



مؤسسة قطر
Qatar Foundation

إطلاق قدرات الإنسان
Unlocking human potential



Arts & Culture at Qatar Foundation

September 2025

01

Overview

As the art world transforms into an art industry, Qatar has opened state-of-the-art museums and cultural facilities, and commissioned leading artists from around the world – illustrating its desire to showcase the place that art occupies in the life of the country, and its goal of being one of the world's leading art hubs.

- Three museums are at the forefront of the art scene in Qatar: the Museum of Islamic Art, which opened in 2008; Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, which opened in Qatar Foundation's Education City in 2010, and the most recent addition to the country's arts and culture scene, the National Museum of Qatar, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouve, which cost **more than \$400 million** and opened in 2019.
- The Qatar Tourism Authority is set to invest **\$5.7 billion** to preserve and promote the country's cultural heritage and **\$2.7 billion** to upgrade urban attractions by 2030.
- Qatar Foundation owns approximately **150 art pieces**, many of which have been purchased through the global 'Percent-for-Art' scheme. The work of local artists represents 20 percent of the collection, and 40 percent is the work of artists from across the region and the Arab world.
- Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, founded in 2007 and a member of Qatar Foundation, comprises 78 musicians from 28 countries, selected by a jury of international music professionals.

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Qatar's Public Art & Exhibitions by Global Artists



- Over the past decade, Qatar has been the setting for some of the world's leading art names to showcase their work to local, regional, and global audiences.
- These include Pipilotti Rist, Jeff Koons, Virgil Abloh – whose **Figures of Speech** was the American artist and designer's first museum exhibition in the Middle East – and Brian Donnelly, who also exhibited in the Middle East for the first time with the 40 major pieces that comprised **KAWS: HE EATS ALONE**.
- Qatar is also home to Richard Serra's **EAST-WEST/WEST-EAST**, made up of four steel plates over 14m tall installed in the desert landscape, while in 2021 and 2022, House of Dior held its first Middle East retrospective, **Christian Dior Designer of Dreams**, featuring a selection of pieces that have never been shown before.

03

Mathaf:
Arab
Museum of
Modern Art



- The Mathaf collection, co-owned by Qatar Museums and Qatar Foundation, is displayed in a 59,000-square-foot space, and represents the largest collection of Arab modern and contemporary art in the region.
- Redesigned by French architect Jean-François Bodin, it showcases over 9,000 artworks, mostly from modern Islamic art collections.
- More than 50 Qatari and Arab artists represented are represented within Mathaf's permanent collection.
- **Prominent Exhibitions**
 - **2025: [Qatar: Close To My Soul](#)** – Art from the Collection of Abdulla bin Ali Al Thani presents works from the late 1960s onward, providing an overview of Qatari art, artists, movements, and ideas that have shaped modern and contemporary art from Qatar.
 - **2025: [Your Ghosts Are Mine](#)** focuses on contemporary experiences of community life and exile, including the benefits and perils of transnational crossings.
 - **2025: [Wafa al-Hamad: Sites of Imagination](#)** is the first solo exhibition dedicated to the visionary artist and educator, bringing attention to her role in the development of modern Qatari art and offering new insights into her contribution.
 - **2025: [Daoud Aoulad Syad, Territories of the Instant](#)** celebrated over three decades of work by the Moroccan photographer and filmmaker, whose work captured the soul of his homeland.
 - **2024/25: [Seeing Is Believing: The Art and Influence of Jean-Leon Gérôme](#)** delved into the art and legacy of the renowned French painter and sculptor, showcasing over 300 works that invited a reconsideration of his art and impact.
 - **2021: [On Silence](#)** was a major solo exhibition of French visual artist Kader Attia's work over the last two decades. The exhibition features a wide range of work across all media and includes site-specific installations, sculptures, collages, drawings, video and photography. The pieces explored themes of postcolonial trauma and the ensuing decades of psychiatric 'repair' at social and individual level.
 - **2020: [Huguette Caland: Faces and Places](#)** was Lebanese painter Caland's largest solo museum exhibition in the world, organized around three different locations across the world: Beirut, Paris and California.
 - **2019: [M. F. Husain: Horses of the Sun](#)** presents the renowned artist's work across more than six decades. The title refers to a recurrent motif in his art, a personal symbol of self-renewal and vitality.

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Qatar Foundation Art Sites

- o **2019:** [El Anatsui: Triumphant Scale](#) showcased the African artist's monumental sculptures designed with bottle caps. The exhibition also included wood sculptures and wall reliefs dating from the mid-1970s to the late 1990s; ceramic sculptures from the late 1970s; and drawings, sketches, and prints.
- o **2011:** [Told | Untold | Retold](#) was the first and largest exhibition of contemporary art of its scale within a museum context in the history of the Arab world. Pieces ranged from paintings, drawings, and sculpture to photography, video, and mixed media installations, providing a unique and challenging view of contemporary art from the region.



