

2026 Art for Tomorrow — Doha

Redesigning Dialogues

Draft Agenda*

How can societies celebrate their heritage while looking toward the future? What can established artists learn from the experiments of emerging ones? Where does design end and art begin?

This year's Art for Tomorrow will take advantage of the rich culture and institutions in Doha to create dialogues that explore inherent contrasts reflected in the city itself: between past and present, East and West, pop culture and high culture. Our conversations will consider how these dualities challenge, influence and ultimately enrich each other. In a time of increasing division, we can cultivate understanding by settling into these spaces between.

This rich program of content will be complemented by exclusive cultural visits as we venture into museums, performance spaces and design studios to see the arts in action. We will also benefit from all of the activities and participants involved in **Qatar Creates** and the second **Design Doha Biennial**, which also opens on April 12. Some speakers and delegates will then move on to Art Dubai, taking place April 16–19.

SUNDAY, APRIL 12 — afternoon

Venue: Barahat Msheireb

15:00 - 15:10 **Opening Remarks**

Achilles Tsaltas, President, Democracy & Culture Foundation

15:15 - 15:55 **Opening Panel: The Blurry Border Between Design and Art**

Wandering through design festivals or museums, or scrolling through social media feeds, you will undoubtedly be struck by the sheer beauty of the objects on display. You may also notice a distinct shift, as an increasing number of works appear to prioritize form over function, concept over practicality. Collectibles and limited-edition works are grabbing the spotlight in a sustainability-conscious era. Meanwhile, a growing number of artists lend their creative vision to brands, effortlessly shape-shifting into designers. This focus on scarcity and beauty raises a fundamental question: Where does art stop and design begin? This panel explores the critical, commercial and philosophical forces collapsing the boundary between the two fields.

- Sheikha Reem Al Thani, Deputy C.E.O. of AL RIWAQ, Public Art and Rubaiya Qatar, Qatar Museums
- Tim Marlow, Director and C.E.O., Design Museum, London
- Karim Rashid, Designer

16:00 - 16:30 Spotlight Conversation: *Carsten Höller*

16:35 - 17:10 Panel: State of Play: Designing Public Spaces

Public spaces are, by definition, places where the community comes together. And yet, in many cities, they are an afterthought of urban design. Some architects and designers argue that this is a missed opportunity for fellowship and interaction. Why choose between form and function, they say, when they can work in harmony? From sculptures that double as shelters to elaborate green courtyards and benches that look like art installations, these projects promise connection. Some balk at extravagant price tags, however, especially when public funds are involved. Are these civic vanity projects or essential urban investments?

- Stefano Boeri, Urban Planner and President, Triennale Milano (TBC)
- Nora Lawrence, Executive Director, Storm King Art Center

SUNDAY, APRIL 12 — evening

Venue: W Hotel

19:00 - 19:30 Creativity for Social Change Award

Presented by:

- Adama Sanneh, Co-Founder and C.E.O., Moleskine Foundation
- Achilles Tsaltas, President, Democracy & Culture Foundation
- Kiluanji Kia Henda, Artist

19:35 - 19:45 Performance Short

19:50 - 20:20 Keynote Conversation: *Otobong Nkanga*

20:30 - 22:00 Opening Cocktail Dinatoire

MONDAY, APRIL 13

Venue: Bharat Msheireb

9:30 - 9:45 Welcome Remarks

- Achilles Tsaltas, President, Democracy & Culture Foundation
- Kim Conniff Taber, Editorial Director, Democracy & Culture Foundation

9:50 - 10:30 Panel: Embracing Heritage With an Eye to the Future

Iconic Doha buildings like the National Museum of Qatar, known as the “Desert Rose,” and the Museum of Islamic Art are famously emblematic of the successful blending of tradition and modernity. Today, this fusion is happening at the scale of art and design, as works pay homage to local culture, craft and personal memory while simultaneously embracing contemporary techniques and technology. This regional trend speaks to a global impulse to connect to distant

homelands and childhood narratives. What are some examples of these works, and their meaning to the creator and the viewer? What do they say about both our longing for home and our pursuit of novelty?

- Takashi Arai, Photographer and Visual Artist
- Bouthayna Baltaji, Director of Museography and Heritage Museums Development, Qatar Museums

10:35 - 11:10 Conversation: Notes from Art Basel Qatar

- Wael Shawky, Artist and Artistic Director, Fire Station Doha and Art Basel Qatar

11:10 - 11:40 Coffee Break

11:40 - 11:50 Performance Short

11:55 - 12:30 Conversation: Countryside

- Samir Bantal, Director, AMO
- Rem Koolhaas, Architect

12:40 - 13:40 Parallel Sessions

13:40 - 15:00 Lunch

15:00 - 18:00 Tours of Design Doha Biennial exhibitions and other cultural highlights

TUESDAY, APRIL 14

Venue: Bharat Msheireb

9:30 - 9:45 Welcome Remarks

- Kim Conniff Taber, Editorial Director, Democracy & Culture Foundation

9:50 - 10:00 Provocation

10:05 - 10:40 Conversation : Behind the Scenes

- Susanne Bier, Filmmaker
- Gabrielle Tana, Film Producer

10:45 - 11:05 Lightning Talk

- Alicia Hansen, Founder and C.E.O., NYC Salt

11:05 - 11:35 Coffee Break

11:35 - 11:40 Performance Short

11:45 - 12:20 Panel: Architecture and the Cultural Footprint

- *Speakers to be announced*

12:25 - 13:00 "Intelligent" Art?

- Sofia Crespo, Visual Artist
- Gary Gautier Bernat, General Director, Casa Batlló, Barcelona

13:05 - 13:35 Spotlight Conversation: *Ibrahim Mahama*

13:45 - 15:00 Lunch

15:00 - 18:00 Tours of Design Doha Biennial exhibitions and other cultural highlights

20:00 - 22:00 Design Doha Prize Ceremony and Gala Dinner — *by invitation only*

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15

Venue: Bharat Msheireb

10:00 - 12:00 Special Program — to be announced

Confirmed Speakers:

Takashi Arai
Bouthayna Baltaji
Samir Bantal
Susanne Bier
Aaron Cezar
Tony Cragg
Sofia Crespo
Gary Gautier Bernat
Alicia Hansen
Kiluanji Kia Henda

Carsten Höller
Rem Koolhaas
Nora Lawrence
Ibrahim Mahama
Otolobong Nkanga
Tim Marlow
Karim Rashid
Adama Sanneh
Wael Shawky
Sheikha Reem Al Thani
Gabrielle Tana