

INTERIORS OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF QATAR

MEDIA RELEASE
MARCH 2019

KOICHI
TAKADA
ARCHITECTS

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INTERIOR OF NMOQ

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Koichi Takada Architects' scope for the National Museum of Qatar in Doha is nearing completion after 8 years in the making, after winning an international competition to design the interiors in 2012. The grand opening on Wednesday 27th March will reveal the much anticipated and captivating designs by Koichi Takada Architects, including its Museum Shops, Desert Rose Café, Cafe 875 and Jiwan Restaurant.

Located on a 1.5 million-square-foot site at the south end of Doha's Corniche, the National Museum of Qatar will be the first monument visible to travellers arriving from the airport. The exterior of the National Museum of Qatar was designed by French architect and Pritzker prize winner, Jean Nouvel. The forms and materials used by Koichi Takada Architects aim to respect and complement Jean Nouvel's architecture.

Principal Architect, Koichi Takada, explains,

"Talking to H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa and to the Qatar Museums Authority (QMA) has opened my eyes to a culturally rich way of life, which has inspired me. They passionately talked about the iconic nature of Dahl Al Misfir (Cave of Light), located in the heart of Qatar, and introduced me to the ritual of majlis floor dining, a bit like my favourite childhood memory of Japanese tatami floor dining. Designing the interiors of the National Museum of Qatar was an opportunity to create a unique experience for visitors to immerse in Qatar's cultural heritage; the traditional and historical past, and its development into a modern state as the cultural hub of the Middle East."

The interior design concept "desert-scapes" was carefully

curated to create a local cultural experience for visitors, while bowing to Jean Nouvel's architectural masterpiece:

"The architecture is a representation of the desert rose mineral formation; a connection to nature. Each interior space offers a fragment of the Qatari history, that aims to enhance and fulfil both, a cultural and memorable experience for museum visitors."

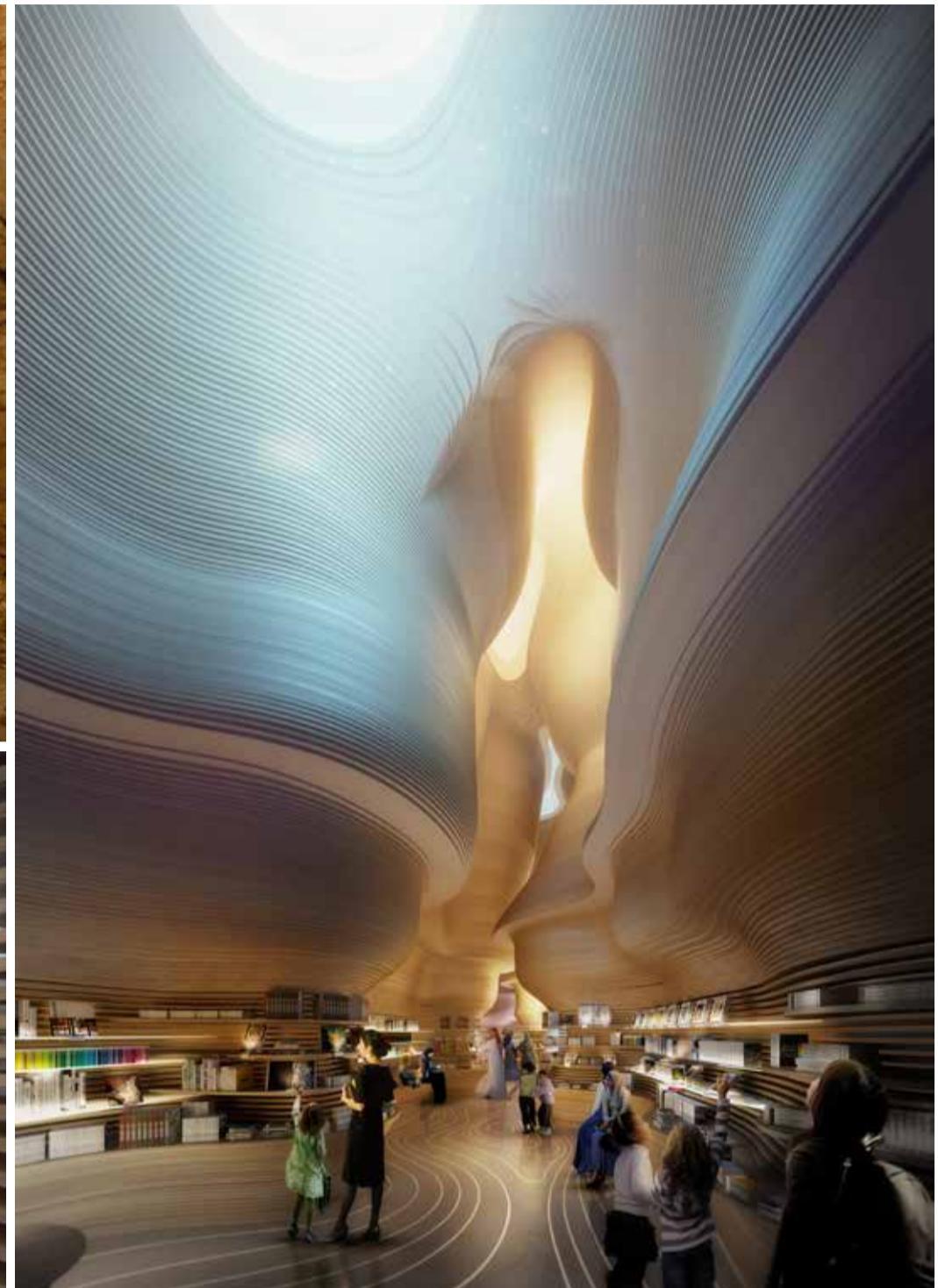
The design of the Interiors by Koichi Takada Architects in the National Museum of Qatar is a Narrative of the Qatari history. The designs are an embodiment of the Qatari history, the beginnings of the trade, nomadic lifestyle and beautiful natural environment. Through many conversations with the local Qatari people, the designs evolved to translate a story into a visual design and memorable experience.

