



Under the patronage of his Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of The State of Qatar, and Her Excellency Ms. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO

“The Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue” receives a grand opening on November 29th at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris

A travelling cross-cultural touring exhibition featuring a unique assembly of global artefacts

Doha, Qatar, November 30, 2018: Following its highly successful showcase at the Grandmaster’s Palace in Valletta, The Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue, a travelling cross-cultural exhibition that features a collection of the Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al-Thani Museum – a unique assembly of artefacts reflecting the interaction of civilizations in the past while encouraging dialogue in the present – opened up to a great start, hosting more than 200 VIP guests on the 29th of November at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, taking the audience's delight to a new height with a specially composed song 'Cultures In Dialogue', by the legendary female Qatari composer Dana Al Fardan. The official world premiere of this song was performed by numerous musicians from Qatar.

The exhibition was highly appreciated by the personages as well as international media, who have attended the first day of the opening ceremony. It was successful in distinctly establishing rich Qatari culture on the global canvas through impressive artefacts. This event also emphasized on the crucial importance that museums play in showcasing the cultural prowess in initiating dialogue.

Mr. Kees Wieringa, Director of the Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al-Thani Museum, in the presence of Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani and Mr. Xing Qu, the Deputy Director General of UNESCO for Culture, welcomed a number of journalists from highly esteemed French and international media for engaging guided tours during the day.

Preceding the inauguration delegates’ speeches, VIP guests had the opportunity to view the astonishing and exceptional collection that bear witness to hundreds of years of intercultural dialogue and interaction of civilizations, through a guided tour around the exhibition. Objects of great beauty and deep fascination including Chinese Qurans, mosque lamps made in Vienna, Persian carpets with Russian texts featuring the Virgin Mary, and mystic artefacts shared from Africa across the Arab world to India, were the prime highlights, triggering a diversification of thoughts and emotions.



H.E. Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani and Mr. Xing Qu addressed government, cultural and corporate officials from Qatar and France, representatives of a number of cultural institutions, as well as Mr. Andrew Faulkner, Chairman and Managing Director of Qatar Shell, with warm welcoming words, as they celebrated the opening of the exhibition at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

The Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue has been organized at the initiative of the Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al-Thani Museum, in collaboration with the UNESCO Doha Office, the Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, and Qatar Museums. Under the Platinum sponsorship of Qatar Shell, the Silver sponsorship of Refalo & Zammit Pace Advocates and local sponsorships of QNB and Katara Hospitality, the exhibition will stop in the UNESCO Headquarters for a duration of two weeks before moving forward to the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, for a 2-month period.

Showcasing an exceptional collection, the exhibition intends to drive visitors to sit in the majlis to listen to stories and engage in conversations on what they see; transmitting the cultural dialogue by exchanging their impressions of the exhibition and learning about other cultures and religions at first hand.

This diverse cultural exhibition recreates the atmosphere of the majlis—the space of hospitality and dialogue present in homes throughout the Arabian Gulf—offering guests the opportunity to exchange ideas about how much common ground exists between different cultures, and how these commonalities have been expressed in technology, art and culture.

Commenting on this occasion, **H.E. Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani**, said:

“We are overwhelmed to receive such a stupendous response for “Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue” event in Paris. The city is known to be a connoisseur of global art & culture and the success of this event very well resonates with its inherent philosophy of spreading peace by way of artefacts, handicrafts, arts and songs. By taking this event to various parts of the globe, we intent to spread the message of hope and positivity, by way of breath-taking artistic displays, to the global canvas and encourage visitors to respond to what they see by sharing their own stories, creating dialogue between East and West, between young and old, within a real Majlis seating. This event has also positioned Qatar firmly on the global map and reaffirmed its strength to the global audience.”

From her part, Dr. Anna Paolini, Director of **UNESCO Doha Office**, said:



“The Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue in Paris truly exemplifies how art can perfectly play the role of a critical enabler in building bilateral ties. In sync with the philosophy that Museums play a decisive role in strengthening the creative economy locally and regionally, we take immense pride in associating with this noble cause and such an exemplary initiative. Qatar possesses a great culture and it needed to be projected in the right way and the right place; hence the Majlis which did an excellent job in propagating the very notion of blending art with business to drive future growth.”

On his part, **Mr. Andrew Faulkner, Chairman and Managing Director of Qatar Shell**, said:

“This exhibition will help to build awareness of Qatar’s commitment to promoting outreach, openness, and integration through the nation’s cultural heritage, while also linking this heritage to those of other peoples and civilizations. Qatar Shell is proud to support such an initiative.”

For his part, **QNB Group Acting CEO, Abdulla Mubarak Al Khalifa**, said:

“Throughout the years, QNB Group has supported many initiatives and events that promote the rich heritage of our beloved nation, and we are very happy to help make The Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue initiative happen and continue on this path, through providing our Local sponsorship. QNB believes that culture and art communicate across barriers of language and bridges communities. By sharing the roots and values of the Qatari people with other communities outside Qatar, we can all contribute to bridging cultural understanding, promoting a peaceful co-existence, and achieving prosperity for all.”

His Excellency Sheikh Nawaf bin Jassim bin Jabor Al Thani, Chairman of Katara Hospitality, said:

“We are proud to host the gala dinner for the grand dignitaries attending The Majlis - Cultures in Dialogue exhibition opening ceremony. This is such a unique endeavor being held under the patronage of his Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of The State of Qatar, and her Excellency Mme. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO to bind two regions together. The Gala Night facilitated networking opportunities for the like-minded people to connect over cultural matters, moreover to discuss and deliberate upon the key role museums play in showcasing a region's cultural prowess.”

Noted composer, **Dana Al Fardan**, said:



“I am honored to contribute a piece of music dedicated to bridging cultures and promoting dialogue. Music is a universal language that transcends physical and cultural barriers, creating shared values and experiences that enrich the human spirit and condition. I am proud and honored to participate in this noble cause to unite humanity through the arts. This piece was composed to highlight historical commonalities between civilizations around the world. The musical features of this composition resonate between Eastern as well as Western cultural movements and traditions, with the intention of bridging the gap, and invoking a heritage based on inclusion”.

The exhibition is only the beginning of a much bigger project to connect people, beliefs and cultures by creating opportunities for respectful, yet incisive dialogues to take place. The project envisions to create a platform where relevant cultural aspects can be discussed, and original perspectives can be generated through collective thinking. The aim is to initiate meaningful connections between people and cultures and stimulate enriched dialogue around the world.

The Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue is a visitor’s experience that reveals how global perspectives can vary depending on the position of the viewer. Following Paris, the exhibition will visit several countries, including Austria, Germany, Spain, Turkey, and the UK. The tour will also include the United States by 2021.

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