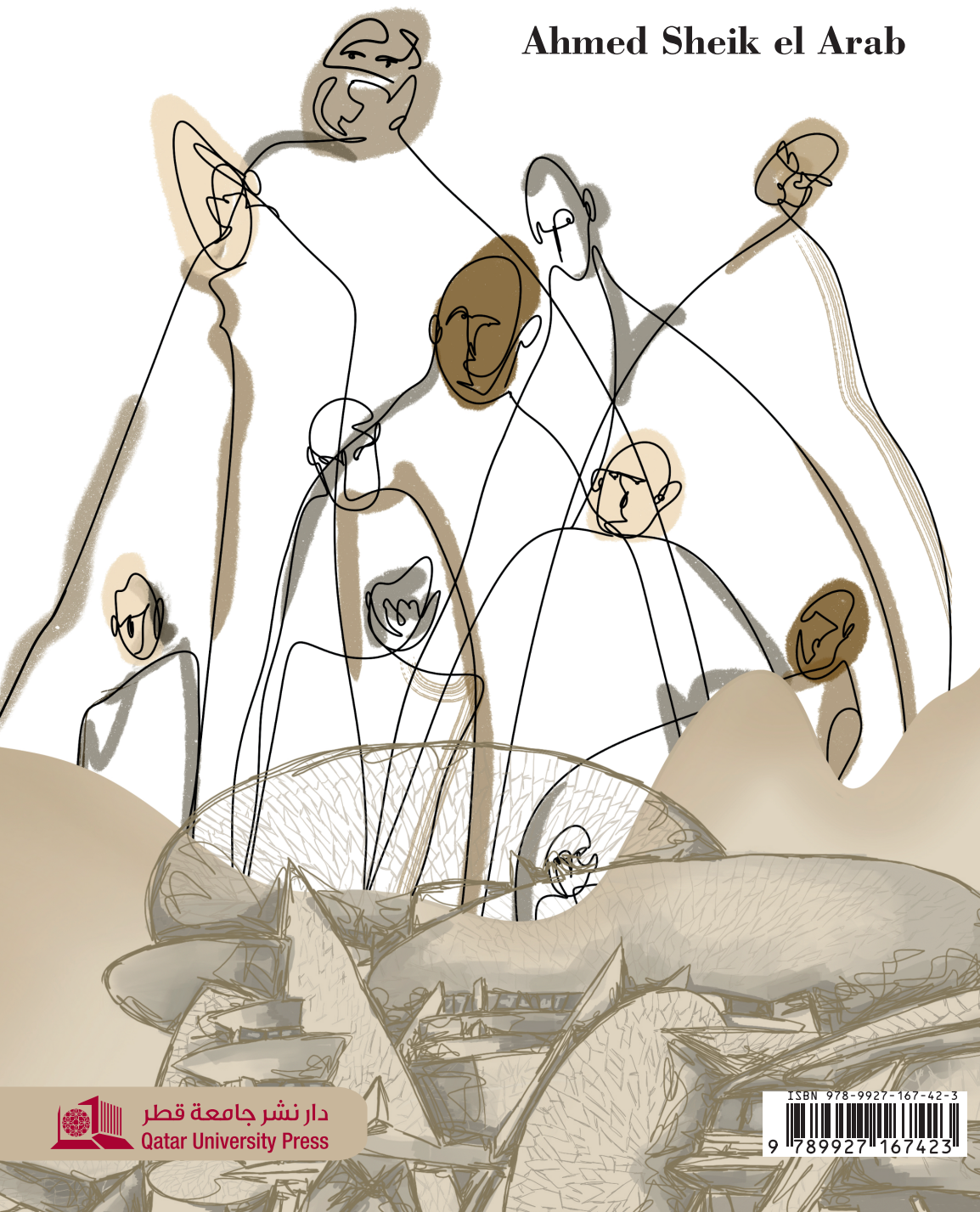


# Museum Treasures for All

## The Role of Museum Curators in Public Communication

Ahmed Sheik el Arab



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**Proofread by:**

Syed Aqeel Ahmad

Nabil Darwish

**Layout review:**

Neda Ahrari

**Cover design:**

Fawziya Al-Kubaisi

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**Ahmed Sheik el Arab**

Senior Museum Guide

The National Museum of Qatar (NMQ)

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## Preface

My first experience of working for a museum was in Qatar. This fired in me a desire to understand how museum artifacts that belong to different cultures can carry a universal message when displayed together in one exhibition. It was this desire for understanding and knowledge that motivated me to complete my academic studies and enroll in University College London (UCL) in Qatar to study museum & gallery practices. During my studies, I became increasingly interested in understanding the role of curators who are responsible for organizing and developing museum galleries. This book was originally my MA thesis detailing the important roles, which museum curators play from the inception of the museum. These responsibilities were not limited to taking care of objects but were increased and developed throughout history, and now include different methods of interpretation and outreach to the visitors. The museum is becoming a great center of education and entertainment, with the aim to actively communicate the museum message to the public. This study focuses on the curators' roles in developing museum galleries, based on my work at the galleries of the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) as a case study model.

I hope this work will be of benefits to museums curators as well as museum visitors who are keen to learn more about what the museum curators do to make their visit an unforgettable experience.

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This book would not have been existed without the help of the many people who have motivated me to be who I am now.

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## Introduction

Thinking about developing museum collections that originally belong to different historical and cultural backgrounds, in the sense that Steven Conn (2010: 7) asserts of collecting, sorting, and using these collections to create new meanings, is the role of a multidisciplinary profession in museums. Many critics and museologists have confirmed that this profession traditionally consisted of only one role: being a guardian of museum objects and then it evolved to perform various roles. These responsibilities drive the person working in this field to play the roles of various professionals, varying between the guardian, mediator, artist, auteur, producer, interpreter, author, and researcher and last but not least the exhibition maker as assessed by Paul O'Neill & Mick Wilson (2015: 14–15).

The person who performs all the above-mentioned roles is called a curator. According to Linda Vlnroodasse (2017: 24) curators are responsible for connecting the audience with museums, through building several exhibitions, using museum artifacts from the past to deliver new messages today. Here Vlnroodasse raised two modern responsibilities for curators that are building exhibitions and that there must be a background meaning to the new frame for the artifacts. Because building great museums and exhibitions without any interpretative approach that engages visitors' imagination in creating their narratives of artifacts, results in a poor museum experience. At the same time, museum curators will not be able to build new moment messages from the past objects unless they practice their curatorial role as researchers to have what Okwui Enwezor (2007: 121) called a broader look to the context of the past cultures. Enwezor believes that this look enables curators to raise varied modern dialogues among the artifacts themselves and between the artifacts and the museum audience. These dialogues will not be interesting unless there are a variety of interpretive

approaches that allow what has been said in the recorded video Curators and the Public (Clayton 2014), to engage visitors with the museum collection at different levels of open channels. Moreover, implementing varied interpretation methods give visitors enough space to build their understanding of the narrative of the museum collections as asserted by Margaret Lam (2013) & Teffany Jenkins (2013).

In the same context, this dissertation aims to explore the role of curators in developing different interpretive strategies that guide audiences to understand the narrative of the museum in a pleasurable way. Using Gallery 4 in the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) as a case study of a modern museum to answer the question of what are the interpretive approaches developed by curators to guide visitors through the narrative of the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) in Gallery 4 and why have these approaches been developed, I chose Gallery 4 as a case study for many reasons, including but not limited to, that it makes it easier for visitors to feel how to go from one venue to another. Once visitors enter this gallery, they find the display showcases on the right side, and then the other showcases are centered with the spatial design of the gallery. The other reason is that it contains five different sections, all of which are connected to each other to tell the story of the people of Qatar during a certain period in history (that is, the period before the discovery of oil) so that the audience is not distracted. Furthermore, there is a good use of modern technology, oral films, and elements of interpretation that help the audience understand the topics covered in the gallery.

This book explores the different roles of modern curators with much of the focus on their responsibility in developing interpretation paradigms that help visitors to make meanings from past museum objects. The following is a summary of the evolution of these chapters after the Introduction:

Literature Review begins with mapping out a brief history of the curatorial practices, as a means of identifying the derivative of the term curator and exploring the role of curators. It traces the nonstop progress

of museum curators' responsibilities over time and the increased responsibilities of contemporary curators. These responsibilities are not only towards museum objects as to care about them in the past but also towards the museums and visitors. Finally, it throws spotlight on the different interpretive approaches that were developed by curators, aiming to help visitors to understand the museum message, and to make sure that the museum message is delivered in an interesting way. Curators also develop the other two elements of the interpretation process. The first, curators create different methods of presenting these past objects that are like hooks to visitors. The second, their use of the varied interpretive factors of visuals and modern technology.

Research Methodology traces a museum specific methodology framework that attempts to answer the research question (see p.2). Exhibition analysis has been used, which aims to analyze how NMoQ curators put together what Stephanie Moser (2010: 23) called the exhibition elements of visuals, objects, space, and technology to create one context for Gallery 4 in the museum. This research method of exhibition analysis served in illustrating "the complex relationship between content and methods of presentation" (Moser 2010: 23), which helped in defining the interpretive approaches that NMoQ curators implemented in Gallery 4 to guide the audience within the museum's narrative.