- The earliest of the artworks found within Qatar Foundation's Education City date from the 1960s. The majority of the works span a period from the late 1900s to the present day.
- **Art Trail** is a Qatar Foundation initiative which offers guided public tours of the artworks located around Education City. These art sites include:
 - o **2025: Lawh Wa Qalam: M. F. Husain Museum** will be launched by Qatar Foundation, dedicated to the life and work of one of the most influential figures in the history of modern art, Maqbool Fida Husain. The museum will invite visitors to step inside Husain's world and explore the influences, philosophies, and memories that shaped his artistic journey. Through multimedia storytelling and art forms including paintings, films, tapestry, photography, and poetry, the museum will bring Husain's creativity to life in bold and innovative ways. Lawh Wa Qalam: M. F. Husain Museum – the design of which mirrors a sketch by Husain depicting the architectural concept he envisioned for the building – will open to the public on 28 November 2025.
 - o **2024: Al Azzm** is a sculpture within Education City symbolizing the [determination of Qatari women, while also embodying Qatari culture and traditions and the resilience of the nation.](#)
 - o **2022: Come Together**, a public art installation designed by South Korean artist Choi Jeong Hwa, that pays tribute to Qatar's preparations for hosting the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™. The brightly colored structure, resembling a dandelion, is made up of workers' helmets, mirror balls, and traditional Qatari kitchenware.

- **2019: The Media Majlis** at Northwestern University in Qatar, a Qatar Foundation partner university, is the first museum in the Arab world dedicated to discussing and examining the content of media, journalism, and communication. It explores various themes from Arab representations in film, to censorship and identity.
- **2019: Maqbool .Fida. Husain's Seerof fFi aAl aArdh** is the final work from the late artist, highlighting the progress of humanity on land, in air, and at sea, and its inclination to utilize the surrounding resources to achieve its goals. The artist moved to Qatar to create the artwork and visualized the installation in one of his sketches from 2009, which includes a mosaic wall painting of Arabian horses, a sculpture of Abbas ibn Firnas suspended from the ceiling, a sculpture of Leonardo da Vinci's flying machine, five life-sized colored glass horses, and a collection of vintage cars.
- **2018:** Georgetown University in Qatar a Qatar Foundation partner university, houses a panel of the Berlin Wall, which was brought to the country by Qatar Museums under the Qatar-Germany 2017 Year of Culture, as part of its Public Art Program. Just over a meter wide, over 3.5 meters high, and 2 meters thick, the concrete is reinforced with steel bars, and covered in spray painted graffiti that conveys messages of hope, freedom, and change.
- **2013:** Damien Hirst's The Miraculous Journey is a series of 14 monumental bronze sculptures that chronicles the gestation of a fetus inside a uterus, from conception to birth. It ends with a statue of a 46-foot-tall anatomically correct baby boy, and stands outside Sidra Medicine, Qatar Foundation's pioneering women's and children's hospital and medical research center.
- **2011:** Louise Bourgeois' 1999 Maman is a bronze, stainless steel, and marble sculpture which depicts a spider, and is among the world's largest sculptures, over 30ft high and over 33ft wide.

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International Partnerships

- Qatar Foundation and the British Library developed an ongoing partnership in 2012, managed by Qatar National Library, to digitize millions of archival and manuscript materials relating to the history of Qatar, the Gulf region and the wider Middle East.
- Phase 1 of the partnership, from July 2012-December 2014, saw the digitization of more than 500,000 pages from the British Library's collections, which included 475,000 pages from the India Office Records and 25,000 pages of medieval Arabic manuscripts.
- Phase 2 of the project involved the digitization of additional 1,125,000 pages of rare, historical documents that are being regularly shared with the public through Qatar Digital Library.
- Phase 3 will digitize an additional 900,000 pages of new material on the Gulf, as well as Arabic manuscripts on science.

⁴The tripartite agreement works towards fostering and raising awareness about a better understanding of the Islamic world, Arab culture and the Arabian Gulf region's history. The multi-phase partnership contributes effectively to the principles of the Qatar National Vision 2030, which aims to preserve the nation's heritage and enhance the Arab and Islamic values and identity.

06

About Qatar
Foundation

Qatar Foundation (QF) is a non-profit organization made up of more than 50 entities focused on education, research, and community development.

QF's unique ecosystem – supported by partnerships with leading international institutions – is built on initiatives that address our most pressing challenges, create global opportunities, and empower people to shape our present and future.

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About
Education
City

Education City, QF's flagship initiative, is a campus that spans more than 12 square kilometers and hosts branch campuses of some of the world's leading educational institutes, a homegrown university, research and innovation hubs, and community facilities. Together, this makes Education City a unique environment of knowledge – pioneering a new approach to multidisciplinary, global education and enabling breakthroughs that benefit Qatar and the rest of the world.

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QF Media
Center

The Qatar Foundation (QF) Media Center provides you with access to useful information. This includes a list of QF expert commentators, information about the QF Centers, media pack & factsheets, logos, photo gallery and finally, our stories & press releases. To find out more, please visit www.qf.org.qa/media-center

For more information and for media enquiries, please contact the QF Press Office at pressoffice@qf.org.qa



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