



Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of The State of Qatar

“The Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue” hosts inspiring cultural discussions at Institut du monde arabe

Doha, Qatar, March 3, 2019: Landed earlier this year at the Institut du monde arabe (IMA) in Paris, “The Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue”, a traveling cross-cultural exhibition organised at the initiative of the Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al-Thani Museum – that features a collection of a unique assembly of artefacts reflecting the interaction of civilizations in the past while encouraging dialogue in the present – gathered its visitors during the month of February around interesting open cultural discussions that were held at the heart of the majlis, the main hub of the exhibition, and the space of hospitality and dialogue present in every home in the Arabian Gulf.

The exhibition, present at IMA until the 10th of March 2019, invites visitors to sit in the majlis to listen to stories and engage in conversations on what they see and hear; transmitting the cultural dialogue by exchanging their impressions of the exhibition and learning about how much common ground exists between different cultures.

The open discussions that were held on the carefully selected topics of "**The Power of Language in Shaping Culture**" and "**Evolving Art to Identities**", focused on the advancement and preservation of culture through language and art, giving participants an opportunity to view the world with a different lens and explore other traditions, customs, beliefs, societies, and much more.

Commenting on the exhibition’s distinguished concept, His Excellency Sheikh Mohamed bin Faisal al Thani, Member of the board of trustees of Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Museum, who attended the first cultural dialogue, said:

“Since its launch, the Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue has aimed to create a respectful and meaningful dialogue among different cultures and communities and has reflected the growing importance of museums in voicing the rich history that cultures possess. We are elated to expand our horizons and offer the public in Paris an open platform to discuss and debate on the various impactful subjects around art, language and culture in presence of respectful speakers. We believe the valuable feature of this exhibition in the form of discussions at the heart of the majlis resulted in a great exchange between the



culture veterans and the visitors, and we are proud to act as a cultural bridge bringing people together under one roof".

Through "**The Power of Language in Shaping Culture**", "The Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue" embraced the different thoughts surrounding the preservation of language as a means of preserving culture and discussed the way language and culture have developed over time and influenced each other. This open discussion also invited visitors to share their experiences and perceptions about the power that a language has in the shaping of culture, while discovering the way the language is able to form a whole generation of thoughts and stories.

The discussion was honored by the participation of renowned speakers including Mrs. Jacqueline Morand-Deviller, Associate Professor of Public Law and Political Science and Professor Emeritus at Pantheon-Sorbonne University, as well as Dr. Nasser Al Hinzab, Legal Counsel of the State of Qatar to UNESCO, who have shared their impactful opinions engaging the audience in an interactive dialogue.

Equally interesting to the visitors, the "**Evolving Art to Identities**" cultural dialogue has successfully shed light on the extent at which art can contribute to positive change among societies and the crucial role art plays in the development of cultures. Participants including Mr. Julien Borowczyk, Member of the French National Assembly, Mr. Philippe Heracles, Chairman of the Board of Directors at Le Cherche-Midi Editeur SA, Mr. Claude D'Anthenaise, Directeur of Paris Museum of Hunting and Nature, Mr. Ghaleb Bencheikh, President of the Foundation of Islam in France, Ms. Vianne Savoli, Artist and Financial Market Professional, as well as Ms. Cecile Plaisance, renowned Photographer, and Mr. Jean-Paul Scarpitta, Director and Curator, have also discussed the influence of art on shaping identities from one side and the role that the identity could have in inspiring art from another side. A connected topic that raised interesting thoughts around history, east and west.

Commenting on the mission of the exhibition, **Professor Monem Jemni, moderator of the open discussions**, said: "The majlis set-up, which is hardly known in the Western world, is the perfect facilitator for dialogue. All visitors attending, including politicians, artists, academics and journalists, expressed their views freely at an equal level."

From his part, **Mr. Julien Borowczyk, Member of the French National Assembly**, praised the importance of the initiative following his visit to the exhibition. He said: "This initiative helps us realize our vital need to exchange views and discover one another. Discussing art at the heart of the majlis gives all visitors the chance to re-identify themselves and connect with others while accepting their differences".



Mr. Ghaleb Bencheikh, President of the Foundation of Islam in France, applauded the concept of “The Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue” that is giving every visitor a voice to speak, debate, and negotiate”. He added: “In a place like the majlis, people are equally valued, and their views are highly respected. Such a great initiative happening in Paris will probably inspire opinions out there in the capital of light”.

The exhibition will host its last open discussion “**Sports as a Driver of Cultural Change**”, on March 10th, 2019 at 15:00, before traveling to other European destinations and encourage dialogue among other societies.

The exhibition has been organised in collaboration with the UNESCO Doha Office and the Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, and Institut du monde arabe, as well as under the Platinum sponsorship of Qatar Shell, Silver sponsorship of Refalo & Zammit Pace Advocates, and local sponsorships of QNB, Katara Hospitality, and Handson.

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