

**DOI: 10.7596/taksad.v9i1.2544**

**Citation:** Al-Hammadi, M. I. (2020). National Museum of Qatar: New Architectural language, New Vision. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 9(1), 195-208. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v9i1.2544>

## **National Museum of Qatar: New Architectural language, New Vision**

**Mariam Ibrahim Al-Hammadi<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

The original Qatar National Museum that was established in 1975 as a pioneer museum in the gulf region was closed in 2005 for renovation. The new National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) took more than a decade, around fourteen years from 2005-2019 to accomplish. It is one of Qatar's mega projects, which was opened with a VIP opening celebration that was held in 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2019, and opened officially for the public on 28<sup>th</sup>. After more than a decade in creation, the NMoQ finally designed to reflect and narrate the story, history and ambition of the state and to become an icon for modern Doha. Ever since its establishment in 1975 the national museum has been a matter of making a place for the Qatari culture and history. Although the museum is refurbished into totally new vision and setting, it still belongs to the same history and serves the same nation. Both visions are pursuing to identify the continuance progressions of the country, which takes the state's history as its stem. However, we need to know which methodology the current establishment is using, and to what drama it could lead? What differences does the present introduce with respect to the past? This paper discusses and analyses the interpretation of the Qatari culture, heritage, and history, by examining the architecture of the new NMoQ. The purpose of the paper is to trace and compare the national museum's presentation and interpretation of Qatari culture and history, between the past and present, through its architecture. In addition, the paper investigates the changing economic, social, and political codes of Qatar through the reordering of cultural materials.

**Keywords:** Qatar National Museum, Qatari culture, Museum Architecture, Mature Museums, Cultural Interpretation, Nostalgia, Globalization.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr., Humanities Department, Qatar University. E-mail: m.alhamadi@qu.edu.qa

## Introduction

The original Qatar National Museum, which was established in 1975 as a pioneer museum in the Gulf region, was closed in 2005 for renovations. The new National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) took more than a decade (2005–2019) to complete. It is one of Qatar's mega projects, and was officially opened to the public on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019. On the previous day (27<sup>th</sup> March 2019), there was an opening celebration with many VIPs in attendance. These VIPs included The Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, members of the royal family, the prime minister, ministers, Qatari elites, and envoys of state. In addition, a large assembly of museum directors, academics, heads of international companies and institutions, film directors, celebrities, those involved in the sector of heritage from around the world, international critiques, and the press were also invited to the ceremony (The Peninsula, 2019). The presence of these guests served to emphasise the national importance of the event. Sheikha Al-Mayassa, Chair of The Board of Trustees of Qatar Museums, commented at a press conference from the sidelines of the opening of the NMoQ 'We have not limited our imagination during these years and we have given hope that every visitor to this place from inside or outside Qatar will see what he or she expects', (Gulf Times, 2019). She further added that visitors would be making a trip through the history of Qatar, from prehistoric times to the modern era, echoing Qatar's variety, vitality, and openness to the world (Gulf Times, 2019). The presentation also included information on the ongoing political measures, such as the blockade that was forced by neighbouring countries (Marshall, 2019).

After being more than a decade in creation, the NMoQ has been finally designed to reflect and narrate the story, history, and ambition of the state, and to become an icon for modern Doha. The richness of Sheikha Al-Mayassa's statement acts as an effective introduction to the new role of museums in Qatar, which are considered as agents of soft power, political, economic, and social change, and development in the country. The speech of the Emir himself added further weight to her statement, as he emphasised the new role the national museum was meant to play within the community, as an interactive institution rather than a storage facility for antiquities. The Emir started his statement with the following question:

Why building museums? We do not do this to store art collections, to showcase the past, but to enlighten the public in Qatar, residents and visitors, with our past, present and position in the world. The museum presents the formulation of our past, our environment and our experiences from the perspective of the present. It is, therefore, a formulation of our Arab-Qatari cultural identity, and museums are not repositories of the past, but our present is embodied in how we read our history and position within humanity in general (Nabeela, 2019)

During the preparation process, the staff at NMoQ approached hundreds of Qataris to collect ethnographical material and to record oral history. In addition, the people of Qatar were consulted on which stories they would like their national museum to present and display. In parallel to this process, intellectual discussions were conducted with local experts from different knowledge areas, institutions, and disciplines. The museum's staff also built a local network comprised of experts on heritage, biology, history, archaeology, and political science from local universities and institutions. These institutions included Qatar University, University College London Qatar, Friends of the