Chapter one provides metadata about three points in two sections. The first section deals with the description of two points. The first point is the description of the old museum, called the Qatar National Museum, which was presenting the story of Qatar through old objects and using techniques commensurate with the times in the year 1975. The second point is the description of the new museum, which is an extension of the old museum. The focus in the first section is on how the museum's narrative was divided into eleven galleries of the new museum. Both the architecture of the new museum and the latest technology have been used to represent the Qatar story in proportion to our contemporary

era. In the second section, I describe the exhibits of the five sections of Gallery 4 (see figures from 2-10 on pages 31-38) with the surrounding environment for the gallery as a whole, so the reader can imagine what the gallery looks like.

Chapter two focuses on the case study of Gallery No. 4 at the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ). Here, the role of curators at NMoQ in developing interpretive approaches is explored, which guides visitors to interpret artifacts and help them build their understanding, rather than the role of curators in providing a live interpretation of museum objects through lectures, guided tours or presentations (Whitehead, 2012a: xii-xiii). The interpretive approaches that are implemented do not work entirely without the other two interpretation elements; presentation and interpretive factors, because these two elements attract visitors to approaches of interpreting artifacts (Whitehead, 2012a: xvi). In other words, curators are responsible for choosing how objects are presented, which may be displayed solely or as part of a group of objects. Sometimes curators choose to display objects in showcases or without them to serve the interpretative approaches chosen by curators for their museums or exhibitions. Moreover, the role of curators in selecting subordinated interpretive factors, such as the language of labels and panels, images, films, and modern technology that illustrates presentation and interpretive approaches. One can notice that the two former elements of interpretation support interpretive methods to help the audiences create meanings.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the literature review, research methodology, chapters one and two, and explains the findings that were reached in this book.

## Introductory Chapter Literature Review

Literature Review provides an overview of the curator's profession, spanning the complex roles of this profession throughout history. This work then gradually moves on to what Lisa Wright (2014: 269) called the main role of museum curators in developing the museum's contents through developing and applying various interpretative methods, i.e., defining the two essential requirements of presentation and the factors of interpretation that are curators' vehicles to reach a successful interpretation approach for each exhibition.

### 1. Historical overview of the profession of Curators and development of Curatorial Practice

The word curate is not a new term, but the task of the curator has been different over the centuries. The same word went through some transformations, for example, in ancient Rome, where the Romans called the supervisor who took over public affairs, such as water canals, sewage system, and bathhouses *curatores* (Obrist 2014: 24–25). In the Middle Ages, the task of the assistant of any priest was to care for people in the church neighborhood and provide them with their needs and was called the *curatus* (Graham, 2010a: 10; Obrist, 2014: 25). Then at the end of the eighteenth century, museums appointed a person to care for museum collections, and that person was called curator (Obrist, 2014: 25). One can discover that all of the ancient Roman *curatores*, the medieval *curatus*, and the museum curators shared three things. First, they participated in carrying out a care mission either for projects that serve people's affairs, or people or objects that have been created by people. Secondly, they shared knowledge, because, to take care of the things mentioned above, they must have the knowledge to do so. This knowledge helped previous careers organize their ideas. Third,



they all engaged in the practice of curating their works, starting with planning how to do their work, and then refining their business through organizing it.

Other critics have not interpreted the curator word as being derived from any word in the dictionary, but rather to develop the curatorial practices. For example, Morgan (2013: 23) believes that the classification of curators has gone through three shifts: sometimes an expert, a caretaker at other times, and a mobile curator.

First, in the 15th-century people in Europe began to develop an interest in collecting artworks and antiques. These art patrons and collectors had become experts in curating their past collections. The second shift of the curatorial typology was with the advent of public museums in the nineteenth century. During that period, curatorial practice was a governmental tool for maintaining museum objects in certain ways to reflect some of the values and ideas that shape people's understanding. The third curatorial practical shift was in 1990, when the curators began creating (large-scale group exhibition), displaying contemporary art, either thematic or biennials (Morgan, 2013: 23–25). This kind of exhibition involved many curators and has led to the existence of what Morgan called "hyper-mobile curators" who can move from their countries of origin or cities to work with many curators to put grand exhibitions together (Morgan, 2013: 23–25).

Finally, some international bodies have developed definitions for the curator. The first is the Curators Committee of the American Association of Museums 1983 (CurCom), which defined the curator as "highly knowledgeable, experienced, or educated in a discipline relevant to museum's purpose or mission" (CurCom, 2009: 3). CurCom has classified the curators into two types, they "can be highly specialized experts with responsibilities in a particular collection area, or they can be generalists who control a broad range of materials and perform duties ranging from exhibition development to facility maintenance and

usage" (CurCom, 2009: 3). The second is the Association of Art Museum Curators (AAMC), which has defined curators as "art historians engaged in scholarship with a special emphasis on physical objects..."

Curators have a particular knowledge of and access to art objects that can generate valuable new insights (AAMC, 2007: 6). These insights are presented through use of interpretive methods. In the meantime, AAMC notes that the scholarship can be obtained through curatorial researches in libraries, which in turn enhances their understanding of museum objects to carry out their role successfully.

### **1. The role of Curators**

The traditional roles of museum curators practicing and still differentiated between caring for objects and educating visitors are no longer sufficient, but they have evolved in our contemporary era to include other roles as important as those in the past. According to AAMC (2007: 7-14) earlier extended roles and even developed roles can be divided into three overlapping sets of responsibilities:

The first group is the role of the curators towards museum objects, including caring for them, displaying them in a correct way, and striking a balance between interpreting visuals and audio means. From the perspective of the role of curators towards objects, Jens Hoffman (2014: 10-11) argues that in the eighteenth century to 'much through of the twentieth century' museum curators played the role of museum overseers or guardians, who cared about artifacts, starting with purchase collections, sorting and cataloging. Consequently, the roles of contemporary curators in the museum are to develop the contents of the museum either through their traditional role in obtaining more objects with all the practices explained by Hoffman or through their modern role in enriching these objects in new interpretative ways that provide visitors with different museum experiences (Heinich & Pollak, 1996: 233–34). Furthermore, developing new ideas to encourage

visitors to visit the museum depends on the old responsibility of curators in researching the artifacts and their new role of interpretation. The first is curatorial research that enhances the awareness of the curators about objects. Curator Okwui Enwezor, when interviewed by Paul O'Neill (2007: 110–11), has confirmed that this kind of awareness will be most effective if curators engage their minds and feelings while researching everything related to the process of making objects, such as artistic features, historical features, people, and places. Therefore, research in this way helps to acquire a variety of artistic skills that will be reflected in curatorial practices. This leads visitors to uncover the meaning of exhibitions and provide them with a unique museum experience (Enwezor, 2007: 111). Here, the curator acts as a researcher. This is because the curator investigates facts about artifacts from books or from another reliable source such as, the owner or producer of this artifact, and then displays them to the public using various methods of interpretation. The second new role that curators play to enrich the museum's experience is what Terry Smith (2015: 16-18) described in his book "Talking Contemporary Curating" by exchanging knowledge between contemporary curators through curatorial discourses. Terry Smith also claims that these speeches will update curators with new interpretative approaches for each exhibition.

The second set of responsibilities of curators is the role of curators towards visitors through educating the audience and hosting visitors as well. However, educating the public takes various forms, direct or indirect (AAMC, 2007: 12). In the direct form, it is a new role that curators play to communicate directly with the audience by offering guided tours, lectures, or any other direct educational program. The curator here acts as a guide or lecturer. On the other hand, the indirect form of educating visitors is by presenting and interpreting objects. In this case, the curator acts as a producer (Graham, 2010b: 158). From the standpoint of educating visitors, critic Morgan (2013: 23) says that the

role of curators to teach museum visitors is not only related to educating visitors about objects but also related to the way visitors behave in museums, for example placing an outstretched hand image with a no-touch sign.

In addition, Hoffman (2014:11-12) believes that the role of museum curators has now been developed because they are interested in creating a context in the museum artifacts display. This context will not be provided unless the museum curators put exhibits in dialogue with each other to allow the meanings to reproduce and resonate with the audience as asserted by Hoffman. Hoffman's earlier belief is one of many examples in this paper that shows the overlapping roles of curators involved in interpreting objects, educating the public, and the well-being of the museum. Moreover, another curator role is to host the audience. Critic Graham (2010b: 124) argues that the curator not only curates objects but also curates the entire exhibition space. For example, defining platforms for short audiences and children if the showcase is high or arranging a sofa bed in front of a movie that lasts for a few minutes or to create interesting, attractive spaces. Through this, curators cultivate the entire space in a hospitable manner, which in turn attracts visitors and enhances the museum experience (Graham, 2010c: 124).

The third set of curator responsibilities was defined by AAMC (2007: 12) as the 'role of curators for senior museum staff,' but this group could be called the 'curator role for the well-being of museums,' because, when curator assists museum educators in building educational programs and workshops by providing educators with the necessary data about museum collections (AAMC 2007: 12), this means that curators are concerned with the well-being of museums. Moreover, when curators present to museum managers proposals to build new temporary exhibitions to reuse museum objects for delivering new messages, this leads to an increase in the number of museum visitors, so they are concerned with the well-being of the museum. This is, in fact,

a new role for museum curators (Alloway, 1996: 221–22). To embellish these exhibitions, curators must play their part in developing and using the various interpretative methods that are part of the interpretation process as assessed by Smith (2015: 14).

