**HER HIGHNESS SHEIKHA MOZA OPENS BAGHDAD: EYE’S DELIGHT EXHIBITION AT MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART**

*Exhibition presented as part of the Qatar-MENASA 2022 Year of Culture*

**25 October 2022, Doha** – Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, today opened the *Baghdad: Eye’s Delight* exhibition at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA). The exhibition, on view at MIA’s Temporary Exhibition Gallery until 25 February 2023, introduces and celebrates the significance of Baghdad under the Abbasid dynasty (750-1258) and its influential impact in the region and around the world up until today. *Baghdad: Eye’s Delight* highlights Iraq’s capital as a political, economic, and intellectual hub during a period that was one of the most innovative in world history. The exhibitionis presented as part of Qatar-MENASA 2022 Year of Culture, an international cultural exchange designed to deepen understanding between nations and their people and Qatar Creates, the year-round national cultural movement that curates, promotes, and celebrates the diversity of cultural activities in Qatar.

The presentation explores Baghdad’s role as a great intellectual and artistic city that has attracted scholars and philosophers from around the world and document the city’s tremendous resilience in face of war, violence, and destruction through its history. The exhibition highlights how Baghdad continued to endure, building on the memories of its Abbasid heritage.

*Baghdad: Eye’s Delight* is jointly curated by Dr. Julia Gonnella, Director, Museum of Islamic Art and the museum’s curatorial team: Dr. Mounia Chekhab Abudaya, Dr. Tara Desjardins, Nicoletta Fazio and Simone Struth. The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated exhibition catalogue with important contributions by distinguished international scholars.

“The Museum of Islamic Art is delighted to mark its recent reopening with *Baghdad: Eye’s Delight,* an exhibition celebrating a remarkable city that has made significant contributions to art, science and intellectual studies in the region. We invite residents and the influx of visitors to Qatar for the World Cup to visit the exhibition to learn more about Baghdad and to challenge their perceptions of what they know and understand about this significant city and its fascinating history,” Dr. Gonnella said.

*Baghdad: Eye’s Delight* pays homage to the city’s “glorious” past, concentrating on the Baghdad of the 20th century, focusing especially (but not only) on the period between the 1940s and 1970’s when Baghdad once again became a thriving place with vibrant city life. The display comprises 160 objects, including loaned works from Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City; Louvre Museum, Paris; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Islamic Art (SMB), Berlin; Oriental Department, State Library (SBB), Berlin; Bavarian State Library, Munich; The David Collection, Copenhagen; Benaki Museum, Athens; Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah; Dia Al-Azzawi Collection, London; TheBritish Library, London; and Chester Beatty, Dublin. An immersive exhibition design includes scenographic elements, including a depiction of the River Tigris on the floor of the exhibition that serves to connect the different themes.

Presented in conjunction with the exhibition, *City of Mirages: Baghdad, 1952-1982* on MIA’s level four spotlights built and unbuilt work by 11 architects, including Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Josep Lluís Sert, Alvar and Aino Aalto, and Robert Venturi FAIA. The exhibition, curated by Prof. Pedro Azara was organised by the Barcelona Delegation of the Col. d’Arquitectes de Catalunya (COAC) in Barcelona in 2012 and then became a travelling exhibition that was displayed in the United States (New York, Boston - MIT), Ramallah and Baghdad.

Also currently on view at MIA until March 2023 is *Raku Kichizaemon XV: Jikinyū’ – A Living Tradition of Japanese Pottery*, displaying a set of fourteen ceremonial tea bowls inspired by Qatar’s natural environment and people, featuring the poetry of Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani, founder of Qatar.

The exhibition unveilings follow the recent reopening of MIA after the museum underwent a facilities enhancement project that included the reimagination and reinstallation of its permanent collection galleries. One of the world’s premier institutions of Islamic art and the first world class museum in the region, the reimagined MIA provides a more accessible, engaging, and educational experience for guests. More than 1,000 objects – many newly conserved or acquired – are displayed in the Museum’s permanent galleries for the first time, alongside the masterpieces for which MIA has long been recognised.

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**Museum of Islamic Art**

Founded in 2008, the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) was one of the first projects initiated by QM. Designed by the renowned Chinese American architect I. M. Pei, the MIA is a globally acclaimed museum that stands majestically on Doha’s Corniche, with panoramic views of the city’s waterfront. The museum showcases Qatar’s world-class collections of Islamic art spanning some 1,400 years. Representing the full scope of Islamic art from the 7th to the 20th centuries, the MIA collection includes manuscripts, ceramics, metal, glass, ivory, textiles, wood, and precious stones. The works have been collected from three continents, including countries across the Middle East, and reaching as far as Spain and China. MIA presents a changing programme of exhibitions illustrating the heritage of the Islamic world, as well as extensive educational activities for school children and families, making the museum a vital part of the community. The MIA has become a popular museum in the region and internationally, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. Dr. Julia Gonnella has served as director of the museum since 2017.

**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 and expands the nation’s cultural offerings, 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, and amplify the voices of Qatar’s people. Since its founding in 2005, QM has overseen the development of museums and festivals including the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) and MIA Park, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, the National Museum of Qatar (NMOQ), 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum, QM Gallery Al Riwaq, QM Gallery Katara, and the Tasweer Qatar Photo Festival. Future projects include Dadu: Children’s Museum of Qatar, Art Mill Museum, Qatar Auto Museum and the Lusail Museum. Qatar also has one of the largest and most ambitious public art programmes in the world. Through its Department of Archaeology, QM spearheads several initiatives to preserve and restore Qatar’s historical sites and buildings. QM also initiates and supports Creative Hubs that nurture artistic talent and create opportunities to build a strong and sustainable cultural infrastructure. These include the Fire Station: Artist in Residence, M7 for innovation, fashion and design, and Liwan Design Studios and Labs. For more information visit https://qm.org.qa

**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.

**About Qatar Creates**

Qatar Creates curates, celebrates, and promotes cultural activities within Qatar.

Working with partners in museums, film, fashion, hospitality, cultural heritage, performing arts, and the private sector in Qatar, the Qatar Creates platform amplifies the voice of Qatar’s creative industries, directly connecting audiences to events.

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