and artistic engagement to Qatar.

Bridging East and West

The Museum of Islamic Art, the flagship project of QM, embodies Qatar’s vision of bridging East and West, as well as past and present. “Art and culture is a religion we can all practice,” she says. “People have said, ‘Let’s build bridges,’ and frankly, I want to do more than that. I would like to break the walls of ignorance between East and West. Art is very powerful because it has no boundaries and you don’t need to belong to any country or religion or social class. It brings people from all walks of life together to talk about an idea.”



| Her Excellency Sheikhha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani

**“Art has always
been our culture and
part of our identity”**

H.E. Sheikhha Al Mayassa Al Thani



| H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani attends the “Chinese Art of Silk” exhibition opening



| H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani attends “What About the Art?” Contemporary Art From China



| H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani attends “The New York Times Art for Tomorrow” Conference



“Art is very powerful because it has no boundaries and you don’t need to belong to any country or religion or social class. It brings people from all walks of life together to talk about an idea”

In addition to her work on cultural initiatives, H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa is the Chairperson for Reach Out To Asia (ROTA), a philanthropic non-governmental organisation aiming to improve primary and secondary education in Asia. She is also the Chairperson of the Doha Film Institute, empowering people through film and new media, educational workshops, and grassroots festivals. “Art has always been [Qatar’s] culture and part of our identity.”

Much-Deserved Recognition

H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa was named the most influential person in art on ArtReview’s Power 100 in 2013 and prominently appears on the TIME 100 and Forbes’ the World’s 100 Most Powerful Women lists. In 2015, the Sheikha was awarded the StellaRE prize, established by Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo of the Italian contemporary art foundation bearing her name.

She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Political Science and Literature from Duke University in the United States in 2005. While at Duke, she served as Vice President of the International Association, Vice President of Hiwar (an organisation to promote political dialogue), and a delegate to the Model United Nations. During her 2003–2004 school year, she studied at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and the Institut d’Études Politiques de Paris. She also studied post-graduate public administration at Columbia University.

Fire Station Artist in Residence

A Hub for Creative Exchange

Redesigned as a hub for the local art community, the Fire Station hosts a rolling nine-month Artist in Residence programme. Chosen artists have the opportunity to collaborate with fellow artists, benefit from weekly mentoring sessions, and attend all exhibitions and lectures. A springboard for emerging artists, the programme seeks to encourage interaction among local artists, academia, the community, and the flourishing art scene in Qatar.

Under the supervision of Qatari Architect Ibrahim Al Jeidah, Doha's former Civil Defence headquarters has been renovated, with special care taken to preserve many of its original features, including the building's façade. The original station, built in 1982, was used for 30 years until the last fire engine rolled out in December 2012.

The renovated building provides 24 artist studios and an exhibition space. New public spaces include a café, restaurant, bookshop, art supply shop, cinema, and artist facilities. The public gallery at the Fire Station, called the Garage, is dedicated to new talent. Here, artists in residence now display the fruits of their labour.