### **1.1. Interpretation**

One of the main roles of curators is the process of presenting museum artifacts, implementing specific interpretation factors, and developing an interpretative approach to help audiences build their own meanings, called interpretation (Black, 2005: 184–85). First, presenting museum artifacts means how curators want visitors to look at objects, not just for the sake of showing. Second, factors of interpretation help to convey the meaning of objects and the concept of the museum. Third, methods of interpretation are ways to engage audiences to get the whole message of the museum. One can notice that the way elements of interpretation work together forms the inaudible voice of the curators through which they direct visitors to the museum's narrative as confirmed by Tiffany Jenkins (2013).

### **1.2. Presenting the objects**

The presentation of museum objects takes various forms. Sometimes curators exhibit museum artifacts, either in solo or group shows. In a solo show, the artifacts are displayed separately from each other, which allows the audience to take a deep look at each object to capture a transition from a specific moment as confirmed by Hoffman & Yamaguchi (2014:14; 1991:61). On the other hand, a group show provides viewers with a "comprehensive picture" of the museum's storytelling, because presenting a collection of objects in one setting generates a visual language that creates a dialogue between objects and each other (Hoffman, 2014: 14; Yamaguchi, 1991: 61). Moreover, the group presentation introduces objects in one context to create a story and provide the audience with a balanced sensory and mental

experience (Hoffmann, 2014: 14). This means that visitors can see new components close together and relate their meanings to each other to gain a full understanding of the museum's narrative. In addition, Michelle Henning (2007: 31) asserts that to develop an effective display language for objects, it is better to present them in a comparative form. Here the audience will engage with their sense of seeing and mind, as they will look at the two groups and try to find similarities and differences.

### **1.3. Factors of interpretation**

The second element of the interpretation process is the factors of interpretation. According to Andres Lepik (2017: 45–46) the exhibition design, which is represented in visuals such as models, drawings, photos, maps, and videos, is a crucial factor in the interpretation of objects, because it attracts the sight and mind of visitors, and creates a kind of communication between the audiences and objects of the museum. At the same time, it is appropriate to display big images close to objects, to create a dialogue between both that helps to convey the meaning as it appears in one context. Lepik believes that displaying these large images directly to the audience without placing them in vitrines creates a kind of direct experience with the objects (Lepik, 2017: 45–46).

While critic Christopher Whitehead (2012: xiii–xiv) believes that the production of interpretation depends on two sets of factors. The first is the "physical display environment (such as exhibition design and lighting)" and the second is the "supporting materials such as panels, labels, audio guides interactive, audiovisuals...presence or absence of museum furniture (cases, seating, barriers)" (Whitehead, 2012: xiii-xiv). Although the above factors of interpretation create a kind of communication between objects and visitors, giving the audience a better understanding of both objects and the concept of the museum (Storr 2006: 25; Whitehead 2012a: xv), the use of these factors should have standards that serve the interpretation process in museums. For

example, Robert Storr (2006: 24) believes that readabilities, like labels and panels, is best written in a language that all age groups understand. At the same time, they should not contain many words, in order not to divert the audience's attention from the artifacts. Furthermore, attracting visitor attention for any support material creates crowds that block the flow of visitors in any spot in the museum (Storr, 2006: 24–25). This lack of interpretation affects the mental communication of the public in following the museum's narrative.

#### **1.4. Interpretive approaches**

The third element of the interpretation process is the interpretative approach developed by curators to create a link between museum objects and the museum's message as if it were a kind of mapping to access the museum's contents (Whitehead, 2012b: 23). Whitehead explains that this helps engage audiences in making meanings. While Sheikh (2007: 180) considered interpretative approaches as vehicles to tell the museum narrative to the audience. In order for this approach to be successful, it must have characteristics as Graham Black argued strongly in his book "The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitors Involvement." For example, the method used must contain a main and clear theme for the entire museum, supported by sub-themes connected to the main one. This association between themes helps visitors know their direction in the museum. Graham Black added that the interpretative approach should be active by encouraging visitors to be productive rather than being consumers by engaging visitors mentally and physically (Black, 2005: 192–97). Therefore, visitors can read, see, listen, imagine, and do, which enables them to build new knowledge. Finally, to provide visitors with unique museum experience, the approach should stimulate the imagination of visitors and be enjoyable. This can happen by encouraging visitors to think, and arouse their curiosity, to discover and learn about the museum's artifacts in a pleasurable way (Black, 2005: 192–97).

The following is a review of some of the interpretative approaches used by museum curators:

#### **1.4.1. The classical approach**

In this approach, the curators arrange and display objects in historical order, so, "the relationships of objects in time are transposed into a spatial context, and...enables them to be used as an apparatus of social memory" (Yamaguchi, 1991: 61). Yamaguchi stated that this approach is often used in art museums and museums of cultural history, to increase community awareness of their cultural history and educate visitors in general with the narrative of the museum. This means that the primary focus of museums adapting to this approach is to tell the narrative of the museum rather than focusing on the aesthetic value of the objects that are used as tools in conveying the museum's story to the audience (Lavine, 1991: 152; Wilson, 2007: 195–96).

#### **1.4.2. Multi-sensory approach**

According to Janet Marstine (2006: 102), contemporary museums displaying modern art needs to provide visitors with sensory experiences that enhance their feelings towards the displayed objects. This means that in this approach, visitors are encouraged to use all their senses such as doing, thinking, reading, listening, observing, and imagining (Black, 2005: 198–99). Similarly, Anna Baccaglini (2018)"plainCitation": "(Baccaglini 2018 reveals in her research (Multi-Sensory Museum Experiences: Balancing Objects' Preservation and Visitors' Learning) at Seton Hall University that a multi-sensory approach is an appropriate way of connecting visitors to museum objects, because it involves the visitors intellectually, emotionally and physically. In this way, visitors will be able to discover the meaning of the artifacts and link them to the main message of the museum.



### **1.4.3. Thematic approach**

In building exhibitions based on one topic such as calligraphy, Graham Black (2005: 196) emphasized that curators should select the objects that are associated with the exhibition's topic. In order to create a strong and enjoyable thematic architecture for thought-based exhibitions, Black and Obrist (2005: 196–97; 2014: 32–33) have confirmed that curators must do two things. First, divide the main theme into sub-themes. Second, the themes must be related to the life of visitors. Therefore, visitors enjoyably extract meanings. One more characteristic of designing exhibitions and museums thematically is that this approach helps visitors to map their visit to a museum as explained by Griggs (2009: 119–20) because in this case, the museum's curator gives the visitor the choice of theme to start with.

### **1.4.4. Product-based approach**

According to Whitehead (2012c: 36–37), this approach is one of the most preferred in museums, because objects are the tangible heritage that represent absent cultures, connecting audiences with the diverse aspects of these cultures. This connection is based on what Whitehead (2012c: 36) called "the visible characteristics of work in terms of technique and style" that distinguish artworks from one another. Therefore, the product-based approach maps the importance of these objects historically in terms of usage and artistic features as well as the importance of manufacturers (Whitehead 2012c: 36).

### **1.4.5. Process-based approach**

This approach has more to do with European culture than any other culture because the process-based approach is very interested in casting artworks to include the reasons that led to these works and the conditions around them (Whitehead, 2012c: 36–37). For example, for whom these artworks were made, the cost of these artworks and

who the middleman was including the payment method (Whitehead, 2012c: 36–37). This interpretative approach is most appropriate for professionals who understand the educational, technical, artistic, and objective relationships of artworks that they rely on based on the core values of modern artworks as claimed by Whitehead (2012c: 36–37).

#### **1.4.6. Human interest approach**

This approach may be similar to the thematic approach to visitor's life, but the human interest approach is more closely related to visitors' emotions and mental activities (Black, 2005: 195). To illustrate, displaying objects with stories that affect different feelings of visitors such as happiness, fear, love, hate, or topics of interest to people such as ways to tailor clothes in the past or how people think about the future. In other words, displaying objects in a way that stimulates visitors' interests, experiences, knowledge, and imagination (Black, 2005: 195). One of the characteristics of this interpretation strategy is that it "reflects how often we respond to things...how we feel about them-our emotional response to them-rather than from an objective viewpoint" (Black, 2005: 195). In other words, the stories of objects that touch human feelings and emotions are kept in the visitors' memory. So, when visitors see these objects again, they will remember the same feelings and emotions associated with the stories of the artifacts.

#### **1.4.7. Chronological approach**

Organizing objects according to times of origin is called chronological order to engage audiences in the chronological progression of a story, objects, or cultures (Whitehead, 2012b: 31-32). For example, it shows objects associated with ancient, modern, and recent times such as Stone Age objects first and then the transition to the Bronze Age after those objects dating back to the Iron Age.

#### **1.4.8. Geographical approach**

Objects in this approach are unified according to production sites, to provide audiences with an overview of the development of art in specific geographical regions (Whitehead, 2012b: 31-32), giving an example of The National Gallery in London, which adopts a geographical approach and chronology together that "represent the development of art over time in specific places" (Whitehead, 2012b: 32).

#### **1.4.9. Interactive approach**

According to Henning (2007: 35), this approach is applied in science museums and children's museums. The use of modern technology such as multimedia in this approach enriches museums with different messages rather than just one message (Henning, 2007: 35; Coutinho, 2017: 73). At the same time, both former critics believe that the power of the media will entice public awareness to develop their interpretation through active participation. For example, visitors can rotate models of objects by pressing a button, so they can enjoy learning about objects. Another example is to use the touch screen to read more about objects or on topics related to objects. This type of physical participation using modern technology is used as a means of shaping visitors' awareness of museum objects (Henning, 2007: 37–38).

