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| **Qatar Museums**[***Years of Culture***](https://yearsofculture.qa/)**2022 Showcases and Supports the****Artists and People of the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (MENASA)*****2022 program features dozens of exhibitions and events, asserting pride in******Islamic and regional culture on the eve of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™*****1 November 2022 – Doha, Qatar** – Providing recognition and support for the artists and people of the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA), and sending a strong message of pride in Islamic and regional culture on the eve of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, the Qatar Museums Years of Culture initiative celebrated its tenth anniversary yesterday, 30 October, with the world premiere of a commemorative symphony, *The Desert Rose,*performed by the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra at the National Museum of Qatar. The event was just one example of the robust Year of Culture offering of exhibitions and programs that is currently celebrating the nations of the MENASA region. Nine exhibitions of Islamic art and regional culture are now open across Qatar’s museums and galleries as part of the initiative. Major works by MENASA artists have been installed at public sites throughout Doha and the nation. Community days for the people of MENASA nations have been celebrated and special screenings held at the Ajyal Film Festival. Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums, said, “To mark the 10th anniversary of the Years of Culture initiative, as well as the historic occasion of Qatar hosting the first FIFA World Cup in an Arab country, Years of Culture has partnered not with one nation but with the entire MENASA region. We are using the spotlight of the World Cup for good by sharing our platform with regional artists to help promote narratives from the region, by the people of the region. Qatar has become a thriving hub where regional talent can find its voice. Years of Culture collaborated with artists like Najla El Zein from Lebanon, as well as incredible Qatari talent like Bouthayna Al Muftah and Yousef Ahmed. We firmly believe that cultural initiatives promote tolerance and harmony between cultures and societies and take great pride in seeing regional talent succeeding in Qatar.” **Saluting the Nations and Peoples of the MENASA Region**On 4 October, in the presence of Qatar’s Foreign Minister His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Bin Jassim Al Thani, accompanied by Minister of Youth and Sports, His Excellency Salah bin Ghanim Al-Ali and Minister of Culture His Excellency Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad bin Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani, a ceremony inaugurated the new Flag Plaza in the Museum of Islamic Art Park with the raising of 119 flags representing the MENASA region and all nations with embassies in Qatar. Accompanied by a musical salute by the Qatar Armed Forces Band Regiment, the flag-raising ceremony also served to unveil the major work of public art commissioned for Flag Plaza: *Us, Her, Him*by Lebanese artist Najla El Zain, a series of benches, 313 metres in length, created in hand-sculpted limestone. For ten days after the inauguration of Flag Plaza, Qatar Museums and the Years of Culture organized a jam-packed Community Days Festival for residents, beginning on 5 October with Qatari traditional performances and culminating on 15 October with community members from Palestine, Pakistan, Thailand, Haiti, Russia, and Morocco. **Heightening the Public Presence of Qatari and Regional Artists**In addition to unveiling Najla El Zain’s sculptural benches at the Flag Plaza, the month of October has brought the works of a wide range of Qatari and regional artists to public places throughout Doha and the nation. Among the new highlights:* Three monumental works by Lebanese artist Simone Fattal were installed at the Northern Heritage site near Al Zubarah.
* Sculptures by Qatari artist Shua’a Ali were placed in Msheireb and Grand Hamad Plaza.
* A work by Qatari artist Shouq Al Mana was unveiled on the Lusail Marina Promenade.
* A light installation by Iraqi artist Adel Abidin was added to the façade of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, to accompany the works by Egyptian artist Adam Henein and Iraqi artist Ismail Fattah.
* Kuwaiti artist Monira Al Qadiri’s *Zephyr*was placed on the West Bay’s North Beach.
* Iraqi sculptor Ahmed Al Bahrani’s *Dugong Family*was placed in Al Ruwais.
* Shezad Dawood, a UK-based artist with both Pakistani and Indian heritage, contributed to Al Masrah Park an artwork that serves as a playground.