Environment Centre, Hamad bin Khalifa University, and Maersk Oil (Nabeela, 2019). These local connections were broadened by the staff shaping worldwide collaborations, with organisations including the Ottoman Archives, the Moesgard Museum in Denmark, Leiden Naturalist, and the Natural History Museum in London. The result of these connections and communications was the collection and production of a rich array of information, centred on Qatar and its life. This process helped to map out the topics, narratives, and ideas that emerged in the exhibition plan, which runs through the Museum (Nabeela, 2019). Within their exhibition designs, the museum's curators envisaged a journey that would be revealed in three stages. First is *Beginnings* (the formation of Qatar), which is meant to present the period from Qatar's formation (which started 700 million years ago) until the Islamic era (NMoQ, 2019). The galleries focus on Qatar's geology, environment, early inhabitants and their settlements, and the biodiversity of the land and sea of Qatar (Galleries' Guides 2019). Second, *Life in Qatar* (the people of Qatar) presents the daily life, culture, tradition, and heritage of Qatari people. Finally, *Modern History of Qatar* presents the pivotal moments in Qatar's modern history from the 1500s to the present day (NMoQ, 2019). The galleries narrate how Qatar developed as a state and transformed into today's Qatar (Galleries' Guides, 2019).

Ever since its establishment in 1975, the purpose of the national museum has been to provide a space for displaying Qatari culture and history. Although the museum has been refurbished into a totally new vision and setting, it still belongs to the same history and serves the same nation. The pursuit of both visions is to identify the continuance progressions of the country, which takes the state's history as its stem. However, we need to know what methodology the current establishment is using, and to what drama it could lead. Further, we need to establish what differences the present introduces with respect to the past.

This paper discusses and analyses the interpretation of the Qatari culture, heritage, and history, by examining the architecture of the new NMoQ. The purpose of the paper is to trace and compare the national museum's presentation and interpretation of Qatari culture and history, between the past and present, through its architecture. In addition, the paper investigates the changing economic, social, and political codes of Qatar through the reordering of cultural materials.

### **Toward Mature Museums: Unrestricted Cultural Interpretation**

When analysing the architecture and exhibitions of the new museum, it becomes apparent that the new museum uses new dialogue that is not restricted, but freer than it used to be at the previous museum. In its presentation, the museum has become more mature and democratic, free from the style of courtesies, free from reservations, and takes different reactions into consideration. The new museum philosophy has employed ultimate codes of a culture. Those codes that control, inspire, and dictate the dialogue, language, values, concepts, traditions, beliefs and customs of a populace right from its establishment (Foucault, 1994, pp. 20-24), are flexibly reordered through their interpretation and analyses within the museum context, in accordance with what corresponds with the new political role of Qatar. Critiquing the reordering of cultural codes conjures up several theoretical questions: which and whose history has been visualised, and which experiences have been reflected

in the reordering that is meant to create a new identity and heritage model. Such reordering places the national museum in a contradictory situation regarding its claim that the museum is about the Qatari and for the Qatari. Contrary to beginning by presenting the Qatari heritage, it offers an opportunity for the elaboration and rise of a new form of a novel identification of the national identity and heritage through the new architectural language.

Foucault stressed that the present could be analysed as a revolving point to the shift toward the dawning of a new world. In his discussion of enlightenment, the philosopher Kant defined two vital elements under which human beings can move away from their immaturity: first, institutional and spiritual, and second, political and ethical. He further added that the realm of obedience and the realm of reason are clearly distinguished (cited in Rabinow, 1984, p. 35). Kant summarised this immature status briefly in the following expression 'Don't think, just follow orders' (Rabinow, 1984, p. 36), in which he likened such attitude to religious authority, political power, or military discipline being exercised. As mature institutions, museum interpretations use narratives that explain why certain ordering of cultural codes are used, which roles they are expected to play, and which messages they are meant to deliver (Foucault, 1994, pp. 20-24). It is within such narratives that the cultural codes of a nation can be operated to suggest a new direction. Institutionalising a society's inheritance, therefore, obliges a parting from the original cultural codes (Foucault, 1994, pp. 20-24), bearing in mind that reordering and interpreting cultural codes does not mean this is the best or the only interpretation that these cultural codes carry. Rather, such reordering may risk those cultural codes and accordingly, the nation's inheritance. Foucault states that order is the inner law of things and a concealed system that regulates the rules of confrontation. Meanwhile, the order also has no presence, but only in the grid that is built by seeing, exploring, and communicating (talking). Furthermore, its presence can only be found in the blank spaces of this grid revealing itself in deepness as it is already there waiting in peace for the moment of its expression (Foucault, 1994, pp. 20-24).

