

The logo consists of the letters 'A2Q' in a large, white, sans-serif font. The '2' is smaller and positioned between the 'A' and the 'Q'. The background is a photograph of a modern architectural structure with a complex, geometric, metallic mesh ceiling and two tall, curved, sail-like structures against a clear blue sky.

A2Q

VOL 2 • ISSUE 1 • APRIL 2022

Islam and the Architecture of Qatar

How the evolving
culture of Qatar has
shaped the nation's
mosque aesthetic.

+ Poetry & the Arabic Language
+ Interview with Choreographer
Dana Tai Soon Burgess + Origins
of Qatar National Spots Day

About A2Q

A2Q (America to Qatar) is a digital magazine that spans the work of artists and the insights of experts from the United States, Qatar, and the Arab and Islamic worlds. As a digital platform serving creatives with diverse perspectives in art and culture, A2Q addresses subject matter in the aim of bridging cultural barriers and cultivating understanding. While at its core A2Q provides a voice to culture, history, and art relating to the Arab and Islamic communities around the world, A2Q also exists in recognition of the universal appeal of creative expression and the benefits of cultural convergence.

Interested in being featured in an upcoming issue of A2Q? You can submit your work as an artist, writer, or academic with the QAIC editorial team for a chance to be featured. If selected, we will contact you to begin the editorial process. More information can be found at www.qataramerica.org/A2Q.



About QAIC

The Qatar America Institute for Culture (QAIC) is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that creates, curates, and executes programs and research that amplify the prominence of all forms of art and culture in society. QAIC cultivates artistic expression and cultural dialogue from the United States, Qatar, and the larger Arab and Islamic worlds.

QAIC serves as a vital hub to convene artists, curators, storytellers, creatives, scholars, and academics, connecting them with a global network that extends beyond its physical space in Washington DC. Through art exhibitions, educational programs, scholarly research, and cross-cultural partnerships, QAIC provides interactive experiences in an inclusive environment to celebrate and appreciate art and culture.



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What We Do

ART

QAIC's headquarters, located in DC's popular Dupont Circle neighborhood, hosts rotating exhibitions throughout the year in our historic gallery space. Whether an innovative contemporary art installation or a sensory journey through history, these exhibitions invite visitors of all ages to explore diverse forms of art and heritage.

CULTURE

At QAIC, all are welcome to expand their knowledge of the arts and culture by participating in our regular educational programs. Our Expressions Art & Culture Talks provide audiences exclusive insight from creatives and experts on topics including horse breeding, film, and architecture. The newly launched Museum Series convenes museum practitioners not only for a behind-the-scenes look at today's museums, but also to generate dialogue about current museological trends and issues. At our hands on cultural enrichment events, audiences learn about art, culture, and the creative process by producing their own art and crafts.

EDUCATION

We invite members from our various communities to engage with us in many ways, whether through celebrations such as our iftar dinners or our annual IMPART Summit, the "Congress for Creatives." We also offer various scholarly opportunities, including fellowships and internships, throughout the year for those interested to get further involved with QAIC.

What's Inside

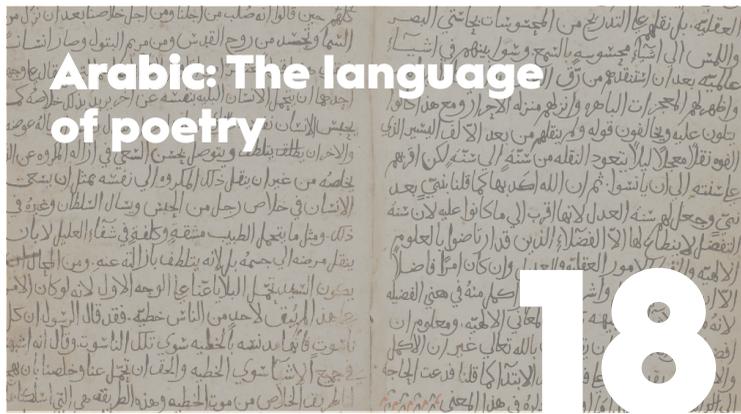
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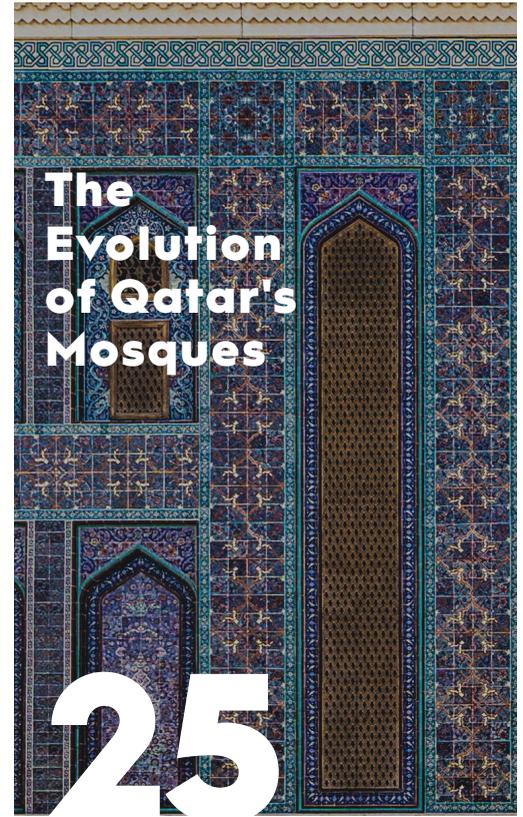
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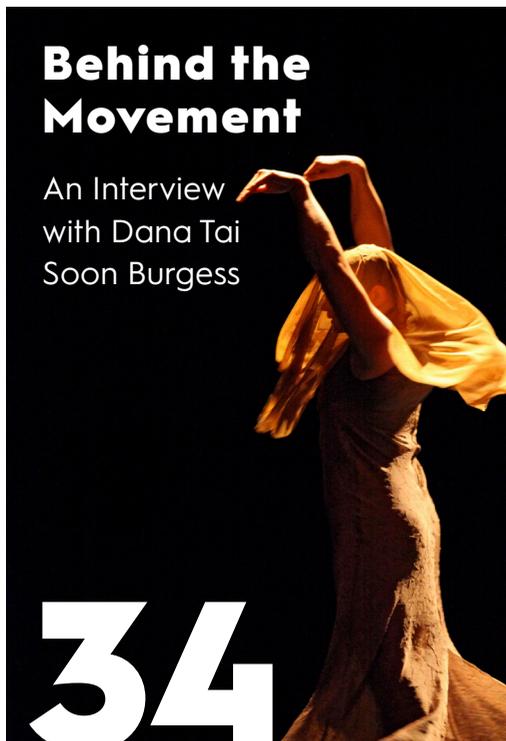
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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends of QAIC,

I hope everyone has had a wonderful start to 2022. This issue marks A2Q's one-year anniversary, and since then, a lot has happened.

At last, we witnessed a gradual decrease in the pandemic's most severe effects as life for many slowly adapted toward a new sense of normalcy. With this shift, we opened QAIC's doors to the public more often - welcoming old and new friends to our space. From art exhibitions to social events, we have enjoyed hosting guests at our home while sharing with them all the beautiful traditions of the Arab and Islamic cultures. We were also delighted to restart our culture delegation program by taking two groups of American cultural leaders and artists to Doha. With these changes, we feel an enlivened sense of our mission and our ability to serve as a keystone in the cultural bridge between Qatar and the United States, whether stateside or across the oceans.

Furthermore, this change made us refocus on what matters to us the most: meaningful and authentic programming that is centered around our audience experiences. As a result, we have refined the A2Q magazine to mirror this value. Throughout this and upcoming issues, you will observe some changes: a triennial publication instead of a quarterly one, a new design for easier reading, and more in-depth stories from contributors within the QAIC community. In fact, we are thrilled to feature several first-

time contributing authors in this issue who are amongst our first batch of American and Qatari students in the Arabic language and culture fellowship. All these developments to the A2Q magazine support our aim to deliver more quality, inclusive, and diverse content that aligns with our mission.

Although the Qatar-USA 2021 Year of Culture has come to an end, we look forward to extending the principles of that partnership in 2022 and for years to come. Qatar will host the FIFA World Cup this year - the first time ever in the Middle East - which will connect Qatar to new audiences from around the world. 2022 also marks the 50-year anniversary of US-Qatar relations. We are proud of the role we play in supporting the exchange of arts and culture between the two nations, and we hope it shows on all of QAIC's public platforms.

Lastly, I'd like to sincerely thank our sponsors who make all our work, both offline and online, a reality. Also, special thanks to the QAIC team and our contributing authors for their time and efforts in producing this publication. I hope you enjoyed previous issues of the A2Q magazine and look forward to the new issues in the year to come.

Sincerely,

Fatima Al-Dosari,
Executive Director



QAIC's *A2Q Digest*, a collection of some of the most memorable stories from the four A2Q magazine issues in 2021, was made available to guests who visited the United States Embassy's booth during the 31st International Doha Book Fair held in January 2022.

CREDIT: CEDRIC CRAIG

What We've Been Up To



A QAIC delegation surveys the Education City complex from the balcony of the Qatar Foundation headquarters.

CREDIT: CEDRIC CRAIG

QAIC HOSTS TWO DELEGATION VISITS TO QATAR

From 10-15 January, 2022, QAIC hosted museum and cultural leaders from institutions across the United States as part of an immersive cultural delegation to Qatar. Over the course of five days, the delegates had the opportunity to visit various art, historical, and culturally significant sites across Doha, meet with several high-level cultural leaders, and experience first-hand the rich heritage and traditions of the region, all in an effort to encourage future cross-cultural exchanges between the United States and Qatar. The delegation was comprised of a diverse group of individuals whose unique interests in Qatar allowed for a more in-depth exploration of the nation's artistic and cultural offerings.

With the success of the first delegation, QAIC hosted a second delegation of several U.S. artists and creatives to Qatar to facilitate cultural exchange between the U.S. and Qatar, the traditions and heritage of Qatar, and promote key arts and cultural relationship-building.