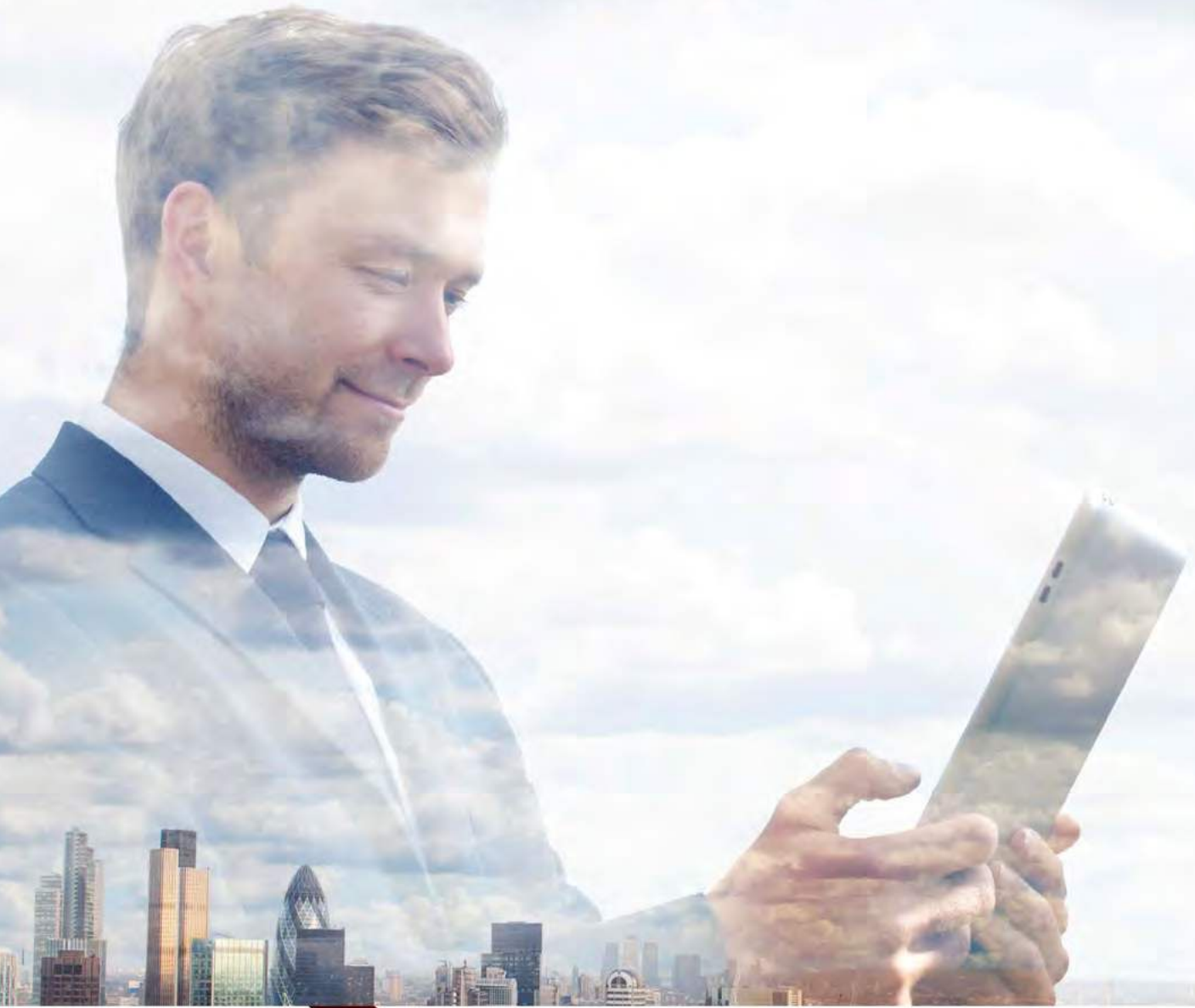


| *The Fire Station, Doha*



| Artists at work in the Fire Station

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Yousef Ahmad

Story of Ingenuity

From the breath-taking oil paintings of Al Zubarah fort to mixed media calligraphic pieces, these are works that define a nation.

Qatar Museums last year chose to honour one of the country's foremost artists and his cultural contribution with *Story of Ingenuity*, a retrospective exhibition of Yousef Ahmad's most notable pieces.

The event featured a selection of works showcasing Ahmad's artistic journey, including striking early oil paintings from the 1970s, and more recent conceptual pieces.

The exhibition demonstrated Ahmad's strong affection for Qatar, be it "celebrating the gentle quietness of Qatar's sea or the flat expanses of its desert and serene openness of the sky."

It ran from 11 November, 2014 to 28 March, 2015 at QM Gallery Katara, during which time thousands of visitors were able to see these seminal works, which have previously been exhibited around the world including in the US, Europe and the Middle East.

A pioneer of Qatar's modern art movement, Yousef Ahmad was born in Qatar in 1955. He was appointed Head of Art and Exhibitions within the Ministry of Information in 1976, and travelled to the US in 1979 to study a master's degree, specialising in painting.

Returning to Qatar, he taught art appreciation at Qatar University for more than 20 years, receiving an Honorary Order of Merit in acknowledgement of his outstanding career.

Opening the exhibition, Ahmad described his artistic passion for his native land, saying: "As a local artist who has had the privilege to train abroad, I find so much in our environment that excites and inspires me. What's more, the opportunity to share my works with the people of Qatar is inspiring and humbling, and I hope that my journey encourages future generations of local artists to follow their creative dreams."

He added: "I'm proud to play an important part in the development of our country's artistic community and I look forward to seeing it evolve and develop at this incredibly important time."



| Work by Yousef Ahmad



| Yousef Ahmad





2

Transcending Borders: Qatar and the UK

Page 34

Qatar Goodwood Festival

Page 36

The Great British Festival Qatar

Page 38

The British Library — Qatar Foundation Partnership

Page 40

British Architects in Qatar

Qatar Goodwood Festival

This summer over 100,000 people gathered for one of the highlights of the UK's sporting and cultural calendar: Qatar's 'Glorious Goodwood' Festival.

Set against the magnificent backdrop of the Sussex countryside, this event saw the biggest names in horse racing compete in almost 40 races across five exciting days. Highlights of the week included the Magnolia Cup, in which 12 female riders competed over five and a half furlongs to a photo finish, with British Eventing team rider Izzy Taylor beating TalkTalk CEO Dido Harding in the final stretch, and the £1 million Qatar Sussex Stakes, in which The Gurkha, ridden by Ryan Moore, crossed the finish line just a millisecond ahead of Galileo Gold.

In 2014, Goodwood signed a historic 10-year sponsorship deal with Qatar, underlining the long-term commitment the country has to British horse racing.

The deal has seen millions of pounds invested in the races, increasing prize money and helping Goodwood attract the very best riders from across the world. The festival is increasingly known for its atmosphere—Super Saturday is the highlight with high fashion on show and attendees treated to live music and an impressive fireworks display.

With Qatar's sponsorship, Goodwood is fast becoming part of the global elite flat racing calendar, rivalling bigger and more established events. Racecourse General Manager, Alex Eade described how Goodwood is "cementing [its] position in the series of races that ends in the Champions Series at Ascot. We see ourselves becoming part of the narrative throughout the whole summer."



“Goodwood is fast becoming part of the global elite flat racing calendar, rivalling bigger and more established events”



| Flat racing at Qatar Goodwood Festival



| Premier Skills Football Tournament, Qatar UK Year of Culture 2013, Al Sadd Sports Club, Doha, Qatar

The Great British Festival

The Great British Festival Qatar is an annual celebration of UK-Qatari relations in Doha.

During two weeks in March, over 40 events were held in Doha to showcase the best of British culture, education, tourism, and business. This ranged from the launch of new British-inspired menus at hotels across the city to presentations from British researchers from University College London in Qatar on recent archaeological investigations in the country. The festival is a testament to the strong and eclectic bilateral relationship.

The centrepiece of this year's Qatar Great British Festival

was three events marking the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare. The Reduced Shakespeare Company performed a compilation of all his plays in under 100 minutes, there was a giant screening of arguably the best film adaptation of *Much Ado About Nothing*, and Qatar's Philharmonic Orchestra played a selection of famous music inspired by Shakespeare's writing.

The Qatar Football Association and Aspire Academy also organised a special edition of the Hadaf five-a

side schools' football tournament, which featured five independent and five British curriculum under-16 school teams.