Reorganisation of cultural codes in the museum risks their being overlaid upon other kinds of concepts and beliefs that could possibly neutralise them. Nonetheless, despite such risk, the new national museum aims to reorder codes of belief, awareness, heritage, tradition and practice. As such, it is relevant to explore and reveal the impact of such a significant programme of national cultural change by analysing one of the main elements of the museum, which is its architecture.

### **New Architectural Language and the Position of the Old Emiri Palace**

The architecture of the museum (Figure 1) is designed by the well-known and Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, whose design (inspired by a Qatari mineral formation) was called the 'Desert Rose'. Thus, Nouvel's design was constructed of a series of 539 colliding discs (Griffiths, 2019). He described his design as almost 'a geometric game' both from the inside and outside, and a very rhythmic, where the spaces run into one another harmoniously (Marshall, 2019). What is noticeable with the new museum's architecture, however, is the location of its entrance.



Fig. 1. The Desert Rose architecture positioned at the forefront of the historical building of the Old Emiri Palace, ([www.insplosion](http://www.insplosion) 2019).

Previously, visitors to the Qatar National Museum entered through its historical gate (Figure 2) that led them directly to the Old Emiri Palace (OEP), which was placed at the forefront of the modern building of the State Museum. Qatari ethnographical materials were displayed in the OEP's different rooms. The palace stood as political evidence of the royal family, representing their political role during the existence of the Ottoman and British empires (Al-Hammadi, 2019). Through such presentation, historical Qatar was presented as a cradle for modern Qatar. Preservation of Qatari heritage, culture, and history were the most important element in the museum's narrative.



Fig. 2. Main traditional entrance of the first Qatar National Museum, ([farm3.staticflickr.com](http://farm3.staticflickr.com), 2019)

Unlike the entrance to the old museum, entering the new museum feels like entering the new Qatar of today. As a visitor, I entered from the magnificent building that was inspired by a Qatari desert rose, unsure of where to go and which direction to follow to reach the exhibitions. When finally entered the building, I lost my way again, as I found myself in a huge ground-level reception area with no galleries. Visitors are supposed to follow a long route from the museum's entrance until they reach the galleries on the first floor. This arrangement leads us to the question: what is more important here, is it the architecture or the collection to present and preserve Qatari culture? It is apparent that through the architecture, the museum is both globalised and westernised. Following its development and achievements, Qatar aimed to impress the world. The architectural language of the museum is very much concerned with the idea that we arose and moved on. The architecture, together with the exhibitions contained within offer physical and visual proof of the continuous progress of Qatar's evolutionarily development at economic, social, and political levels.



Fig. 3. The new National Museum of Qatar (assets.theedgemarkets.com 2019)

Controversially, the architecture of the new museum has proven to be a double-edged sword for Qatar and the Qatari people. The building is positioned directly in front of the OEP, disseminating ostensibly informed evolutionary images of Qatar to the globe. As visitors enter the museum, they immediately face the spectacular architecture of Jean Nouvel, observing the Desert Rose that hides and overcomes the OEP (Figure 3). From the start, visitors can see no trace for the existence of the OEP, all their concentration and scrutiny are directed to the Desert Rose with its complicated architectural design. Nouvel succeeded in taking from the local desert rose an inspirational element, and created a post-modern design that might globalise Qatar further. However, he rather failed to reflect the Qatari community and its historical factors.

