



# RISING FROM THE DESERT

*Qatar: At the Cutting Edge of Architecture*

*National Museum of Qatar*

Throughout history, architecture has always been closely intertwined with the identity of a cultural group or nationality; from the naïve vernacular, to its iconic super structures. Mention the Great Pyramids of Giza, the Eiffel Tower, the Colosseum, the Empire State building, or the Kakslauttanen glass igloos in Finland, and the names invoke images and emotions, nostalgia, and in most cases, an invigorating yearning to explore specific countries.

Iconic architecture is exceptionally enticing as it identifies a place, as Ashworth says, by its “physical obtrusiveness demonstrating unambiguously to visitors and residents that something serious is happening to a city”. The commodity that draws visitors to a place is attributed by the authenticity of it, is the place memorable and is it a celebration of the culture, food, people, history, diversity and architecture.

## **NATIONAL MUSEUM OF QATAR**

As a child, I had family living in Namibia and my grandmother received a desert rose as

a gift from them. I was totally mesmerised by the structural formation of these crystallised rosette clusters. The National Museum of Qatar – designed by renowned French Architect, Jean Nouvel, – is inspired by this flower-like synthesis of mineral crystals eventuate only in arid coastal regions, through sea spray, wind and sand acting over millennia, nature itself creates this surprisingly complex and poetic architectural structure. This building in my opinion represents everything good architecture should represent, to create a space that inspires capture the imagination reminding us of the concentrated qualities

that we crave and are deficient in our life, creating an escape from our everyday fear, the mundane and the ordinary. This building encapsulates the words of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe beautifully, when he said that "Music is liquid architecture; Architecture is frozen music." Nouvel explains the execution from the Design Rational as follows: "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 outsize 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 *Howsh*. Following the time-honoured template, this is a central courtyard surrounded by buildings where travellers would come and unload their merchandise."-sic.

Qatar has an economic background that could be divided in three categories, firstly their pearl and fishing trade dating back to the Roman times. Secondly just after the second World War the discovery of oil followed by the discovery of gas about twenty years after that, today 70% of the total government revenue depends on the exploitation of petroleum and natural gas. This brought enormous change to the country in development commerce and tourism. With a population of just 2.8 million, Qatar is the richest country in the world today, according to GDP per capita. Today Qatar is the world leader in fields as variegated as energy, technology, education and communications. Qatar has invested in phenomenal architecture, attracting visitors from far and wide.



*Museum of Islamic Art*

### MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART

The Museum of Islamic Art was designed by Chinese-born architect, most famous for his design of the glass pyramid at the Louvre in Paris. To emphasize the importance of this building, I.M. Pei was commissioned out of retirement at the age of 91 to design this architectural treasure. Nestled on one end of a seven-kilometre-long Corniche in Doha, the Museum occupies an area of 45 000 square meters on an artificial peninsula on the south-end of Doha-Bay. The Museum consists of parks, workshops for schools and general public and a library in both Arabic and English, providing information about Islamic Art.

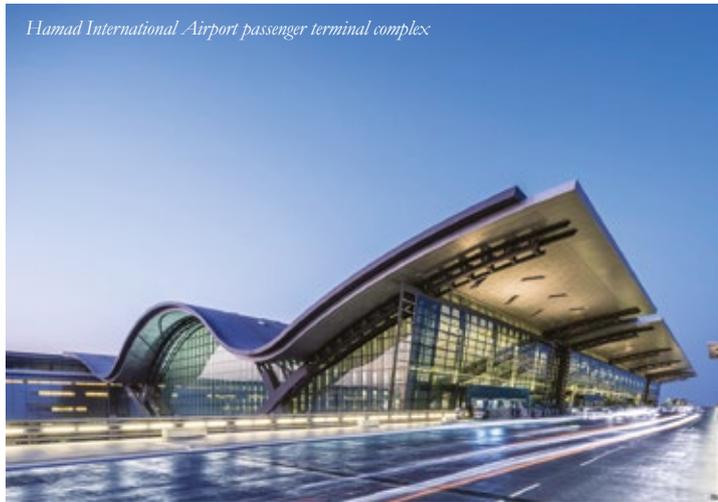
### BURJ DOHA

Burj Doha is a 238-meter, 46-story tall building, also designed by Jean Nouvel and the sixth tallest building in Doha. This building was designed to create office space for companies that wish to operate in the diverse business district. What makes this building unique is that it is the first skyscraper with internal diagrid columns, this forms an 'X' shape that creates an eye-catching cylindrical façade. The design is a celebration between the ancient Mashrabiya Islamic and modern design. Screens also in an Islamic design, create a shaded outer skin that helps to regulate temperature and reduces sand residue on the glass façade of the building.



*Burj Doha*

*Hamad International Airport passenger terminal complex*



*Qatar National Convention Centre*



*Al Janoub Stadium*



*Lusail Stadium*

**HAMAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

Hamad International Airport passenger terminal designed by HOK, is an architectural structure which has drawn world-wide attention. The contemporary design mimics the rhythm of the ocean waves and the curve silhouettes of the sand dunes creating a resonating image that is Qatar Airways home and the countries gateway to the world. This airport has a capacity to handle around 50 million passengers on a yearly basis, with 41 unrestricted contact gates.

**QATAR NATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE**

(QNCC) consists of a 4,000-seat theatre, a 2,300-seat theatre, three auditoria and 52 flexible meeting rooms. Renowned Architect Arata Isozaki's design concept was inspired by Sidra tree. In

the desert, a tree represents a sheltered beacon of comfort, where poets and scholars can gather and share knowledge, this is why the façade portrays the figure of two intertwined trees branching out to support the exterior canopy.

Qatar is also the host for the 2022 FIFA World Cup and this event also boasts some of the most inspiring designs.

**AL JANOUB STADIUM**

Al Janoub Stadium, inspired by the dhow - the Arabian pearl fishing boat that is of great cultural significance and representation of the heritage of Qatar and the Al Wakrah region. The design was done by Zaha Hadid Architects in association with AECOM. To interoperate and reflect the heritage the use of colours, patterns and the use of timber and other materials were cleverly used to help reduce and embodied the carbon footprint of

the structure. Following the tournament, the stadium's capacity will be reduced to 20 000 seats removed, donated and reconstructed in coordination with FIFA in countries that require assistance in developing sporting infrastructure.

**LUSAIL STADIUM**

The Lusail Stadium designed by Foster + Partners will be the centrepiece of the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar games. Located nine miles north of central Doha. Aside from hosting both the opening and the closing games of the 2022 FIFA World Cup tournament, the stadium will also be a catalyst for the development of Lusail City. Following the tournament, the majority of the seats will be removed, and the stadium will be transformed into a community centre. A health clinic, school, café and housing will be built under the roof of the stadium, along with a community football pitch.🏠