

National Museum of Qatar
Press kit

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Introduction

Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums

Qatar is an ancient land, rich in the traditions of life in the desert and by the sea. It is also a country whose modern history has been defined by oil, with all the dramatic change that its discovery brought.

Today, as we enter a new era, Qatar's trajectory onto the contemporary world stage has been just as rapid. Already we are in the vanguard of technological advance and are preparing, through the ambitious 2030 Qatar National Vision, an outward-facing, creative and sustainable future for all our people.

But a future must grow out of an understood and integrated past. So, as we move forward, we are focusing strongly on culture, in diverse forms. We are delving into our Arab heritage while also exploring the arts as they are evolving today, both within Qatar and far beyond.

In particular, we are encouraging our own young artists, many of whom are women. They are drawing on the unique perspective that their place in the global village allows them. At the same time they are looking to connect, ever more strongly, with their peers across the world, and in this we are supporting them.

Culture connects people, and through international festivals, our new museums and an array of programmes for exploration and exchange, the arts in Qatar are both growing organically from within, and reaching out across the seas. The National Museum of Qatar supports our ambition to celebrate the local in the global, the global in the local, and all our shared humanity.

Welcome to the Museum

Sheikha Amna bint Abdulaziz bin Jassim Al Thani, Director of the National Museum of Qatar

A visit to the National Museum of Qatar is an all-encompassing journey, carrying you from millions of years ago to the edge of tomorrow. The journey sweeps you across the inland desert, and plunges you into the depths of the sea. It embeds you among nomadic poets and artisans, and ushers you into today's gleaming towers and bustling refineries. Music, storytelling, commissioned artworks, ancient artifacts, rare and precious objects, and dazzling, monumental films are all part of the experience, which combines wide-ranging scholarship with the authentic faces and voices of the people of Qatar—the true source and inspiration for this museum.

Just as the museum itself is a journey, so too was the process that led to its creation.

Qatar Museums and the National Museum team felt strongly that we wanted to create a living experience for our people—a museum with a heart. That meant, first of all, that our galleries should be full of movement, sound, colour, and a sense of discovery. We believed we had the potential to go beyond even the most exciting existing museum displays and develop something truly immersive. And we believed the substance of those experiences ought to come from the Qatari people themselves. So we began a decade of planning and organizing.

To develop our ideas about the form that our exhibitions might take, we visited institutions throughout the world, surveying the most advanced, engaging displays of history, natural history, and art. To develop the content of NMoQ, we began to organize meetings with the public, inviting Qataris to share whatever stories and materials they might care to offer. We asked them to tell us what they most wanted to see and hear in NMoQ. We held more than a dozen of these meetings, which were attended by more than 400 people. Out of them came a richness of information—of life—that became the essence of NMoQ.

Our next step was to distill this essence into themes that would run through the museum. We imagined the special combination of space, sights, sounds, and materials that would carry our visitors along—including the artworks and films we could commission to help tell our story.

At the same time, we were gathering scholarly insights and information from our local and international network of subject specialists. The depth of knowledge from these partners helped us shape the adventure in museum-going that was beginning to emerge.

To test our ideas, one of our earliest initiatives was to organize a pilot project, telling the story of the historic Palace of Sheikh Abdullah: the former home of the ruler and seat of government, and the original site of the National Museum. To discover how our themes and methods would resonate with people, we presented a three-month-long exhibition about the Palace. When 11,000 people came to visit and told us how much it meant to them, we knew we were on the right path.

Working hand-in-hand with our outstanding design team, we continued to give the new NMoQ its astonishing reality. Every element of the museum that took shape, inside and out, became a reflection of the lives and aspirations of the Qatari people. The magnificent architectural design by Jean Nouvel, which like the desert rose seems to grow out of the landscape, enfolds the beloved, renovated Palace of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim as the very core of the new Museum. Commissioned artworks by local and international artists—Ali Hassan, Aisha Nasser Al-Sowaidi, Roch Vandromme, Jean-Michel Othoniel, and more—add a variety of highly personal visions to our themes.

The result is a museum that tells a story in three overarching chapters—Beginnings, Life in Qatar, and The Modern History of Qatar—divided into eleven sections. Each section is a distinctive, 360-degree environment, which brings you into the heart of its theme. You encounter the natural habitat and wildlife of Qatar through a kaleidoscopic visual experience by filmmakers Christophe Cheysson and Jacques Perrin. You meet the people of Qatar and begin to learn about their traditional way of life through filmed oral histories, selected from more than 500 that we recorded, and authentic artifacts salvaged from a ship that sank a thousand years ago. The gallery about life in the desert centers on a complete *bait al-sha’r*, or nomads’ tent, accompanied by a breath-taking film by the great director Abderrahmane Sissako, starring the actual family to whom the tent belonged. The presentation about contemporary life and today’s liquid natural gas production includes a grand-scale model of Doha itself, a multi-user interactive wall for calling up information and images, and a 30-screen video installation by John Sanborn.

With all this, and more, the museum we have created is not a showcase for a collection. It is a journey—and like any true journey, it does not merely take people from one place to another. It changes the travellers themselves and helps redefine them. I hope that everyone who joins in the journey of the National Museum of Qatar will be moved by the experience. I hope they will come out with a deeper understanding of life in this ancient and modern land, and a greater sense of wonder at all it offers the world.

Welcome

Mansoor bin Ebrahim Al Mahmoud
Qatar Museums Executive Board Member

I join with Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums, in thanking you for your presence on this great occasion, as we open the new National Museum of Qatar.

This institution, which has been more than a decade in the making, is a source of immense pride for our nation, connecting Qatar's past with its diverse and cosmopolitan present. Full of heart and soul, the Museum expresses the collective memory of the people of Qatar. It reflects how we imagine our past and the historic events that shaped our country's identity, celebrates our interactions with the desert and the sea, and acknowledges how our society has modernized rapidly, while becoming a centre for innovation and international exchange.

People are central to this story, and this breath-taking space fosters a sense of connection, awe, and enchantment. Through the beautifully designed immersive galleries, visitors will experience compelling storytelling that engages the imagination through oral histories, commissioned artworks, music, archaeological and heritage objects, site-specific art films, and more. Each element adds its own perspective to the complex narrative of Qatar.

With the opening of the new National Museum, Qatar Museums has created an institution that will serve our own people, helping us reconnect with our roots, educate our youth about our ancestors, and show that Qatar has always flourished by being open to different peoples and ideas.

Qatar Museum has located this new institution at the heart of a public realm that we are shaping as a key civic quarter for Doha – one that connects the National Museum with cherished institutions including the Museum of Islamic Art and Qatar Museums' Gallery Al Riwaq. An iconic institution that recently celebrated its tenth anniversary, the Museum of Islamic Art was our first large-scale cultural project and set tremendous expectations for the role of art and culture in the Arab world. The collective impact of these institutions reflects the wider urban, civic, and cultural development of Doha. Each contributes something distinctive to our goal of transforming Qatar into an Arab capital of culture.

One of the central missions of Qatar Museums is to build connections through culture, to encourage cooperation and mutual understanding. The new National Museum of Qatar advances the nation's cultural vision on the global stage, serving as a hub for discovery, creativity, and community engagement and offering boundless educational opportunities. This institution captures what is truly remarkable about Qatar: its history, resilience, and soul.

I hope you enjoy this extraordinary cultural experience. Thank you again for joining us.