From March 20-25, the delegates had the opportunity to visit many similar cultural important locations across Doha and some new ones. They also had the opportunity to meet with cultural leaders, explore the art scene, and experience first-hand the rich heritage and traditions of the region, all in an effort to encourage future cross-cultural exchanges between the United States and Qatar.



A delegate from one of the American museums snaps some photos of various antiquities on display during a tour of the National Museum of Qatar.

CREDIT: CEDRIC CRAIG



In addition to official meetings and cultural site visits, the delegations were also able to get a "hands-on" experience with the local Qatari customs and traditions through various cuisine tastings, artistic demonstrations, and more. Above, the March 2022 delegation traveled to the Heenat Salma Farm where they learned how to make "sedu."



One of the many perks of a QAIC delegation is the ability to receive a "behind the scenes" look into the many state-of-the-art facilities and institutions based in Qatar. Above, the January 2022 delegation received an exclusive tour of the training and care facilities at the Al Shaqab equestrian center, home of the world's top Arabian horses.

Left: Delegates take in the awe (and some photos) of the amazing sights upon entering the courtyard of the National Museum of Qatar.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



The January 2022 delegation group, which consisted of directors and curators from some of the leading arts and cultural institutions in the United States, posing for a photo in front of the Doha skyline before taking a tour along Doha's famous Corniche aboard a traditional "dhow" boat.



Both delegation groups were treated to immersive educational opportunities, like touring the collection of ancient manuscripts at the Qatar National Library.



The "Women of the Pandemic" exhibition on display at the Katara Cultural Village. The March 2022 delegation attended the closing reception held at Katara.



The participating American and Qatari artists featured in the "Women of the Pandemic" exhibition finally meeting in person at the reception hosted by Katara. The artists pose with QAIC's Fatima Al-Dosari (left of podium) and Dr. Khalid Al-Sulaiti, the General Manager of the Katara Cultural Village and member of QAIC's Board of Directors.



The March 2022 delegation gave the visiting American artists many opportunities to connect with Doha-based creatives and cultural leaders. Above, the group is visiting the al markhiya gallery located at the Doha Fire Station where they met with artists from the joint "Ruwad" exhibition: Mubarak Al-Malik, Fatima Mohammed, and Sara Al Ansari.



It is easy to get lost in the immersive experience that is the National Museum of Qatar, but even more so if you are a curator or museum director.

CREDIT: QAIC STAFF



QAIC's Fatima Al-Dosari (left) demonstrates the interactive component of the *Alif Ba* exhibit to Western Kentucky University provost Bud Fischer (right) and other members of the university .

CREDIT: WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

"ALIF BA" EXHIBITION

QAIC has partnered with the Qatar Foundation (QF) and Qatar Museums (QM) to extend the duration of the Alif Ba exhibition in the United States by bringing it to two new cities before residing at QAIC's Washington, DC headquarters later in the year. The four-piece interactive Arabic alphabet installation is a joint exhibition and program spearheaded by QF and QM that was first debuted in the U.S. at the Children's Museum in DC as part of the Qatar-USA 2021 Year of Culture initiative.

Following its time at the Children's Museum, QAIC will be supporting the legacy of this initiative in the United States between February 2022 and August 2022 by showcasing it in two additional cities as part of QAIC's overarching "Arabic Language & Culture Program." The exhibition will first travel to Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, KY before making its way to Philadelphia where it will temporarily reside at Al Bustan Seeds of Culture. QAIC will host the exhibition at its location in Washington, DC for the final leg of the exhibition's tour before returning to Qatar.

In addition to hosting the physical interactive installation, QAIC will be coordinating "family days" at each of the three hosting locations to celebrate the Alif Ba initiative and to provide immersive experiences for visitors to further explore the Arabic language and culture through food, film, music, and the arts. The public will be able to visit the installation outside of



The *Alif Ba* exhibition at the National Children's Museum before it embarked on its national tour across the eastern United States.

CREDIT: NATIONAL CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

these designated cultural days in accordance with the visiting schedules and policies set by each individual venue partner.

This initiative includes more than just the exhibition and its cultural activities, as QAIC is also offering a scholarly fellowship to a group of students from Qatar Academy Doha and Western Kentucky University who will be supporting QAIC with some of the efforts of its Arabic Language & Culture Program. QAIC hopes that the American students from the Arabic Language & Culture Program fellowship will be granted the opportunity to travel to Doha, Qatar as part of a student delegation before the end of the year to continue their exploration of Arabic language and culture.

EXPRESSIONS ART & CULTURE TALK: "THE CONTEMPORARY ART SCENE IN DOHA"

On February 10, QAIC hosted its first Expressions Art & Culture Talk of the year which featured many of the Qatari artists who participated in the "Ruwad: The Pioneering Contemporary Arts of Qatar" exhibition presented in partnership with the al markhiya gallery in Doha.

The virtual discussion titled "The Contemporary Art Scene in Doha" offered audiences an inside look at the current art scene in Qatar from the perspective of four of the artists whose works were displayed at the QAIC headquarters as part of the "Ruwad" exhibition.

Moderated by QAIC's Executive Director, Fatima Al-Dosari, the featured panelists included artists Fatima Al Mohammed, Ebtissam Al Saffar, Mubarak Al-Malik, and Sarah Al-Ansari, who all shared their insights and experiences as Qatari artists adapting to the ever-evolving art environment in Doha and what they perceive will be the future of art in Qatar. To watch the recording of the full discussion, visit QAIC's YouTube channel.



Screen capture from the virtual event



"RUWAD" EXHIBITION

"Ruwad" ("pioneers" in Arabic) is a collective exhibition of established and up-and-coming Qatar-based artists whose works are contributing to a transformation in the creative landscape of the region. Spanning many diverse forms of creative expression, "Ruwad" presents a group of visionary minds from Qatar whose work inspires and promotes the cultural richness of the region. The 2021-2022 "Ruwad" exhibition marks the first collaboration between the al markhiya gallery in Doha, Qatar, and QAIC. al markhiya is the oldest privately owned gallery presenting emerging and established artists from the Arab world in their two gallery spaces located at the Doha Fire Station and the Katara Art Center.

59TH NAIMUN RECEPTION

On February 18 & 19, QAIC had the pleasure to host a two-day program for student delegates and staffers of the 59th North American Invitational Model United Nations (NAIMUN) Conference at our headquarters in Washington, DC. The program consisted of a networking reception for students and staff, and a lecture delivered by QAIC's Executive Director, Fatima Al-Dosari.

NAIMUN continues to be the largest student-run Model United Nations (MUN) conference in the world and is one of the oldest and most competitive MUN conferences for North American high school students. With more than 3,300 of the best delegates from around the world, NAIMUN has been dubbed the "high school championship" of MUN. Every year the conference typically hosts thousands of students from North America and hundreds of Georgetown University staff. It connects students and advisers from around the world to discuss real-world issues and offer unique perspectives on international affairs.



NAIMUN delegates and staff receiving a tour of the QAIC space and learning about QAIC's mission, art and culture in Qatar and the larger Arab and Islamic worlds, and the importance of cross-cultural dialogue and exchange.



NAIMUN delegates touring QAIC's Perfumery Museum to learn about the science and history of fragrance.



NAIMUN delegates testing their art and culture knowledge with a QAIC crossword puzzle for a chance to win some exclusive QAIC gifts.

CREDIT: ALBERT TING



CALLIGRAPHY BY MOHAMED ZAKARIYA

Exhibition In Depth: "Living Line, Living Legacy"

QAIC newest exhibition in partnership with the Reed Society for the Sacred Arts (RSSA) showcases the inherited legacy of the art of Islamic calligraphy and the creatives preserving the craft for future generations of calligraphers.

Officially unveiled to the public on April 11, 2022, QAIC's new calligraphy exhibition in partnership with the Reed Society for the Sacred Arts (RSSA), "Living Line, Living Legacy," features the works of renowned master calligrapher Mohamed Zakariya and other prominent calligraphers from the United States and Europe, many of whom were

students of Zakariya before going on to master the art. According to Aisha Iman, Executive Director of the Reed Society for the Sacred Arts, this exhibition "brings to a new audience a chain of artistic transmission and accomplishment that has progressed through a number of schools and centers, always in action somewhere, from 7th-century Arabia to the present."

While not the first of QAIC's exhibitions featuring Islamic calligraphy (QAIC hosted twenty large-scale calligraphy paintings by master calligrapher Sabah Arbilli in 2021), "*Living Line, Living Legacy*" tells the story of Islamic calligraphy from its origins and how this beautiful practice of utmost precision is sustained and celebrated in the modern day through the efforts of teachers and students alike.

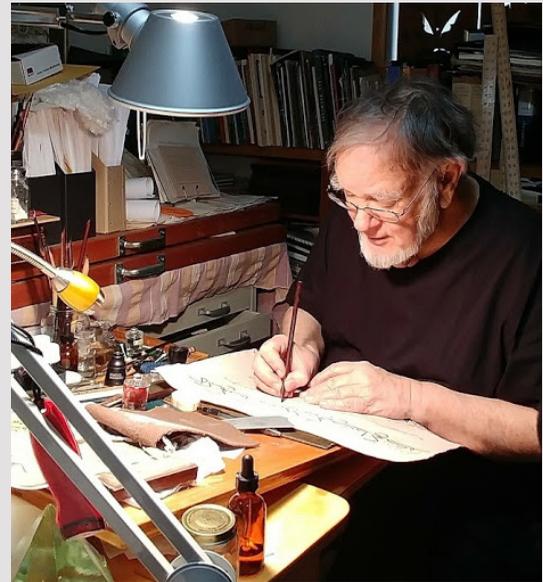
The origins of Islamic calligraphy can be traced to Zayd ibn Thabit and his associates, who produced the first copies of the Qur'an and formed the first writing atelier for the production of books. The legendary encouragement of these early calligraphers came from Ali ibn Abi Talib, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Historical sources tell the stories of luminaries such as Ibn Muqla, Ibn al-Bawwab, Yaqut al-Mustasimi, and Şeyh Hamdullah, who, in the early centuries, spread the art of Arabic-script calligraphy throughout the Islamic world. Mohamed Zakariya has continued that trend by introducing students in the United States to this living artform. Zakariya's students are now becoming prominent here and abroad.