#### **1.4.10. Period room approach**

This approach provides simultaneous snapshots of artistic cultures in a specific historical era by organizing objects in "a reconstructed or imagined interior, usually a domestic one" (Whitehead, 2012d: 130). For example, when hobbyists collect and display paintings near their furniture, they create what Whitehead (2012d: 130) explained "a sense of the time and atmosphere in which these objects were originally created and enjoyed and purchased."

## **2. Research Methodology**

Once the research question for this book was identified (see p.2), a clear systematic pathway was followed to the exhibition analysis research method that is closely related to the research question. This is because the study was conducted to answer the research question without involving human subjects. To have a clear path within the research methodology, this part was structured in two stages. First, the literature reviewed on exhibition analysis as a museum-specific methodology. Second, a field visit to Gallery 4 at the NMoQ was done.

### **2.1. Stage 1: Review on exhibition analysis**

As noted in the above review, the three elements of interpretation have been discussed which are the way of presentation, factors of interpretation, and interpretation approaches. On the other hand, the research method of exhibition analysis examines the three previous elements of interpretation as well as other elements "when assessing the epistemological function of museums" (Moser, 2010: 22). To elaborate on this, we will discuss in depth the elements of the display analysis environment that relate to the research question in this book.

#### **2.1.1. Displaying methods**

According to Stephanie Moser (2010: 22–24) exhibition analysis research method assesses the different ways of presenting museum exhibits such as artifacts, texts of labels, panels and audiovisuals media because each method of the display creates a different reading for objects. For example, as shown in the above literature when objects are displayed independently, this means that curators want visitors to focus more on the artwork itself and its artistic value. On the other side, when the curators aim to focus more on the museum's story than on the artistic value of the artifacts, they display objects altogether. Therefore, the ways objects are presented help the audience to generate meaning (Moser, 2010: 22).

### 2.1.2. Exhibition environment

Each exhibition consists of basic communication factors that help visitors decode the meanings of any exhibition, as evaluated by Hedley Swain (2007: 217). These factors form what John Falk (2000: 127) calls the exhibition environment, which varies between exhibition exhibits of museum artifacts, interpretation/visual aid (images, panels, and films), exhibition design techniques, and space for displaying objects. Moser (2010:23) believes that exhibition analysis not only identifies the various factors of the exhibition but also analyzes "how they reinforce each other in a system of representation" (Moser, 2010:23). On one hand, determining the factors of the exhibition helps to "stimulate the different senses" as assessed by Moser (2010: 23). For example, when visitors interact with interactive touch screens, they immediately use their hands and eyesight to see something better, as they can enlarge the object image and read more about it or related topics. On the other hand, an analysis of the way these factors work together "helps create a context, atmosphere, and ambience for displays" as confirmed by Swain (2007: 217). For instance, as shown in the review above, displaying a huge picture or movie related to museum objects and close-up creates one context for exhibits. Therefore, visitors can connect these messages and understand the whole narrative of the museum.

### 2.1.3. Exhibition layout

The smooth orientation of visitors through the exhibition theme to generate meanings depends on what Moser (2010: 27) called "the ways in which different components of an exhibition are laid out." Moser explained that the distribution of museum exhibits of objects and factors of interpretation in the exhibition space could help the public to understand development of the exhibition topic or even the importance of the topic. For example, if an object is displayed in a separate display directly in front of the exhibition entrance, it will give visitor the

impression that this object is a masterpiece. Another example, the arrangement of artifacts in a particular direction indicates what Moser (2010: 27) called the path for visitors and at the same time helps the audience understand the cultural development of civilization or subject that these objects represent.

#### **2.1.4. Exhibition style**

Exhibition analysis examines the way or the style of an exhibition because this helps in identifying the learning style of that exhibition. Thus, the public can understand the main message, as assessed by Moser (2010: 28–29). Moser sorted the exhibition styles into thematic, ‘object-led’, didactic, discovery, esthetic, contextual, and immersive. For example, in the thematic style, the curators choose museum objects that share the same idea/subject to be displayed in an interpretive way (see the interpretive approaches in the review above) to tell a story. Here the audience learns about the museum’s collection through the main theme of the exhibition, and they do not learn about the museum’s collection through its artistic value, as asserted by Moser (2010: 29). She also believes that if curators want visitors to experience the original function of objects, they design the exhibition contextually.

#### **2.1.5. Harmonic design and color factors**

Two of the primary environmental factors for exhibition analysis are the exhibition design and the color of the ceiling, walls, and furniture. Moser (2010: 25-26) argues that the exhibition design and colors can reinforce the exhibition’s message, if they match the exhibits and can create "contrast to the exhibits" of the opposite. For example, the desert rock facade design creates harmony with the objects presented by a Bedouin gallery. While, if the same gallery walls and roof colors are not the same as desert colors, it will create contrast.

Finally, in addition to the factors mentioned above when thinking about

display analysis, Belcher (1991: 38) believes that "bringing object and viewer close together is the most important function of the museum exhibition." The proximity of this distance helps the viewer gain a better understanding of the exhibition's theme. Meanwhile, this proximity of distance will enable the visitor to see the objects from different directions. By doing this, Moser emphasized, the viewer would gain a better understanding of the museum's valuable collections.

#### **2.1.6. Exhibition texts**

In addition to using interpretative methods as an implicit way of presenting museum messages or topics that encourage visitors to take an "active role in interpreting aspects of culture they find meaningful" (Moser 2010: 26–27), curators also use explicit means. Moser argues that labels and panels text is used as an explicit means of educating visitors about the museum's mission. However, these texts take different writing styles, such as academic style, magazine-style, or book-like style. Moser explained the three methods, saying that visitors prefer neither academic nor book-like styles, because the previous style is more complicated and the subsequent style is crowded with words. She believes that the journalistic style is the best because it is more interpretive. This can be agreed with because the journalistic style has a language that is closer to the majority than the other two styles of text.

### **2.2 Stage 2: A field visit**

To fully experience Gallery 4 (which is called the People of Qatar) at NMoQ, a visit to the exhibition was made and analysis of its sections was done based on the systematic review of the exhibition analysis. At the beginning of the visit, I looked at the atmosphere of the gallery, trying to identify all the elements of the exhibition, such as the style, design, colors, and exhibits that were implemented. Then we noticed that the exhibition was divided into five sections dealing with different topics—"Trade & Global Connection", "Travelers Accounts", "Navigation

and Orientation", "Water & Plants Resources Collection & Models" and "Animals and Movement." Besides, there is an oral history video, a great model map of Qatar, and an interactive area. We studied how the exhibits of each section were presented and how the factors of interpretation, design, and color were placed in the five sections in their context, trying to figure out the interpretive approaches implemented by the curators in Gallery 4 to help the audience understand the Gallery message. At the end of the visit, we took pictures of all sections of the Gallery for analysis.





**Chapter 1**  
**Case Study: Gallery 4 at the NMoQ**



# Chapter 1

## Case Study: Gallery 4 at the NMoQ

### 1. Briefing the narrative of the NMoQ

The new National Museum of Qatar is not the first museum built to represent the national identity of Qatar, there was the Qatar National Museum which was opened to the public in 1975, as confirmed by Al-Mulla & Exell (2014: 117–19; 2016: 26). Both Al-Mulla and Exell noted that after Qatar declared independence in 1971, and during the reign of Sheikh Khalifa Al Thani, the old royal palace was renovated and used as the Qatar National Museum. This palace was built in 1901 by Sheikh Abdullah Al Thani and has been used as a settlement for the government of Qatar for 25 years as mentioned on the Qatar National Museum website. The exhibits in the old museum were arranged chronologically to tell the narrative of Qatar's heritage and to develop the identity of the new nation (Al-Mulla, 2014: 120–25; Exell, 2016: 29). The old museum was then closed in 2005 to be part of the new museum, as confirmed by Exell (2016: 28).

As for the new Qatar National Museum (see Figure 1) designed by the famous French architect Jean Nouvel, who designed the museum in the form of a desert rose that is formed in the Qatari environment (National Museum of Qatar), the new museum was designed to tell the narrative of Qatar's tangible and intangible heritage from the early ages to the present day, using an immersive contextual method to provide the audience with a sense of what Moser (2010: 29) called 'the actual function of things in the real atmosphere.' Qatar's narrative unfolds in three chapters represented in eleven permanent galleries.



Figure 1: National Museum of Qatar.

The first chapter "The Beginnings" is represented from the first Gallery to the third Gallery, and it focuses on the natural environment in Qatar. Starting with the formation of the peninsula, the diversity of the natural environment in Qatar, ending with archeology. Here visitors will see images, films, models, and real objects representing that era.

Chapter Two, "Life in Qatar" represented by Gallery 4 to Gallery 7, reveals how the life of Qataris was fluctuating between land and sea before the discovery of oil. Here, visitors will experience trades, crafts, traditions, costumes, and tangible heritage through objects, films, pictures, and written texts displayed.

The third chapter "Modern history of Qatar" explains how Qatar has become a nation. Here, visitors will explore natural and human-caused challenges, such as diseases, wars, and the emergence of cultured pearls; all of these challenges were faced by the Qatari society and suffered from, socially and economically. This was followed by the development that occurred in Qatar as a result of the discovery of oil and gas and the aspirations of the Qatari rulers.