Architectural Statement: The Desert Rose

Jean Nouvel

The National Museum of Qatar emerges from a desert that has ventured all the way to the sea. On the site, the Royal Palace of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani rises up, a twentieth-century landmark of major heritage value to Qatar.

The National Museum is dedicated to the history of Qatar. Symbolically, its architecture evokes the desert, its silent and eternal dimension, but also the spirit of modernity and daring that have come along and shaken up what seemed unshakeable. So it's the contradictions in that history that I've sought to evoke here.

Qatar is also about the peoples who settled along the seaboard, setting up these coastal towns that became ports of call for passing nomads as much as local fishermen and pearl divers. And so the native fauna and flora, and the nomadic peoples and their long-held traditions, are the very first features of the history of Qatar.

Three economic miracles occurred to shake up this overwhelming tranquillity. The first, dating from Roman times, was associated with pearl fishing and the pearl trade. The second, in the aftermath of the Second World War, was the amazing discovery of oil, followed twenty years later by the discovery of another treasure: gas. The desert peninsula of Qatar and its people suddenly saw enormous, dazzling change and the country turned into a real crossroads, alluring and open, and attracting visitors from far and wide.

The building I designed needed to reflect these three different stories. The first, which covers a long period, is the story of the peninsula and its inhabitants. The second is an exploration of the coastal and desert lifestyles as well as the pearling industry, and third covers the spectacular acceleration that gave the kingdom – in just a few decades – the power and prosperity we associate with it today. Because of its economic power, Qatar has become a world leader in fields as diverse as education, communications, and energy technology.

The desert rose, a flower-like aggregate of mineral crystals occurring only in arid coastal regions, is the first architectural structure that nature itself creates, through wind, sea spray and sand acting together over millennia. It's surprisingly complex and poetic.

Taking the desert rose as a starting point turned out to be a very progressive, not to say utopian, idea. I say 'utopian' because, to construct a building 350 metres long, with its great big inward-curving disks, and its intersections and cantilevered elements – all the things that conjure up a desert rose – we had to meet enormous technical challenges. This building is at the cutting-edge of technology, like Qatar itself.

The museography that grew out of this specific history and these specific considerations provides an experience that's architectural, spatial and sensory all at once. Inside, you find spaces that don't exist anywhere else in the world since it's the interlocking of all these disks that forms the building, inside and out. The result is a construction made of geometric spaces.

I owe my love of things that aren't quite vertical to one of my teachers and mentors, Claude Parent, with whom I worked a great deal. A number of floors are on an incline. You walk under them, you walk up, and you become aware that there are hardly any vertical lines anywhere. Looking more closely, you can find a few elements that appear to be vertical but, in reality, are not. You only get the impression they are because that's the natural scheme of things.

The museum occupies a vast area. From the moment you step inside you're struck by the relationship between the form and the scale, between the theme and the different eras dealt with... between the small desert rose that comes down to us from out of the mists of time and this outside creation. As for the desert, it's always there, even if it has morphed into something else completely.

As you walk through the different volumes, you never know what's coming next in terms of the architecture. The idea was to create contrasts, spring surprises. You might, for instance, go from one room closed-off pretty high up by a slanting disk to another room with a much lower intersection. This produces something dynamic, tension.

As in a lot of other museums, the circuit forms a loop. The complete tour takes about two hours and ends in discovery of the old Royal Palace, which has been restored. From certain points, you can access the Baraha. Following the time-honoured template, this is a central courtyard surrounded by buildings where travellers would come and unload their merchandise.

The Baraha gives an idea of the scale of the Royal Palace. It's a sheltered space, with the museum built around it. Thanks to disks tilted at different angles, it also offers shade. This space can accommodate outdoor events, performances, theatre pieces, events connected to the exhibitions. The Baraha is also connected to the outdoor spaces of the old palace. From there, you can stroll along a promenade at the water's edge.

I wanted to create a structure that evoked the local geography and, in keeping with the tradition of the place, to ensure that it offers maximum protection from the sun.

The building is extremely energy efficient. The disks that make up its structure are heavy and form a sort of cushioned barrier that acts as a sunscreen. When the sun hits the building from east or west, the disks cast long protective shadows. The building doesn't have a lot of openings, and the few windows it does have are set back so that they're always out of reach of the sun. The interior spaces can be air conditioned more economically as a result.

The skin of the building is made of high-performance glass fibre-reinforced concrete that's the same sandy beige colour inside and outside the building.

As for the museography, I have worked in close collaboration with the National Museum to launch the opening with a series of films that provide glimpses of different aspects of Qatar and its history. Made by filmmakers and video artists handpicked for their talent as creators of evocative poetic images, these films are sensitive testaments to past eras. They will never be shown anywhere else, as they've been made specifically for the museum and formatted to fit the shape and scale of the walls they're screened on. The films translate the way the architecture is tailored to the expression of a museography specifically designed to evoke the scale and power of the land and history of Qatar, from time immemorial to the present moment.

The Museum Experience

The National Museum of Qatar, spread over a gross floor area of 52,000 square metres, and with a route extending over 1.5 kilometres, is set out chronologically, beginning with the period before the peninsula was inhabited by humans, and continuing up to the present day. From the entrance the route passes through a succession of impressive multi-shaped spaces until it reaches the museum's grand finale: the painstakingly restored Palace of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani.

Now literally encircled by the disks of the new building, the restored palace is perhaps the most significant monument in Qatar, as it was the former seat of government and also the site of the original National Museum of Qatar. The old and the new fold into each other.

The museum tracks Qatar's evolution and development. The story is told through a succession of films and multimedia displays, presented on a grand scale, accompanied by exhibits including archaeological and heritage objects, jewellery and other treasures, as well as manuscripts and documents. Around the park, major artist commissions created specifically for the museum add to the story.

Along the museum path our story is told with a grand cinematic atmosphere created by a series of eight art films produced specifically for NMoQ by noted international filmmakers in association with the Doha Film Institute. These massive movie projections map the surfaces of the curving and flowing walls of the galleries, bathing the visitor in the emotional charge of our journey. Each filmmaker interpreted a chapter of the story in his or her own way. For the visitor the result is an ever-evolving adventure of visual delights and surprises.

The films are monumental in their vision and physical scope. An international team of artists and engineers collaborated using cutting-edge cinema technologies to create what will be, at the time of the opening, the largest cinema projection presentation, at the highest resolution, anywhere in the world.

All the films were produced by the Doha Film Institute and shot within the borders of Qatar and the surrounding ocean waters. They are projected on the interior walls of the museum using a vast array of projectors and video servers designed and manufactured specifically for the needs of the museum, allowing a clarity of resolution never before seen at this scale.

In addition, there are four video installation: two large format oral histories created by Jon Kane capturing people's memories, a film on the Father Amir and his legacy created by Tala Hadid and two young Qatari film-makers, Rowda and Amal Al Thani, and a video installation responding to Qatar's innovative investment in LNG, *Alchemy*, by John Sanborn.

Among the permanent exhibits are many exquisite bespoke models made by craftspeople and artisans – models of boats, buildings and archaeological sites, of animals and creatures of the sea.

Layered interpretation in the galleries enables visitors to research at the level they choose. Oral histories, a key resource for the museum, feature strongly. These will be continually recorded and updated – indeed, all the content of the museum is designed to morph and grow.