#### **A New Cultural Approach: Globalisation versus Nostalgia**

It is readily apparent that Qatar adopted a new cultural approach in its planning and policy. In the 21st century, Qatar's approach has shifted from traditional to new planning policy, which is more

engaged in cultural planning that corresponds with the requirements of the contemporary world. Such a turn in cultural urban planning would require the country to incorporate culture, heritage, and arts into various urban planning developments (Zaidan & Abulibdeh, 2019). Meanwhile, such an approach enables the development of a new cultural framework within the utilisation of existing traditional urban planning, or by taking drawing on local culture an inspirational tool. Hence, the use of the city's local arts, heritage, culture, and tradition as tools in urban regeneration as a new global phenomenon is imperative. Therefore, the new framework of cultural planning will shape the state's reputation and global status as a universal economic and cultural capital. In fact, cultural planning consists of a broad-based community consultation that helps developers and planners to consider cultural means to reflect strategically how locals utilise the increased benefits of these means for the city's regeneration (Zaidan & Abulibdeh, 2019). Because this approach is considerable in terms of scale and strategic approach, any new cultural planning in Qatar should consider integrating cultural resources into new cultural urban developments. However, positioning the OEP as a final destination for visitors on their way out of the museum does not place it as the cradle of Qatar's history. Nor does it evoke a sense of nostalgia; in fact, a sentimental yearning for the past is absent here. In addition, when considering the size of the OEP with that of the new museum, and comparing the different design styles, the OEP seems lost and isolated from the rest of the museum. Its value as a traditional architectural treasure and all the different elements and beauty of the building are lost. The sentimental, political, and practical values of the OEP are no longer there. It is as if the OEP was left behind, far away from the interests of the new generation.

Changes in the structure of Qatar's economy throughout its history have affected the state's urban planning strategies. For instance, during the period 1972–1995 and the reign of Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad, the state adopted a modernising and traditional planning policy by replacing some traditional architecture with more modern examples, as well as preserving some important traditional Qatari architecture. However, there was no integration between both old and new cultural resources; each took its own architectural language and shape separately. Contrary to that particular urban strategy, since 1995 Qatar's urban planning strategies have emphasised the utilisation of existing local cultural codes and heritage, by integrating these codes within the new creations and developments, such as the creation of various structures that were inspired by Qatari cultural codes. The stadiums that have been designed for the 2022 Football World Cup are prime examples of that.

Although policymakers in Qatar intended to utilise the existence of the OEP, nonetheless, within his design of the new building, the architect Nouvel appeared not to value or appreciate such a cultural resource. Thus, such important historical architecture was not integrated within the new design. Rather, visitors reach the OEP after completing a museum tour that takes approximately two hours. Commenting on the position of the OEP, Nouvel comments:

The Howsh gives an idea of the scale of the Royal Palace. It's a sheltered space, with the museum built around it. Thanks to disks tilted at different angles, it also offers shade. This space can accommodate outdoor events, performances, theatre pieces, events connected to the exhibitions. The Howsh is also connected to the outdoor spaces of the old palace (Nouvel, 2019).

Instead of addressing the nostalgic value of the OEP, Nouvel only envisaged it as an area where outdoor events and activities could be organised. The nostalgic value and aspects of the palace have been explicitly marginalised here. Over the last decade, there has been a cumulative anxiety about retracing and re-considering the nature of nostalgia. Studies have recently acknowledged the tremendous condescension for nostalgia. They further argue that nostalgia is an expression that has been mainly applied to elite and governmental remembrances. Scholars such as Chase and Show (1989) critiqued nostalgia as it usually used by elites and conservative social groups to present a picture of an imagined past that never existed. In fact, nostalgia tends to be dismissed or dried uneasily, described as helping to support the struggle felt by people who are trying to cope with a continuously changing world (Bonnett, 2009). Bonnett argues that connections to the past and feelings of loss are oppressive; the past is something to run away from, and radicals would instead look to and adopt the future (Bonnett, 2010). He further adds that nostalgia is described as a symptom and raises a social debate with people who call for a return to what is perceived as a more secure and comfortable time.

Others insist that nostalgia is neither good nor bad, instead considering it to be a sprawling, unavoidable, and constitutive existence within modernism. They agree that nostalgia develops a sense of longing that is constructive; what is referred to as 'progressive nostalgia' (Smith and Campbell, 2017, p. 613). Nostalgia is not simply a desire to go back in time to a fetishised past that is considered an ideal; rather, it is more of a multifaceted phenomenon. Nostalgia can be genuine, sincere, enabling, and both present and future centred. Recognising nostalgia as a method of affective practice, allows us to share it as an inspirational tool that evokes positive thinking and imagination towards a better future (Wetherell, 2012). As a practice of recalling the past that is overtly and often flagrantly passionate, nostalgia is a significant phenomenon in observing how the past is both brought to bear on the present day and on the expansion of political, economic and social agendas for the future (Smith and Campbell, 2017).

