

Embassy of Japan Celebrates Bilateral Harmony at Inaugural Illustration Contest Award Ceremony

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By Haroon Rashid Qureshi

Doha, Qatar, October 30, 2025: The Embassy of Japan in the State of Qatar hosted the 2025 Japan-Qatar Illustration Contest Award Ceremony on October 29, marking the successful conclusion of the first-ever contest. The event served as a vibrant platform for cultural exchange, reflecting the long-standing friendship and artistic collaboration between Japan and Qatar. The contest, themed “Draw a Japanese element in a Qatari setting,” attracted more than 130 entries from artists across Qatar, showcasing the creativity of participants from diverse ages and backgrounds. The winning artworks beautifully blended Japanese and Qatari cultural elements, symbolizing harmony, respect, and mutual appreciation between the two nations.

In his remarks, HE Naoto Hisajima, Ambassador of Japan to Qatar,

commended the participants for their outstanding creativity and expressed hope that such initiatives would further strengthen bilateral relations. He said the contest had received an overwhelming response and that the Embassy plans to make it an annual event with even greater participation in the future. Commenting on the artworks displayed at the event, he noted that all were from this year's submissions and that future contests would continue to encourage fresh and innovative contributions. Ambassador Hisajima confirmed that around 130 contestants participated across two categories, general and under-13, reflecting the enthusiastic response from Qatar's creative community.

The first prize went to young Qatari artist Ms. Moza Al Marri for her digital artwork titled "Qahwa wa Chai (Coffee and Tea)." The judging panel, which included prominent Qatari artist Ms. Kholoud Al-Ali, praised the participants for their creative works that captured the elegance of Japanese aesthetics alongside the warmth of Qatari culture. Speaking after receiving the award, Ms. Al Marri said she was deeply inspired by Japanese culture and created her artwork to represent hospitality as a shared value between the two nations. "The title combines Arabic and Japanese words, 'Qahwa' meaning Arabic coffee and 'Chai' meaning tea in Japanese. I imagined two elderly women, one Qatari and one Japanese, sitting together, sharing coffee and tea as a symbol of friendship, warmth, and tradition," she explained.

She added that before beginning her work, she researched the history of diplomatic relations between Japan and Qatar, which began in 1972, and was inspired by the cultural similarities between the two countries. Ms. Al Marri, who is currently a senior student of Interior Design at Virginia Commonwealth University of the Arts in Qatar, said her academic training and presentation experience helped her express ideas clearly and confidently through art. Recently returning from Japan after a study trip related to Expo 2026, she described the visit as a valuable opportunity to witness cultural exchange firsthand, recalling how Japanese visitors enjoyed Qatari henna art at the Qatar Pavilion.

Offering advice to young people, Ms. Al Marri encouraged them to be confident and take part in public events, saying, "Don't be shy to

present your ideas and show your work. Every interaction is a chance to grow and gain experience.”

The contest was co-organized by Geekdom, Nakama, and the Japanese Club at Qatar University, with support from sponsors including Teyseer Motors Suzuki, FNAC Qatar, Daiso Japan, and North Café. Ambassador Hisajima expressed appreciation to the partners and sponsors for their valuable contributions and commitment to making the event a success, emphasizing that such initiatives play a key role in strengthening mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and Qatar. The beautiful evening concluded with refreshments specially prepared by the Ambassador’s chef Kameyama, adding a warm and personal touch to the memorable occasion.

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