Infographics range in scale from the very large to the very detailed: how deeply visitors will explore depends on whether they wish to gain an overall picture or zoom in on a particular subject. Over repeated visits, there will always be more to discover. All texts are written in Arabic and English.

The National Museum of Qatar

Gallery by Gallery

The National Museum of Qatar is organised in three 'chapters': 'Beginnings', 'Life in Qatar', and 'The Modern History of Qatar'. Within these chapters are eleven galleries.

The entrance to the museum is marked by a specially commissioned art work by Qatari artist Ali Hassan Al Jaber, *Wisdom of a Nation*, whose geometric design draws on the image of the Qatari flag and an excerpt from a poem by the founder of modern-day Qatar, Sheikh Jassim bin Muhammad Al Thani. Just before the entrance to the permanent galleries is a work by the Qatari artist, patron and collector Sheikh Hassan bin Mohammed Al Thani, *Motherland*, evoking the connections between the desert, the sea, and the women of Qatar.

Chapter 1 – Beginnings

The Formation of Qatar

The first gallery takes the visitor on a journey through time, exploring the geological and biological evolution of the Qatar peninsula. The story told in this gallery begins more than 700 million years ago. At times the region was land-locked, at others it was submerged under water, with the peninsula as we know it today emerging just a few thousand years ago. The gallery offers an interactive exploration of the complex geological processes that created the peninsula. Fossils of plants and animals on display represent seven time periods of Qatar in the distant past.

Entering the first gallery, a vast, enveloping cinematic experience takes the visitor back to the epic birth of the universe, the earth, and eventually the peninsula of Qatar itself. Long extinct animals and landscapes magically come to life in photo-realistic 'footage' via the creative CGI expertise of Swedish effects company Goodbye Kansas under the creative direction of French filmmaker Christophe Cheysson in *The Beginnings* (2018).

Qatar's Natural Environments

This gallery focuses on Qatar's natural environments, and on the need to preserve the country's diverse natural habitats. Featuring models and exhibits relating to indigenous plants and animals, it shows the variety of life found today in Qatar, on land and in the sea – from the Arabian oryx to the sand cat, from the sunfish to the deathstalker scorpion. Significantly, Qatar is home to one of the largest whale shark aggregations in the world. In the summer months, more than 100 individuals have been spotted. Here, visitors can walk under a full-size model of a whale shark. At over nine metres long, it is the largest fish found on earth.

The natural history film in this gallery will, at the time of the opening, be shown on the single largest projection surface at the high resolution employed anywhere in the world. Director Christophe Cheysson and legendary natural history filmmaker Jacques Perrin (*Oceans*) collaborated over a three-year period to capture the changing environments of Qatar: the visitor will experience the sky filled with birds in flocks 50 metres wide, schools of flashing, darting fish chased by a full-size whale shark, a wind storm marching thunderously across the desert. *Land and Sea* (2017) is a kaleidoscopic nature film like no other.

The Archaeology of Qatar

This gallery takes visitors on a journey from the earliest human presence on the peninsula thousands of years ago through to the thriving Qatari towns of the 1500s. One of the largest displays of objects in

the museum, it features hundreds of artefacts: large and small, luxury imports and everyday goods. Some 1,000 archaeological artefacts are displayed in tall glass cases in chronological order.

On one wall there are full-scale replicas of rock carvings, examples of the many hundreds of Qatari petroglyphs whose origins remain a mystery. On the opposite wall is a large-scale film by Jananne Al-Ani, *Archaeology* (2017), about Qatar's archaeological sites, which through beautiful aerial shots moves through periods of pre-history into the Bronze Age and beyond, referencing migration paths and trade routes, and moving between the macroscopic and microscopic, from landscapes to the tiniest details of the surfaces of archaeological objects on display in the galleries.

Chapter 2 – Life in Qatar

The People of Qatar

The centrepiece of this gallery is a huge three-dimensional sculpture of the peninsula that demonstrates how, in the past, people's survival in Qatar depended on moving around the land. They moved to trade, to find water and pasture for their herds, to fish and dive for pearls, to hunt and to go on pilgrimage. On this sculptured map, projections bring to life nomadic patterns in and around Qatar. Gallery exhibits include the artefacts of movement such as elaborate camel saddles and leather water bags, and objects related to traditional knowledge about plant resources and animal tracking. A highlight is an array of objects from the wreck of the *Cirebon*, a boat that sank 1,000 years ago off the Indonesian coast with trade goods from the Arabian Gulf.

Here, the first of the museum's monumental oral history films, designed by Jon Kane, tells the story of life in the desert. People with personal experience of this life recount in their own words, directly to the camera, their experiences and memories.

Life in *Al Barr* (Desert)

This gallery focuses on the challenges of living in *al barr*, the inland desert of Qatar, a harsh environment where tradition, community, deep knowledge and stories were essential for survival. A grand and elegant film by Abderrahmane Sissako (*Timbuktu*), shot in beautiful silver-nitrate-style black and white, unfolds along the long walls of this gallery. *Life in Al Barr* (2017) is a day in the life of a family in their desert home. We join the mother, father and young daughter as they gather wood to build a fire to cook, tend their falcons, fix their tent and go about dealing with many fascinating and challenging aspects of living in a vast and epic desert environment.

The display of objects includes a complete *bait al-sha'r* (tent), laid out as if ready to be packed up and transported, together with the beautifully woven *riwaq* (dividing wall) and a collection of everyday objects associated with cooking, coffee preparation and falconry. There are large displays of traditional clothing and *sadu* weaving. The sounds of poetry and the smell of coffee add to the potent atmosphere.

Life on the Coast

Moving from the desert to the sea, the visitor discovers a large-scale model of Qatar's first UNESCO World Heritage Site listing, Al Zubarah. Al Zubarah is one of the largest and best-preserved coastal cities in the Arabian Gulf. Active in the 1700s and 1800s, it was an important centre for pearling and trade. Finds from the Al Zubarah site reveal life in the city, from the domestic to trade.

A pearl merchant's chest, an extremely rare survival from the town, is displayed here, as well as beautifully written religious texts that speak of Al Zubarah's significance as a centre for learning and religious education.

Other exhibits explore coastal activities such as boat-mending, fishing and pearling.

This gallery features two films. First, wrapping around behind the model of the city, is a faceted wall that creates a six-screen backdrop. Abderrahmane Sissako is the director of the film, *Al Zubarah* (2017), which presents an almost cubist view of a day during the heyday of Al Zubarah. It is a hive of trade as citizens and merchants go about the business of the day from the pre-dawn call to prayer, the opening of the markets, children at school, streams of camels ferrying goods, and into the *majlis*-rooms of the wealthy pearl traders sipping tea and making their transactions.

In an adjacent area of the gallery a second oral history film designed by Jon Kane focuses on the pearling industry. Like the first oral history film, it features Qatari people speaking to the camera with direct knowledge of fishing for pearls, and the hardships of this life. Linking Life on the Coast with the next gallery, Pearls and Celebrations, is *Nafas (Breath)*. Directed by acclaimed filmmaker Mira Nair and designed by collaborator Jon Kane, the film is presented on two opposing screens, each approximately 31 meters long. *Nafas* (2014) is a narrative period epic told in the form of a cinematic collage. It is a visceral experience that takes visitors out to sea and plunges them directly into the water alongside the daring pearl divers.