The festival was launched in 2014 to build on the success of the Qatar-UK 2013 Year of Culture, a cultural exchange programme established by Qatar Museums and held in partnership with the British Council, Qatar's Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage, and the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Festival reinforces the strong bilateral bond between Qatar and



| Bob Ross conducting Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, Education City, Doha, Qatar

the UK, bringing together Qatari, British, and international audiences to enjoy the best of what Britain has to offer. Opening this year's Festival, the UK Ambassador to Qatar, His Excellency Mr Ajay Sharma described it as "a fantastic platform for both countries to forge new partnerships in commerce, tourism, culture, education, and science."



| Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra

The British Library

Qatar Foundation Partnership



| The British Library, London

In June this year, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al Missned met with His Holiness the Pope in Vatican City, where an agreement was signed between the Vatican Library and the Qatar National Library, along with the Qatar Foundation, to digitise the Vatican's manuscripts relating to the Gulf and other Islamic regions.

This is the most recent library digitisation programme that Qatar has undertaken. In January 2013, the British Library and Qatar Foundation entered into a long-term partnership to create an online resource portal documenting the Islamic world, Arab cultural heritage, and the modern history of the Gulf.

Described by Oliver Urquhart-Irvine, who leads the partnership, as



| *The British Library, London*

one of the most exciting “global knowledge partnerships in recent years”, the portal makes a wealth of original, interpretative, contextual, and pedagogical resources in Arabic and English freely available to the general public. In its first 12 months, the Digital Library received 2.5 million page views from over 308,000 users across 219 countries. Since then, a joint agreement has been signed to digitise a further 1,125,000 pages of content from Arabic science and mathematics manuscripts.

Project highlights include the launch of a new digitised photo album showing historical and architectural views of Mecca and Medina dating back over a century to coincide with the Hajj in 2014. These incredible pictures offer a unique viewpoint on how the pilgrimage has changed over time.

Creating such an extensive catalogue of multi-lingual digital sources has been an ambitious, and sometimes challenging, project for the British Library and Qatar Foundation. However, as Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al Missned noted, the partnership has “helped shed light on the Gulf region’s fascinating history and culture.”

British Library Chief Executive Roy Keating concluded, “there’s something about finding a shared vision that has unleashed an intellectual and creative energy that I think is going to have really long-lasting consequences...The more research we do, the more we uncover...and we hope this is just the beginning.”



British Architectural Design in Qatar



Qatar is quickly becoming a hotbed for top British architects, drawn by the modern and innovative approach the country is taking towards building the infrastructure for the 2022 World Cup, as well as its longer-term development plans.

Iraqi-born British architect, Zaha Hadid was commissioned by Qatar to design the Al Wakrah Stadium, and, in 2013, revealed a highly futuristic plan inspired by the flowing shape of local dhow boat sails. This 40,000 capacity stadium is now under construction. Hadid, who was renowned for her highly expressive and sweeping forms designed to “[evoke] the chaos of modern life”, sadly died earlier this year. Al Wakrah

Stadium will act as a tribute to her on-going contribution to modern architecture and global culture.

Similarly, Lord Norman Foster, Chair of Foster + Partners, was approached to design the flagship Lusail Stadium, the largest proposed venue for the 2022 World Cup. With a capacity of 80,000 the proposed stadium will be encircled by a reflective pool, with six bridges running across it for spectators to enter. It will also feature a state-of-the-art cooling system and a floating roof, which can be retracted to allow the pitch to be either open to the sky or fully covered. This is being built as part of the wider development of Lusail as Qatar’s first ‘smart-green’ city.



In order to deepen links between the architectural sectors in Qatar and Britain, the British Council organised a week-long design residency in Doha in March 2016. The programme, entitled ‘Open City’, invited teams to develop new approaches and innovative design solutions to creating accessible cities. The winning team, “City of Play”—made up of two Britons and

three Gulf residents—proposed a contemporary city that “builds upon the best of its past in order to cater for new urban communities” and was awarded a £15,000 grant to help develop the proposal over the coming year.



| Al Wakrah Stadium







3

Qatari Lifestyle: Merging Tradition with Modernity

Page 46

Pearl Diving: A Celebration of Traditional Culture

Page 48

Falconry: Keeping the Tradition Alive

Page 50

The Dhow's Place in Qatari Fishing and Culture

Page 52

Preserving Qatar's Equestrian Tradition

Page 54

Camel Racing: A Unique Qatari Experience

Page 56

Souq Waqif: The Social Heart of Doha

Page 58

Katara Cultural Village: An Inspired Vision for Art and Culture

Pearl Diving

A Celebration of Traditional Culture

Every year in May, dhow boats appear just off the coast of Qatar, bobbing peacefully on the calm, blue-green Gulf water. The boats carry pearl divers, who intermittently descend to the seabed and rise with many pearl producing clams.

These divers are part of the annual Senyar competition, which commemorates Qatar's prominent pearl diving past. The team that collects the most clams wins the competition and a \$100,000 prize, but they don't open the clams—preserving the pearls and the local ecosystem.

Prior to the discovery of oil in Qatar, pearl diving was one of the country's main sources of income, and demand for pearls around the world kept the industry bustling.

Opening Qatar to the World

The job was not always safe, as divers faced a myriad of challenges: trips at sea that sometimes lasted six months, lack of fresh water,

predators, and more. Divers tied weights to their feet to reach the seabed quickly and ropes to their waists to return to the surface. The most adept divers could stay under water for over two minutes, and to this day pearl divers continue to free dive, often unaided by advanced equipment.

But overcoming the challenges paid off—the sought-after pearls supported a large segment of the country's economy for many years, selling across the globe, from India to Europe and everywhere in between.

Honouring a Maritime Tradition

With the discovery of oil, the country grew less dependent on pearl diving.

