

**THE NATIONAL PAVILION OF QATAR AT THE 61ST INTERNATIONAL
ART EXHIBITION – LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA ANNOUNCES**

***untitled 2026 (a gathering of remarkable people);
Rirkrit Tiravanija, Sophia Al-Maria, Tarek Atoui, Alia Farid, Fadi Kattan***

The project, led by artist Rirkrit Tiravanija, will bring together artists, musicians, and chefs from across the Arab world to activate the site of the future Qatar Pavilion in the Giardini della Biennale

Featured artists include Qatari-American artist Sophia Al-Maria, Lebanese artist Tarek Atoui, and Kuwaiti-Puerto Rican artist Alia Farid, alongside renowned Palestinian Chef Fadi Kattan

Commissioner: Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani

Curators: Tom Eccles and Ruba Katrib

Exhibitor: National Pavilion of Qatar

Produced by: Qatar Museums

Presented by: Rubaiya Qatar



Left to right: Fadi Kattan (© Elias Halabi), Sophia Al-Maria, Tom Eccles, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Tarek Atoui, Ruba Katrib (© Brigitte Lacombe), Alia Farid (© Myriam Boulos)

[PRESS IMAGES AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

DOHA, 13 APRIL 2026 — The National Pavilion of Qatar today announced details of its presentation for the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, commissioned by Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson, Qatar Museums. *untitled 2026 (a gathering of remarkable people); Rirkrit Tiravanija, Sophia Al-Maria, Tarek Atoui, Alia Farid, Fadi Kattan* builds on artist Rirkrit Tiravanija's decades-long practice of inviting collaborators to activate his architectural and spatial scenarios. For the 61st International Art Exhibition, Rirkrit Tiravanija has designed a tent-like structure to serve as a

place for cultural exchange, with a film by Qatari-American artist Sophia Al-Maria, live performances organized by Lebanese artist Tarek Atoui, a large-scale sculpture by Kuwaiti-Puerto Rican artist Alia Farid, and a culinary programme of Middle Eastern cuisine designed by Palestinian chef Fadi Kattan.

Produced by Qatar Museums and presented by Rubaiya Qatar (Qatar's contemporary art quadrennial), *a gathering of remarkable people* is co-curated by Tom Eccles (Executive Director, Center for Curatorial Studies and the Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College) and Ruba Katrib (Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, MoMA PS1). It will be presented in the Giardini della Biennale on the site of the future permanent Qatar Pavilion designed by Lina Ghotmeh — Architecture.

Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani said, "On the global stage of the Venice Biennale, this exhibition demonstrates Qatar's unwavering belief in the power of culture to bring people together and to create space for reflection, connection, and affirmation of our shared humanity. Qatar is proud to provide a platform for the creative talent of our nation and the Arab world. Together, these artists and their work highlight the importance of resilience in a complicated time, empowering communities, inspiring generations, and strengthening our combined heritage."

Drawing on diverse cultures from the Arab world and modelled after Qatari gathering spaces, the temporary structure will welcome the public to experience a range of cultural offerings.

Co-curators Tom Eccles and Ruba Katrib said, "We are proud that *a gathering of remarkable people* builds upon the presentation of Rirkrit Tiravanija's work in Doha, as part of Rubaiya Qatar. The engaging, participatory nature of this new, expansive work, including its desire to nourish both the spirit and the body, will be carried forward by the outstanding artistic collaborators who will bring the exhibition to life in Venice. By including artists, musicians, poets, and chefs, the exhibition proves that culture is the indelible link between us all. Bringing people together at this moment is more important than ever. In fact, it is essential."

Rirkrit Tiravanija said, "I feel honoured to work with Qatar Museums, the Rubaiya Qatar team, and all the artists who will be contributing to this experience in Venice. Sophia Al-Maria, Tarek Atoui, Alia Farid and Fadi Kattan represent different aspects of Arab culture, which will be united at the Qatar Pavilion to show how we all can come together."

Art installations and activations will include:

- an experimental narrative film by Qatari-American artist Sophia Al-Maria, in which her protagonist goes on a dream-like journey that delves into the transformative possibilities of music and sound.
- *Jerrican* (2026), a large-scale sculpture by Alia Farid from her series of larger-than-life vessels used to store and carry water in the Gulf. Farid's versions are enormous but hollow and light, molded in lacquered fiberglass and fabricated using the same method as the decorative casings for public drinking fountains that have become a distinctive feature of the urban landscape across the Arabian Gulf.
- improvisational collaborations arranged by Tarek Atoui with musicians and poets, responding to field recordings, archival sources, and other sonic elements from across the Arab world.
- a culinary programme designed by Fadi Kattan, which highlights chefs from the MENA region whose cuisine sits at the intersection of preservation and innovation, with menus often centered on a single ingredient to trace the cross-cultural impact of migration and trade.