Pearls and Celebrations

At the end of the pearling season, referred to as *al-Guffal*, the dhows and their crews returned to Qatar, bringing with them hauls of exquisite pearls. This gallery presents the results of the pearling industry and Qatar's connections with the world through pearl exports. The spectacular centrepiece is the Pearl Carpet of Baroda, actually intended to be a cover of the tomb of the Prophet (PBUH) and commissioned by India's Maharaja of Baroda, Gaekwar Khande Rao, in around 1865.

Embroidered with some 1.5 million Basra Pearls – so called because they were traded through Basra (in Iraq), a major Gulf pearl trade hub – it is also decorated with diamonds, sapphires, emeralds and rubies. A magnificent expression of the scale and success of the Gulf pearling industry, it was described by auctioneers Sotheby's as 'undeniably one of the most remarkable objects ever created'.

Chapter 3 – The Modern History of Qatar

In the first space the visitor encounters the involvement of the Portuguese, Ottomans and British in Qatar's history, and the emergence of Qatar as a united nation under Sheikh Jassim, covering the period 1500-1913. This gallery begins the historical chronology, introducing the leaders of Qatar, from the significant historical figures of Rahmah bin Jaber and Isa bin Tarif, to the first leaders, Sheikh Mohammed bin Thani and Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani. Displays present archival documents, historic maps, artefacts, stamps and currency, historical photographs, testimonies of people and beautiful model boats.

Filmmaker Peter Webber (*Girl with a Pearl Earring*) takes us back in time to battles of the 1500s and the eventual tribal unification under Sheikh Jassim that brought important changes to Qatar's destiny. This film, called *Shadows of History* (2018), was shot on location in the desert of Qatar and the Palace of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim. This grand cinematic project features scores of warriors thundering to battle on horseback across the desert landscape and tells the story on a single massive screen.

The next space, covering the years 1913-1972, and the reigns of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani, Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah Al Thani and Sheikh Ahmad bin Ali Al Thani, tells the story of the challenging years of the early twentieth century, when Qatar was affected by the collapse of the pearling industry, the great storm that sank the pearling fleet, known as *Sanat A Tabah*, and by global events such as the First World War.

It also presents the turning point in Qatar's fortunes, the coming of oil and the impact that it had on Qatari society, culture, politics and economy. This transformation is presented through dense displays of the new objects available in Qatar, such as radios, telephones and cars, and archival images capturing Qatar at this time.

This gallery features an impressionistic 360-degree film installation by world-renowned video artist Doug Aitken. With dazzling visuals shot in extreme closeup, ultra-wide aerials incorporating abstraction and stunning landscapes, *The Coming of Oil* (2017) alludes to the economic and cultural impact of the discovery of oil by dramatically focusing on the creation of oil deep within the earth and its thunderous path to the surface.

Qatar's dramatic transformation between 1972 and 2013 is explored in the next space, which covers the reigns of Sheikh Khalifa and Sheikh Hamad (the Father Amir). The oil industry brought great wealth and extended Qatar's trade connections across the world. Every aspect of life was influenced, from diet and transport to employment and leisure time.

Here, exhibits relate to the country's massive urban development, economic growth, international recognition and the flourishing of society and culture. At the centre of the space is a 5-metre-diameter sycamore-wood sculpture of the city of Doha, with the city's urban transformations projected on to it. A multi-user interactive wall allows visitors to explore a wealth of archival images related to the country's development.

This gallery features a sweeping video art installation by veteran video art star John Sanborn. Unlike the projected films in the museum, *Alchemy* (2019) comprises 30 high-resolution video monitors of varying sizes scattered all the way along the long wall of the gallery. Spectacular scientific imagery combined with images of the hardware of the industry - refineries and massive ships - will tell this story of innovative science, thoughtful investment and dedication to the Father Amir's vision that makes Qatar's LNG process the most successful in the world. In dialogue with this installation is a large format oral history of the Father Amir and his peers discussing his achievements and legacy.

Qatar Today

A cutting-edge digital space, this gallery will immerse visitors in Qatar's recent history and immediate future under the leadership of the current Amir, HH Sheikh Tamim. This gallery will open in the National Museum's second phase.

The Old Palace

Now embraced by Jean Nouvel's building is another – the historic and now restored Palace of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani (1880-1957), the son of the founder of modern Qatar. Built in the early 1900s, this palace is enormously important as a national symbol and is one of the best loved of Qatar's landmarks. Following a painstaking restoration project over a period of more than three years, it now forms the final highlight of a visit to the National Museum of Qatar.

The Palace had already undergone many modifications, additions and refurbishments, and its texture and fabric tell a rich story about Qatar's development from the early 20th century onwards. After serving both as a family home and as the seat of government, it became the home, between 1975 and 1996, of the original Qatar National Museum (now replaced by the new museum). There, visitors could see objects relating to the country's history and culture. A little later, a maritime museum was incorporated. Today, by contrast, the building that housed that first National Museum has itself become an exhibit.

In the early 1970s, the palace complex consisted of three courtyard houses, two '*majlis*', or reception halls, and various service quarters, all within a walled enclosure. A two-storey arcaded structure at the

centre of the compound, built in 1918, dominated the site. The 1975 scheme, by Michael Rice & Co. and Design and Construction Group, added the new three-level museum building. Partly below ground, it joined the north wall of the complex, completing the courtyard. In 1980, the National Museum of Qatar won the Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

The recent restoration project, which gives a sense of the continuous development of the palace, refurbished most of the buildings, including some, though not all, of the 1970s museum.

Among the palace's most important structures is the fine arcaded building at the centre of the courtyard, known as the Inner Majlis (the word '*majlis*' means a gathering place for meetings, official business and social interaction). This *majlis* is richly decorated with fine carved woodwork – with much of the wood identified as coming from India or East Africa. The second *majlis*, in the north-east corner, has a large painted ceiling and elaborate decoration. There is a third, much smaller one, nearby. There are three gates, including the North Gate, which originally connected with the harbour. The house of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim, a traditional Qatari home, is the oldest building. It sits in the southwest corner, near the houses of two of his sons, which are also enclosed in courtyards.

Conservation was carried out by Ziegert Roswag Seiler (ZRS), the specialist German architectural restoration firm. Appointed in 2011, the key issues they faced were humidity, salt absorption and, from the 1970s restoration, the effects of cement plaster which had prevented the buildings from breathing. A team of local artisans was trained over the course of the restoration and worked closely with the German project team.

The palace will be used for programmes and events, as well as being integral to the museum visit.

The Park

The museum is surrounded by a 112,000-square-metre park with gentle landscaping, a broad 900-metre-long artificial lagoon, gardens with large green areas, paths and walkways, designed by French landscape architect Michel Desvignes on the overall plan for a natural, truly Qatari setting for the museum.

All the abundant plantings, including many large trees, are of native species. There are eleven varieties of date palm. As well as new trees, an existing stand of large sidra trees has been carefully preserved. This local tree is especially close to the hearts of the Qatari people who regard it as symbolic of their country. All the smaller plants in the park are desert species, including shrubs, herbs and grasses. Everything relates to the land and history of Qatar, and reveals a remarkable diversity given the desert location of the country.

Visitors to the museum will be able to wander freely through the gardens, which at cooler times will also provide a delightful setting for picnics. At night, the building will gently glow in the landscape, lit by Hervé Descottes of the French company L'Observatoire International.