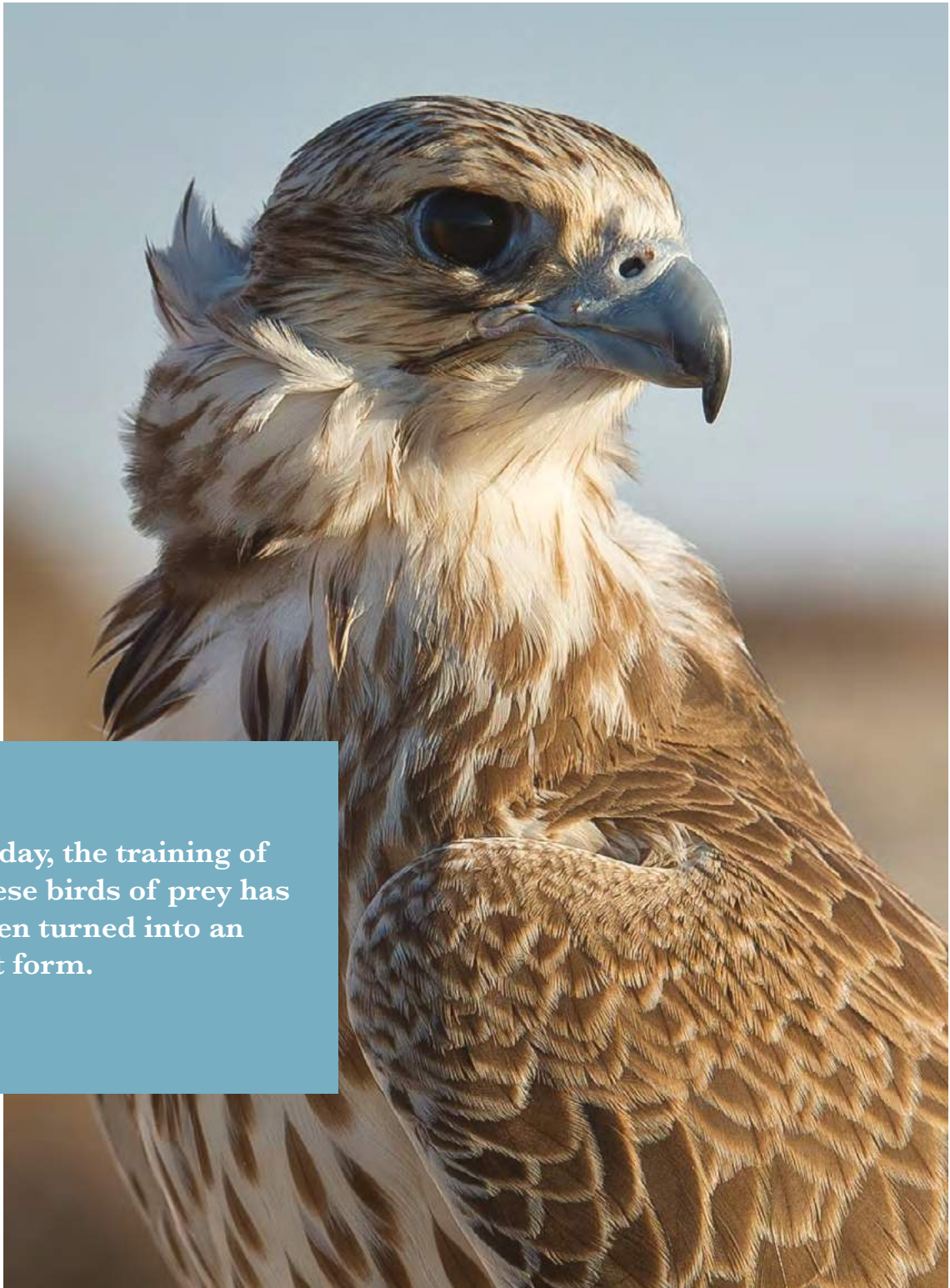
And with the advent of Japanese artificial pearls in the 1930s, the industry lost its profitability.

However, the tradition of pearl diving remains an important part of Qatari history. Many families depended on it for decades, and—with many Qataris born and living near the coast—the sea has remained a prominent fixture in daily life. Thus, the annual Senyar was established to keep this vital aspect of Qatar's cultural history alive.

When you visit Qatar today, you may not see too many dhow boats trolling the sea for pearls, but you will experience a rich, vibrant culture—one that thrived for many years thanks to the hard work of pearl divers.



| Pearl Divers



Today, the training of these birds of prey has been turned into an art form.

| *A falcon*

Falconry

Keeping the Tradition Alive

Falconry has always been a beloved sport in Qatar, dating back to its roots in the ancient Bedouin societies of the Arabian Peninsula. Hunters trained the falcons to pursue migratory birds, which served as a primary source of meat in these cultures.

Though the practice at one time reached across the Middle East and Europe, it is now practiced principally in Qatar and other Gulf countries.

Falconry Today

As Qatar has rapidly modernised, so too has the sport of falconry. Today, the training of these birds of prey has been turned into an art form with many trainers spending hours a day with hooded falcons on their arm.

Serious falconers must be well equipped for their ventures into the desert, making modern falconry gear as impressive as the determination needed to excel at it. Hunters use large, custom 4x4 vehicles to transport their birds and even have specialist GPS locators to track the birds.

These falcons are extremely well cared for, with dedicated veterinary clinics and pharmacies available to them. The most valuable falcons are even issued their own passports to protect them from smuggling or theft.

Celebrating Tradition

Qatar hosts a variety of festivals honouring and celebrating falconry, including the Qatar International Falcons and Hunting Festival, which saw its seventh annual iteration earlier this year. Though most participants come from the Gulf region, many travel great distances to join in this unique event.

Although falconry has changed considerably over the centuries, it remains an important part of the Qatari national identity. And while Doha locals no longer depend on the birds for sustenance, the falcons, still sold in the city's Souq Waqif, help bond modern citizens to their rich cultural history.