Celebrating the UNESCO designation of Arabic calligraphy as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, this gallery showcases the work of a family of calligraphers who all have received their *ijazah*, or teaching license. Coming from different paths and backgrounds they are linked by the deep love they have discovered pouring over these letters and immersing themselves in an artistic practice that merges breath, ink, and space. This meditative art is a foray into the worlds of languages, texts, poetry, geometry, travel, and genuine community

On May 7, 2022, QAIC and RSSA will host the "*Living Line, Living Legacy*" symposium at QAIC's headquarters and feature presentations from notable calligraphers and curators, including Mohamed Zakariya, Dr. Maryam Ekhtiar, curator for the Department of Islamic Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and author of "*How To Read Islamic Calligraphy*," Dr. Ashley Dimmig of the Walters Art Museum, and more.

To learn more about the "*Living Line, Living Legacy*" exhibition, the symposium, or the calligraphers featured in the exhibition, visit the QAIC exhibitions webpage at www.qataramerica.org/exhibitions/.



About Master Calligrapher Mohammed Zakariya

Mohammed Zakariya entered the world of Islamic penmanship in 1961. Growing up in in Los Angeles, California, he was inspired by the artists and the surrounding art. Working as a machinist in some of the little factories that dotted Southern California, Zakariya learned about the aesthetics and precision which he applies to his art today.

Zakariya was introduced to calligraphy for the first time in the window of an Armenian carpet store in Los Angeles. Since then, he travelled to Morocco and aquired a fascinationa and appreciation for Islam and Islamic calligraphy.

With an extensive and prolific career, Zakariya has studied under Turkish master calligrapher Hasan Celebi and received his diploma in 1988 at the Research Center of Islamic History, Art, and Culture in Istanbul, Turkey, making him the first American to acheive this feat.

To learn more about Zakariya's legacy, visit www.mohamedzakariya.org.

من الشيطان ومن موت الخطية يقول المؤمنون بالمسيح انه
لذكره التعظيم اتي لخلاصنا من الشيطان ومن موت الخطية ورفع
عنا اللعنه فتحملة ذلك ومصيره لعنه بدلنا كما قال اولوس
الاول والثاني والثالثه عشر. فالامانه التي يتلوها المؤمنون
الاول والثاني والثالثه عشر. فالامانه التي يتلوها المؤمنون
الاول والثاني والثالثه عشر. فالامانه التي يتلوها المؤمنون

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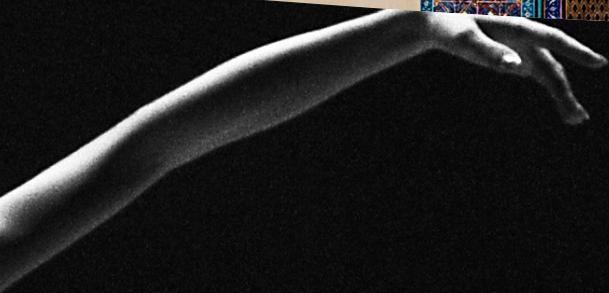
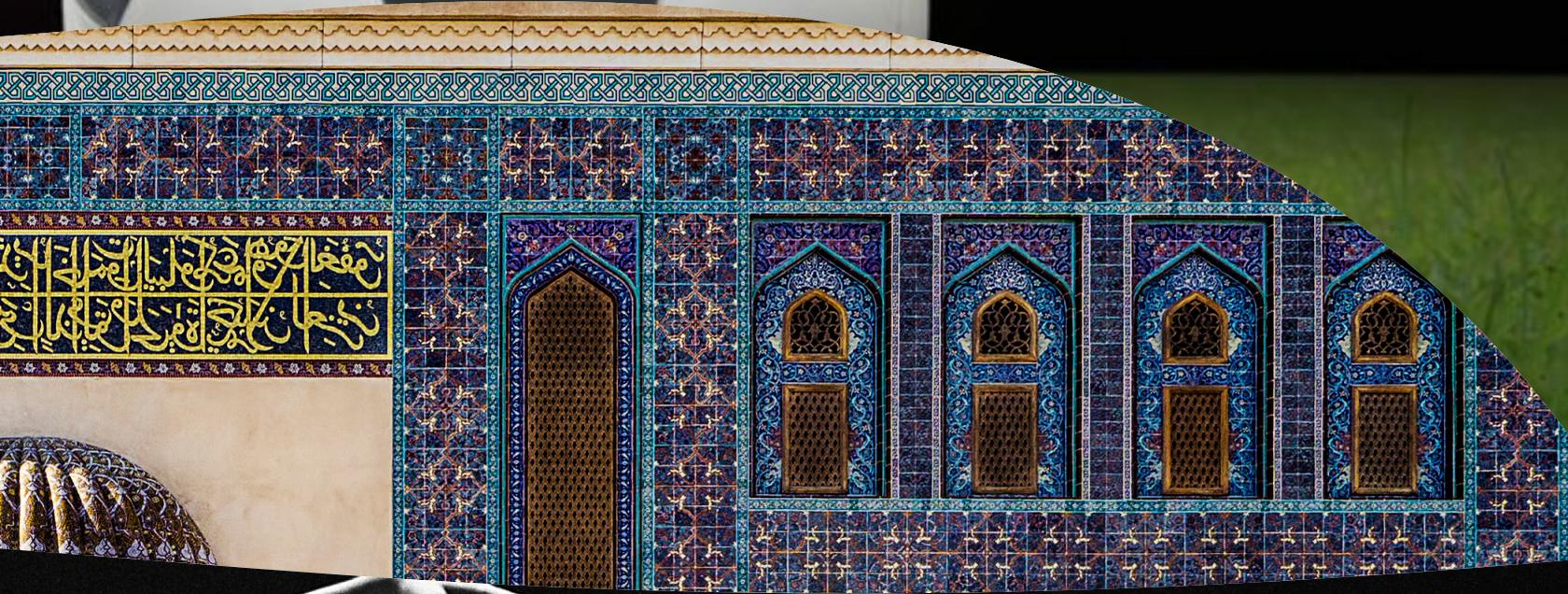
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للناس غذاة اولاً بالسنه الاولي كما يعندي الطفل بالاغذيه
للاغذيه التي بها يعندي الكاملين لان بني اسرائيل غلب عليهم عباده
الاصنام والفوا الاشياء المحسوسه والمدركه بالبصر والسمع واللمس
وهو يتكلم مكنه قودهم قوداً ارادياً الي الشريعة الاطيه بالقياسات



22



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Credit: "History of Bayâd and Riyâd" ("Hadîh Bayâd wa Riyâd"),
Maghrebi or Andalusian manuscript, 13th century

Arabic: The language of poetry

Since pre-Islamic times, Arabs were noted for producing prolific poetry. Their mastery of poetry is something that distinguishes them as a unique quality of their learning and the importance of the Arabic language. A vivid aspect of Arab culture, poetry is one of the most important facets that identify the Arabs as a distinct civilization. This literature depicts most clearly the history of Arabs by grasping the ideals and images of customs, traditions, and values.

BY YOUSRA KHALIL

For centuries, poetry has been an integral cultural component in the Muslim and Arab worlds. It is a highly regarded form of art and creativity, and its extensive use throughout history makes it one of the highest forms of Arab and Islamic cultural expression. Arabic itself is a linguistically intricate and eloquent language and is a significant identifier of what it means to be "Arab." Through the ages, Arabs have not only used poetry as a form of art used to creatively express emotions and thoughts, but also as a means to exude cultural pride.

Literally translated to "ode," the word for poem in Arabic is *qasida*, an ancient Arabic word and form of writing poetry. Some of the most famous *qasayed* (plural of *qasida*) are known as the seven *Mu'allaqat*, a group of seven long Arabic poems. *Al Mu'allaqat* means "The Suspended Odes" or "The Hanging Poems" because they were hung on display in the Kaaba in Mecca. Some scholars have also suggested that the hanging is figurative, as if the poems "hang" mentally for the reader as they ponder their meaning.

The traditional use of poetry as a form of communication and recorded history emerged in the 7th century. Poets composed these narratives and stories to be passed down through generations, and hence poetry evolved as the primary linguistic precedent to the Arabic text in the Qur'an. Arabic poetry reflects the depth and richness of the language itself as it is naturally poetic and eloquent in verse and flow. However, poetry became the language of the elite, an admirable art that was mastered by few to be enjoyed by many.

The Arabic language is integral to Arabs not only as a means of communication, but also as a sense of heritage and identity with Arabic considered the official language in each Arab League member state. In fact, the term for Quranic Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), *fusha*, literally means "the eloquent." Poetry has always been highly appreciated in the Arab world even before the arrival of Islam. Throughout Middle Eastern history, poets are often figures who

This Arab painting from between circa 1218 and circa 1219 AD is the frontispiece, or cover artwork, of a manuscript of *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Book of Songs) of Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani. It is considered to be a representation of Badr al-Din Lu'lu' as the name of Badr al-Din Lu'Lu' (بدر الدين لؤلؤ) is readable on the *tiraz* bands of the sleeves of the King.





CREDIT: NEAR EAST SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY IN BEIRUT, LEBANON

A 16th/17th-century Arabic manuscript containing the old Arabic poems known as Al-Mu'allaqāt along with some brief commentary (in red) on individual words. These pages show the end of the poem of Imru' al-Qays and the beginning of Labid's poem.

are celebrated for their linguistic abilities. For Arabs, poetry was not only an art form, but rather a source of identity, history, and knowledge. It was more than a means of entertainment, becoming a way of life and a reference tool for facts.

Many times, poems were used to highlight certain environmental, social, and religious elements. Topics such as horses, camels, and the Arabian desert are recurrent themes in Arab poetry, reflecting the importance of the natural world amongst Arab population. Different types of poetry are also distinguished through their themes and motifs. For instance, love poems are known as *ghazal*, satirical poetry is called *hija*, while elegies are referred to as *ritha*. During pre-Islamic times, themes such as wine and war had their own category, shedding light on what ideologies were important to the Arabs during certain periods and how they changed over time.