This story ends with a visit to the restored old palace that was previously the Qatar National Museum and is now part of the overall story of Qatar.

The new museum also includes a temporary exhibition gallery and some other facilities such as the library, learning center, restaurant, cafe, park, and two gift shops, one for children and the other for adults.

## **2. A descriptive window on Gallery 4**

The panel presented by the curators before entering the exhibition provides an idea of the main topic (the people of Qatar) for Gallery No. 4, and this topic deals with the traditions of the seasonal movement of the Qatari people between land and sea. It also shows how over the centuries, the people of Qatar have been experts in navigation, sailing, and tracing, which has led them to develop advanced skills to survive in difficult conditions. One can note that the environment has shaped the identity of Qataris who travel in the desert to find water, raise animals that enable them to produce wool and dairy products they trade-in, as well as go to the sea to collect pearls and sell them to fulfill their daily requirements. As noticed, the spatial display of the Gallery contains five sections and each has a sub-theme. Starting with the "Trade & Global Connection," the section contains two sets of antiquities. The first one was found on the shipwreck of Cirebon, while the other was excavated in Qatar. It can be said that the curators used previous section collections as a transitional point, linking the second chapter (Life in Qatar) with the third Gallery, which is the last gallery in the first chapter. The second section carries the theme of "Travelers Accounts". These travelers visited the peninsula, mentioned lands and cities, and described the people of Qatar at those times. Then the third section "Navigation and Orientation" explains the tools that Qataris used to navigate the sea. After that, the fourth section is "Water & Plants Resources Collection & Models Display," which mainly relates to the Bedouin Qatari life to collect freshwater and their uses for plants such as medicinal and edible plants. The fifth section is "Animals and Movement", that explains how Qataris used animals for various purposes. In addition to the oral history video that tells the story of the seasonal movements of the Qatari people, which is interpreted on a huge digital map of Qatar in the middle of the exhibition.

## 2.1. "Trade & Global Connection" section

The collection of this section, which dates back to the end of ninth century and the beginning of the tenth century (see Figure 2), is displayed on the right side when entering the Gallery. Curators presented the collections of this section in a showcase over two separate groups. However, the two groups are presented in group shows. According to the information on the touch screen, the message of this section is to demonstrate that there was some kind of trade between the people of Qatar and other countries more than 1000 years ago. The first group was found on the wreck of the Cirebon ship that was thought making its way from China and its last stop may have been Basra (Mesopotamia, present day Iraq), but the ship sank on the coast of Cirebon in the Java region in Indonesia. The ship was loaded with valuable cargo for trade, for example, the items shown here, such as crystal beads from Africa and Chinese porcelain can be witnessed. While the other group was excavated in Murwab, a coastal city in the northwest of Qatar, it can be stated that the reason why these two groups appear separately is to guide visitors to make a comparison between the two exhibits so that visitors can discover the similarities between the two groups. Perhaps curators wanted to help visitors to conclude that there was some kind of trade between the people of Qatar and other people in the past.



Figure 2: Trade & Global Connection collections

Figure 2 shows a huge black and white map, displayed behind these two separate groups. The map shows trade routes in the past, such as the Silk Road from China and the Spice Route from India. There is one label for each group that contains the name and number of each object in Arabic and English. Near the displays of this section, there is a touchscreen interface that shows pictures of objects and more information about each of them. Visitors can zoom in on objects and see anything from any side. Information can be read in Arabic or English. Besides, there is more information about the materials that Qatar was importing from other countries and the use of these materials.

## 2.2. Travelers Accounts section

The curators exhibited the travelers' collection in a closed show (see Figure 3) immediately after the Trade & Global Connection section. Figure 3 shows a collection of books for travelers who have visited Qatar over the past four centuries. Behind this collection of books is a huge black and white map showing the routes these travelers used and described in their books. Labels and Panels are displayed at the bottom of the showcase in English and Arabic. Close to this group, there is a touch screen interface displaying information in both English and Arabic about the accounts of these travelers, who traveled to Qatar, describing the regions of Qatar and how Qataris were making a living.



Figure 3: Travelers Accounts collection,



### 2.3. Navigation and Orientation section



Figure 4: Navigation and Orientation 1<sup>st</sup> collection,

Curators presented the collections of this section in two showcases, one of them is a live display showcase. Both showcases contain navigation objects related to Qataris' sailing experience. The first showcase (see figure 4) is displayed immediately after the travelers section in a way that allows visitors to see this group from any direction. Here the curators presented the marine navigation tools, starting with a compass followed by a telescope, then a navigation logbook written by a Qatari ship captain Rashid Bin Fadhil Al Binall (1874-1959). The logbook describes the methods of sailing and navigation and lists the pearl beds in the Arabian Gulf. This Collection ended with a black and white map developed by a Qatari sailor Sheikh Mana Bin Rashid Al Maktoum in 1940 to show where the pearls were abundantly found in the Arabian Gulf. Near this showcase, there is a touch screen displaying more information in English and Arabic about these objects and their pictures, in addition to more information about the reason for going to the sea for the Qatari people and the uses of these tools.



Figure 5: Navigation and Orientation 2<sup>nd</sup> collection.

Figure 5 shows the second showcase as a huge open, round display showing parts of a rowing boat presented by the curator in a group show. Behind this group, there is a huge black and white image that shows some Qataris while sailing at sea.

#### **2.4. Water & Plants Resources collection & Models Display section**

The curators represented the lives of Qataris on the land, by using an open display representation. Figure 6 shows how the curators displayed the objects that helped collect fresh water for survival. Then, on the same showcase, there are examples of two types of plants, which are herbaceous plants, and on the opposite side, models of edible plants. Immediately behind this showcase is a very massive black and white image showing the process of collecting freshwater using the same objects presented in this section with plants. There is also a touch screen displaying information on the various sub-topics of edible and herbaceous plants and the importance of fresh water for humans, animals, and plants. In addition, visitors can browse information about each item separately in Arabic or English. Just behind the touch screen, there is a large screen showing plants growing in the Qatari desert.



Figure 6: Water & Plants Resources Collection & Models Display collection.

## 2.5. The Family Interactive area

Behind the touch screen of Bedouin life and the black wall (see figure 7) there is an interactive area for children, where they can get to know the plants and animals of the desert interestingly, by tracking these desert animals. The kids there can also learn how to navigate using the stars and do other activities.



Figure 7: Tracking desert plants and animals in the Interactive Family Area.

## 2.6. Oral History Video

Figure 8 shows how curators introduced some old Qatari people while sharing traditional memories. Like the traditions of the Qatari people in the summer and winter seasons, and how life was in the past. Here, curators present to the public a different way of the theme of Gallery 4 about the seasonal movement of Qataris, by sitting on the couches in front of the film, because the oral video lasts for more than 5 minutes.



Figure 8: Oral Interviews Video.

## 2.7. Qatar map

Figure 9 shows a map of Qatar with a projection of the "traditional seasonal movement" of the people of Qatar and what they used to do in winter and summer before the discovery of oil. For example, the projection shows that when it was summer, sailing boats started to move from all over the peninsula to the sea, collect pearls, and then return at

the end of the season. The return of the sailboats to the coasts meant the arrival of winter. Here, the public can see the weather change with the appearance of clouds, rain, and grass that grows and shows Qatari characters moving with their animals for grazing.



Figure 9: Map of Qatar with the projection of Qatari movements.

## 2.8. Animals and Movement section

The visitors' journey to Gallery 4 ends in this section, where curators present a large open showcase that displays its collection in a group show. The objects in this section represent camel and horse equipment that highlights the relationship between the people of Qatar and their animals (see figure 10). Not only were these animals a transport vehicle,

but they also provided them with wool, meat, and fun when they went for camel or horse racing. Here, visitors can see howdaj (saddle) for women and girls just for their ride while traveling to protect women from the summer heat and provide them with privacy. There is also a sink used for watering animals, a leather bag to store freshwater, and decoration for desert animals.

Immediately behind this showcase, extremely massive images of desert animals used as vehicles and travel equipment appear in black and white. There are also two touch interfaces that provide the audience with more information about the artifacts and transportation that Qataris used to move from one place to another such as horses and donkeys in the desert.



Figure 10: Animals and Movement collections.



**Chapter 2**  
**Reading Curatorial Practices**  
**through Environmental Analysis of Gallery 4**





## **Chapter 2**

### **Reading Curatorial Practices through Environmental Analysis of Gallery 4**

In this chapter, I will try to decipher a set of practices for interpreting artistic values in Gallery 4 at NMoQ that differ between methods of (A) how the way of presenting objects bring them to life by provoking different dialogues between objects on one side, and between objects and the audience on the other side. Moreover, (B) the use of interpretation factors that help visitors produce an interpretation of objects. Meanwhile, (C) the interpretation methods that guide audiences to understand the message of Gallery 4, followed by the conclusion.