Thus, in the case of Qatar, the OEP commemorates the history of the royal family along with the social and economic life in Qatar before the oil industry developed. Positioning the OEP in this context is a pathetic attempt to dismiss and undermine the importance of the nostalgic values that lay within the palace. These values are important for envisaging a potential future, which encourages the current and future generations to work hard towards their highest educational attainment. Fulfilling any nostalgic sense is also necessary to address the longing among the old Qatari generations who wish to have a memorial that reminds them of the modest lifestyle and genuine culture and traditions they adopted and created in the development of their community.

Highlighting the nostalgic elements within the OEP, would without doubt offer nostalgia for the future, a path that the descendants envisaged during their own time. Hence, this form of nostalgia is imaginative, helpful, creative, and maps the way forward (see Bonnett and Alexander, 2013; Cashman, 2006; Keightley and Pickering, 2012; Smith, 2006; Smith and Campbell, 2011; Smith and Campbell, 2017). Nostalgia is not only radical, but is also an overt process that significantly engages and navigates ways of positively tackling social change. Qatari heritage—through the emotive complexities of nostalgia—can be used in politically, socially, and economically progressive ways. Increased oil and gas wealth for Qatar allowed the country to move forward into a new significant



stage of its history. In this stage, the state's movement and development strategies focused very much on culturally led approaches, however, with new garments. The country has replaced the undeveloped picture of the past with a new one (Al-Majala, 2008). Various aspects at both civilian and cultural levels have been changed in Qatari policy both internally and externally. Such changes are the result of an awareness of the significance of the new epoch that Qatar is approaching. Thus, as Qatar became more open in a global sense, it also exchanged its earlier identity for one that is more developed, modernised, and globalised. This identity has been led by Qatari culture, where such heritage and culture can contribute largely in regenerating the whole country. The adoption of this new identity explains the boom that Qatar is witnessing since the middle of twentieth century, in construction, new organisational development, adoption of various international events, participation of international activities, and events at the cultural levels (Al-Majala, 2008). For instance, the rapid development of imposing skyscrapers filling the central area of the West Bay area of Doha City, and the establishment of educational organisations such as the Qatar Foundation, the Museum of Islamic Art, the Oasis of Science, and the Cultural Village stand out. Together with these efforts to modernise and globalise the country, there has been an awareness of the necessity to preserve Qatar's cultural heritage and traditions. Hence, different traditional cities and sites rebuilt or created representations of Qatari heritage in order to fulfill the nostalgic mood of the public. For example, the rebuilding of Souq Waqif, and the creation of Souq Waqif Al-Wakra, where hotels built at Souq Waqif used Qatar's traditional architectural language. Furthermore, the preservation of traditional houses in the Misherb district, created sites that took from Qatari cultural codes as its main inspirational elements. Throughout these projects, Qatari culture and heritage have been utilised as part of the policy makers' and politicians' policies and vision, in which the influence of globalisation and modernisation is seen to model cultural heritage in Qatar. For instance, in its design and purpose, the Museum of Islamic Art is meant to be part of this modernising and globalising agenda and the push to reconstruct heritage. Likewise, the creation of the new National Museum of Qatar is meant to reconstruct heritage by making the Desert Rose the main inspirational tool for the architect; thus, creating a global architecture that is designed as a vibrant and immersive area. However, such new architectural creation has overcome the traditional Qatari architecture in its location and the overall museum tour. By examining Qatar's global strategy, we can answer our main question why Nouvel did not integrate the OEP into his design, choosing instead the inspirational element of the desert rose. In fact, in the current competitive global era, the policymakers in Qatar decided to promote the state by branding a new image, which uses cultural heritage as a core for that brand. Place promotion requires Qatar to re-construct an image of the country that could attract the tourism market as well as capital and social investments. Therefore, Nouvel's creation, with its inspirational element, fits very well in the holistic place images that Qatar is currently focusing on building. Such holistic images would help Qatar in becoming a strong competitor in the global economy as well as attracting potential international investors and knowledge-based labourers.