بينَ مَنْطوقٍ لم يقصدْ
و مقصودٍ لم ينطقْ
تضيعُ الكثيرُ منَ المحبةِ

Between what is said and not meant
And what is meant and not said
Most of love is lost.

A short poem by Gibran Khalil Gibran (commonly referred to as Kahlil Gibran), a Lebanese-American writer ("The Prophet"), poet and visual artist who carried on the tradition of Arabic poetry into the modern era.

تزوجتني

She Married Me

تزوجتني رغم أنف القبيلة
 وأسافرت معي رغم أنف القبيلة
 وأعطتني زينب وعمر رغم أنف القبيلة
 وعندما كنت أسألها: لماذا؟
 كانت تأخذني كالطفل إلى صدرها
 وتتميم: لأنك أنت قبيلتي.

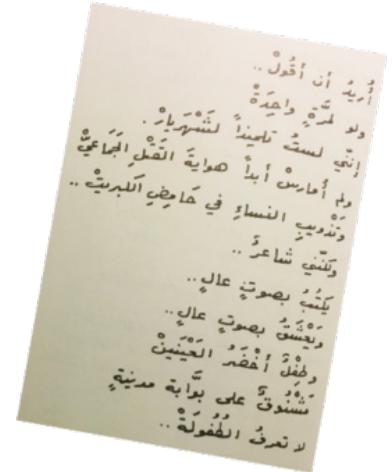
She married me in spite of the tribe
 And she traveled with me in spite of the tribe
 And she gave me Zeynab and Omar in spite of the tribe
 And when I used to ask her: why?
 She would take me like a child against her chest
 Because you are my tribe.

– نزار قباني

- Nizar Qabbani



Nizar Qabbani



السجن

Prison

قال ابن آدم:
 طوبى للعصافير في هذا القفص
 إنها، على الأقل،
 تعرفُ حدودَ سجنِها

The son of Adam Said:
 Blessed are the birds in their cages
 For they, at least, know the limits
 Of their prisons

– مرید البرغوثي

- Mourid Al Barghouti

A close-up photograph of a soccer ball on a green grass field. The ball is white with colorful patterns in blue, orange, and green. A barcode and some text are visible on the ball. In the background, a blurred stadium with tiered seating is visible under a bright sky.

A Sporting Effort

The Origins of Qatar National Sports Day

In December of 2011, Qatar National Sports Day was created. Presently, Qatar's National Sports Day acts as an important annual occasion (on the second Tuesday of every February) with the goal of engaging the local community in Qatar with sports activities and fostering the adoption of a healthy lifestyle.

BY KHALID MUBARAK, QAIC FELLOW



Ever since our humble beginnings as hunter-gatherers, mobility has always been an intrinsic part of being human. Movement and the need for mobility are visible all over the world, crossing cultural boundaries, shared by people. In Ancient Greece, this love for sports was highlighted in the Olympiads, an avid celebration of sports and movement, and in Feudal Japan, sumo wrestling matches were friendly competitions between clans. This love and celebration for sport have endured to this day, with each sport gaining massive followings and passionate lovers. When looking around the world, the State of Qatar has one of the largest celebrations of sport ever, and it comes during Qatar National Sports Day.

It is a massive celebration of sports and sportsmanship across the country, with an almost endless number of activities littered across the country's many sporting venues as well as a break for students and most employees as well. It is a reminder of the value and importance of sports. In 2011, by Emiri Decree No. 80, every second Tuesday of February would be declared as Qatar National Sports Day. According to Qatar's national e-Government website, Hukoomi, National Sports Day was established to "promote sports and to educate the local population on ways to reduce health risks associated with an inactive lifestyle, such as coronary heart disease and diabetes." National Sports Day is a paramount reminder about the importance of health and why it is so important for humanity. In Qatar, there is an alarming rate of obesity, as well as diabetes.

According to the World Obesity Federation, Qatar has a national obesity risk rating of 7.5 out of 10, making it dangerously high. It is even higher for childhood obesity with a whopping 8.5 out of 11. With the inclusion of sports and activity in your daily schedule, it may lessen the risk of you contracting dangerous illnesses like diabetes, heart disease, and more.

As well as being an incubator of sports and the love of sports, National Sports Day is a living, breathing reminder of a new, vibrant, sports culture in Qatar. For decades now, a brewing, budding sports culture has emerged. This new love of sports has blossomed into a wide array of sports that highlight Qatari culture too. For example, the Al Shaqab organization was founded in 1992 by HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir, as an organization built on protecting and preserving the ancient Arabian equestrian culture. Since then, it has stemmed into a flowering beacon of



CREDIT: QATAR MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

In addition to football (soccer), marathons, and other major sporting events, Qatar National Sports Day also offers smaller-scale activities like ping pong (table tennis) and foosball (table football).

sports that hosts the Longines Champions Tour, one of equestrian showjumping's most prestigious events. Another sport that has captivated Qatar and Qatari culture is falconry. An ancient hunting technique that nomadic Arabs relied on for their livelihood, the sport of falconry has grown into one of the most important aspects of Qatari culture. Its impact on the arts, architecture, even basic living has been tremendous. In fact, Qatar is one of the only countries in the world that has an entire veterinarian center dedicated solely to falcons located in Souq Waqif. Yet another example of its impact is the giant falcon hood building in Katara.

It would be naïve to discuss the topic of sports in Qatar without speaking of football (or soccer!). Qatar is truly one of the world's most football-crazed nations. A budding league, a powerful national team that has held the title of Asian champions more than once - these facts indicate strong local interest. And its importance was also exacerbated by the World Cup of 2022. This tournament has brought a great whirlwind of change

to Qatar. Infrastructure was expanded, stadiums built, and changes were observed in arts and culture too.

To conclude, we have only seen the beginning of the sports revolution in Qatar. Changes have been tremendous across society, and as we progress through the 21st century, we will see even more improvements in the field of sport. Golf, swimming, track and field, basketball - these are only a few of the many growing sports that were not mentioned and continue to grow in Qatar.



The Evolution of Qatar's Mosques

The many mosques of Qatar, both ancient and modern, symbolize the blending of local heritage despite their aesthetic differences, providing a unique insight into the continuous evolution of the Qatari architectural tradition.

BY SARA ALJABER, QAIC FELLOW

TOP PHOTO: THE KATARA MOSQUE, OR BLUE MOSQUE, LOCATED IN THE KATARA CULTURAL VILLAGE IN DOHA



CREDIT: WWW.AATHAAR.NET

Al Shoyoukh Mosque, which translated means "the mosque of the Sheikhs," is situated next to the Emiri Diwan in central Doha and offers daily prayer services to the public. It is considered to be the oldest operating mosque in Qatar since its construction in 1913 by Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani, the third ruler of the State of Qatar.

Over the past few decades, Qatar has been rapidly developing in all its aspects. One of those is its architecture. The evolution of Qatari architectural tradition is evident in mosques. They are not only sacred places of worship and spiritual rituals, for they also serve as public institutions where Muslims are educated, practice affairs of their lives, and settle disputes. Mosques are a visual representation of the vision of the cosmic Islamic faith, so their design is important as it symbolizes and expresses the identity and traditions of the local Muslim community. Older mosques in Qatar, like the Al Shoyoukh Mosque, portray a more traditional architectural design while newer mosques, like the Education City Mosque, encompass both Qatari traditions and modernistic features. By looking at both of these examples of mosques in Qatar, we can see how the rapidly advancing architectural styles in Qatar and the efforts to preserve local tradition can even be reflected in some of the most sacred sites in the country.

The architecture of a mosque varies from country to country. Islamic laws or principles do not determine the architecture of the sacred building; the only requirement is that there is enough space for worshippers to stand and bow in rows behind an imam, the person leading the prayer. The architecture of a mosque is rather mandated by the regional traditions at the time and its location. Therefore, as Qatar develops and becomes more innovative, so do the mosques' shapes and designs while still adhering to aspects of Qatari tradition.

Al Shoyoukh Mosque

Al Shoyoukh Mosque, which translates to "the mosque of the Sheikhs," is located in the Emiri Diwan area of Doha, close to Souq Waqif and the Corniche. It is considered to be one of the oldest operating mosques and the most ancient built in the State of Qatar. Constructed by Sheikh Abdullah Bin Jassim Al Thani in 1913 as part of the Emir's Diwan, or governing center, the mosque was originally built from basic building materials such as mud, stone, and wood. During

this time, it featured wooden windows and a minaret that was not very high in comparison to average mosques at the time.

In 1959, the Qatari government rebuilt the mosque into its current appearance while preserving its unique architectural style evoking its traditional Islamic pride. In its grand dome hangs a crystal chandelier originally destined for a mosque in Germany, which at the time of its installation was regarded as the largest chandelier in the world. The mosque also features a single green octagonal minaret (representing peace in Islam) built from three tall segments with the highest peak erected upon eight columns. This advanced model of minaret is seen with more current minarets in Qatar and most other Arab and Islamic nations.

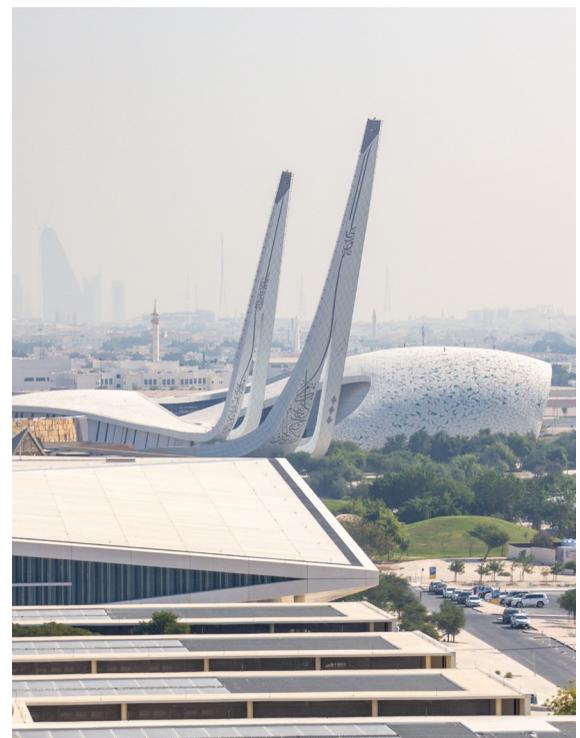
In addition, the mosque was enlarged to include a short open courtyard and a qibla shade. Its prayer hall is covered with a group of domes in the middle of a large dome erected in the space preceding the *mihrab* and the *minbar*. This unique architectural style was attributed to the great Ottoman mosques, such as the Sinan Pasha Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey and the Muhammad Ali Mosque in the Citadel of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi in Cairo, Egypt. Similarly, it was and still is used to hold Islamic lectures and religious sermons derived from the Holy Qur'an, Friday sermons, Qur'an memorization, and of course, daily prayers.

