



artfor
TOMORROW



THE
**DEMOCRACY
& CULTURE**
FOUNDATION

2026 Art for Tomorrow — Doha

Redesigning Dialogues

Programming Brief

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.

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.

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, that 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?

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?

- Notes from Art Basel Qatar
- Architecture and the Cultural Footprint
- Portrait of the Collector As A ...
- Future-Proofing the Artist's Estate
- "Intelligent" Art? A.I. and Creative License
- Cultural Insecurity: What's Safe Anyway?
- As well as Keynote Conversations, Lightning Talks, Round Tables...