

Tales of a Connected World

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LUSAIL MUSEUM

Tales of A Connected World

LM Intern

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Introduction

An exhibition introducing a new museum designed by Herzog & de Meuron currently under development in Lusail. The Lusail Museum will draw on its world-class collection of Orientalist art, archaeological artefacts and media from antiquity to the 21st century to create a new, enlightened and constructive way of looking at the world to understand who we are, where we come from, and where we are going.

Organised thematically across six galleries, this exhibition of paintings, photographs and films from the Lusail Museum's world-class collection of Orientalist art invites visitors to explore the movement of ideas and changing points of view.

Why Choose Lusail? Exploring it's History and Significance



PREHISTORIC LUSAIL

Lusail has a long history of settlement from the prehistoric to the present day.

The curved form of underwater fish traps from the bronze age are still visible in aerial photographs of the site.

Local archaeological finds include arrowheads and stone tools.

SHEIKH JASSIM IN LUSAIL

The new museum is anchored in Lusail, a special place – a home of Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani, founder of Qatar.

Sheikh Jassim was a great statesman, diplomat and warrior who united the people of Qatar, establishing an autonomous emirate, proudly independent of Ottoman and English influence.

The heritage houses still standing are of a similar type to those in which Sheikh Jassim would have lived and offer us a glimpse into his world.

Lusail was the focus of his pearl fishing and pearl merchant activities and he was also one of the most popular Nabati poets in Qatar in the 19th century.

During Sheikh Jassim's lifetime, as Qatar emerged an independent state, a burgeoning fascination in the Indian Ocean World took hold in the west.

Artists, poets and writers could only imagine the real lives that were lived here, creating work that captivated western audiences and spread misconceptions and stereotypes that have persevered even in the 21st century. The western pursuit of this imagined world is known as Orientalism.

CONTEMPORARY LUSAIL

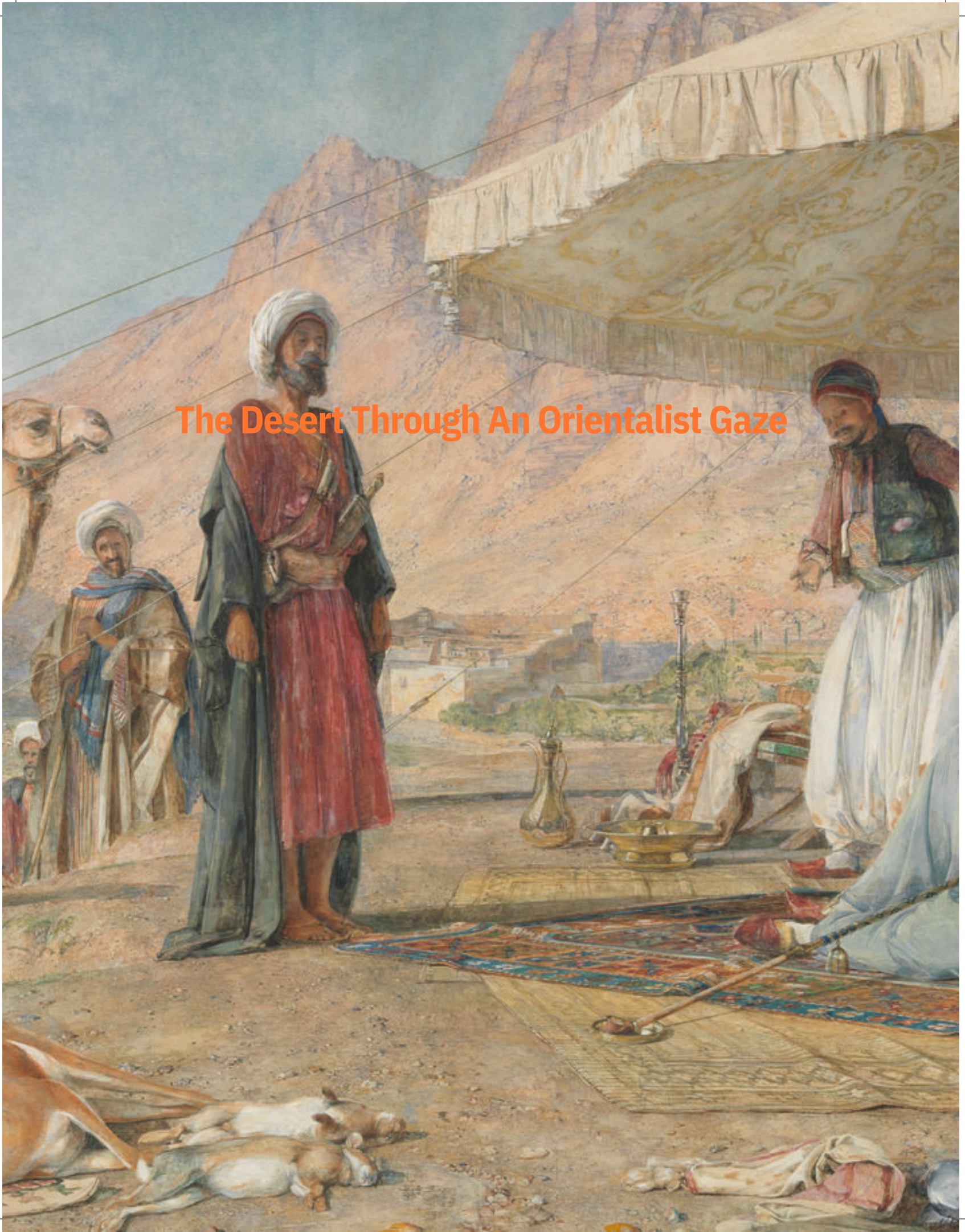
From these profound beginnings Lusail is flourishing as an incredible modern city connected globally at the heart of the Indian Ocean world.

