
Doha Design District and VCUarts Qatar Unite to Nurture Qatar's Creative Talent



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Doha, Qatar – 21 January 2026: Doha Design District (DDD) and Qatar Foundation partner university Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar) have officially partnered in plans to open a dedicated multifunctional design hub in the heart of Msheireb Downtown Doha. This strategic partnership brings the university's creative research

and academic excellence into the city's vibrant design center, providing a dedicated space for community and industry focused creative innovation.

Located within DDD headquarters, the VCUarts Qatar multifunctional space will extend the university's academic, creative, and research activities beyond Education City and into the heart of the city. The initiative enhances engagement with Qatar's wider cultural ecosystem and contributes to the ongoing development of Doha Design District as a leading regional hub for creativity and design.

Amir Berbić, Dean of VCUarts Qatar, said: “The establishment of a VCUarts Qatar creative hub within Doha Design District reflects VCUarts Qatar's deep commitment to supporting Qatar's vision for a thriving, interconnected creative economy. It will serve as a visible platform for academic activity, creative research, and community education. VCUarts Qatar has long been a catalyst for artistic excellence, experimentation, and global dialogue. By expanding into Msheireb Downtown Doha, we are creating new pathways for collaboration, community engagement, and opportunities for our faculty, students and alumni to shape the future of design in the region.”

Msheireb Properties CEO, Eng. Ali Al Kuwari, said: “The establishment of the VCUarts Qatar annex within Doha Design District represents a significant milestone in our commitment to nurturing Qatar's creative ecosystem. By bringing academic excellence into the heart of Msheireb

Downtown Doha, we are bridging the essential connection between learning and practice, theory and application.”

“Situated within the world’s first smart and sustainable city regeneration, this collaboration reinforces our vision of DDD as a knowledge hub where creative talent can develop, experiment, and engage with industry. Education is central to building a sustainable design economy, and this partnership creates meaningful pathways for students, alumni, and practitioners to shape the future of design in Qatar and the region,” he added.

Dr. Hend Zainal, Executive Director of Strategy, Management and Partnerships at Qatar Foundation’s Higher Education Division, said: “At Qatar Foundation, we believe that education reaches its full potential when woven into the fabric of the community. The partnership between VCUarts Qatar and Doha Design District stands as a testament to our commitment to a multidisciplinary ecosystem that transcends traditional learning. By bringing creative innovation into the heart of Msheireb Downtown Doha, VCUarts Qatar and Doha Design District are working collaboratively to provide the community with a platform to create, experiment and learn together.”

Education forms a cornerstone of Doha Design District’s strategic positioning as Qatar’s leading hub for design excellence. Through partnerships such as this collaboration with VCUarts Qatar,

DDD connects academic research with real-world industry application, activating spaces with purpose-driven programming that supports talent development and long-term ecosystem building. This focus on education distinguishes DDD as a knowledge platform where learning, experimentation, and applied design converge, supporting the growth of local and regional creative talent in alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030's objectives for innovation-led development and cultural advancement.

The activation at Doha Design District builds on VCUarts Qatar's longstanding collaboration with DDD and Msheireb Properties. Together, the partners are expanding opportunities for cultural exchange and increasing community access to the arts and design experiences. Moreover, it aligns with VCUarts Qatar's objectives to broaden education and creative research, increase visibility, and develop community connections.

VCUarts Qatar and Doha Design District have partnered on numerous initiatives, ranging from sustainable bird sanctuaries to student-led window displays in association with Liberty London. During the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, VCUarts Qatar joined Msheireb Downtown Doha to showcase student installations in the city center, exploring the intersection of local heritage and global sport. This partnership was highlighted by David Beckham's participation, who met with the student designers to champion Qatar's creativity on the world stage. Previous faculty-led

exhibitions with Msheireb Museums include Strange Wonders & Mapping Migration Memories.