There are three specially created outdoor children's play areas, which will open as part of later phases of the project:

- The Cave of Wonders is constructed like a *dahl*, or cave, with rays of light coming through openings in the roof. Inside are rocks that glow, rock carvings, objects that emerge like archaeological finds from the sand, hanging bats and a giant gecko.
- The nearby Adventure Ship Playground is constructed like the wreck of a traditional Qatari boat, or dhow. During their exploration children can learn about sailing, pearling, fishing, trading and other occupations that whole families became involved in. Through stories and songs, cargo and treasure, and interactive play opportunities the children will absorb history and culture.
- Set over land and water, the Oil Refinery Playground is an immersive and highly interactive space where visitors become part of the oil and gas story. Children will engage in kinetic play activities, from discovery through to the processing of crude oil, until the creation of end products that demonstrate the many uses of oil and gas in today's society.

Site-specific commissioned works of art selected by Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums, form a key element within the design of the landscape and gardens. These works include:

- Within the *Baraha* visitors will encounter the sculpture *Flag of Glory* by Iraqi artist Ahmed Al Bahrani, which embodies the story behind the Qatari annual national day celebrations in the image of a group of hands united in holding the Qatar flag.
- Standing outside near the historic Palace is another commissioned artwork: a sculptural group by French artist Roch Vandromme, *On Their Way*, which evokes the long history of nomadic lifestyle and trade through the figures of four camels.
- Simone Fattal's sculpture *Gates to the Sea*, located in the walkway toward the entrance to the museum, is inspired by petroglyphs found at Al Jassasiya. The work represents the overlap of time between the past and the present.

- A monumental installation by the noted French artist Jean-Michel Othoniel, *ALFA*, consisting of 114 individual fountains set within the lagoon. The largest project ever conceived by Othoniel, the fountains echo the sense of movement that is so much a part of the flowing architecture of the building and its contents. There are no vertical streams of water; rather, the references in the way the water rises and falls are to the fluid forms of Arabic calligraphy.

Families and Education

The National Museum of Qatar has designed and developed a wide variety of exciting and engaging learning resources for school, family and youth audiences. Hands-on interactive gallery spaces, family trails, student activity booklets, art-trolleys, handling collections and outdoor playgrounds all contribute to create a dynamic and fun environment for young learners.

Within the main museum galleries, there are six intergenerational learning spaces for families, with exhibits designed by Dutch designers Opera Amsterdam, as well as the play areas in the park.

Each of the six intergenerational learning spaces is made up of around five mini-interactive exhibits. These target different age groups, ranging from toddlers to pre-teens. The spaces prompt visitors to engage with gallery content and with each other, in fun, tactile and creative ways.

Qatar's Natural World

The first intergenerational learning space invites visitors to play, design and become part of the story of Qatar's natural world. Through a series of mini-interactive exhibits, they can explore the local flora and fauna and discover the unique features that allow them to survive the extreme climate. Towards the end, visitors are prompted to make a pledge about how they can help conserve and protect their environment.

Become an Archaeologist

The next intergenerational learning space explores archaeology in Qatar. Through a series of mini-interactive exhibits, visitors are invited to take on the role of an archaeologist and uncover how people in Qatar used to live many years ago. By gathering and examining surviving artefacts, discovered at various archaeology sites across Qatar, visitors experience archaeology first hand.

Navigation and Movement

The third intergenerational learning space focuses on how life in Qatar in the past depended on seasonal movement. A series of mini-interactive play exhibits highlight how people moved in search of water and food, and to trade, as well as how expert trackers and navigators read animal tracks, bird flight paths and the stars to help them find their way.

Al Barr Life

Imagine it's 1959. Every winter you have to pack up your belongings, load them on to a camel and start looking for a new home. That's what life for people in Qatar was like in the past. The fourth intergenerational learning space invites visitors to discover how people lived according to the rhythms of the seasons, spending their days with their families, working together to take care of each other and their herds of animals.

Join the Pearling Crew

The pearling industry reached its height in Qatar between the mid-1800s and early 1900s. The fifth intergenerational learning space invites visitors to become members of the pearling crew. Through a series of interactive exhibits, visitors are prompted to take on the different roles on a pearling boat, where the crew has to work together to survive the dangers of the sea and collect as many pearls as possible.

Energy Hub

The final intergenerational learning space explores how energy makes the way we live today possible. Here visitors are invited to shop at a grocery store only to discover all the grocery items featured are made from petroleum by-products. Another exhibit encourages visitors to work together as a team with the goal of harnessing and collecting as much energy as possible to power Qatar.

Schools Programme

The National Museum offers an extensive range of activities and events for schools. Taking the themes and subject matter on display in the galleries, bespoke programmes have been created that assist students in exploring the ancient and more recent history of Qatar. All educational programmes are devised with National Curriculum objectives in mind and consist of creative workshops that support and enrich teachers' lesson plans. Topics covered include: plant and animal diversity in Qatar, travel and navigation, designs for the future, international connections and living in the contemporary world.

Public Programmes

The National Museum will host quarterly public events programmes to ensure a dynamic and ever-changing cultural offering to multiple audiences. Talks and discussions for adults and students, practical art and design workshops, family weekend drop-in activities, along with special evening performances and courses, are just some of the upcoming initiatives for 2019. An important feature of the National Museum's programming is its co-production of public events with local cultural organisations and community groups.

Museum Shops and Dining

The National Museum of Qatar interiors are designed by Koichi Takada Architects.

Museum Shop

The Dahl Al Misfir ("Cave of Light"), located in the heart of Qatar, is a beautiful underground sanctuary formed largely from fibrous gypsum crystals that give off a faint, moon-like, phosphorescent glow. This natural formation inspired the design of the two museum shops that will be open at the NMoQ. Their organic architecture echoes Koichi Takada's vision of bringing nature back into architecture, establishing relationships that connect people and nature through design.

The interiors are constructed from 40,000 wooden pieces, which form a three-dimensional puzzle. Each wooden piece is entirely unique and fits only with its exact counterpart. They were assembled by hand in Doha by Italian master carpenter, Claudio Devoto and his team of artisans.

The main gift shop will stock a large collection of well-designed, exclusive gifts, many of which draw their inspiration from the history, heritage and culture of Qatar. IN-Q Enterprises, which operate the gift shops, have worked in collaboration with local artists and designers to develop authentic and original merchandise. The children's gift shop will offer a diverse range of locally designed souvenirs and gift items, including educational toys, books, puzzles and games.

Café 875

Café 875 was inspired by traditional Qatari gold jewellery, with the concept of '875' representing the grade of the gold's purity. *Kan Ya Ma Kaan*, a sculptural wall installation by young Qatari artist Bouthayna Al Muftah around the concept of gold, traditionally worn only by women, is located within the café. This 875 gold theme carries through in the café's design, offering patrons a chance to dine in a traditional Qatari setting inspired by Bedouin nomadic lifestyle and enduring hospitality. The

fabric used in the cafe blends the traditional black and white stripes of *Al Sadu* weaving heritage, symbolising the country's transition into a modern Qatar.

Café 875 is located on the mezzanine floor over the main lobby and was designed to 'hide' from the visitors' sightline so that it does not physically overwhelm the arrival experience. The wooden profiles of the seating medallions are angled to follow the ceiling of architecturally impressive interlocking discs flying over the main lobby and the café.