Lusail Museum will honour Sheikh Jassim's legacy of proud independence by creating a new kind of museum, a place that protects and promotes cultural identity while fostering international dialogue through the open sharing of ideas.



Image courtesy of General Collection - Doha and the Lusail Museum Collection - Doha

The Desert Through An Orientalist Gaze



For us in Qatar the desert is a profound and tangible part of heritage and culture. For other parts of the world it is exotic, remote and misunderstood – a place that exists only in the imagination.

The orientalising trope of 'the East' as a land of barren deserts, hardy Bedouin nomads and strange customs can trace its history back to ancient writers such as Herodotus, and was a popular subject for Orientalist artists, including imagined scenes.

Picture of the desert

Image courtesy of General Collection - Doha and the Lusail Museum Collection - Doha

This way of thinking has a contemporary legacy, evident in popular culture such as Star Wars and Lawrence of Arabia, and contemporary media coverage of the Middle East.

The active, dynamic nature and rich, complex intangible heritage of the desert are little understood in the West but are vitally important to society, both historically and today.

As you explore this meeting point, looking at views of the desert through popular culture and the lens of Orientalist artists, what do you see – a place? or, an idea, a fantasy?

Painting by John Frederick Lewis

A Frank Encampment in the Desert of Mount Sinai, 1842, John Frederick Lewis, 1862, Oil on panel, Lusail Museum Collection – Doha. Lusail Museum Collection - Doha, 2022

Bedouin Culture

Artist	John Frederick Lewis
Year	1862
Dimensions	66.7 x 135.9 cm
Medium	Oil on panel
Location	Lusail Museum Collection – Doha

The desert and Bedouin culture have intrigued European painters for centuries. Some, like British artist John Frederick Lewis who lived in Egypt for several years, took care to understand the culture and carefully depict it from

first-hand studies. Others drew from their imagination to create romanticised but formulaic views of barren landscapes, camels and soft desert light.

The Souq

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Painting of a souq

In the Bazaar, August Macke, 1914, Watercolour and pencil on paper, Lusail Museum Collection – Doha. Lusail Museum Collection - Doha, 2022

In the Bazaar

Artist	August Macke
Year	1914
Dimensions	28 x 22 cm
Medium	Watercolour and pencil on paper
Location	Lusail Museum Collection – Doha

The life of the souq is, and has been, a core part of daily communal experience – a continuation of shared activities under one roof from market to mosque and home.

Exploring this gallery, you will find a mixture of imagined, realistic or abstracted scenes through photographs, film and paintings. As bustling and dynamic meeting places,

souqs have featured regularly in the works of Orientalist artists. Some of these pictures are based on first-hand experience, while others were imagined or inspired by artefacts, photographs or texts. Macke's abstracted *Im Bazaar* concentrates on the bright, clashing colours of the marketplace, giving us an insight into its exuberant vitality.

Painting of a souq

The Carpet Menders, Rudolf Swoboda, 1883, Oil on canvas, Lusail Museum Collection – Doha. Lusail Museum Collection - Doha, 2022

The Carpet Menders

Artist	Rudolf Swoboda
Year	1883
Dimensions	79 x 107 cm
Medium	Oil on canvas
Location	Lusail Museum Collection – Doha

The vibrant works on display in this gallery thrum with the life of the souq, busy with merchants, buyers and goods changing hands. The Carpet Menders by Rudolf Swoboda

is meticulously painted, particularly the detail of the carpet in the foreground, and gives us an insight into a trade in action.