Education City Mosque

In stark contrast to the Al Shoyoukh Mosque, the Education City Mosque features highly modern architecture while combining traditional Islamic art and references into its futuristic design. Opened in 2015 after three years of construction, the Education City Mosque is one of the main features of the Minaretein center, a facility belonging to the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies (QFIS) that is located within Education City, a large complex of universities, schools, and educational facilities founded and operated by the Qatar Foundation. Designed by the Iraqi calligrapher and architect Taha Al-Hiti, the mosque seamlessly blends modern abstract architecture with religious Islamic traditions. Able to hold approximately 1,800



A photograph of the original Al Shoyoukh Mosque structure in 1946 as part of the Emiri Diwan complex before its renovation in 1959 (Credit: Al Sharq newspaper, 13 June 2017)



The Education City Mosque/Minaretein center as seen from the Qatar Foundation headquarters in Education City outside of central Doha.



worshippers inside the halls and another 1,000 in the courtyard, the mosque serves as a community space for people of all backgrounds. The institution itself is based on a “*kulliyya*,” or a place where knowledge is sought according to Islamic tradition, which represents that knowledge and faith are two concepts that intertwine; however, all knowledge is a result of faith. Therefore, in addition to prayers, the mosque offers a variety of activities for people to participate in, for example, Arabic calligraphy classes and other opportunities for lifelong learning.

As suggested in the Qur'an, knowledge is essential for attaining enlightenment: *“Read! In the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created man out of a [mere] clot of congealed blood: Read! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful, He Who taught [the use of] the pen, taught man that which he knew not.”* (The Holy Qur'an: Al-Alaq). This idea is visualized through the spiral building plan and its many routes that connect QFIS to the mosque. As stated by Sulaiman Bah, the Community Engagement and Outreach Coordinator for the Education City Mosque: “If you look at Islamic history, you will see there are so many other places where you have a combination of the ‘*madrassa system*,’ where the mosque serves as a space for learning as well [as worship].”

The mosque is supported by five columns symbolizing the five pillars of Islam: *Shahada* (profession of faith), *Salah* (prayer), *Zakat* (giving alms), *Sawm* (fasting), and *Hajj* (pilgrimage). Each pole is inscribed with Arabic calligraphy in the form of a verse from the Holy Qur'an. “The idea is to enable people to associate modernity with these verses and the architecture, to understand that this is a contemporary building, but it has at its heart a message which is at the heart of Islamic tradition,” said Ali Mangera, director and co-founder of Mangera Yvars Architects (MYAA), the firm that produced the award-winning design of the Islamic center. As the calligraphy extends vertically upwards, so do the viewer's eyes to the sky. This is a contemplation of faith and meaning, as the sky, known as the seven skies in Islam, is associated with heaven.



CREDIT: CEDRIC CRAIG

Left image: the two minarets of the Education City Mosque as seen at ground level from the Qatar National Library within the Education City complex. Right image: detail of the calligraphy that is inscribed on the minarets. The left inscription reads: "Thus We have appointed you a middle nation" (Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 143). The right inscription reads: "And think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth" (Surah Al-Imran, Verse 191). According to the Minaretein center, the calligraphy artist "used the "ladder" format of calligraphic writing to emphasize the minarets' architecture. The decision to use an ascending vertical shape, for a language that is written in a horizontal format, was made to allow the public to read the calligraphy as they gaze upon the 80-meters-high minaret."

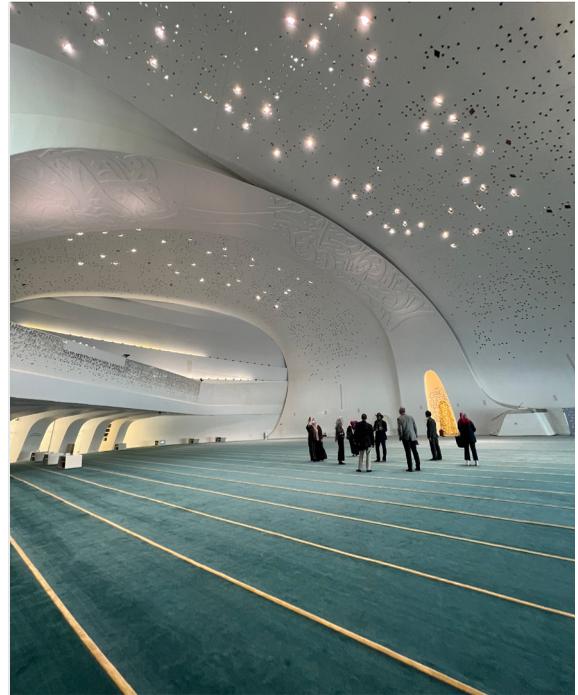
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This concept is also reflected in the unique design of the building as its structure, originating from a larger mass on one end, sweeps across the ground and aims itself towards the sky with the help of two 90-meter-high minarets. Traditionally, minarets serve as a compass, pointing towards Mecca and the sacred Kaaba, which Muslims face during prayer (*qibla*). While these minarets are uniform in function, they are however unique in shape, diverging from the aesthetic and structural norms of traditional lighthouse-style minarets. Instead, the two minarets have been designed as ribbons that “envelop” the building, with one end of the ribbon symbolizing knowledge and the other symbolizing light in Islam. The “ribbons” are designed to intersect at numerous spots, forming shared areas such as courtyards and gardens for guests to relax in and meditate.

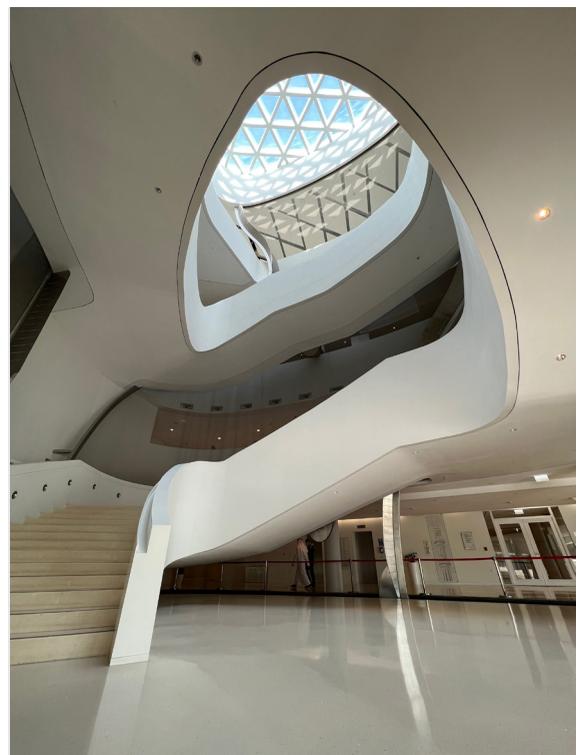
Visitors to the mosque will encounter four streams of water flowing in the exterior and interior spaces supplied by the gardens, each stream representing one of the four rivers of heaven – wine, milk, honey, and water – awaiting Muslims in paradise as cited in the Qur’an. The mosque grounds also house an outdoor Quranic Garden, containing numerous plants mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, like olive trees. The purpose of the garden is to emphasize harmony, as well as conserving and preserving plant diversity throughout the natural world. The garden is one of many beautiful details that prove that the Education City Mosque was designed in a way that connects Islamic heritage with modernity, acting as a beacon of hope for positive change.

Conclusion

In general, a mosque, or *masjid* in Arabic, is a building where all Muslim worshippers pray the five daily prayers. However, by comparing Al Shoyoukh Mosque and the Education City Mosque, it is evident that mosques are much more than just places for prayer. They act as a central point that ties members of a local Muslim community together, helping them to grow spiritually through their engagement with lectures, community affairs, and other opportunities for them to connect with their faith. Despite Islamic tradition encouraging modesty in mosque architecture and interior



The main prayer hall that can host up to 1,800 worshippers at a time.



A spiral staircase at the main entrance of the Minaretein center reinforces the ribbon-like fluidity in the overall design of the structure, both externally and internally.



The glass windows separating the interior of the Minartein center from its courtyard Quranic Garden are adorned with flowing calligraphy script citing sacred Islamic scripture.

/// The mosques of Qatar provide insight on how the next generation of modern mosques can successfully retain their connection to Islamic heritage and their purpose as a place for prayer and community.



One of the notable details of the Education City Mosque's prayer hall is its golden qibla (right). A qibla is a prominent and important feature of every mosque around the world as it serves to orient worshippers during prayer in the direction of the Kaaba, the building at the center of the most sacred mosque in Islam located at Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

CREDIT: CEDRIC CRAIG





design, they remain remarkable venues that reinforce the concept that there's "beauty in simplicity."

Regardless of each mosque's unique aesthetic and architecture, the various mosques found throughout Qatar are representative of how these structures evolved over time in design and style largely in response to the period they were built in. Inspired by the traditional Ottoman mosques, the Al Shoyoukh Mosque incorporates more of a traditional horizontal design and features a single minaret. With the Education City Mosque being built nearly six decades following the renovation of the Al Shoyoukh Mosque, its designers were able to take advantage of modern architectural practices and building materials available at this time, therefore allowing the structure to occupy more vertical space and offer its signature "ribbon" design.