The vision of globalising Qatar has long inspired the positioning of the OEP, in a way that the new architecture of Jean Nouvel overcomes the nostalgic mood of the OEP to represent the progress of Qatar globally. However, such positioning did not mean to de-estimate the culture, as much as it meant to contribute to a more holistic image of place for the country. The architecture deals more with the idea of dazzling and enormous changes that Qatar has witnessed since the discovery of oil

and gas until today, where a natural fortune turned the state into a crossroads, appealing and open to the globe, as well as attracting opportunity hunters and visitors from around the world (Nouvel, 2019). The museum's exhibits, accordingly, have become integral to this presentation and narrative, which becomes apparent in every aspect of the museum. Borrowing from historical accounts of Qatar's heritage and ethnographies, together with early images of social and economic life in Qatar, exhibits transformed their people from ethnographical spectacle to evolutionary spectacle. Such a move urges further investigation of the following point by which the process of regenerating Qatari culture and heritage and urban development continues. How cultural regeneration creates harmony between national economic growth and the cultural heritage of the state, and how the country modernised and globalised while protecting its cultural inheritance, are two essential questions.

### **Cultural Regeneration: Branding Qatari Heritage**

In this section, I question how modernism, post-modernism, and globalisation have shaped the urban regeneration of Qatar. I will discuss how Qatar as a country has regenerated and globalised, from within its local distinctiveness. During the current century, many societies might not place emphasis on their local culture or identity, and as such their architectural tradition and cultural practices have become more standardised or been lost (Osborne, 2004). This is a result of the intention to shift toward a global economy, which brought with it many changes at national and international levels. Unlike these experiences, Qatar regenerating and globalising itself through a localised strategy can be seen as a reactive strategy toward global social and economic movements, which can be referred to as "glocalisation" (Swyngedouw and Baeten, 2001). The desire to create a charismatic identity in a most globalised era is at the core of urban development in Qatar. The powerful appeal of increasing place distinctiveness is apparent in Qatar in most of its national projects and developments. Qatar's new strategy for urban planning involves constructing places and arenas with an emphasis on the use of existing local culture and heritage. This is a strategy of cultural heritage branding, which most of the Gulf countries are using today. The region (and specifically Qatar) are using culture and heritage as tools to attain several goals, such as enhancing quality of life, strengthening life distinctiveness, achieving economic development, and attracting tourists (Zaidan and Abulibdeh, 2019). Awareness of the effect of globalisation on local culture increased the emphasis on and the need for a distinctive strategy in Qatar. The state became eager to present itself to the rest of the world as a distinctive location, which can offer all aspects of a global state whilst preserving its unique cultural identity. The Qatari strategy is to balance the standardising influences of globalisation and increasingly reaffirm its local identity and uniqueness. This is to prevent driving its identity away from its urban planning, which could position Qatari urban culture into a category of placelessness. Such placelessness is a condition caused by the standardising results of modernity, where the city would lose its significance. Thus, a lack of attachment to place would inevitably occur, a problem that some cities in the world face today with their adoption of new global standardised urban planning. Hence, branding itself by focusing on cultural attributes and icons, the state harmonised itself with the world economically and politically while preserving its distinctive identity. At the same time, it considers the importance of place attachment, which becomes an essential component of state identity. This is especially important now that Qatar is competing to become a centre of knowledge-based and

capital industry. Thus, the state global image, with its urban and cultural attractiveness, is enhanced by an emphasis on the production, reproduction, and implementation of the Qatari cultural codes in new urban planning all over the country.

## **Conclusion**

I have argued in this paper that the NMoQ established a vital and effective introduction to the new role of museums in Qatar. The new Qatari museological practice that approaches today, considers museum culture an agent of soft power that could make a great contribution to the economic, political, and social development of the country. Throughout this paper, it has become clear how cultural practice has been linked directly to the country's political movement and change, in which the Emir himself in his statement emphasised the new role that the national museum will play within the community as an interactive institution. Museum culture, as such, has been constantly encompassed in the political agenda to enlighten the public in Qatar about the country's past, present, and the envisaged position that Qatar is aiming for in the future. Consequently, the policymakers focused on which image they want to send globally about Qatar, further driven by the desire to create a distinguished identity for the country at a most globalised time. Such desire has without doubt influenced the country's urban development strategies, where we can see explicitly that the powerful appeal of increasing the distinctiveness of place is apparent in Qatar in most of its national projects and development.

