

## Art Basel Qatar closes inaugural edition to exceptional local, regional, and international response



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Over 17,000 visitors attended the inaugural edition at M7 and Doha Design District across VIP and public days, alongside thousands more who visited the fair's Special Projects across Msheireb. •

Nearly half of the private collectors and patrons in attendance hailed from the MENASA region, alongside strong participation from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. • Galleries reported meaningful engagement with new collectors and institutions globally, particularly from Qatar,

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Europe leading to sales across the spectrum of price points. •

Representatives from more than 85 museums and foundations worldwide attended, positioning the fair as a significant site for institutional discovery and engagement. Art Basel today concluded the first edition of Art Basel Qatar, successfully establishing a new long-term platform for artistic exchange, institutional engagement, and market development in the MENASA region. Presented in partnership with Qatar Sports Investments (QSI) and QC+, the inaugural edition was met with an exceptional response from Doha, the wider region, and the international art community, reflecting the strength, relevance, and ambition of Art Basel's presence in Qatar. Throughout the week, galleries reported forging connections with new audiences – particularly from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Europe. These conversations translated into steady commercial momentum across the fair, with galleries noting strong interest and sales to prominent regional and international private and institutional collections. Demand was particularly pronounced for artists from the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, and the Global South, with galleries citing focused attention on solo presentations and significant works by both established and emerging voices. The breadth of acquisition interest reflected the strength of the region's collector base and its active engagement with global artistic practices. His Highness The Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and other high level officials visited the fair, including: Her Highness Sheikha

Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation and United Nations SDG Advocate; His Highness Sheikh Jassim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Personal Representative of His Highness the Amir; His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs; Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums; among many other official Ministers. Representatives from more than 85 museums and foundations worldwide attended Art Basel Qatar, reflecting strong institutional engagement from Qatar, the wider MENASA region, and across Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Institutions in attendance included Art Mill Museum, Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art (Qatar); Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Louvre Abu Dhabi, Sharjah Art Foundation, and Jameel Arts Centre (UAE); MISK Art Institute (Saudi Arabia); and international institutions such as Pinault Collection, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Palais de Tokyo, Fondation Beyeler, LUMA Foundation, Dia Art Foundation, Tate, Serpentine Galleries, Whitney Museum of American Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, MoMA PS1, New Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, He Art Museum, and Leeum Samsung Museum of Art, among others. Noah Horowitz, Chief Executive Officer of Art Basel, said: “The inaugural edition of Art Basel Qatar has been a powerful validation of a shared vision. With our partners Qatar Sports Investments (QSI) and QC+, we have laid the foundations of a fair worthy of the MENASA region’s

dynamism and potential, and one positioned to support the elevation of artists and the development of market infrastructure for the long term. The depth and quality of engagement reported by our galleries, and the energy evident across the fair, Msheireb, and Doha more widely, have been exceptional. I would like to congratulate everyone involved in this endeavor—in particular the artists, galleries, and collectors who made this possible—and to thank our partners in Qatar and across the Art Basel platform. We are thrilled to continue our work together in the years ahead.” Vincenzo de Bellis, Chief Artistic Officer and Global Director of Art Basel Fairs, said: “This week has affirmed what we hoped Art Basel Qatar could be. From the outset, the ambition was not to replicate an existing fair model, but to respond meaningfully to context—to the artists, the city, and the wider region. Seeing how audiences engaged with focused presentations, thematic narratives, and projects unfolding across Msheireb and beyond has been deeply rewarding. The way the fair extended into the city, and the visibility given to artists from the region within a global framework, felt both natural and necessary. I would like to thank Wael Shawky, my close collaborator and the Artistic Director of Art Basel Qatar, for his inspirational creative leadership, as well as our partners in Qatar for their trust and commitment throughout this process. That spirit of collaboration—and the conversations it enabled—is what gives this platform its relevance and will continue to shape its future.” Wael Shawky, Artistic Director, Art

Basel Qatar 2026, said: “Art Basel Qatar has presented a new way forward for the art market. By building on and complementing the strong cultural and artistic infrastructure already in place here, the fair enhances the ecosystem and offers artists real opportunities to grow their practices. Seeing the artist-led presentation format resonate so clearly this week has been incredibly rewarding, and it reinforces my belief that this approach can meaningfully shape future editions of Art Basel Qatar and, more broadly, how the art market evolves. It’s been an immense privilege to work closely with all the galleries and artists, as well as the teams at Art Basel and our partners in Qatar on this incredible first edition of Art Basel Qatar.” Bringing together 87 galleries from 31 countries and territories, including 16 first-time Art Basel exhibitors, Art Basel Qatar presented a tightly curated program that placed regional artists and narratives at the center of its inaugural edition, while situating them in dialogue with global contemporary practice. Across the fair, audiences encountered a considered mix of Modern and contemporary solo presentations, alongside new commissions and large-scale, site-responsive works across media. Art Basel Qatar’s Special Projects featured a series of ten ambitious installations and performances staged across Doha, extending the fair beyond the exhibition halls and into key cultural sites. Highlights included site-responsive works and live performances by Abraham Cruzvillegas, Nour Jaouda, Hassan Khan, Nalini Malani, Bruce Nauman, Khalil Rabah, Sweat Variant (Okwui Okpokwasili

and Peter Born), and Rayyane Tabet, engaging with themes of memory, identity, language, and transformation, reinforcing Art Basel Qatar's commitment to commissioning new work and activating the city as part of the fair experience. Among these, Jenny Holzer's SONG, unveiled at the Museum of Islamic Art on February 2 and presented as a nightly projection on the museum's façade throughout the fair week, stood out as a landmark public intervention. Art Basel's flagship talks program, Conversations, launched its first Qatar edition in collaboration with Qatar Creates Talks, opening with a panel featuring Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa Bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Maja Hoffman, and Hans Ulrich Obrist. Held at M7 across three days, the program welcomed nearly 2,500 attendees, marking the highest average attendance per session in the history of Art Basel Conversations. Bringing together artists, curators, collectors, and cultural leaders—including Mohammed Hafiz, Ruba Katrib, Lina Lazaar, Glenn Lowry, and Rachel Whiteread—the program addressed the region's evolving arts ecosystem and its global intersections. The fair unfolded alongside a dynamic program of exhibitions and initiatives across Qatar's museums and cultural institutions, including the Museum of Islamic Art, Mathaf: Museum of Modern Arab Art, the National Museum of Qatar, ALRIWAQ, and the Fire Station, reinforcing the country's position as an active center for artistic production, scholarship, and international collaboration. Art Basel Qatar, presented with Visit Qatar as lead partner, held its

inaugural edition from February 5–7, 2026, with VIP Days on February 3–4 across M7 and Doha Design District. Dates for the 2027 edition will be announced in due course.