 In addition, Qatar Museums and the Years of Culture organized a special gathering in October of JEDARIART, the program that brings together local artists to add vibrancy and meaning to walls throughout Doha by painting murals and other forms of street art. In this Year of Culture initiative of JEDARIART, artists made works celebrating and promoting the popular Pakistani and Indian tradition of hand-painted trucks **Showcasing Islamic and Regional Art and Culture**Special exhibitions that were launched in October 2022, celebrating both the heritage and the contemporary creativity of the MENASA region, include:* *Baghdad: Eye’s Delight,*the inaugural special exhibition at the thoroughly reinstalled Museum of Islamic Art, revealing the glories of Baghdad during the Abbasid caliphate and the resurgence of Iraqi art and culture in the 20th century
* Qatari-American artist Sophia Al-Maria’s ***~~INVISIBLE LABORS~~******daydream therapy****,*which presents a many-sided dialogue about the Gulf region’s relationship to the world
* Palestinian artist Taysir Batniji’s *No Condition Is Permanent,*meditating on the history of Palestine and its struggle
* *One Tiger or Another*, a research exhibition for a major new project, Rubaiyat Qatar, an art quadrennial that will be presented in its inaugural edition across Qatar in 2024
* Qatari artist Al Maha Al Maadeed’s *Inspired by the Land,*which draws on the resources of family history and poetry
* *Majaz: Contemporary Art Qatar,*featuring works by 36 alumni of the Qatar Museums Fire Station artist-in-residence program
* *Reesha,*an exhibition of art made by children in Doha, organized by Qatari artist Maryam Al Mulla at the Qatar National Library
* *Safar,* organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, exploring the history and culture of Afghanistan and the experiences of Afghan refugees evacuated in 2021 with the assistance of Qatar
* *Labour of Love: Embroidering Palestinian History,*presented in collaboration with the Palestinian Museum, examining the role of embroidery in affirming Palestinian identity and resistance
* *On the Move,*inviting viewers into the experience of the nomadic and semi-nomadic people of Qatar, the central Sahara and Mongolia

**Amplifying the Musical Voices of Qatar and the Arab World**As a special event to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Years of Culture initiative and celebrate the 2022 Year of Culture with the MENASA region, the National Museum of Qatar hosted the world premiere of *The Desert Rose*symphony*,*commissioned by Years of Culture from the renowned Syrian-American composer Malek Jandali, who is now the honorary composer-in-residence of Qatar Museums. A partial preview of *The Desert Rose*symphony was played in September 2022 at a private event in New York City, when His Highness Sheikh Tamim attended the United Nations General Assembly and hosted a dinner at The Metropolitan Museum of Art to mark the inauguration of The Qatar Gallery at The Met, showcasing works of Islamic art from the most classical periods. The world premiere of *The Desert Rose*symphony*,*which weaves into its structure the traditional melodies and modes of Arab music and evocations of the sounds of the Qatari landscape, was performed at the National Museum of Qatar by the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra. **Bringing Community Together**A special edition of the Doha Film Institute’s Ajyal Film Festival was held in early October, in which the Ajyal Jury—made up exclusively of young people, ages 8 to 25—gathered to view the creations of filmmakers from throughout the region and decided on the festival awards.###**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, Türkiye, 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 National Tourism Council, Qatar Olympic Committee, Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, with assistance from Doha-based embassies of participating countries. 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 Qatar Airways, Vodafone, Qatar Gas, Shell, Ooredoo, Shangri-La Hotel and Resorts, Lulu Group International, Qatar Financial Centre, Qatar Petroleum, and ExxonMobil. **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. 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.**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.**FIND US ONLINE:***Qatar Museums**Twitter:* [@Qatar\_Museums](https://twitter.com/Qatar_Museums) | Instagram: [@Qatar\_Museums](https://www.instagram.com/qatar_museums/?hl=en) | Facebook: [@QatarMuseums](https://www.facebook.com/QatarMuseums)**Press Contacts***International*Julia Esposito, julia.esposito@finnpartners.com *MENASA Region & Qatar*Anya Kotova, akotova@qm.org.qa |
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