While this added architectural freedom gave the Education City Mosque the ability to adopt a design based on Islamic symbols such as knowledge, light, and the five pillars of Islam, these are core elements that make up the foundation of every mosque found across Qatar and the world. We can expect that the architectural tradition of mosques in Qatar (and the Arabic and Islamic worlds in general) will continue to evolve steadily over time as new advancements in architecture and design are introduced. However, no matter how unconventional these future structures may seem, the mosques of Qatar provide insight on how the next generation of modern mosques can successfully retain their connection to Islamic heritage and their purpose as a place for prayer and community.

Once the largest mosque in Qatar, the Al Fanar Mosque is still one of the most widely-known landmarks throughout Doha with its unique spiral minaret. While still functioning as a mosque, the center also offers educational and social activities to both locals and visitors in addition to its standard religious offerings.

CREDIT: CEDRIC CRAIG



CREDIT: CEDRIC CRAIG

View of the main entrance and minaret of the Msheireb Mosque located within the Msheireb Downtown Doha development. Designed by architecture firm John McAslan + Partners, the design of the Msheireb Mosque "fuses Modernist ideas with an historically familiar arrangement of Islamic volumes, spaces and thresholds" (Mosqpedia.org).



Behind the Movement

An interview with Dana Tai Soon Burgess

The QAIC team recently had the pleasure of chatting with Dana Tai Soon Burgess, founder of the Dana Tai Soon Burgess Dance Company in Washington, DC, to learn more about the origins of contemporary dance, his journey of becoming the first choreographer-in-residence within a Smithsonian institution, and how dance and other performing arts can be used to increase connection among diasporic communities and to foster understanding between cultures.

What first inspired you to take an interest in dance and to pursue it professionally? Upon beginning your career as a dancer, how has your own culturally-diverse upbringing influenced your art?

My parents were both visual artists and I grew up in Santa Fe, New Mexico, which has a large artist community, so I was always surrounded by the creative process and conversations about art making. But I was a mover as a child, much more than I was a visual artist. I didn't have a visual arts inclination like my parents and brother did. So my parents enrolled me in a karate academy when I was 8, and I did competitive martial arts until I was sixteen. And right around when I was sixteen, my dad suggested I go with a friend of mine to take a dance class. I did and as soon as I took that class, I thought, *"oh, this is the intersection of movement and art that I had been looking for. This is really it, this is my artistic route."*

I ended up going to the University of New Mexico and received a dance scholarship. I started to pursue dance professionally and auditioned and danced for Tim Wengerd's company (he was a former Graham soloist) and then I went on to work with other dance companies on the east coast of the United States. I then went to school for a Master of Fine Arts in Dance and started my own company. That was three decades ago - this is my company's 30th anniversary season - essentially, I grew a modern dance company that ended up being the premier one in Washington, DC, and I created a repertory which is steeped in exploring diverse American

CREDIT: MARY NOBLE OURS



// And what I learned when I was a child was that communication really, perhaps at its most fundamental level, is movement; everyone moves, everyone dances all around the globe. //

stories and how to express those through movement. This aesthetic pursuit led to me to specialize in working with museums and interpreting portraiture and art.

In terms of how my background influences my art, I'm Korean-American, fourth generation. I grew up in a Latino community in Santa Fe, attended bilingual schools in Spanish and English, and my best friend was Diné, or Navajo – he was culturally indigenous. And so, I was surrounded by diverse perspectives. And what I learned when I was a child was that communication really, perhaps at its most fundamental level, is movement; everyone moves, everyone dances all around the globe.

We fundamentally understand the posturing of someone who's sad or depressed, or someone who's elated, jumping up and down for joy. So, I realized early on that if I was able to create dances that they would communicate across a broad spectrum of socio-economic, socio-political, and varying cultural perspectives and assumed barriers. Dance could be a bridge between all these things for people to understand one another.

Many American communities identify with cultures and traditions that originated outside of the United States. Looking back at this country's history, how has dance as a medium allowed these communities to reconnect with their distant heritage? How do today's communities require a deeper understanding of culture – their own or others' – through the lens of dance and performance?

I think that modern dance, in particular, has the capacity to engage with lots of different cultural perspectives and traditions. Movements from culturally specific dances make their way into the modern dance vernacular. Cultures have a way of being represented through modern dance, which is unlike, for example, ballet, which comes out of a very different hierarchical European tradition. Cultures connect through movement because dances have universal usages such as to help communities define their relationship to the environment, help them restore and remember their histories, mark important moments in a community such as a wedding or the birth of a child, and even to connect to divinity.

America, with its diverse population that includes indigenous peoples, has individuals with histories of forced immigration such as slavery, asylum seekers, lots of different reasons for waves of immigration; all these different identities and stories can be represented through movements which are related to their mother cultures.

You say that your work focuses on the “hyphenated person” and the idea of “cultural confluence.” Can you elaborate more on these concepts and how they are translated into dance?

American history is complicated, because we have so many different cultural communities, so many stories. An individual that might be part of, for example, the Asian diaspora, soon becomes Asian-American. And so, the question is: what is Asian-American? What is that hyphenated place in the middle of these two identities? That is, the bridge between Asian culture and American culture? I think that we see this quandary across the board; we have identities that are Latino-American, African-American, Arab-American and all of these varying perspectives are expressing themselves within their communities and also within a larger American identity. So that's what I mean by the “hyphenated person.” It's complicated, because we're Americans and yet many of us have distinct mother cultures that we're very proud of as well. We carry remnants of those cultures that have become part of our American traditions today.

As a former cultural ambassador at the U.S. Department of State for more than two decades, how has that helped the U.S. in achieving cultural dialogue and understanding?

I believe at the heart of diplomacy is friendship. When people ask me “what is cultural diplomacy,” I always say that it is fundamentally creating friends and creating trust. And what better way to do that than to share art making and to share one's innermost thoughts, stories, and cultural perspective through the medium of dance? The arts are a non-combative arena in which to have a dialogue that helps us understand one another on a visceral kinesthetic level that doesn't get confused or convoluted by the nuances of verbal or written language. We just fundamentally dialogue, and that fundamental sharing is what creates a true friendship. Through these friendships we can grow more opportunities for conversation through the arts.

An initial project that I did in Peru years ago led to six tours of my company there. I also completed two Fulbright's in Lima, brought the National Ballet of Peru to the Kennedy Center, and my company continues to go back and forth in teaching residencies. So, we

Dana Tai Soon Burgess is a leading American choreographer, dancer, and cultural figure known worldwide as the “Diplomat of Dance.” In 1992, he founded the Dana Tai Soon Burgess Dance Company (DTSBDC.org), a preeminent modern dance company based in Washington, DC.

As the Company's Artistic Director, his work explores the idea of cultural “confluence” with many of his dances focusing on the “hyphenated person” – someone who is of mixed ethnic or cultural heritage – and the emotions of belonging and societal acceptance.

He has served as a Cultural Ambassador for the U.S. State Department for over two decades, an appointment he uses to promote international cultural dialogue through “the global language of dance.” He has been awarded and completed two Fulbright Senior scholarships for dance.

Since 2016, Burgess has been the Smithsonian Institution's first-ever Choreographer-in-Residence. In this role, he creates new works inspired by museum exhibitions and participates in public discussions about dance and art.



CREDIT: SUERAYA SHAHEEN

have this amazing relationship and connection to the Peruvian arts community because of one initial arts diplomacy project that the State Department sent me on in the early 2000s.

We often see different aspects of culture and art used in an effort to promote peace. How can dance be used as a platform for peacebuilding? And are there any global or local initiatives that you wish dance were more incorporated in to reinforce these efforts?

One important part of diplomacy is an ongoing commitment to engagement. It can't just be a one-off project, it has to be, "*OK, we've done this project, what can we do next? How can we build our friendship? How can we have another cultural exchange, another tour? How can we engage in teaching residencies, in social media, in a video projects?*" It really is about continuing to communicate with one another through art making and through art presentations.

I can talk about the early beginnings of modern dance. Modern dance began at the turn of the last century through the efforts of early dance pioneers such as Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, and Martha Graham. These individuals looked towards the Middle East, towards North Africa, the Mediterranean, South Asia, and even the Far East for inspiration. They were studying the forms and images of antiquity, not always in a [deep] way, because research is different now and communication and travel accessibility is greater than it was back then.

But there was an interest in cultures of the East, and this is completely reflected in the beginnings of modern dance, very specifically, within those three pioneers of modern dance. Isadora Duncan was fascinated by Egypt and Greece, and Ruth St. Denis by the Middle East, the Far East and South Asia. And Martha Graham went through a period where she was very interested in Greek mythology, as well as South Asian and Southeast Asian imagery and philosophies. Now we might look at this fascination with the East as an extension of "Orientalism." It had varying degrees of appropriation,

// So, finding [your] individual voice is very important, and a lot of finding your voice has to do with celebrating what your cultural background is, how you grew up, and where you grew up. All those things make up that voice. //

So, for me, that's really the most important thing, and there is a plethora of different ways that that can occur. It can happen through the support of embassies abroad, it can happen through State Department funding, and through the Fulbright. There are many exchange programs that exist. So, I think making sure that all of those efforts continue to include dance is very important.

How are traditional dance styles that originated in the Middle East and North Africa region similar or different to those prevalently found in Western culture, or even more specifically, here in the United States?

but we have to also look at their work in the context of a very different time period where the conversation, cultural norms, and even the scholarship was different than today.

So, at the roots of modern dance are the great cultures of the East. And if we look at other dance forms today in the Americas, for instance, salsa, merengue, and cumbia, there are rhythms and steps that are a combination of indigenous, Spanish, and West African influences. And those West African rhythms which were brought through forced slavery, moved through the Americas to the Caribbean, to Latin America, and were dispersed south and north. These same rhythms and dances that originated in West Africa also evolved in America becoming jazz, hip hop, and tap.

CREDIT: JEFF WATTS



Have you ever incorporated any Middle Eastern Dance elements into your own routines? If so, how have they complemented these contemporary dance performances?

For me, I have several pieces in repertory that are responses to residencies I did in Pakistan up by the Afghan border and in Egypt. One work in particular is titled “Khaybet,” which means “the shadow.” It is very much an ode to women who live under the veil. It is a dance that we have performed for 20 years now, we even performed it in Jordan near the Syrian border a few years ago where it received a beautiful audience response.