1 The exterior of the National Museum of Qatar designed by Ateliers Jean Nouvel Architects
The architecture is a representation of the Desert Rose formation

2 The interior of the National Museum of Qatar designed by Koichi Takada Architects
The forms and materials aim to compliment and enhance Jean Nouvel's architecture

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MUSEUM SHOPS

The Dahl Al Misfir (Cave of Light), located in the heart of Qatar, is a beautiful underground sanctuary formed largely from fibrous gypsum crystals that give off a faint, moon-like, phosphorescent glow. Gypsum can appear in formations of clusters, such as the famous 'desert rose', but can also crystallize in other forms of fluorescent and translucent shapes, interacting with light and transforming the space, evolving through the day.

The timber walls of the museum shops were inspired by Dahl Al Misfir. Its organic architecture echoes Koichi Takada's vision of bringing nature back into architecture, establishing relationships that connect people and nature through design. Using a cutting-edge 3D modelling software, we achieved a design of curves and surfaces that words fail to describe.

Imagine putting together the 40,000 wooden pieces of a three-dimensional puzzle? Each wooden piece, CNC-cut in Italy, is entirely unique so it could only fit with its exact complementary piece. They were assembled by hand in Doha by Italian master carpenter, Claudio Devoto and his team of artisans.

The intensity of the design and craftsmanship pays homage to Jean Nouvel's desert rose inspired architecture and celebrates the natural Qatari heritage of the desert-scape.

1 The Museum Shops inspiration - Dahl Al Misfir (Cave of light) - an underground sanctuary located in the heart of Qatar



1

CAFÉ 875

The Café 875 was inspired by traditional Qatari gold jewellery, particularly the medallion rings. '875' represents a grade of fineness or purity of gold. It is very rare to come across, and it is only available in the Arab world.

The interior of the Café offers two out of four medallions for visitors to experience the unique Majilis, a traditional setting from the Qatari Bedouin nomadic lifestyle and enduring hospitality. The other two medallions accommodate visitors with more familiar contemporary café seating. The fabric takes on a circular pattern for the banquette seats and blends the traditional black and white stripes of the Al Sadu weaving heritage, gradually fading, symbolising the transition into a modern Qatar.

Café 875 is located on the mezzanine floor over the main lobby and was designed to 'hide' from your sightline so that it does not physically overwhelm the arrival experience intended by Jean Nouvel. Not to be seen from the lobby, the wooden profiles of medallions are angled to follow the ceiling of architecturally impressive interlocking disks flying over the main lobby and the café.

The medallions were also designed with a special up-lighting effect that evokes the allure of 875 gold. Each medallion is designed to cast a ring of light onto the architectural ceiling and intended to attract visitors to come up to the mezzanine and discover the 'invisible' café.



2

1 Medallion seating inspiration - Qatari gold jewellery, specifically the medallion rings '875' - a grade of fineness or purity of gold that is very rare and only available in the Arab world

2 Medallion seating - Offers 2 out of 4 medallions for visitors to experience the unique Majilis - traditional setting from the Qatari Bedouin nomadic lifestyle

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DESERT ROSE CAFÉ

The Desert Rose Café is located on the ground floor under the large structure and opens to both the lagoon (at the Corniche side) and to the Caravanserai courtyard. The café is an oasis of Desert Rose formations, offering a perfect mid-way resting spot for visitors to break the journey through the galleries. The design of Desert Rose Café is a direct reference to the impressive urban scale of Jean Nouvel's architecture, re-imagined at a human scale, just like the naturally occurring Desert Rose mineral formation that pops out as a crystallizing jewel from an otherwise vast and endless desert.

The Desert Rose Café is hidden under a large architectural disk, with a low ceiling, it almost feels like coming into a cave.

The subtle ambient floor lighting is designed among interlocking discs of the banquette seating, taking away the visitor's focus from the otherwise compressed nature of this space. The lighting concept gives a soft glow just like the beautiful dusk light in the desert and smoothens the intensity of the strong natural daylight, ensuring visitors a respite like an oasis in the desert and a comfortable transition into the on-going journey.

- 1 Desert Rose inspiration for Ateliers Jean Nouvel's architecture is re-imagined at a human scale- a direct reference to how the naturally occurring Desert Rose formation pops out as a crystallising jewel from the vast desert
- 2 Floor lighting inspiration - Sand dunes

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