

Art Basel Qatar

PRESS RELEASE

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

- 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.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Art Basel

Founded in 1970 by gallerists from Basel, Art Basel today stages the world's premier art shows for Modern and contemporary art, sited in Basel, Miami Beach, Hong Kong, Paris, and Qatar. Defined by its host city and region, each show is unique, which is reflected in its participating galleries, artworks presented, and the content of parallel programming produced in collaboration with local institutions for each edition. Art Basel's engagement has expanded through new digital platforms including Zero 10 and the Art Basel App, and initiatives such as the *Art Basel and UBS Global Art Market Report* and *Survey of Global Collecting*, Art Basel Awards, and Art Basel Shop. For further information, please visit artbasel.com.

About Art Basel Qatar

Debuting in Doha in February 2026, Art Basel Qatar will embed itself in Qatar's vibrant cultural landscape and provide an unparalleled platform to showcase leading galleries and artistic talent from the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, and further afield. The new fair is the centerpiece of a one-of-a-kind partnership between Art Basel; its parent company MCH Group; Qatar Sports Investments (QSI), a major investor in sports, culture, entertainment and lifestyle; and QC+, a strategic and creative collective specializing in cultural commerce.

About Qatar Sports Investments (QSI)

Qatar Sports Investments (QSI) is a leading, global strategic investment group focused on world-class assets across sport, entertainment, lifestyle, and culture. Founded in 2004, QSI brings hands-on expertise, innovative capital solutions, and a long-term vision to each of its investments. Its portfolio includes the iconic football club Paris Saint-Germain (PSG), the global professional padel tour Premier Padel, and the historic Portuguese football club Sporting Clube de Braga (SC Braga). With a proven track record of transformative impact, QSI continues to shape the future of cultural and entertainment experiences worldwide.

About QC+

QC+ is a strategy group that brings culture to life through experiences that connect and inspire. We merge cultural insight with innovation, positioning culture as a catalyst for creative and commercial growth. Through impactful programmes, activations and professional services, we open up new pathways for value and engagement across tourism, hospitality, retail, and the wider cultural economy. Our expertise spans food and beverage, event hosting within our iconic locations, and art and design consultancy, through to retail and merchandising, product development, and large-scale cultural land development and rejuvenation projects.

Our in-house portfolio includes MICHELIN-awarded restaurants such as IDAM by Alain Ducasse, celebrated Qatari chef Noof Al Marri, and Qatar Creates.

We don't just preserve culture - we cultivate it. This is The Art of Cultural Commerce™.

Partners

Art Basel Qatar's Lead Partner is **Visit Qatar**.

Visit Qatar is the main marketing and promotional arm of Qatar Tourism, dedicated to promoting and expanding tourism in Qatar by cultivating its rich culture, developing thrilling attractions, enhancing Qatar's calendar, becoming the leading MICE destination in the region, and diversifying events and luxury experiences. Visit Qatar is rooted in Service Excellence, boosting the entire tourism value chain, and increasing local and international visitor demand in Qatar. Through our network of international offices in priority markets, cutting-edge digital platforms, and marketing campaigns, Visit Qatar is expanding Qatar's presence globally and enhancing the tourism sector.

As the Lead Partner for Art Basel Qatar, Visit Qatar curates a welcoming space that brings together conversation, creativity, and cuisine, offering a glimpse of Qatar's spirit and contemporary identity. Through this collaboration, Visit Qatar reinforces the nation's position not only as a premier travel destination but as a place to live, create and imagine new possibilities.

For more information, visit www.visitqatar.com.

Art Basel Qatar's Premium Partner is **Qatar Airways**.

Named the World's Best Airline a record ninth time at the 2025 Skytrax World Airline Awards, Qatar Airways leverages its network of over 170 destinations to connect people, places, and cultures. As Art Basel's Premium Partner, the national airline of The State of Qatar showcases its ability to be a catalyst for discovery and cultural dialogue. This long-term alliance sees the airline support all of the fair's prestigious annual exhibitions – in Basel, Paris, Hong Kong, Miami Beach, as well as its newly launched edition in Qatar, marking an exciting introduction of the renowned fair's debut in The Middle East.

Additionally, Art Basel Qatar's Associate Partners are **UBS**, **Audemars Piguet**, and **BMW**; its Official Logistics Partner is **GWC**; its Official Partners are **Media City Qatar** and **Zegna**; and its Official Hotel Partner is **Rosewood Doha**.

Art Basel's Global Lead Partner is **UBS**.

For more information, please visit artbasel.com/partners.

Upcoming Art Basel shows

Hong Kong, March 27–29, 2026

Basel, June 18–21, 2026

Paris, October 23–25, 2026

Miami Beach, December 4–6, 2026

Qatar, dates for the 2027 edition to be announced

Media Information Online

Press releases and high-resolution images can be downloaded directly from artbasel.com/press. Journalists can subscribe to our media mailings to receive information on Art Basel.

For the latest updates on Art Basel, visit artbasel.com, find us on Facebook at facebook.com/artbasel, or follow @artbasel on Instagram, Twitter, Weibo, and WeChat.

Press Contacts

Art Basel, Darah Ghanem

press@artbasel.com

Brunswick Arts, Darrell Rocha
artbaselqatar@brunswickgroup.com

MCH Group, Lucia Uebersax
media@mch-group.com

Qatar Sports Investments (QSI), Fiona Cumberland
fcumberland@qsi.com.qa

QC+, Megan Sprenger
megan.sprenger@finnpartners.com