What's interesting about the traditional dances, for example, of the Gulf states region and dances of the Middle East, is that there is a relationship between the dances. These are tribal dances that define community identity and speak to a relationship to the land. There are also warrior dances that helps us understand the history of the region and interrelationship of various tribes. It would be great to have a conference on these dances and to have representations of all of them in order to discuss how they're viewed within their specific communities, as well as outside their communities.

As a creative, what motivates you to keep moving forward with your art? Is there any advice that you can share with aspiring dancers or other creatives who want to make an impact in their respective industry?

For me, I always felt a calling to be a choreographer. Even before I knew what dance was, I was a mover. I was always trying to express myself through movement. So, what inspires me to do the next project is that I'm inquisitive in general. When I find out about a new story, or a specific historic reference, then I want to research them, and these become dances. I think that it's this combination between being interested in the world and being a mover that keeps me going.

As for a young, aspiring dancer, choreographer, or creative, what I would suggest is to follow your own voice, meaning don't try and copy someone else's dances or do what everyone else is doing. Instead, as quickly as possible, find what your inner voice is, what makes you unique, and stick to that. Because, if you think about those choreographers or dancers who have made it in the field, are all unique in vision. Not one is a choreographic clone, no one remembers copy-cat work. People remember a choreographer's

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work because of the unique perspective they bring to their dances. So, finding that individual voice is very important, and a lot of finding your voice has to do with celebrating what your cultural background is, how you grew up, and where you grew up. All those things make up that voice.

Can you share with us any exciting plans you have in the works?

I have two new dances that will be going up this year. One is on May 17, 18, and 19 at the National Portrait Gallery, and it's called "El Muro/The Wall." It's an ode to asylum seekers and issues of immigration, assimilation, and acculturation happening at our southern border. The work is abstractly about how an individual finds a place of safety to call home in America. It will have live music by Martín Zarzar and his band (he was the percussionist for Pink Martini for years before having his own band). So, the music will also celebrate the different cultures from Latin and South America.

The other work is a tribute to Maya Lin, a dance that goes up in November. It will be much more architectural in the way that the dancers move their bodies, in terms of the relationship of their bodies to space, to being linear, to being curvilinear, because Maya Lin's is very architectural in the way she sees the world.

And then I have two books that are out in September. One is a memoir published by the University New Mexico Press entitled "Chino and the Dance of the Butterfly." It's about growing up in Santa Fe, and my journey to become a choreographer, specifically one who works with museums. The other book is a textbook published by Routledge - I'm the editor and one of the contributors - it's titled "Milestones in Dance History."

What is your process for creating a unique type of experience before presenting it to audiences? What factors go into planning these experiences?

As to what my creative process is, it varies from project to project. But I always start with researching my subject matter, because I think that a choreographer must be informed about their subject matter. When I'm working at the Portrait Gallery, I speak with historians and curators, sometimes I'll talk to artists, and even the sitter of a portrait. Then research the social context of the era that the artwork was made in. So, for instance,



Dancers from the Dana Tai Soon Burgess Dance Company

PHOTO CREDIT: MARY NOBLE OURS

for "El Muro/The Wall," is based on contemporary portraiture, so I've been speaking with the International Rescue Committee [to learn] more about asylum seekers and immigrants and what's going on at the southern border.

[After] informing myself, I take all that information into the studio and start to craft short movement studies that become the movement vocabulary for the choreography and then I build the choreography from there. I make sure that the choreography is also informed by the musical choice that I make so that it's flowing well with the music. That's pretty much the process that I go through, but it'll be slightly different every single time.

With such a long spanning career and having performed in so many places around the world, is there a moment that you felt truly defined you as an artist? Do you have a favorite location to perform at or a favorite dance style that you like to perform?

I love modern dance, that's my favorite form. But I respect all different dance forms because they are all interrelated. They are all forms of human communication.

Some of my favorite places to perform have been interestingly in South America and in Latin America. I think part of that has to do with where I grew up, that South America's development often feels comfortable because of its shared timeline to Santa Fe. In reality, there's this issue of feeling comfortable in a place where there has been conflict. Santa Fe was built out of conflict, and so were many of the cities in Latin and South America, but this conflict has left the vestiges of a very interesting cultural blend. There is a certain amount of cultural confusion when you have a conflict of that nature, and that cultural confusion brings up many creative questions for me.

I really love going to and performing in Peru. What's interesting to me about Peru is that there's this large Asian population that has a very long history there. It's a country that had a president who was Japanese in cultural background. And that's really unusual too, so I find that country fascinating because it has all the different pieces that define me.

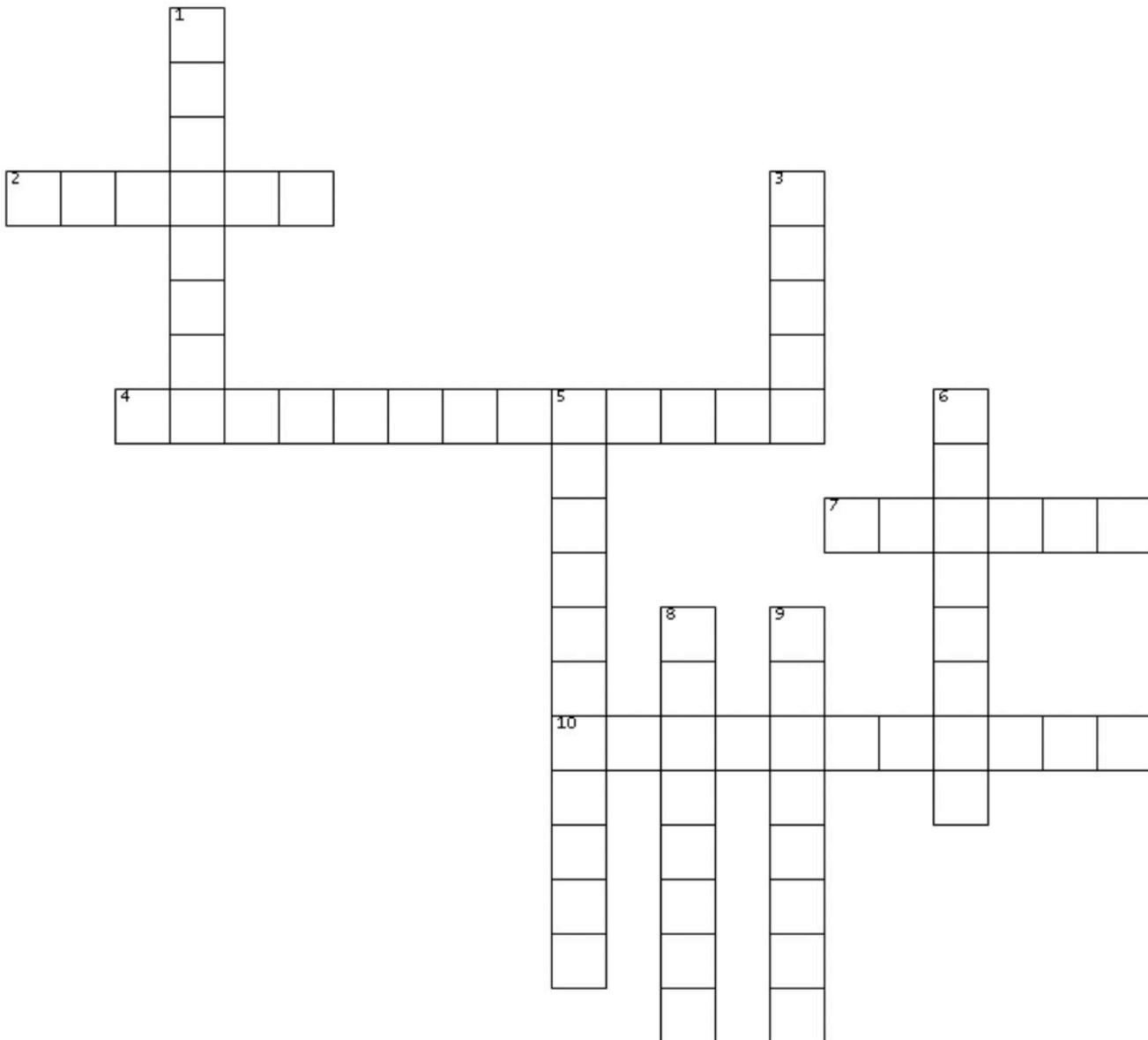
Was there this kind of special moment that I felt defined me as an artist? I did a collaboration in the 90s, which was between myself, lighting designer Jennifer Tipton (who has done the lighting for Paul Taylor and Jerome Robbins and Robert Wilson), and John Dreyfus, who is a sculptor here in Washington, DC, and essentially, we created these dances with very interesting sensate light and form. And [this collaboration] was a large part of what set me on my artistic journey and helped me really understand that my direction and career would be working with visual arts, whether it was portraiture, whether it's the plastique, but whatever it was, it was going to be this visual arts and dance connection.

// There's this issue of feeling comfortable in a place where there has been conflict. [...] but this conflict has left the vestiges of a very interesting cultural blend. There is a certain amount of cultural confusion when you have a conflict of that nature, and that cultural confusion brings up many creative questions for me. //

Keeping up with QAIC

Have you been keeping up with all of QAIC's artistic and cultural features? Test your knowledge with our crossword puzzle and find out how much you've been keeping up with QAIC.

Stumped? Follow us on social media [@QatarAmerica](#) for hints.