Opening Programming

Throughout *vernissage* (6–8 May) and opening weekend (9–10 May), programming for *a gathering of remarkable people* will include musical performances arranged by Tarek Atoui that are inspired by the structures of the *takht* (classical Arabic orchestra) and the *wasla* (a musical suite or sequence). Improvisational and durational in nature, the performances will demonstrate how Arabic concerts historically took place. Under Fadi Kattan's direction, chefs from Qatar and the Gulf will reinterpret *harees /jareesh*.

Featured artists include musicians Gobi Drab (flutes, vocals, Austria), Tomás Gouband (percussion, France/Algeria), Mazen Kerbaj (trumpet, electronics, Lebanon), Aya Metwaly (vocals, electronics, Egypt), Sarah Ourahman (cello, vocals, electronics, UK/Algeria), Naghib Shehbenzadeh (percussion, Iran), Vivian Wang (vocals, electronics, Singapore) along with culinary offerings by chefs and authors Noor Murad (Bahrain) and Majed Ali Almatrooshi (United Arab Emirates), chef Noof Al Marri of the Desert Rose Café at the National Museum of Qatar (Qatar), and mixologists Anna Patrowicz (Poland/UK) and Vesta Kontrimaviciene (Lithuania) of akub London.

A full schedule of performances and the culinary programme for select dates throughout the run of the 61st International Art Exhibition will be announced in May.

-ENDS-

About Rubaiya Qatar

Developed under the leadership of Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums, Rubaiya Qatar is an international contemporary art quadrennial set to open its inaugural edition in November 2026 as a multisite event across Qatar. Conceived to elevate Qatar's international presence and empower new generations of artists and thinkers, Rubaiya Qatar will present a dynamic programme of exhibitions, commissions, public art projects, residencies, publications, talks and more. *Unruly Waters*, the flagship and largest exhibition of Rubaiya Qatar, is curated by Tom Eccles, Ruba Katrib, Mark Rappolt (Editor-in-Chief of *ArtReview* and *ArtReview Asia*), and Shabbir Hussain Mustafa (Chief Curator, Singapore Art Museum). Other exhibitions include *Our Common Currents*, curated by Lina Patmali (Acting Head of Curatorial Affairs, Rubaiya Qatar) and *Seething Sea*, curated by art historian Wadha Al Aqeedi. Rubaiya Qatar is organised under ALRIWAQ Art + Architecture, QM's contemporary art and architecture institution dedicated to research, exhibitions, and public art. Sheikha Alanood Al Thani is the director of Rubaiya Qatar.

About Qatar Museums

Now marking its 20th anniversary, Qatar Museums (QM), the nation's preeminent institution for art and culture, provides authentic and inspiring cultural experiences through a growing network of museums, heritage sites, festivals, public art installations, and programmes. QM preserves and expands the nation's cultural offerings, sharing art and culture from Qatar, the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (MENASA) region with the world and enriching the lives of citizens, residents, and visitors.

Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and led by its Chairperson, Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, QM has made Qatar a vibrant centre for the arts, culture, and education in the Middle East and beyond. QM is integral to the goal of developing an innovative, diverse, and progressive nation, bringing people together to ignite new thinking, spark critical cultural conversations, and amplify the voices of Qatar's people. Since its founding in 2005, QM has overseen the Museum of Islamic

Art and MIA Park, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, the National Museum of Qatar, 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum, ALRIWAQ Art + Architecture, and QM Gallery Katara. Future projects include Dadu: Children's Museum of Qatar, Art Mill Museum, Qatar Auto Museum and the Lusail Museum.

Through its newly created Creative Hub, QMA also initiates and supports projects—such as Fire Station, the Tasweer Qatar Photo Festival, M7, the creative hub for innovation, fashion and design, Liwan Design Studios and Labs, and Design Doha—that nurture artistic talent and create opportunities to build a strong and sustainable cultural infrastructure.

Animating everything that Qatar Museums does is an authentic connection to Qatar and its heritage, a steadfast commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, and a belief in creating value through invention.

Press Contacts

Mohamed Khamis, mfaraj@qm.org.qa, +974 5592 0088

Pac Pobric, pac.pobric@finnpartners.com, +1 917 903 4434