Painting of a mosque

Gate of the Great Umayyad Mosque, Damascus, Gustav Bauernfeind, 1890, Oil on panel, Lusail Museum Collection – Doha, Lusail Museum Collection - Doha, 2022

The Great Mosque of Damascus

Artist	Gustav Bauernfeind
Year	1890
Dimensions	121 x 96.5 cm
Medium	Oil on canvas
Location	Lusail Museum Collection – Doha

Gustav Bauernfeind's architectural training can be seen in the minute precision of this 1888 painting of the Great Mosque. He painted it on his third trip to Damascus using models he recruited in the city streets. This painting is an

important archaeological document, completed in careful detail just a few years before the great fire of 1893: it is also full of orientalist clichés, such as the decay of the architecture and the richly dressed beggar.

Photograph of Souq Al-Hamidiyah

Photograph of Souq Al-Hamidiyah

Photograph of Souq Al-Hamidiyah

Souq Al-Hamidiyah

Location	Lusail Museum Collection – Doha
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Damascus’ main souq, Souq al-Hamidiyah, was built inside the old walled city in the late eighteenth century. It was expanded and given its ornate tin roofs in the nineteenth century. The roofs are still intact today, but their bullet holes are a reminder of the early twentieth-century conflict between the Syrians and the French.

The thriving commercial heart of the historic city, the souq has welcomed merchants from far and wide, with goods exchanging hands and travelling out across the Indian Ocean World and beyond.

Orientalism in Pop Culture

Orientalism continues to influence the world, as evident in popular culture such as Star Wars and Lawrence of Arabia, and contemporary media coverage of the Middle East.

Star Wars

The first Star Wars series is dominated by uninhabitable planets including the desert planet of Tatooine. The name is evocative of a major desert city in Tunisia, close to the location where the scenes of the original movie were filmed. Tatooine is portrayed as a cliched desert out-post - beyond small islands of civilisation held by colonials, most of the planet is in the hands of only partly human savages who nearly kill the hero in the first few minutes of the film.

Jeffrey Chen wrote an article for The Washington Post describing how Star Wars reinforces Western prejudices:

Star Wars is shot with "Orientalizing" stereotypes — patronizing tropes that represent an imagined East, or the Orient, as inferior to the rational, heroic West. Think, for example, of the uniformed conformity of the evil Empire vs. the scrappy (American) individualism of the rebel heroes... Even those who have noted these prejudices could be excused for not noticing the presence of such tropes in another key element of every Star Wars film: John Williams's iconic musical score. Williams's music associates the "good guys" with the grand orchestral style of the European Romantics (think of the beautifully hummable melodies for Luke, Leia and Rey), while the themes for the "bad guys" are expressed in the vocabulary of Chinese, Indian and Middle Eastern music.¹

Lawrence of Arabia

Poster for Lawrence of Arabia

Lawrence of Arabia movie poster, Saverio Pavone, 1962, Paper and linen, General Collection - Doha. General Collection - Doha, 2022

The desert in the first part of Lawrence of Arabia, set mostly in Hejaz, is far more than a setting. It is a harsh and unforgiving character that, little by little, Lawrence develops an uneasy relationship with. Sherif

Ali, the character played by Omar Sharif, has a profound bond with the landscape, reinforcing the stereotype of the Arab as a man of the desert.

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Hollywood's Egypt and Cleopatra

The studios of Golden-age Hollywood were deeply influenced by nineteenth-century European art. The costumes and props from *Cleopatra*, the Joseph L. Mankiewicz masterpiece starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, mingle elements from different periods of Ancient Egypt in ways that owe more to nineteenth-century paintings that were inspired by Shakespeare's work than to genuine archaeological evidence of ancient Egypt.

2

<https://youtu.be/BkhKhamX0I>

Cleopatra (1963) Trailer The official *Cleopatra* (1963) trailer starring Elizabeth Taylor Video posted on YouTube by Rotten Tomatoes Classic Trailers



References

1. Chen, J. (2019, December 23). Perspective | how star wars reinforces our prejudices. The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/12/23/how-star-wars-reinforces-our-prejudices/>
2. Rotten Tomatoes Classic. (2018, April 30). *Cleopatra* (1963) Trailer #1 | Movieclips Classic Trailers [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BkhKhamX0I>

سوق

Painting of a souq

«رائعة السجاد السجاد، رودولف سويودا، 1883، متحف لوسيل، مجموعة مقتنيات - الدوحة مجموعة مقتنيات متحف لوسيل - الدوحة

تنبض الأعمال المعروضة في هذا المعرض بالحياة، فهي مفعمة بأجواء السوق الزاخرة بحركة التجار والمشتريين والسلع المتغيرة. رسم رودولف سويودا لوحة "صانعو السجاد" بدقة متناهية، لا سيما تفاصيل السجادة في مقدمة اللوحة، ليقدّم لنا لمحة عن هذه الصنعة عن قرب وعلى أرض الواقع.