The medallions were also designed with a special up-lighting effect that evokes the allure of 875 gold. Each medallion is designed to cast a ring of light onto the architectural ceiling, intended to attract visitors to come up to the mezzanine and discover the 'invisible' café.

Desert Rose Café

The Desert Rose Café will be operated by Chef Nouf Al Marri, one of the best chefs in Qatar specialized in Qatari cuisine. It is located on the ground floor under the large structure and opens to both the lagoon (at the Corniche side) and to the *Baraha* courtyard.

The café is an oasis of Desert Rose formations, offering a perfect mid-way rest spot for visitors to break the journey through the galleries. The design of Desert Rose Café is a direct reference to the impressive urban scale of Jean Nouvel's architecture, recreating the interlocking disc design on a smaller scale.

The Desert Rose Café is hidden under a large architectural disk, with a low ceiling, which mimics a cave entrance. The subtle ambient floor lighting is installed among interlocking discs of the banquette seating, smoothing the intensity of daylight and giving visitors a respite on the journey through the NMoQ.

Jiwan Restaurant

The *Jiwan* Restaurant, located on the fourth floor at the top of the museum, has a terrace with stunning panoramic views over the Doha Bay. It embodies the unique landscape of the 'inland sea' or *Khor Al Adaid* where the sea comes deep into the heart of the desert. *Jiwan* is named after the Qatari word for the "perfect pearl," rose-tinted white, completely round with a lustre so pure that it comes alive with radiance.

The restaurant's ceiling is inspired by traditional fishing nets, which uses over four million pearl-like crystal beads suspended from the ceiling to create a sense of diving into water.

VIP Lounge

The VIP Lounge features a sculpture, *Central Midkhan*, created by young Qatari multidisciplinary artist Aisha Nasser Al-Sowaidi. A *midkhan* is a Qatari household item, ancient but still used today to hold incense.

Visitor Information

National Museum of Qatar
Museum Park St, Doha, Qatar
Phone: +974 4452 5555
<http://nmoq.org.qa/>

For any queries please email us on: infonmoq@qm.org.qa

Gift shops and cafés hours

- **Desert Rose Café:** open daily from 8.00am-19.00pm and Friday from 13.00pm-19.00pm
- **Café 875:** open daily from 9.00am-19.00pm and Friday from 13.30-19.00pm
- **Jiwan:** open daily from 9.00am-19.00pm and Friday from 13.30-19.00pm
- The Gift Shop and the Children’s Gift Shop: open Saturday through Thursday from 9.00am-19.00pm and Friday from 13.30pm-19.00pm

Admissions

Starting from March 28, admission to NMoQ, MIA and Mathaf will be charged at the entrance. General admission will be QAR 50 for adults; QAR 25 for students and free for children under 16, Culture Pass Plus and Culture Pass Family Members, and visitors with disabilities. Tickets will be free of charge for Qatari nationals and residents of the State of Qatar, with a valid Qatar ID. General admission tickets include exhibitions within the museum and are valid for three consecutive days from the date of first admission. Museum Pass is QAR 100 and permits admission to all museums and venues, valid for three consecutive days from the date of first admission. For full terms and conditions, visit: <https://www.qm.org.qa/en/ticketing-terms-conditions>

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Press Resources

For press releases and images visit the [NMOQ Press Room](#)

Rania Hussein, Qatar Museums: rhussein@qm.org.qa (+974 4402 8535)

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NATIONAL MUSEUM OF QATAR ARCHITECTURAL FACT SHEET

Location	Al Corniche Street, Doha, Qatar
Architect	Jean Nouvel (Ateliers Jean Nouvel)
Dates	2003/2019 Studies: 2003/2011 Building construction: 2011/2018 Opening: March 2019

Project Overview The immersive and experiential National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) tells the story of Qatar and its people from earliest times to today, bringing to life the peninsula’s natural history, giving voice to Qatar’s rich heritage and culture, and expressing a vibrant community’s aspirations for the future.

The new museum embraces, as its centrepiece, the restored historic Palace of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani (1880-1957), son of the founder of modern Qatar: a building that in former times was both the home of the Royal Family and the seat of government and was subsequently the site of the original National Museum. Jean Nouvel's new building incorporates the Palace while seamlessly integrating innovative artworks commissioned from Qatari and international artists, rare and precious objects, documentary materials, and interactive learning opportunities.

Site

Located on a prominent 147,425 m² site on Doha's Corniche, the new museum offers approximately 52,000 m² of enclosed space, including 7,000 m² for the permanent collections, 1,700 m² for temporary exhibitions, a 213-seat auditorium, two cafés, a restaurant, and two museum shops. Separate facilities are provided for school groups and VIPs. Staff facilities include conservation laboratories, staff offices, and collections management and storage areas. The museum is surrounded by a 112,000 m² landscaped park that reinterprets the landscapes of Qatar.

PRINCIPAL DESIGN FEATURES

Architecture

The building design is inspired by a mineral formation commonly found in the deserts of the Gulf region. The 'desert rose' is a rock formed when minerals crystallize in the crumbly soil just below the surface of a shallow salt basin. The system of interlocking disks surrounding the historic palace like a necklace looks as if it's been propagated organically. It incorporates exhibition spaces that fan out in an elliptical circuit around a central court, the *Baraha*, where outdoor cultural events will be staged. The desert-rose form evokes the culture and climate of Qatar. It emerges from the ground and merges with it. The shadows created by overhanging elements allow visitors to stroll around outside at the same time as protecting the interior from light and heat. The sand-coloured concrete cladding is in harmony with the local environment.

Visitor Experience

The museum visit follows an elliptical circuit that gently rises and falls, evoking the natural undulations of the landscape. Large openings offer glimpses of the Baraha, the museum's gardens and Doha Bay. The permanent exhibitions, focusing on the environmental, cultural and political history of Qatar – from time immemorial to the present moment – are on display in eleven galleries. The visitor journey culminates in the old historic palace, one of the jewels of the NMoQ's collections, which has now been restored to its original state.

Park

The museum is surrounded by a landscaped park that reinterprets Qatari landscapes, with alternating low dunes, flooded crops and gardens inspired by sabkhas and oases. Containing only local plants and trees, the park tells the story of Qatar and how its people lived in and cultivated the harsh environment. It includes a heritage garden of traditional plants and

large grassy areas perfect for stretching out on in the evening. A 430-car parking area is seamlessly integrated into the park.

Sustainability

The design is geared to the local climate. Cantilevered elements provide areas of passive shade. Buffer zones in the spaces between the disks create thermal mass, reducing cooling loads. The heating and cooling systems used in the building are state-of-the-art. Steel and concrete, the main materials used, are locally sourced and/or made. The landscaped park features only drought-resistant native vegetation. These and other sustainability measures have qualified the NMoQ for a USGBC LEED Gold rating and GSAS 4 Stars.

Materials and constr.

The building is composed of large interlocking disks, spherical in section, and of different diameters and varying curvatures. Some disks are 'horizontal' and rest on other disks. The 'vertical' disks constitute the building's support and transfer the loads of the horizontal planes to the base.

The building is clad in ultra-high-performance glass fiber-reinforced concrete (UHPC) panels approximately 2m² each, fixed to a steel frame that spans an insulated waterproof superstructure. The voids between disks are filled with glass panels, whose frames are recessed into the ceilings, floors and walls, making the panels look frameless. Mullions divide the larger glass walls into units that can easily be manufactured and transported. Discoid visors stop the sun coming in.