The Dhow's Place in Qatari Fishing and Culture

Even today, dhows and their distinctive lateen sails remain a common sight off the coast of Doha. Qatar, with its reliance on the sea, has a long history with these ocean cruisers.

Typically spotted in the Arabian Gulf and Red Sea, dhows are believed to have originated from Persia or the Indian sub-continent. And they are unique: unlike most wooden boats, dhows are bound together with rope, not nailed together—making them particularly durable even when carrying heavy loads.

Dhows have been used for a variety of purposes throughout Qatari history. Many completed commercial journeys as far as Madagascar or the Gulf of Bengal; others made pearl diving ventures in the Gulf.

One of their primary uses, however, was providing sustenance to the Qatari people through fishing. Fishermen would venture out daily, returning with fresh catch to sell on the beach. Beached dhows drew crowds from coastal towns, and as Doha developed, a permanent fish market replaced the practice of selling directly on the beach.

Although fishing techniques improved—from the rudimentary fish traps used centuries ago to the large fishing nets we see today—dhows remained the boat of choice.

Of course, many Qataris also enjoy taking a cruise on these traditional boats, as modern dhows have become a vessel of leisure. Tourists can even dine aboard a dhow, complete with a view of the Corniche brilliantly reflected in the bay waters.

For a country so closely linked to the sea, Qatar has always enjoyed a special relationship to dhows, from their economic significance in the country's early days to their cultural importance today.





| *Qatari Equestrian Traditions*





Preserving Qatar's Equestrian Tradition

An inspired vision and a passion to preserve and perpetuate the Arabian horse, led His Highness the Father Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani to establish Al Shaqab in 1992. In honour of his ancestor, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani, he built this breeding farm and equestrian centre at the landmark battle site, where more than a century prior, the battle that led to Qatar's independence was fought and won.

Within an amazingly short period of time, Al Shaqab bred three world champion stallions: Gazal Al Shaqab, Al Adeed Al Shaqab, and Marwan Al Shaqab. Today, champion offspring of these stallions enhance the pedigrees of Arabian horses throughout Qatar and around the globe.

With these successes, Al Shaqab stands as a tribute to the Arabian horse and Qatar's long tradition of equestrian excellence. The range of equine disciplines and programmes that Al Shaqab promotes ensures that the cultural legacy and appreciation of the Arabian breed will endure for generations.



Camel Racing

A Unique Qatari Experience



Did you know?

Racing camels can reach speeds of up to 40 mph.



Camel racing is a hallmark of Qatari culture. Today, it remains a prominent attraction in the small hamlet of Al Shahaniya, home of Qatar's popular camel racetrack. At the Al Shahaniya racetrack, an hour's drive from downtown Doha, visitors can view the fiercely competitive and highly expensive domestic and international tournaments.

But the tradition has evolved. Now, remote-controlled jockeys direct the camels on the course in a unique clash of modern and ancient sport. The small robot jockeys are clothed in colourful racing silks, riding the creatures across the sands to the delight of locals and tourists alike.

The regular flow of camels to and from the track during the race season doesn't quite compare to the more than 6,000 camels that participated in the Al Shahaniya Festival last year. Prizes included golden and silver daggers, with the sword of His Highness the Emir awarded to the winner of the final event: His Highness the Emir's Main Race.

Although professional camel racing started in Qatar in 1972, the sport is a pillar of tradition, and the racetrack is a must-see for any visitor to Doha.



| Camel Racing



Souq Waqif

The Social Heart of Doha

Much like a bazaar, a souq is an open market. And Souq Waqif in Doha has served people for centuries as the place to trade wool and animals for other goods and daily necessities. Over time, the souq fell into disrepair and risked ruin before a decision to preserve the historical site in 2004. The souq was then completely renovated and restored according to traditional Qatari architectural techniques.

As one of the last historical souqs still standing in the Gulf, Souq Waqif sees swarms of tourists daily who come to shop, dine, and experience a cultural tradition. Locals also come to purchase traditional goods.

Get lost in the labyrinth of alleyways and you'll find everything from spices and rugs to traditional clothes, cashmere, pets, and perfume.





| Souq Waqif, Doha, Qatar

Katara Cultural Village

An Inspired Vision for Art and Culture



| Katara Mosque

The Qatar Museums (QM) Gallery is a venue for public art projects in Katara Cultural Village. Founded in 2010, the gallery serves as a platform for Qatar's emerging museums to present their collections and projects. The gallery also hosts exhibitions for local and international artists. Its wide range of exhibitions—including photography, archaeology, art, sports, architecture, and sculpture—make the QM Gallery Katara a place to encounter a broad local and international audience.

Keeping pace with the emerging global culture, Katara Cultural Village is Qatar's largest and most multidimensional cultural project. It is a place where people come together to experience the cultures of the world. With beautiful theatres, concert halls, exhibition galleries, and cutting-edge facilities, Katara aims to become a world leader for multicultural activities.

In line with the goals set forward by the Qatar National Vision 2030, Katara serves as a guardian to the heritage and traditions of Qatar while spreading awareness about the importance of every culture and civilisation. As such, Katara hosts many international, regional, and local festivals, workshops, performances, and exhibitions.



| *Bird Tower, Doha*

Gandhi's Three Monkeys



| *Subodh Gupta, Gandhi's Three Monkeys*

Indian artist Subodh Gupta's signature style uses objects of daily life, such as household kitchenware and bicycles, in his artwork. Visitors to Katara Cultural Village will find his stimulating triptych—an homage to Mahatma Gandhi's three wise monkeys—hard to ignore. Gupta assembled steel and worn brass utensils to form the heads of a soldier, a terrorist, and a man wearing a gas mask. The halting sculpture embodies the Japanese proverbial principle, "See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil."





