PRESS RELEASE
17 September 2018

THE MAJLIS - CULTURES IN DIALOGUE
18 September – 28 October 2018
Grand Master’s Palace | Valletta, Malta

From left to right:
Mr Hassan Al Saiqal, Government relations Qatar Shell; Mr Hussain Rashid Al Kubaisi; Mr Rashid Al-Sulaiti, Deputy General Manager Qatar Shell; H.E Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali, Minister of Culture and Sports; H.E Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al-Thani, Chairman FBQ Museum; H.E. Dr. Hamad Bin Abdulaziz Al-Kuwari, Minister of State of Qatar; Mr. Abdulla Khalid Al-Derham, Chargé d’Affaires to the Embassy of Qatar in Malta; H.E Sheikh Mohammed Bin Faisal Al Thani, Vice Chairman Al Faisal Holding; Mr. Mubarak Mohammed Al-Khater, Diplomatic Attache, Embassy of Qatar in Malta

Under the patronage of:
His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar
Her Excellency Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta
Maltese National Commission for UNESCO
The Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al-Thani Museum in Doha, State of Qatar, is proud to announce the first presentation of its exciting international touring exhibition *The Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue*, from 18 September to 28 October 2018 at the Grand Master’s Palace in Valletta, Malta.

Based on the concept of the traditional space of learning, discussion, dialogue and sharing present in every home in the Arabian Gulf, *The Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue* will be presented at various major venues in Valletta, Paris, Vienna and throughout Europe. The exhibition itself represents the first part of a wider project that seeks to connect people, beliefs and cultures by offering a platform for respectful, yet incisive dialogue.

*The Majlis - Cultures in Dialogue* is organized at the initiative of the Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al-Thani Museum, in collaboration with Qatar Museums, UNESCO Doha Office and the Qatar National Committee for Education, Culture and Science and Qatar Shell. It is presented for the first time in Malta under the Patronage of Her Excellency Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, the President of Malta, His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, and UNESCO Malta with the endorsement of Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture.

A *majlis* is the social space present in homes throughout the Arabian Gulf. For hundreds of years and up to the present day, it has been a setting for hospitality and dialogue, where families welcome visitors bearing stories and exotic gifts from their homelands, where children learn from their elders, and where communities gather to make decisions, great and small.

For the first time, *The Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue* will offer European audiences the experience of a real majlis. Visitors will be encouraged to sit, listen to stories and exchange ideas with each other and with scholars on what they see, discover and experience in the displays. Each visitor will have a unique experience at the exhibition; the same object will trigger different thoughts and emotions in each individual. The majlis, a space for encounters and the transmission of knowledge, will provide the captivating scene for sharing these experiences. This will be supplemented by organized activities such as panels, interactive films, lectures, storytelling and more.

Persian carpets featuring the Virgin Mary, mystic artifacts shared from Africa across the Arab world to India, Chinese Qurans, mosque lamps made in Vienna... these selected artefacts are a
testimony to the beauty that has resulted from centuries of intercultural dialogue. They are at the core of fascinating stories that cover the full range of human experience, referencing events from different religions or holy books, relating conceptions of the world and the universe, illustrating matters of power and politics, and narrating tales of love, war and peace.

Publication

The exhibition The Majlis – Cultures in Dialogue will be accompanied by a full-color, hardcover photo book in English published by Skira Editore.

Quotes

H.E. Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta said:

“We must work together to celebrate diversity in all its forms. To achieve this, it is essential for us to intensify intercultural encounters and interfaith dialogue and to keep reaching out across the borders and beyond the barriers that artificially constrain us – especially by empowering young people and providing safe and welcoming spaces where their voices can be heard.”

H.E. Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Bin Faisal Al Thani said:

“By understanding and embracing heritage, we become aware of the things we have in common, an awareness which in turn inspires a sense of belonging to something much bigger—a sense of identity and unity. It is my hope that by sharing objects which connect peoples with their past, The Majlis - Cultures in Dialogue will be both a fitting celebration of this heritage and a catalyst for further dialogue in the future. ”

Kees Wieringa, Director of the Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Museum, said:

“The Majlis - Cultures in Dialogue, is about mutual understanding. It is about what we share together as humanity. It is about strengthening bonds between countries and people. It is about cultural heritage. It is about respect. It is about cultural diversity. It is about equality. It is about unity in diversity. It is about peace.”

Andrew Faulkner, Chairman and Managing Director, Qatar Shell Companies said:

“This exhibition will help to build awareness of Qatar’s commitment to promoting outreach, openness, and integration through the nation’s cultural heritage, while also linking this heritage to those of other peoples and civilizations. Qatar Shell is proud to support such an initiative. ”

Michael Collis, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, BNF Bank, said:

“By supporting cultural events such as this, BNF Bank is making a commitment to building stronger communities. As the world becomes increasingly connected, the Bank acknowledges that cultivating different cultures and their collaboration, is an essential to contribution to economic and social cohesion. Culture together with education, heritage and philanthropy form a strong
part of the Bank’s Corporate Social Responsibility strategy and we are therefore proud to contribute to this prestigious exhibition which encourages cultural dialogue and diversity.”