Like the exterior, the interior is a landscape of interlocking disks. The finishes are neutral and monochromatic. The floors are sand-coloured polished concrete with tiny mineral aggregates. The vertical walls are coated in *stuc-pierre*, or stone stucco, a traditional gypsum and lime-blended plaster that provides a stone look. Ceilings are covered in a microporous acoustic plaster sprayed on mineral wool.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

- *Welcoming the Public* – Public reception areas and lobbies occupy approximately 3,000 m² over two levels.
- *Permanent and Temporary Exhibition Galleries* – 7,000 m² are designed for permanent exhibitions and 1,700 m² are for temporary exhibitions. These spaces form an elliptical circuit around a central courtyard.
- *Auditorium* – A 213-seat auditorium is located next to the main public lobby.
- *Conservation Laboratories* – Two restoration/conservation laboratories are located in the basement and on the second floor.
- *Administrative Offices* – Administrative offices and conference rooms are designed for approximately 150 staff.
- *Catering* – The museum has two cafés, one next to the lobby, one in the middle of the permanent collections. The top floor has a panoramic restaurant and kitchen.
- *Educational Group Facilities* – A school drop-off and orientation area are located next to the main public lobby, and there is a dedicated room for schools and learning activities
- *VIP Facilities* – A VIP drop-off and reception area are located next to the main public lobby.

- *Support Facilities* – These include toilets for visitors and staff, baby-change facilities, prayer rooms, support-staff offices, storage areas, loading areas and service rooms.
- *Public Park* – A public park of 11.5 hectares alternates concrete dunes and planted areas, and includes kiosks and an artificial lagoon.
- *Parking and Roads* – Incorporated into the park, the parking area includes roadways and parking bays for staff, visitors, buses, tourist coaches, and emergency and delivery vehicles.

THE MUSEUM IN NUMBERS

The Museum	Total surface area of the site:	143,145 m ² (660 m long x 330 m wide)
	Surface area occupied by the building:	33,618 m ² (330 m long x 170 m wide)
	Landscaped park:	112,000 m ²
	Gross floor area	52,167 m ²
	Exterior faces:	110,000 m ²
	Usable floor area:	30,064 m ²
	Permanent exhibition spaces:	7,000 m ²
	Temporary exhibition spaces:	1,700 m ²
The Galleries	11 interlinked galleries form a 1.5 km visitor's circuit	
	Close to 3,000 m ² of projection surfaces for screening films, including 120 custom 4K and 8K video projectors	
	1,876 architectural models made of sycamore, replicas of fauna and flora, and reconstructions	
The Construction	Number of Foundations Piles	1,892 units
	Steel Framework	
	• Concrete Reinforcement	8,189 tons
	• Structural Steel (disks)	1,7612 tons
	Concrete	
	• Infrastructure :	21,173 m ³
	• Superstructure :	18,881 m ³
	• Total:	40,054 m ³
	UHPC Floor Cladding Area:	115,000 m ²
	Number of FRC Cladding Elements:	76,000
	Number of Disks:	539
Length of Joints (cladding):	232 km	
Smallest Disk Diameter:	14 m	
Largest Disk Diameter:	87 m	

Biographies

Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums

Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa Bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani is engaged in the fields of formal and informal education. She is Chairperson of Qatar Museums, Doha Film Institute and Qatar Leadership. In having the privilege to serve her country in multiple fields – among them culture, leadership, philanthropy and education – she has been able to facilitate conversations across borders and fields. As a public servant, her objective is to invest in Qatar’s local community, and celebrate Qatar’s diversity using the visual arts as a vehicle for communication. Her current interests are in human development, cultural regionalism and economic growth, using culture as a catalyst for education, dialogue and exchange. Through her public work and support of Qatar Vision 2030, she is building an exciting creative future for Qatar that will connect artistic communities in all areas of culture.

Mansoor bin Ebrahim Al Mahmoud, Special Advisor to H.E. The Chairperson, Qatar Museums

Mansoor bin Ebrahim Al Mahmoud joined Qatar Museums in 2014. He is currently the Special Advisor to Qatar Museums’ Chairperson, H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. Prior to that, he was also QM’s CEO, overseeing the daily operations of QM and providing managerial leadership across the organisation. In February 2019, Mr. Al Mahmoud was appointed as Vice-Chairman of Qatar Exchange. In September 2018, he was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of Qatar Investment Authority “QIA”, where he oversees key strategic projects and provided managerial leadership across the organization.

He is also a member of QNB Board since 2004 and the Chairman of the Group Audit and Compliance Committee since 2016. Additionally, he is a Board Member for both Qatari Diar and Doha Film Institute.

Mr. Al Mahmoud was the CEO of Qatar Development Bank (QDB) and the Office Director of Investment Affairs for His Excellency the Former Prime Minister – Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was also Head of Risk Management at Qatar Investment Authority in addition to other positions in Qatar Islamic Bank and the Supreme Council of Economic Affairs and Investments.

Ahmad Musa Al-Namla, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Qatar Museums

Ahmad Musa Al-Namla is the Acting Chief Executive Officer of Qatar Museums. He oversees the daily operations of QM and provides managerial leadership across the organisation towards accomplishing its overarching goal as set out by Chairperson Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. Previously he served as QM’s Finance Director for nearly four years, where he oversaw all financial operations and directed corporate financial planning and structure for the institution. Ahmad earned an Executive Masters in Business Administration from HEC – Paris University. He is also a graduate of Qatar University with a degree in Accounting. In 2014, Ahmad graduated from the “Current & Future Leaders Programme” and has more than 20 years of experience in oil and gas sector.

Sheikha Amna bint Abdulaziz bin Jassim Al-Thani, Director, National Museum of Qatar

Sheikha Amna bint Abdulaziz bin Jassim Al Thani is the Director of NMoQ. She provides curatorial and managerial leadership, and supervises education and programming initiatives, as well as special exhibitions and conferences. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a minor in English from Carnegie Mellon University, as well a Master’s in Sociology from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Sheikha Amna has previously held positions in the Investment Banking division of Goldman Sachs at Qatar Financial Center and was the Director of Finance and Strategy for the office of QM Chairperson H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. Sheikha Amna is also on the Middle East Board of the World Class Learning Group (WCL Group) and is a member of the Industrial Advisory Committee to the Center of the Advanced Materials (CAM) at Qatar University (QU). As of 2018, Sheikha Amna is a member of the Board of Directors of the *Journal of Interpretation*

Research — a biannual peer-reviewed academic journal covering research in the field of heritage interpretation.

Haya Al-Thani, PhD, Director of Curatorial Affairs, National Museum of Qatar

Dr. Haya Al-Thani joined the National Museum of Qatar's curatorial team in 2011 and has served as Director of Curatorial Affairs since 2016. From 2006 to 2011 she was Assistant Professor in Ancient History at Qatar University. Dr. Al-Thani's published research is rooted in the field of Arabian Gulf archaeology and heritage. Notable works and lectures include: *Arabian Gulf region in the pre-historic and Bronze Age periods* (1996), *Pre-Historic Archaeological Remains in Eastern Arabian Peninsula* (1997), *Dilmun seals and Gulf Contemporary Heritage* (Bahrain Archaeology Conference, 2007), and *An Archaeological Survey of Beth Qatraye* (2014), and *Forts, Strongholds and Towers in Qatar* (2016). Dr. Al-Thani received a bachelor's degree in history from Qatar University, a master's degree in art history from King Saud University; and a doctoral degree from the University of London College (UCL - London).