#### **1. Objects between presentation and dialogues**

Despite the fact that the exhibited objects in Gallery 4 look static, the way curators have presented them in group shows, creates a kind of dialogue between the objects that helps audiences create their interpretation of these collections as emphasized by Hoffman and Yamaguchi (2014: 14; 1991: 61). The visitor wonders about what each object is, how it is used, where it is used, and its relationship to the artifacts that follow it. So, the answers become clear little by little in the mind of the visitor when he looks at the pictures hanging on the wall, which are let us say about sailing, and he connects them with the artifacts displayed on the showcase. For example, in Figure 4, the way maritime navigation tools are displayed next to each other in a group display raises in the minds of the public questions about the function of each of them at sea, and how they are used. Like using the compass to find directions, directly followed by the simple measurement tool of Al Kamal that was used to measure distances alongside the telescope at sea and the sailing book that helps sail, followed by the map of the places where the pearls are

in abundance (See Appendix 2). Therefore, this way of display creates in the minds of the public what Hoffman and Yamaguchi (2014: 14; 1991: 61) called a "comprehensive picture" of this section's message. This is another example of how curators guide visitors to get sensory and mental experiences by displaying objects in a comparative form, so the audience will create a comparison between the groups of objects, as emphasized by Hoffmann (2014: 14).

For example, the two groups of collections of the "Trade and Global Connection" section are displayed in two group shows, at the same time in a comparative form. This comparison will lead the audience to know the similarities, whether in material or in manufacturing, between the group that was discovered in Qatar and the other group that was part of the Cirebon shipwreck. This comparison will help visitors explain the meanings of how the Qataris had previously had a kind of trade by sea between them with the outside world.

Although NMoQ curators display Gallery 4 objects in group shows, one can notice that some sections appear behind glass cases such as "Trade and Global Connection" collections (see Figure 2) and "Travelers Accounts" collection (see Figure 3). On the other hand objects from other sections are in open show, such as "Navigation and Orientation" 2<sup>nd</sup> collection (see Figure 5). Perhaps the NMoQ curators have used closed and open show styles to provide visitors with different experiences.

As for closed show style, the curators wanted to help visitors to learn about the high value of objects displayed behind glass boxes, and, on the other hand, based on the review above, the curators have used the open presentation style to provide the audience with the first-hand experience of objects. In both cases, for the closed or open display, the objects were displayed in a group show, which helps the audience to answer questions that may arise in their minds. For example, in the section of "Trade and Global Connection," the exhibited objects are not only from Qatar, but also from different countries. Which raises

questions, how did these objects move from the country of manufacture until they reached Qatar? What are the old maritime trade routes? What is the function of each object? These questions make the audience look at the objects and connect them with the map presented behind them and the maritime trade routes shown in the maps, to find afterward answers to these questions. When the audience arrives at the "Navigation and Orientation" department, the collections display methods help the public to know that pearl diving is the reason for the Qatari people's interest in navigation. It is the pearl trade that made countries interested in trading with Qatar in the past, which answers the question: What was the importance of Qatar in relation to trade routes in the past?

## **2. Objects between interpretation factors and meanings**

To help visitors understand each section's message, curators used interpretation factors that differed from visualizations such as maps, photos, movies, labels, panels, and touch screens. Moreover, the curators used various methods to present these factors to appear in a single context with the objects. For example, the curators presented a huge black and white map at the back of the two groups of the "Global Trade and Communication" section (see Figure 2). One can notice here that curators created one context for both the map and the artifacts, which would help visitors to decrypt two messages. First, present the ancient trade routes that Qatar was part of; second, connect objects to their original locations while looking at the map. Another example of this is in the section "Water & Plants Resources Collection & Models Display" (see Figure 6).

The huge picture that curators displayed close to objects may attract the senses and minds of visitors to live with their imaginations about the ways Qatari nomads used to get water, by linking the image with the real objects on show. Through the former two examples, one can notice that the curators were able to place all the presented elements

and factors of interpretation in one context that reflects the function of these objects. In addition, placing all exhibits in one context allows the public to understand the lives of Qataris between the sea and the land.

One of the main factors of interpretation that the curators succeeded in applying within Gallery 4 is the use of labels and panels, which Moser called "explicit means of interpretation." I noticed during the visit that the curators did not fill the labels (Appendix 3) with a lot of information such as the place of production, the material, the date of production, or the description of things, but they only wrote the names of objects in English and Arabic. Consequently, I believe that the curators were not able to distract visitors. Based on the above review, it seems that curators wanted the audience to spend most of their time looking and communicating with objects and creating their understanding of each section and its message, rather than spending their time reading the labels. Thus, visitors play an "active role in interpreting aspects of culture they find meaningful" (Moser, 2010: 26–27). However, to read labels or panels, visitors need to kneel or sit in a squatting position, which I experienced myself and found uncomfortable. Therefore, I propose using stands that are suitable for all people and putting labels and panels on them.

The use of technology by curators as a means of interpretation, such as touch screen interfaces, made the impossible possible. For example, audiences are not permitted to touch objects displayed in any section. However, at the same time with these touchscreens, audiences can touch, expand, and see these images from any angle. To illustrate this, let us give the following example, the audience is not allowed to touch the actual books displayed in the "Travelers Accounts" section (see Figure 3) or turn the pages of any book, but through the touch screen, the audience can touch any of the displayed books, flip the pages, or read more about the travelers themselves. In this way, the curators succeeded in giving an alternative to share the senses of the audience with objects.

During my visit to Gallery 4 and while exploring the touch screen close to "Water & Plants Resources Collection & Models Display" section, I could explore topics related to the objects presented, such as the value of water for humans, animals, and plants and their values for edible plants, herbs for Bedouins, and animals.

It seems that NMoQ's curators were keen to provide audiences with different experiences when they offered other factors of interpretation attracting the senses and minds of the audience to fully understand the theme of Gallery 4 and providing them with an enjoyable experience. The first is exhibiting oral history video in which some of the elderly Qatari indigenous people talk about the main theme of the Gallery, the traditional seasonal movements between land and sea, and a brief narration of the Qatari society and their social customs. Here, the curators attract visitors' sight and listening senses to understand Qatari speakers who are enthusiastic about their history in the movie. Giving a clear picture to the visitors about the Gallery topic on one side and linking it with the Gallery's exhibits on the other. Although, the video is narrated by Arabic speakers, there is an English translation in the large font. This leads to the inclusion of non-Arabic speakers as well.

Based on what Graham (2010c: 124) evaluated the role of curators in organizing the exhibition space in a hospitable way to enhance the museum experience. The curators of NMoQ played a good role not only in organizing Gallery 4 exhibits by placing them in one context but also organized the exhibition space in a hospitable manner. This is evident when curators put comfortable seats in front of the video, which lasts for more than 5 minutes. This will attract visitors to sit back and enjoy listening to the entire video without feeling tired and provide visitors with a comprehensive picture of the Gallery's message. The second factor of interpretation that the curators used to enhance Gallery 4 experience is the use of projection on the map of Qatar, which can be seen from all directions around the map, which at the same time attracts the sight and

mind of visitors. This is evident when the curators connect the sailing boat movement with the months of the year that appear on both sides of the map. And when they began sailing back to their lands in Qatar, it started at the same time the countdown to September. Therefore, using projection on the map of Qatar directs visitors to engage their eyesight, minds, and imagination to get a better interpretation of the main theme of Gallery 4 and enhance the gallery experience.

### **3. Objects between interpretative approaches and audiences**

There is a question that arises, could the curators use more than one interpretive method to educate visitors about an exhibition's contents? During my visit to Gallery 4 and based on the review of the interpretive approaches above, I noticed that the NMoQ curators used three different interpretative approaches to educate visitors about Gallery 4's message:

First, because the museum aims to tell the story of Qatar, so the NMoQ curators used the classic interpretative approach that is characterized by arranging objects to tell a story of a nation. In Gallery 4 the curators presented objects in a historical order that focus on what Yamaguchi (1991: 61) calls the "social memory" of Qataris instead of focusing on the aesthetic value of each object. This social memory focuses on the traditions of the seasonal movement of the Qatari people between the sea and the land and their relationships with other countries. To do this, the curators presented all the exhibits of objects and factors of interpretation to appear in one context, to educate the public about the cultural history of the Qatari people.

Secondly, based on the review of the thematic interpretation approach above, I noticed that curators used this approach in Gallery 4 as a vehicle to guide visitors through the Gallery's message. Based on my analysis of the Gallery, the curators developed a strong thematic structure through two steps. The first step is to use the main theme for Gallery 4, "The People of Qatar" which has been divided into five sub-themes across the

five sections of the Gallery (see Chapter 1). Despite the creation of a tour path, by displaying the contents of the first three sections on the right side, dividing the main topic of the exhibition into five topics allows visitors to start from any section. This is useful for not creating what Storr (2006: 24-25) calls the crowded spots that affect audience flow in the gallery, which in turn affects visitors' follow-up to the exhibition message. The second step is that the curators have linked the main theme of Gallery 4 to the real life of Qatari people. For that reason, it can be said the curators used the thematic approach in the case study. Moreover, curators used the previous two steps to arrive at what was evaluated by Black & Obrist (2005: 196–97; 2014: 32-33) to provide visitors with an interesting experience.

Third, NMoQ curators used the multisensory approach that engages the different senses of audience. Based on the review of the multisensory approach above. The way curators presented exhibits (objects and factors of interpretation) in one context, was aimed at engaging visitors' senses in seeing, imagining, thinking, touching and listening. While visiting Gallery 4, I can see the objects of each section displayed in group shows and close to the huge pictures. I looked at objects and imagined their uses and thought about how these objects relate to each other by looking at the huge pictures that were shown near them in each section. Then when I went to the touch screens, I was able to touch the pictures of the real objects displayed, expand these pictures, and see them from different angles.