Therefore, since 1995 a new urban strategy has been adopted in Qatar, which emphasises the utilisation of the Qatari cultural codes as its main inspirational elements for new urban development around the country. Qatar began regenerating and globalising through a localised strategy. Thus, the creation of Nouvel's architecture comes to fulfil this mission by concentrating and highlighting to the world the new creation of the Desert Rose, which offers a highlight of Qatar's economic growth and increasing position in the world; however, this comes at the expense of missing the nostalgic values of the OEP. For the Qatari people, especially the generation that experienced the old national museum, fulfilling the nostalgic sense is important to address their longing, as well as serving as a reminder of the modest lifestyle they experienced before Qatar's economic boom and era of globalisation.

Throughout this paper, we have seen that it is not just the nostalgic mood that is missed here, but also the regeneration of the new national identity. Throughout its architecture, the museum applies multiple methods of presentation, such as the inspirational tool and architecture position to emphasis its claim of Qatar's new economic and political place within the world. The whole presentation of the Qatari statues is changed. It is customised to fit the overall global image of the nation. As within the new architectural language and identity presentation, the new museum policy turned out to be very much a comprehensive and open arena that provided an insight into a new local economy and sociological measures. Unfortunately, the new museum placed the OEP at the end of its presentation, as if its role as a cultural element has ended up at that point. Therefore, there was no distinctiveness in its presentation and position in terms of cultural background. Such presentation led us to consider several vital questions within the paper, as we asked how far the

policymakers view the importance of the OEP as a nostalgic cultural element. How do those two structures link together and relate to each other? In fact, the NMoQ with its new architectural language and presentation of identity endangered the national heritage and prevented the Qatari citizens in fulfilling their nostalgic mood for reflecting on themselves.

### **Figure references**

Figure 1. National Museum of Qatar. [https://assets.theedgemarkets.com/National-Museum-of-Qatar\\_20190326105641\\_afp.jpg?null](https://assets.theedgemarkets.com/National-Museum-of-Qatar_20190326105641_afp.jpg?null). Accessed on 10 May 2019.

Figure 2. Entrance of the First Qatar National Museum. [https://farm3.staticflickr.com/2133/1762154160\\_ca2f73e0ab\\_z.jpg](https://farm3.staticflickr.com/2133/1762154160_ca2f73e0ab_z.jpg). Accessed on 16 May 2019

Figure 3. Desert Rose. <http://www.insplasion.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/1national-museum-qatar10-1024x576.jpg>. Accessed on 16 May 2019.

### **References**

- Bennett, T. (1995). *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. New York, Routledge.
- Bonnett, A. (2009). The Dilemmas of Radical Nostalgia in British Psychogeography. *Theory, Culture & Society* 26 (1): 45–70.
- Bonnett, A. (2010). Radicalism, Antiracism, and Nostalgia: The Burden of Loss in Search for Convivial Culture. *Environment and Planning*, 42: 2351–2369.
- Bonnett, A., and Alexander, C. (2013). Mobile Nostalgias: Connecting Visions of the Urban Past, Present and Future amongst Ex-residents. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38 (3): 391–402.
- Cashman, R. (2006). Critical Nostalgia and Material Culture in Northern Ireland. *Journal of American Folklore*, 119 (427): 137–160.
- Chase, M., and Shaw, C., eds. (1989). *The Imagined past: History and Nostalgia*. Manchester, NH: Manchester University Press.
- Duncan, C. (2007). *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museum*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1994). *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London: Routledge, p. 20.
- Galleries Guide* (2019). National Museum of Qatar. (Qatar Museums: 2019)
- Gremm, J., Barth, J., Fietkiewicz, K. J., and Stock, W. G. (2018). *Transitioning Towards a Knowledge Society: Qatar as a Case Study*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Griffiths, A. (2019). Jean Nouvel unveils National Museum of Qatar in Doha. *Dezeen*. <https://www.dezeen.com/2019/03/28/jean-nouvel-national-museum-qatar-cultural-architecture/> accessed 30 April 2019

*Gulf Times*. "NMoQ opens horizons of dialogue: Al Mayassa".

<https://www.gulf-times.com/story/627177/NMoQ-opens-horizons-of-dialogue-Al-Mayassa> accessed 30 April 2019.

Hague, C. (2005). Planning and Place Identity. In *Place Identity, Participation and planning*. Edited by Cliff Hague and Paul Jenkins, 2-15. London: Routledge.

Janes, R. R. (2007). 'Museums, Social Responsibility and the Future We Desire', in *Museum Revolutions*, ed. by Simon J. Knell, Suzanne Macleod and Sheila Watson. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 134-146 (p. 135).