Karen Exell, PhD, Senior Museum Development Specialist, National Museum of Qatar

Dr. Karen Exell is Senior Museum Development Specialist at the National Museum of Qatar. She has been with Qatar Museums for four years, collaborating on the development and opening of the National Museum. As an Honorary Senior Research Associate at University College London (UCL) Qatar, and Lead Principal Investigator on a three-year research project funded by the Qatar National Research Fund, Exell's work explores the idea of national identity in relation to the National Museum. She has also consulted on other museums in Qatar, including Msheireb Museums and the Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani Museum. Prior to joining Qatar Museums, she was director for the Masters in Museum and Gallery Practice program at UCL Qatar from 2011-2015. She has also held curatorial positions in a variety of UK museums and consulted on large-scale gallery redevelopments. Recent publications include the monographs *Modernity and the Museum in the Arabian Peninsula* (Routledge, 2016) and *The Global Spectacular: New Museum Architecture in China and the Arabian Peninsula* (Lund Humphries, April 2018), and the co-edited volumes *Cultural Heritage in the Arabian Peninsula: Debates, Discourses and Practices* (Ashgate, 2014) and *Museums in Arabia: Transnational Practices and Regional Processes* (Routledge, 2016). Exell studied at the Universities of Oxford, St. Andrews and Durham (UK).

Saif Al Kuwari, Deputy Director for Operations, National Museum of Qatar

Saif Al Kuwari is the Deputy Director for Operations at the NMoQ. He has more than 20 years of experience in the cultural and tourism sector in Qatar, gaining experience across a number of board-level and senior management appointments in several national entities in Qatar, such as Qatar National Tourism Council (formally the Qatar Tourism Authority) and Qatar Airways. Prior to joining QM, Mr. Al Kuwari served as the International Relations Consultant and Director of PR and Communications at the Qatar National Tourism Council, where he oversaw initiatives to engage with international audiences and promote the country's cultural offerings. Mr. Al Kuwari earned his EMBA from the prestigious HEC Paris business school in 2013 and represented Qatar at several international events. He served as committee member on numerous boards and committees, such as the *Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation* (QMMF) Board and the Permanent Committee for Organizing Conferences. Saif also undertook and participated in high-level projects such as National Tourism Sector Strategy 2030 and Qatar's hosting of World Tourism Day.

Jean Nouvel

After he enrolled at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Bordeaux, Jean Nouvel ranked first in the entrance examination of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1966 and obtained his degree in 1972. Assistant to the architect Claude Parent and inspired by urban planner and essayist Paul Virilio, he started his first architecture practice in 1970. Soon afterwards, he became a founding member of the "Mars 1976" Movement whose purpose was to oppose the architects' corporatism and then a

founder of French Architecture Union. His strong stances and somewhat provocative opinions on contemporary architecture in the urban context together with his unfailing ability to inject originality into all the projects he undertakes have formed his international image. Jean Nouvel's work does not result from considerations of style or ideology, but from a quest to create a unique concept for a singular combination of people, place and time.

His works have gained world-wide recognition through numerous prestigious French and International prizes and rewards. In 1989, The Arab World Institute in Paris was awarded the Aga-Khan Prize because of its role as "a successful bridge between French and Arab cultures". In 2000, Jean Nouvel received the Lion d'Or of the Venice Biennale. In 2001, he received three of the highest international awards: the Royal Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Praemium Imperiale of Japan's Fine Arts Association and the Borromini Prize for the Culture and Conference Center in Lucerne. He was appointed Docteur Honoris Causa of the Royal College of Art in London in 2002. Three years later, he received the annual prize of the Wolf Foundation in Israel "for providing a new model of contextualism and redefining the dialectic between the two salient characteristics of contemporary architecture: concreteness and ephemerality". The Agbar Tower in Barcelona was awarded the International Highrise Award 2006 in Frankfurt, "as it makes an outstanding contribution to the current debate on high-rises". Jean Nouvel was the recipient of the prestigious Pritzker Prize in 2008. In France, he has received many prizes including the Gold Medal from the French Academy of Architecture, two "Équerres d'Argent" and the National Grand Prize for Architecture.

Principal completed projects

Arab World Institute (Paris - 1987), Opera House (Lyon - 1993), Cartier Foundation (Paris - 1994), Galeries Lafayette (Berlin - 1996), Culture and Congress Center KKL (Lucerne - 2000), Court House (Nantes - 2000), Dentsu Tower (Tokyo - 2002), Agbar Tower (Barcelona - 2005), extension of the Queen Sofia Arts Center (Madrid - 2005), Quai Branly museum (Paris - 2006), Guthrie Theater (Minneapolis - 2006), Richemont headquarters (Geneva - 2006), "40 Mercer" housing building (New-York - 2008), Symphonic House DR Concert Hall (Copenhagen - 2009), Ferrari's factory (Maranello - 2009), "One New Change" (London - 2010), 100 11th avenue (New-York - 2010), Sofitel Stephansdom (Vienna - 2010), City hall (Montpellier - 2011), Doha Tower (Doha - 2011), Renaissance Fira hotel (Barcelona - 2012), mixed use high-rise building "One Central Park" (Sydney - 2014), Imagine Institute (Paris - 2014), extension of the Police headquarters & Charleroi Danses (Charleroi - 2014), housing, offices and retails tower "The White Walls" (Nicosia - 2015), Philharmonie de Paris (Paris - 2015), Louvre Abu Dhabi (Abu Dhabi - 2017).

Several realisations from Jean Nouvel were inaugurated in Europe in 2018: the office building "La Marseillaise" in Marseille, the European Patent Office in Rijswijk, near The Hague in the Netherlands (currently the thinnest and the largest office building in glass and steel in Europe), the "Château La Grâce Dieu des Prieurs" in Saint-Emilion and in October, rhinoceros, the new building of the Foundation Alda Fendi - Esperimenti in Rome.

Other large-scale projects will be inaugurated between the end of 2018 and the beginning of 2019, such as the Learning Resource Center of the University of Cyprus in Nicosia and the residential tower "Ycone" in the Confluence district in Lyon.

Projects currently under studies or under construction

"53W53, Tour de Verre" integrating the extension of the MoMA galleries (New York), National Art Museum Of China NAMOC (Beijing), the cultural complex "The Artists' Garden" (Qingdao), Pudong Art Museum (Shanghai), Star Art Museum (Shanghai), Tencent Headquarters (Guangzhou), the office towers "Hekla" (Paris) and "Duo" (Paris), the residential towers "Campuséa" (Paris), "Le Nouvel" (Kuala Lumpur), "Anderson 18" (Singapore), "Ardmore" (Singapore) and "Rosewood" (São Paulo), the hotel

and residential tower Soontareeya (Bangkok), Lux Hotel (Chengdu), hotel and residential tower Soontareeya (Bangkok) among others.

Ateliers Jean Nouvel recently won several competitions including the Ecological district and Rassuen Golf Course in Istres with Fontès Architecture (France) and the Rudy Ricciotti Agency (France), but also the Neo II project in Brussels in association with MDW Architecture (Belgium) and the Ecotone project of Antibes with Manal Rachdi - OXO architects (France).