4

Beyond the Museums

Page 62

Working in Concert: The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra

Page 64

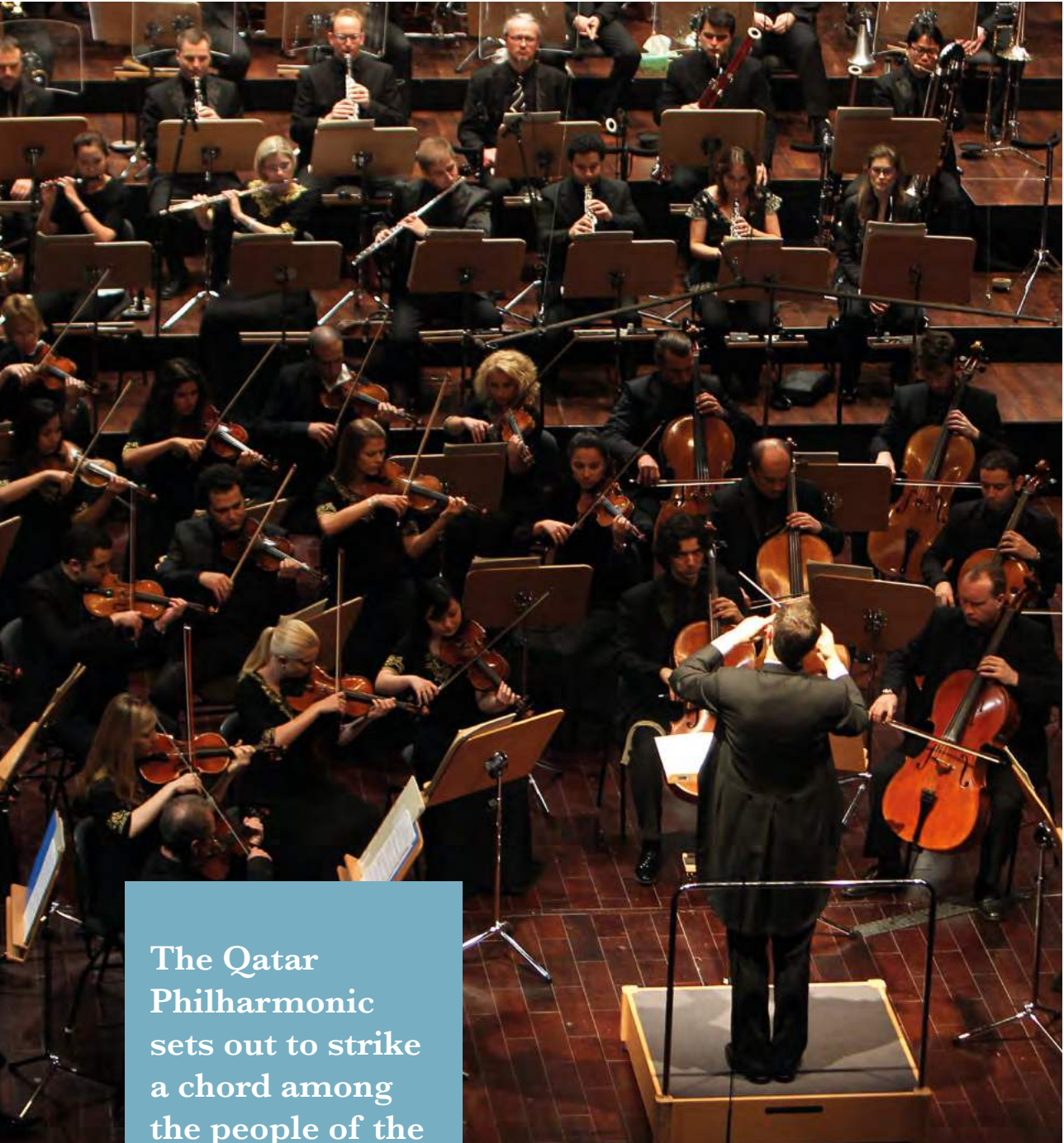
Generations of Qatari Talent

Page 70

Celebrating World Cultures Through Film

Page 72

Al Zubarah: Clues to a Cultural Past



The Qatar
Philharmonic
sets out to strike
a chord among
the people of the
Arab world.

| Conductor Alastair Willis (C) leads the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra

Working in Concert

The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra



| *The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra perform at the Museum of Islamic Art during the 2009 Doha Tribeca Film Festival*

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al Missned founded the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra in 2007. Its goal: to perform and promote Western and Arab music that would inspire the children and adults of Qatar and the Arab world to create and enjoy music.

The 101-member orchestra held its inaugural concert, conducted by Lorin Maazel, on 30 October, 2008. Since then, the Qatar Philharmonic has grown to offer some 40

programmes a year at its home in the Katara Opera House, which opened with the world premiere of Marcel Khalifé's *Rababa Concerto* in December 2010.

On the Road

Touring performances have taken the orchestra from Doha to the Royal Albert Hall in London, the Syrian Opera House in Damascus, the Kennedy Centre in Washington, D.C., and beyond. Other notable

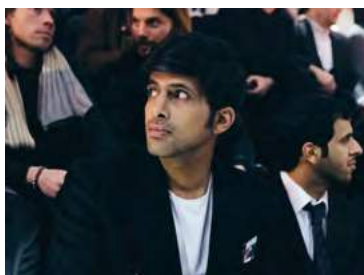
performances include the United Nations General Assembly, the 50th anniversary of OPEC at the Vienna Konzerthaus, and the opening of the Katara Cultural Village Amphitheatre with music by Vangelis and the voices of Angela Gheorgiu and Roberto Alagna.

While the Philharmonic sows the seeds of symphonic music in the Arab region, it also provides a platform for music from around the globe. World premieres have included Marcel Khalifé's *Symphony of Return*, Jean-Charles Gandrille's *Violin Concerto*, Abdalla El Masri's *Oud Concerto*, Rami Khalifé's *Chaos for Piano and Orchestra*, and Requiem and Houtaf Khoury's *Angel of Light Piano Concerto*.