At the same time, through the use of touch screens, I had a better understanding of the message of each section, through reading information about the purposes of the objects and their sub-themes. Heading to the map of Qatar, I saw a drop of animated shapes that represent Qataris, who care for their animals under the clouds of winter. Here one can imagine what the life of Qataris was like in the past, especially during winter. Then I saw a group of moving shapes



representing the Qataris as they were riding their boats under the clear sky, which symbolizes extreme heat. Such an experience provided me with a better understanding of the message of Gallery 4 in an interesting way. For example, seeing and imagining how the Qataris lived between land and sea. As for the listening experience of the oral history video, I experienced the main theme of Gallery 4 with its sub-themes by listening to real Qatari people who lived at the time, while they were talking about their experience and life in the period before the discovery of oil. They talked about what they used to do in summer and winter, the causes of seasonal movements of Qataris, medicinal plants, the diet of Qataris, and the diet of their animals. From the foregoing, it is clear that the curators used this approach to guide the audiences to understand the Gallery's message using their different senses.

To summarize the above, as it seems to me, the curators used the three different interpretive approaches of the classic, thematic, and multisensory methods in Gallery 4, merging them with each other to provide the audience with an enjoyable experience and to understand the Gallery message.

## Conclusion

This book discusses some considerations to answer the question of what interpretive approaches have been developed by curators to guide visitors through the narrative of the National Museum of Qatar in Gallery 4 "The People of Qatar." It also attempts to ask and respond to the basic question as to why have these approaches been developed?

In the first consideration, this study starts with broad points and gradually moves to focus on the points that would become the guidelines to answer the research question. This book begins by discussing a historical review of the derivative of the word curator and curatorial practices. Then gradually moving to a more specific point for curator's roles that were developed over time. It first starts from being a museum object carrier to be a multidisciplinary career. Next, the focus is on discussing the role of curators in embellishing museum objects using the three elements of interpretation, namely, presentation, interpretation factors, and interpretation approaches, focusing more on the different interpretive methods that curators have developed over time to guide visitors to understand any museum's message in an enjoyable way. This study comes up with some findings in this regard; first, there was a curator profession in different ancient civilizations, but under different names, it may be due to differences between languages. However, they shared the same practices of caring for what they were responsible for, constantly developing their knowledge, and planning their profession.

In the second result, the role of curators increased over time, making it a primary profession in developing museums' collections, museum staff and the public. In the third result, one of the role of curators is to harmonize the elements of interpretation of the way collections are presented and factors of interpretation with interpretive approaches, aiming to engage visitors to understand the museum's message in an interesting way

In the second consideration, this study relied on the exhibition analysis as a research method to answer the research question in this book. The elements of exhibition analysis have been discussed here, related to the case study of this book (Gallery 4 in NMoQ) which helped in the analysis of Gallery 4's environment. Then the description of the field visit to Gallery 4, and how an attempt was made to define the environmental elements that would guide the study to answer the research question with the help of the photos taken in the Gallery.

In the third consideration, the NMoQ review was studied, because the museum includes a case study of Gallery 4, simultaneously covering a detailed description of the main theme of the Gallery, which was divided into five sub-themes and sections. At the same time, this book exposed to the presentation of objects, factors of interpretation in each section, and how they are presented.

Efforts were made to plot this case study visit so that readers can get a comprehensive picture of the Gallery. Here, I came to a specific finding that NMoQ is a continuation of the Qatar National Museum in telling the story of Qatar.

In the final consideration, to find an answer to the research question in this study, I have discussed the three inseparable elements of interpretation in order, which are presentation, factors of interpretation, and interpretative approaches. In the first element of interpretation, I analyzed the way curators used to display the Gallery 4's contents. This helped us reach two findings: The first finding is that curators wanted the audience to see things in one context, helping visitors create dialogues between one another's objects. The second finding is that presenting objects can be provocative and enjoyable. The provocative presentation emerges by comparing objects together. It can also be enjoyable to view the objects using direct display without putting them in vitrines. The audience thus gets firsthand experience with objects as assessed by Lepik (2017: 45-46).

In the second element of interpretation, I analyzed the use of curators to the factors of interpretation with respect to the case study and reached two findings. The first finding was, that to communicate the Gallery 4's message, NMoQ curators format provided factors of interpretation in one context with the exhibition objects, which became the contextual style for the entire case study. This will enable the audience to create dialogues when all exhibits are linked together. As a second finding, curators have used the touchscreen to guide visitors to learn more about objects and sub-themes, so Gallery 4's style is also immersive.

In the third element of interpretation, analysis was done of the methods of interpretation developed by curators to guide visitors through the narrative of the National Museum of Qatar in Gallery 4 and the reasons for choosing these approaches. The following finding was reached: that, curators used three interpretive approaches in the case study of this book. These approaches are the classical, thematic, and multisensory approaches.

The first approach is the classic interpretative approach that organizes objects to focus on the "social memory" of nations, rather than on the aesthetic features of objects as emphasized by Yamaguchi (1991: 61). This comes with Gallery 4's message, whose purposes were used to tell the story of the seasonal movement traditions of the Qatari people between the sea and the land.

The second approach is the thematic, interpretative approach that is used by the case study for the following reasons: Firstly, what makes the Gallery theme so interesting is that it relates to the lives of Qataris. Secondly, the theme of Gallery 4 has been transformed into the main theme, which is the traditions of the Qatari peoples' movement between land and sea. The main theme was also divided into five sub-themes and sections of the Gallery. For the fact that the previous reasons constitute all the characteristics of the thematic approach, it is for this reason that the curators implemented them in the exhibition.

The third interpretative approach that curators used was the multisensory approach, because the curators were aiming to engage the different senses of visitors, to fully understand the case study message. However, the sense of smell was not applied in Gallery 4. Therefore, we propose using a device that allows visitors to smell some herbal or edible plants displayed near the "Water & Plants Resources Collection & Models Display" section. Thus, visitors will have contact with objects by also enjoying the smell experience.

Based on the above discussion of the case study, one can feel that the NMoQ curators were interested in interpreting the Gallery 4's collections using different methods, with the aim of enhancing the visitor museum experience.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: NMoQ Gallery Guide



## Appendix 2: Gallery 4

### The People of Qatar

The centerpiece of this gallery is a beautiful three-dimensional map of the peninsula that demonstrates how in the past people's survival in Qatar depended on moving around the land. They moved for trade, to find water and pasture for their herds, to fish and dive for pearls, to hunt and go on pilgrimage. On this sculptured map, projections bring to life nomadic patterns in and around Qatar. Gallery exhibits include the artefacts of movement such as elaborate camel saddles and leather water bags, and objects related to traditional knowledge

about plant resources and animal tracking. A highlight is an array of objects from the wreck of the Cirebon, a boat that sank 1,000 years ago off Indonesian coast with trading goods from the Arabian Gulf.

The first of the museum's monumental oral history films from the archive created by the National Museum Oral History Department over the past five years, tells the story of life in the desert. People who have had personal experiences with this life tell their stories in their own words, directly to the camera.

### **Exhibit: Travelers Accounts**

Qatar has welcomed visitors from across the world throughout its history. Many who travelled through Qatar wrote about their experiences.

These accounts – written by diplomats, merchants, military officers and missionaries – give a unique perspective on life in Qatar over the past 400 years. Some describe a very different Qatar, to the country we know today. They write of tiny fishing villages, palm-leaf huts and messages delivered by carrier pigeons. Others describe more familiar aspects: bustling *souqs*, the finest horses and camels, cosmopolitan towns and warm hospitality.

#### ***Object label 1: Arabia Felix: Across the empty quarter (1932), Bertram Thomas***

Bertram Thomas was a British official and the first known Westerner to cross the desert of inland Arabian Peninsula. During his travels, he recorded information on the geography and culture of the region, including Qatar.

#### ***Object label 2: Description de l'Arabie (1774), Carsten Niebuhr***

Carsten Niebuhr was a German mapmaker and explorer. He travelled

extensively across the Middle East in the 1760s. His descriptions and maps of Arabia were the most detailed and accurate accounts of the time.

*Object label 3: Personal narrative of a year's journey through central and eastern Arabia (1865), William Gifford Palgrave*

William Palgrave travelled through Arabia in the 1860s. In his writings, he described several towns in Qatar, as well as meetings with its leader, Sheikh Mohammed bin Thani, and his son, Sheikh Mohammed bin Jassim al Thani.

*Object label 4: Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and central Arabia (1908), John Gordon Lorimer*

Lorimer's gazetteer is among the most important reference works in the history of Arabia. It was published by the British government in 1908 and includes detailed descriptions of Qatar's geography, history and politics.

**Exhibit: Trade & Global connections**

*Qatar's early trade connections*

Qatar has been part of wide trade networks for thousands of years. Archaeological sites such as Murwab, in northwestern Qatar, provide evidence for this trade over 1000 years ago.

Murwab was a prosperous village occupied during the 800s CE. Archaeologists working there have discovered glass, beads, ceramics and metalwork from Persia, Central Asia and beyond.

Goods were imported to Qatar over land and sea, in boats such as the Cirebon wreck. Although separated by 100 years, there are similarities in the materials and styles of objects found in the village of Murwab and on the wreck.



### *The Cirebon Wreck*

The Cirebon wreck was once a successful trading vessel. However, in 970 CE it sank off the coast of Java, near the modern city of Cirebon. Its precious cargo remained undiscovered for over 1,000 years.