ANSWER KEY
1. Zalabiya 2. Katara 3. Dance 4. Marchitecture 5. Calligraphy 6. Football 7. Sports 8. Pioneers 9. Sheraton 10. Rhode Island

Across

2. The *"Women of the Pandemic"* exhibition held its closing reception in Qatar's cultural village, named this

4. Established in 2018, this Qatar Museums initiative is dedicated to Qatar's architecture and urban design

7. In 2022, Generation Amazing became an independent foundation dedicated solely to social development and this

10. QAIC's headquarters was previously owned by American socialite Mrs. Elizabeth H.G. Slater of this U.S. state (hint: it's the smallest state)

Down

1. To celebrate Al Naflah, QAIC hosted an open house serving this sweet popular throughout the Middle East and South Asia

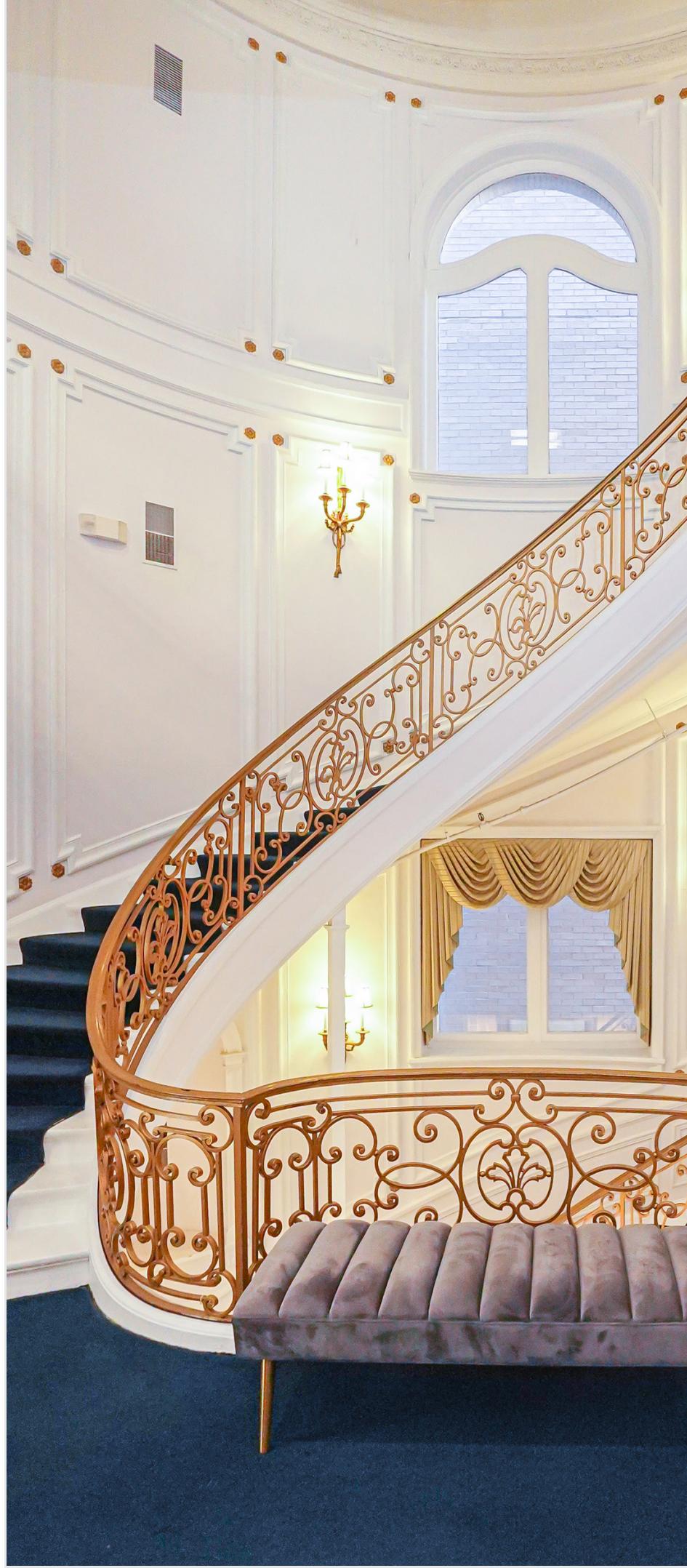
3. Dana Tai Soon Burgess is a cultural ambassador with a studio in Washington, DC showcasing this type of art

5. QAIC's newest exhibition in partnership with the Reed Society of Sacred Arts, *"Living Line, Living Legacy"* focuses on this type of art

6. A major sporting event hosted in Qatar and the Middle East for the first time highlights this "beautiful game"

8. QAIC's second installment of this exhibition, "Ruwad," hosted in Washington, DC in partnership with al markhiya gallery means this in Arabic

9. Completed in 1982, this iconic hotel has become an architectural symbol in Doha's skyline and urban identity and continues its hospitality to this day



Color Me QAIC

Eid Mubarak!

Eid al-Fitr is celebrated by Muslims at the end of the holy month of Ramadan after weeks of fasting, prayer, and giving alms. Eid al-Fitr, commonly shortened to "Eid," usually lasts the first few days of Shawwal, the 10th month in the Islamic calendar. During Eid, many participate in official receptions and private visits, friends greet one another, give out presents, wear new clothes, and visit the graves of relatives. "Eid Mubarak," or عيد مبارك in Arabic, means "blessed feast/festival" and is commonly used as a greeting during this time.



Thanks To


ConocoPhillips

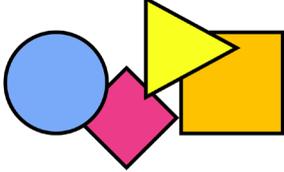


THE EMBASSY OF THE
STATE OF QATAR IN
THE UNITED STATES


مؤسسة قطر
Qatar Foundation

كتارا
katarra


جاليري المرخية | al markhiya
gallery


متاحف قطر
QATAR MUSEUMS

مؤسسة الدوحة لأفلام
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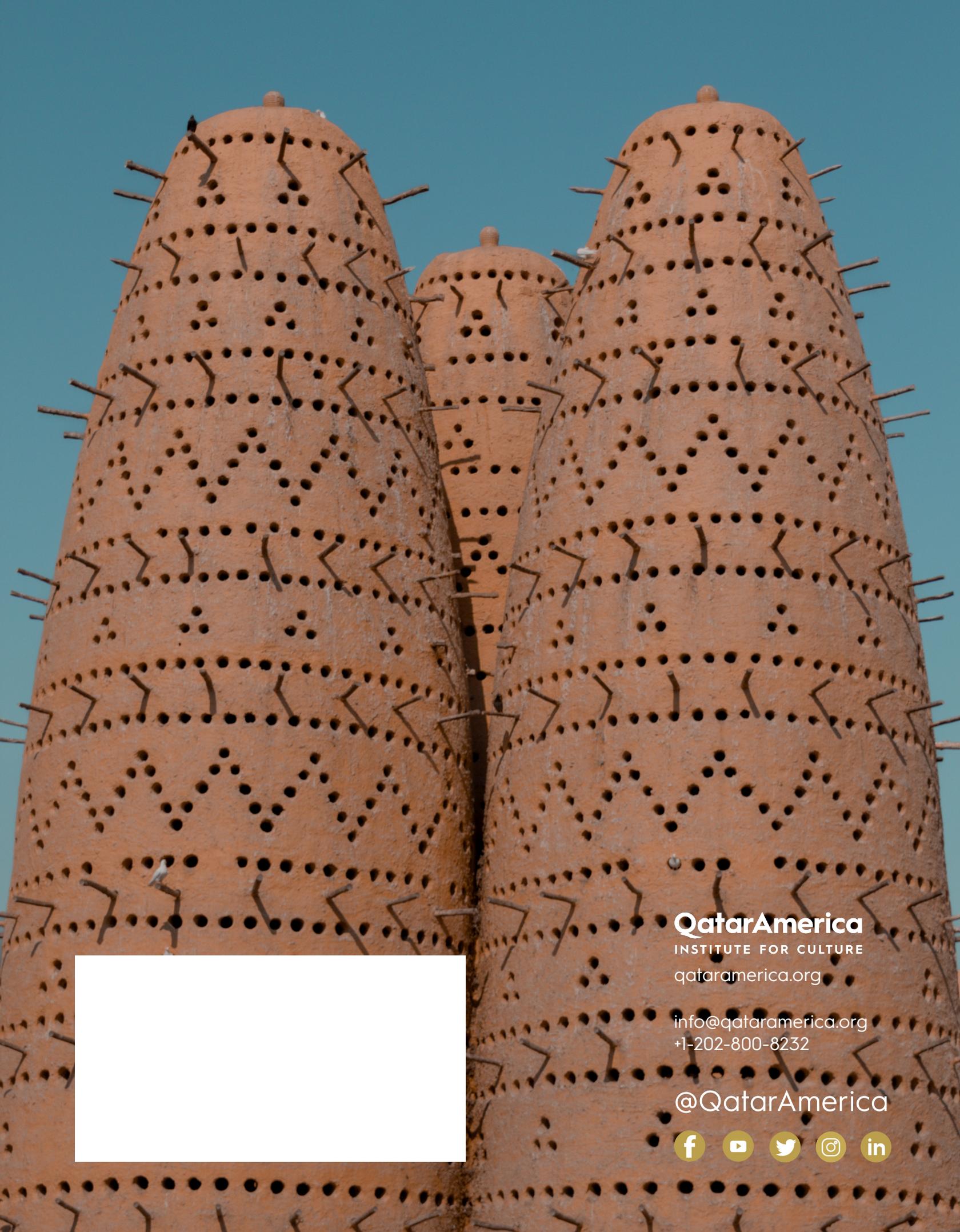
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Interested in taking your support of the Qatar America Institute of Culture further? If so, you can do this in two ways: supporting QAIC's mission and programming as an official sponsor, or joining QAIC's membership community to enhance your art and culture journey.

As a member, you become part of the extended QAIC family. With an annual membership, you will receive more exclusive experiences during some of QAIC's programs. These offerings include access to exclusive engagements with featured guests, intimate receptions with visiting artists, and other benefits – both tangible and intangible, to better serve you as a platform for cultural and creative enrichment. QAIC members are an extension of us; therefore, it is with this network of passionate individuals that we can further advance our mission of connecting creatives, convening communities, and celebrating cultures, locally and beyond. For more information, visit www.qataramerica.org/membership.

As a sponsor, your support will directly sustain and expand the programming that QAIC has to offer to its audiences in the United States, in Qatar, and around the world. Sponsors also receive unique benefits as part of their contribution, like exclusive access to QAIC events, brand exposure, and more. For more information, visit www.qataramerica.org/support-QAIC.

Lastly, your contributions and continued support will allow QAIC to remain a viable platform and partner for creatives and artists. Through QAIC's programming, artists and creatives are highlighted, which helps further their own success and cultivate peace among various peoples from around the world.



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