The Philharmonic is a member of Qatar Foundation, which supports Qatar on its journey from a carbon economy to a knowledge-based economy by unlocking human potential.

Generations of Qatari Talent

Mubarak Al Thani



| *Mubarak Al Thani*

Mubarak Al Thani is a Qatari artist and graphic designer, and founder of Blessed, a high-end pop culture brand making men's clothing.

Al Thani's designs embody the very essence of Qatar, and Qatari and Arab culture.

"Everything across the country is an inspiration I incorporate into the brand—the famous architectural designs, the old fabrics used in tents, the nature, the flora and fauna of the desert. The logo on our polo shirts is a camel, the ultimate desert animal."

"We use a lot of geometric designs to reflect the historic and modern buildings that also use these patterns. Islamic history in the region, Islamic calligraphy—all these things help shape my work."

Launched in Qatar in early 2015, Blessed has big goals. "My designs aren't just for Qataris—they're for everyone...Taking Blessed to fashion weeks around the world, New York, Paris, that's the dream in the near future."

"I want my designs to show that the Middle East is about so much more than problems and crises. We have great artistic potential, beautiful architectural and fashion work. This is the future."

Al Thani sees a bright future for fashion design in Qatar.

"I'm the only menswear designer in Qatar at the moment, as most of the market is focused on women's fashion, but I see this changing soon. We're already branching out and will be launching our first fragrance this year. A new generation of Qataris are developing smaller brands, and using Instagram and other social media to share them with the world. I'm looking forward to the competition!"



| *Mubarak Al Thani Designs*





| *Work by Ali Hassan*

Ali Hassan

Multi-award winning Qatari artist Ali Hassan has been practising his craft in Qatar since the early 1970s, and is now inspiring a new generation.

Hassan has exhibited his work in New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Atlanta, Paris, London, Berlin and Tokyo, as well as all across the Middle East.

He has worked with UNESCO, been featured in the world's top hotels and galleries, and designed the logo for the 2010 'Doha Capital of Arab Culture'.

He passionately believes in Qatar's distinctive cultural identity as a source of inspiration for artists.

"Every country's culture is unique and Qatar's art culture is uniquely Qatari. Any creativity in Qatar must reflect the Qatari identity, or what it means to be Arab, or the essence of Islam. There's everything here—the Museum of Islamic Art, Katara, the Qatar National Museum, sports, hospitality, shopping! Doha has a fantastically international character. It's all here in our art."

Hassan recently undertook a project for Hamad International Airport, producing an iconic horse sculpture that reflects Qatar's desert landscape.

"Qatar is fostering an environment for creativity. Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa's leadership is taking Qatar's artistic community into the future. It's authentic. It's in the art, architecture, and music.

It's done great things for the country."

He has high hopes for the next generation of Qatari artists.

"Having taught at Virginia Commonwealth University and Qatar Foundation, I've seen first-hand that the next generation is in good hands. Studying art in Qatar used to be uncharted territory; now young men and women are studying really diverse subjects at Qatar Foundation's Education City and other universities. The investment in education is amazing for our arts scene. This next generation is something special."



| *Work by Ali Hassan*



| *Work by Ali Hassan*

“Qatar is fostering an environment for creativity. H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa’s leadership is taking Qatar’s artistic community into the future”

Ali Hassan



| *Work by Ali Hassan*

Wadha Al Sulaiti



Wadha Al Sulaiti is a Qatari artist, and a pioneering figure of Qatar's

grassroots art scene.

"What was simply a hobby for me in school became an opportunity to express myself, and then became my life's work at the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage."

A board member of the Qatar Fine Arts Society and a former artist-in-residence at Qatar Museums' Fire Station, she helped renovate the old Civil Defence building to turn it into a place for artists to create.

"I think Qatar is a story of opportunity. It is a unique place where what is traditional and what is modern co-exist in harmony. There's a lot to look forward to."

Since her first exhibition in 2005, Al Sulaiti has showcased her work all over Qatar, the Middle East, and in global artistic hubs such as Paris.

She is one of a number of renowned international artists to have her work displayed in Qatar's Hamad International Airport—paintings Heritage 2 and Heritage 3 are in place to welcome international travellers from across the world to Qatar.



| Work by Wadha Al Sulaiti



| Work by Wadha Al Sulaiti



“I think Qatar is a story of opportunity. It is a unique place where what is traditional and what is modern co-exist in harmony. There’s a lot to look forward to”

Wadha Al Sulaiti

| Work by Wadha Al Sulaiti



Celebrating World Cultures Through Film

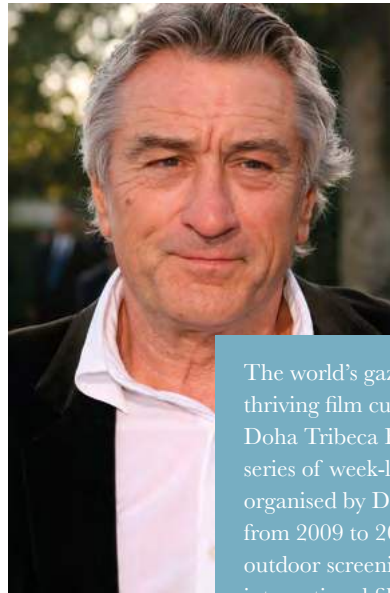
Film has the power to change hearts and minds. That's what drives the Doha Film Institute (DFI), Qatar's hub for film appreciation and education.

Worldwide cultures are celebrated in year-round screenings that range from restored masterpieces to documentaries ripped from today's headlines.