Keightley, E., and Pickering, M. (2012). *The Mnemonic Imagination: Remembering as Creative Practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mager, R. F. (1975). *Preparing Instructional Objectives* Atlanta: Fearon, pp. 19-22.

Maleuvre, D. (2012). Must Museums Be Inclusive. In *Journal of Educational Media, Memory & Society*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Special Issue: Museums and the Educational Turn: History, Memory, Inclusivity (Autumn), pp. 112-125.

Marshall, A. (2019). *Qatar National Museum Tells a Country's Story at Every Turn*. 28 March 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/28/arts/qatar-national-museum-jean-nouvel.html>. Accessed on 14 May 2019

Mercurio, K. R., and Forehand, M. R. (2011). An Interpretive Frame Model of Identity-Dependent Learning: The Moderating Role of Content-State Association. In *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (October 2011), pp. 555-577. Oxford University Press.

Nabeela (2019). *I love Qatar*. National Museum of Qatar unveils details of structure and what's inside ahead of 28 March opening. <https://www.iloveqatar.net/news/artsCulture/national-museum-of-qatar-unveils-details-of-structure-and-whats-inside-ahead-of-28-march-opening>. Accessed 30 April 2019

Nabeela. I love Qatar. National Museum of Qatar officially open; inaugurated by H.H. The Amir. <https://www.iloveqatar.net/news/artsCulture/national-museum-of-qatar-officially-open-inaugurated-by-h-h-the-amir>, accessed on 13 May 2019

National Museum of Qatar's Labels. Visited on 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2019.

Nouvel, J. (2019). *AJN*. Qatar National Museum: Architectural and Museographical Design: The Desert Rose <http://www.jeannouvel.com/en/projects/musee-national-du-qatar/>, accessed on 15 May 2019

Osborne, B. S. (2006). From Native Pines to Diasporic Geese: Placing Culture, Setting Our Sites, Locating Identity in a Transitional Canada. *Canadian Journal of Communication* 31(1), 147-175. Accessed February 26, 2019. Doi: 10.22230/cjc.2006v31n1a1781.

'Qatar [...] Progressing Full with Development and Economic Progresses [...] and A Vision Towards Enlightenment Future', *Al-Majalla*

<<http://www.al-majalla-com/printNews.asp?DB=MainNews&NewsID=1965>>, pp. 1-7 [accessed 2 March 2019].

Rogers, R., Castree, N., and Kitchin, R. (2013). *A Dictionary of Human Geography*. UK, Oxford University Press.

Smith, L. (2006). *Uses of Heritage*. London: Routledge.

Smith, L., and Campbell, G. (2011). Don't Mourn, Organize: Heritage, Recognition and Memory in Castleford, West Yorkshire. In *Heritage, Labour and the Working Class*, edited by L. Smith, P. Shackel, and G. Campbell, 85–105. London: Routledge.

Smith, L., and Campbell, G. (2016). The Elephant in the Room: Heritage, Affect and Emotion. In *A Companion to Heritage Studies*, edited by W. Logan, M. Nic Craith, and U. Kockel, 443–460. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Smith, L. and Campbell, G. (2017). 'Nostalgia for the future': memory, nostalgia and the politics of class. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, [online] 23(7), pp. 612-627. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/mylibrary.qu.edu.qa/doi/pdf/10.1080/13527258.2017.1321034?needAccess=true> [Accessed 15 May 2019].

Swyngedouw, F., and Baeten, G. (2001). Scaling the City: The Political Economy of 'Glocal' Development – Brussels' Conundrum. *European Planning Studies* 9(7): 827-849. Accessed February 26, 2019. Doi: 10.1080/09654310120079797.

The Heartbeat of Our Heritage. National Museum of Qatar. <https://nmoq.org.qa/the-museum> accessed on 19 May 2019

The Peninsula. Watch National Museum of Qatar opening ceremony live. <https://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/27/03/2019/Watch-National-Museum-of-Qatar-opening-ceremony-live>, 27th March 2019. accessed 30 April 2019

Wetherell, M. (2012). *Affect and Emotion: A New Social Science Understanding*. London: Sage.

Zaidan, E & Abulibdeh, A. (2019). The New Cultural Turn in Urban Development for the Gulf State: Creativity, Place Promotion, and Identity: Doha As A Case Study. In *Qatar: Political, Economic and Social Issues*. Edt by Al-Khateeb, H. M. (USA: Nova Science Publishers, 2019)