

NEWS



The National Museum of Qatar. Photo: Iwan Baan.
November 05, 2018 at 11:10am

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF QATAR TO OPEN IN MARCH

Qatar Museums, the government organization that oversees the development of cultural institutions such as the Museum of Islamic Art and Mathaf: the Arab Museum of Modern Art, announced today that the Jean Nouvel–designed National Museum of Qatar will open to the public on March 28, 2019. The new 430,000-square-foot building will incorporate the restored historic palace of the son of the founder of modern Qatar, Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani (1880–1957). The palace was formerly the home of the royal family, the seat of government, and the site of the original National Museum.

The new institution will be organized into three “chapters”—Beginnings, Life in Qatar, and Building the Nation—that will be presented in eleven galleries. The visitor will be invited to take a chronological journey that starts in the geological period, long before the peninsula was inhabited by humans, and continues to the present day. Oral histories, archival images, artworks, music, costumes, and an array of archaeological and other heritage objects are featured in the museum’s collection.

Artworks commissioned for the institution include pieces by the Qatari artist Ali Hassan, the Qatari artist and arts patron Sheikh Hassan bin Mohammed bin Ali Al Thani, the Syrian artist Simone Fattal, and the Iraqi artist Ahmed Al Bahrani, as well as a monumental installation by the French artist Jean-Michel Othoniel. Othoniel’s work comprises 114 individual fountains set within a lagoon. Their streams are designed to evoke the fluid forms of Arabic calligraphy.

“The National Museum will give visitors an unprecedented museum experience, with people at the heart of its vision and development—this is a museum that narrates the story of the people of Qatar and shares this story in an innovative, holistic, and immersive way,” the museum’s director, Sheikha Amna bint Abdulaziz bin Jassim Al Thani, said in a statement. “At the core of the museum’s permanent exhibits and accessible to the public is a digital archive of thousands of images, videos, and documents from Qatar and abroad. And all these elements will be made accessible to as many people as possible.”

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