The DFI is also building a dynamic film industry in Qatar by nurturing regional storytellers whose work is global in scope. These rising talents develop and produce original stories for the web, television, radio, and theatres. They mature alongside the veterans in DFI's in-house film production unit who collaborate with foreign filmmakers.

Acclaimed filmmaker Mira Nair saw the value of the DFI instantly. After partnering on the production of the political thriller *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, she continued the collaboration by bringing emerging East African filmmakers to the DFI for intensive training.

The DFI has also co-funded prominent films such as Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*, which was produced by Salma Hayek Pinault and based on the celebrated poems of Lebanese-American poet Kahlil Gibran.



| Robert De Niro

The world's gaze fell on Qatar's thriving film culture during The Doha Tribeca Film Festival, a series of week-long film festivals organised by DFI and held annually from 2009 to 2012. Indoor and outdoor screenings of Arab and international films, including multiple world and international premieres, were held at Katara Cultural Village in Doha. Attendees included world-famous actors Kevin Spacey and Robert De Niro.



The annual Ajyal Youth Film Festival builds on the DFI's history of community-based programming. Ajyal, which means "generations" in Arabic, invites people to discuss cinema through interactive events. A week of workshops, tournaments, exhibitions, and screenings empower and inspire the region's youth.

| Holly Carter, Jayshree Janu Kharpade, guest and Doha Film Institute Resident Filmmaker and Programmer Chadi Zeneddin attend the 2014 Ajyal Youth Film Festival



| *Closeup of the main entrance door, Zubarah fort, Qatar*

Al Zubarah

Clues to a Cultural Past

Al Zubarah reveals invaluable clues to Qatar's cultural identity. Recently named a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Qatar's Al Zubarah is considered one of the best-preserved historic merchant towns in the Gulf region. Founded in the mid-18th century, the abandoned coastal town sits about 100 miles northwest of Doha.

Once a thriving centre of pearling and international trade, Al Zubarah rose to become the country's largest and most important merchant town. Its success attracted the attention of other Gulf powers and repeated attacks ensued. In 1811, Al Zubarah was burned to the ground and never fully recovered. The town was abandoned by the mid-20th century.



|The rectangular eastern tower of Zubarah fort, Qatar

With the help of local and international archaeologists and scientists, including British researchers from University College London, the site of Al Zubarah—and the visitor centre in the nearby fort—provides important clues to Qatar’s cultural identity. The 60-hectare archaeological site includes remains of houses, mosques, large fortified buildings, and a market. Such archaeological evidence offers invaluable insight into the history of the pearl trade and the development of the modern Gulf region.

Earlier this year, archaeologists from University College London Qatar, unearthed more of Qatar’s past. At a site in Fuwairit in the north of the country, there are

the remains of a pearl-fishing settlement that experts believe could date back around 300 years. The Fuwairit dig is funded by a QR3 million grant from the Qatar Foundation’s Qatar National Research Fund and is an extension to the Origins of Doha and Qatar Project run by UCL Qatar.



The Qatari Embassy in the UK

The importance of Public Diplomacy

His Excellency Yousef bin Ali Al Khater, the Ambassador of Qatar to the UK, is committed to reaching out to the United Kingdom's wider community. His Excellency recognises the importance of engaging with Britons beyond political and diplomatic purposes, which is why over the past 18 months, under his leadership, the Embassy has embarked on a number of philanthropic, educational, and social endeavours. His Excellency is eager to continue sharing Qatar's culture while promoting the importance of education, both of which are core pillars of the Embassy's mission in the UK.

His Highness the Emir of Qatar meeting with UK Prime Minister Theresa May

- In September, His Highness the Emir visited London to meet with Prime Minister May at 10 Downing Street.
- The two leaders discussed the strength of the bilateral relationship and agreed to explore increased ties in the areas of investment, education, science and research.



| Lancelot Primary School visit to Qatar Embassy

Secretary General of the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy Hassan Al Thawadi visit to London

- His Excellency the Ambassador hosted a reception at the Embassy in honour of the Secretary General of the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy. Notable guests included Former First Minister of Scotland Alex Salmond, Dr Phillip Lee MP, Baroness Morris, and Baroness Bolton.
- The following night, Hassan Al Thawadi delivered a speech at Chatham House to high-profile guests and media, where he discussed the 2022 World Cup. He outlined what Qatar hopes to achieve as hosts and addressed criticisms the country has faced.

UK delegation to Doha

- Working with the Council for Advancing Arab and British Understanding, His Excellency and Embassy diplomats accompanied a delegation of UK Parliamentarians to Doha.
- The delegation met with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, as well as Qatar Foundation.
- Speaking of the visit, Dr Philip Lee MP said: “The World Cup is the biggest sporting event on earth and it is right that it comes to the Middle East. It hasn’t been here before, and so I wish all the very best to Qatar in hosting it.”



Launcelot Primary School

- The Embassy hosted Launcelot Primary School for a day visit to learn about Qatari history and culture.
- As part of the day's activities, the children had the opportunity to learn about Qatar's history and culture, including trying on traditional Qatari clothing. They also presented the Embassy with their core values.

Eid Celebrations

- Last year, the Embassy sponsored the 10th anniversary of the Eid Festival in London with the Mayor of London's office. The event was a huge success, with over 35,000 people gathering in Trafalgar Square.

- At the celebrations, people had the opportunity to experience real Arabic hospitality, including traditional coffee and dates. The Qatari Embassy also hosted workshops on calligraphy and literature and exhibitions with authentic Qatari clothing for visitors to try, alongside photo opportunities with the national bird of Qatar, the falcon.

Photos Courtesy of:

Qatar Tourism Authority

Museum of Islamic Art, Doha

Qatar Museums

Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha

British Council

Qatari Embassy in the UK



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With thanks to *His Excellency Ambassador Yusef bin Ali Al Khater*

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Q | Issue 1 | December 2016



Issue 1



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