Experts think that the boat set sail from Guanzhou in China, heading to the Iraqi city of Basra via the Arabian Gulf. Its cargo included gold, silver, glassware, precious stones, coins, metals and fine ceramics. Many of the objects from the Cirebon wreck are similar to those found at the village of Murwab. The wreck is a unique record of the goods that were being traded across the region in this period.

### *Objects from Murwab, Qatar:*

1. Bowl fragments, Iran.
2. Glass ingot, Iran.
3. Bottle rim and neck, Iran.
4. Jar fragment, Iran.
5. Glass bottle base, Iraq.
6. Glazed ceramic jar, Basra, Iraq.
7. Stone vessel fragment, Iraq.
8. Bone button, Iraq.
9. Bowl fragment, southern China.
10. Oyster shells, north Qatar.
11. Stone vessel fragments, Asir mountains, Saudi Arabia.
12. Crystal bead, east Africa.
13. Carnelian bead, south-east Africa.
14. Glass bead, Levant.
15. Pot sherd, Levant.

*Objects from the Cirebon Wreck:*

1. Glass beads, Funan Kingdom, south-east Asia.
2. Lapis lazuli jeton, Afghanistan.
3. Bone buttons, Iraq.
4. Rose water sprinkler, Iran.
5. Glass bottles, Iran.
6. Crystal beads, east Africa.
7. Beads, west India.
8. Pearls, Arabian Gulf.
9. Jar fragments, Basra.
10. Glass fragment, Iran.
11. Dish, yuyao, China.
12. Celadon bowls, south China.
13. Jar, Funan Kingdom, south-east Asia.

**Exhibit: Navigation and Orientation**

**Navigation and Orientation**

The ability to navigate on land and at sea was essential to life in Qatar. People had a deep understanding of their environment, knowledge, which was passed down and enhanced over generations.

Qatar's inhabitants moved regularly around and beyond the peninsula, spending winters inland and summers on the coast. Navigation on land required close observation of the landscape, as well as weather patterns and the movement of animals. At sea, navigators relied on their knowledge of coastal features, the stars, even the color and movement of the water. Skilled navigators helped their communities to move quickly and safely.

The objects displayed here were used in Qatar between the 1800s and 1900s:

### **Group 1: Compasses**

These compasses were used for navigation at sea during pearl diving and trading expeditions. The compass in a wooden case has a glass window, where a lamp could be fitted to illuminate it when sailing at night.

### **Group 2: Logbooks**

The captain (*nakhudhah*) of a vessel recorded details of the navigation, movement and operation of their boat in a logbook. The most decorated logbook displayed here belonged to famous *nakhudhah* Rashid bin Fadhil al Binali (1874–1959). He describes sailing and navigational methods and lists pearl diving sites in the Gulf.

### **Group 3: Anchors**

The metal anchor displayed here is known as an admiralty pattern anchor, the most recognizable type. The triangular stone anchor is simpler, but still effective. It is known as a *sin*, which is Arabic for tooth, due to its shape.

### **Group 4: Oars**

Sailors used oars to propel the boat when winds were low. Two of the oars displayed here have been carefully shaped to make them as effective as possible. The third is a simpler oar, just a wooden square attached to a handle.

### **Object label 1: *Kamal***

A *kamal* was a simple yet effective navigational tool. Navigators used the wooden part and a system of knots to work out the elevation of the pole star in order to understand their latitude.

### **Object label 2: Map**

This map shows the rich pearl beds of the Arabian Gulf. It was prepared by Sheikh Mana bin Rashid al Maktoum and dates back to August 1940.

### **Object label 3: Dhow etching**

This plaster panel was found at the archaeological site of Al Zubarah. It features a faint etching of a boat. Experts believe it may be a Chinese vessel, indicating far-reaching trade connections.

### **Object label 4: Rudder**

This wooden rudder was once connected to the helm of a traditional dhow. A helmsman operated it to change the direction of the boat.

## **Exhibit: Animals and Movement**

### *Animals, transport and trade*

Animals have been essential to life in Qatar for centuries. They were a source of milk, meat and wool, co-hunters, companions and, above all, a means of transport.

People and animals depended on each other. Animals were used to transport people, goods, food and water in the challenging environment of the peninsula. In return, the whole community contributed to caring for the animals. Groups of people moved regularly to find water and fresh pasture for their herds. People had a deep understanding of their animals and worked in partnership with them.

Arabian horses and camels remain highly prized in Qatari society today. International festivals are held to celebrate their beauty and skill.

### **Group label 1: Horse-riding equipment**

Qatar's Arabian horses are known for their strength, endurance and beauty. Riding equipment is both practical—such as the saddle (*mirshaha*) and halter, displayed here – and decorative, such as the woven trappings, worn on special occasions.

The objects displayed here are modern versions of traditional Qatari riding equipment:

1. Horse saddle (mirshaha).
2. Bridle (migwad).
3. Halter.
4. Breastplate.
5. Breast strap (malba).
6. Girth rope.

### **Group label 2: Camel equipment**

Camels can travel up to 90 kilometres a day carrying heavy loads. The large saddle displayed here could hold a rider and several bags. The leather trough was used to feed and water camels, and could also be strapped to the camel to carry objects, or even young children, during a move.

The objects displayed here were used in Qatar between the 1800s and 1900s:

1. Camel saddle.
2. Saddle blanket.
3. Camel halters.
4. Camel harness.
5. Camel decorations.
6. Camel bag.
7. Leather bag.
8. Water trough.

### Group 3: Women's camel saddle

Women used a saddle called *hawdaj* or *meghbat*. Fabric draped over the upper part of the saddle shielded women from sight. People hung bags and water containers (*girba*) on the saddle to transport objects, food and water, and decorated their camels with woven tassels and rings.

The objects displayed here were used in Qatar between the 1800s and 1900s:

1. Camel saddle (*hawdaj* or *meghbat*).
2. Camel halters (*khtam*).
3. Camel nose ring (*farda*)
4. Camel decoration.
5. Camel bag (*idil*).
6. Leather bag (*eiba*).
7. Udder protector (*shmal*).
8. Water container (*girba*).

### Group 4: Saddles

These saddles were used for riding camels. The wooden frame would have a cushion on top and a soft pad underneath for the comfort of both the rider and the camel.

The objects displayed here were used in Qatar between the 1800s and 1900s:

1. Camel saddle (*masama*).
2. Camel saddle.

### Group 5: Leather bags

Each family had to pack up and transport all their possessions during a move. Therefore, they only owned essentials and most items had more

than one function. These leather bags, used to carry items while on the move, were also used as water containers or to carry equipment for hunting expeditions.

The objects displayed here were used in Qatar between the 1800s and 1900s.

1. Bag (*mikhlah*).
2. Leather bag (*eiba*).

## **Exhibit: Water & Plant Resources Collection & Models Display**

### ***Water and Plant Resources***

Until the mid 1900s, people moved around the peninsula in search of water and plants. These resources can be difficult to find in Qatar, but the people were skilled and knowledgeable about their environment.

The peninsula may appear inhospitable, but those who knew where to look could find water beneath the surface and after the rains, and plants for food, grazing and medicine. Knowledge of Qatar's water and plant resources, and the skills to access them, evolved continuously. Each generation added new discoveries and information.

### ***1-Water collection display***

#### **Group 1: Water collection**

Qatar has a natural supply of underground water, as well as salt water springs. People dug wells up to 50 metres deep to access this water. The wooden wheel was part of a pulley system that lowered water scoops (*dalu*) to collect water from wells. Displayed here are traditional leather water scoops, as well as rubber scoops, which became widespread after the discovery of oil in the mid 1900s.

The objects displayed here were used in Qatar between the 1800s and 1900s:

1. Water scoops (*dalu*).
2. Water pulley wheels.
3. Pulley shaft.
4. Donkey saddle for drawing water.

### **Group 2: Water containers**

People collected their water from wells. They used leather or rubber containers (*girba*) to transport and store it. Large earthenware jars stored water when people settled in one place for a longer period. The jars were buried in the ground and covered to keep the water cool and clean.

The objects displayed here were used in Qatar between the 1800s and 1900s:

1. Jars (*hib*).
2. Leather water container (*girba*).
3. Canvas water container (*girba shira'a*).
4. Rubber water container (*girba*).

## ***2- Plant models***

### **Group 1: Edible plants**

Many edible plants grow in Qatar. People ate the leaves and fruits of different plants. The tender leaves of *hummeid* could be eaten raw or cooked. The leaves of *huwa* were chopped and mixed with dates or yoghurt. Truffles (*fuga*) were dug up from the ground and cooked in many different ways.



1. Truffle (*fuga*).
2. Egyptian sage (*naam*), *salvia aegyptiaca*.
3. Bladder dock (*hummeid*), *rumex vesicarius*.
4. Purslane-leaved aizoon (*jafna*), *aizoon canariense*.
5. Dandy (*huwa*), *launaea capitata*.
6. Port royal senna (*ishrig*), *cassia italica*.
7. *atar*.
8. Brown lily (*mesielmo*), *dipcadi erythraeum*.
9. Devil's thorn (*hinzab*), *emex spinose*.

People moved regularly to find fresh grazing for their camels and livestock. *Thummam* was an important grazing plant, said to have many benefits for camels. Great care was taken to preserve the precious resources of the land, avoiding areas of recently grazed grass to allow regrowth:

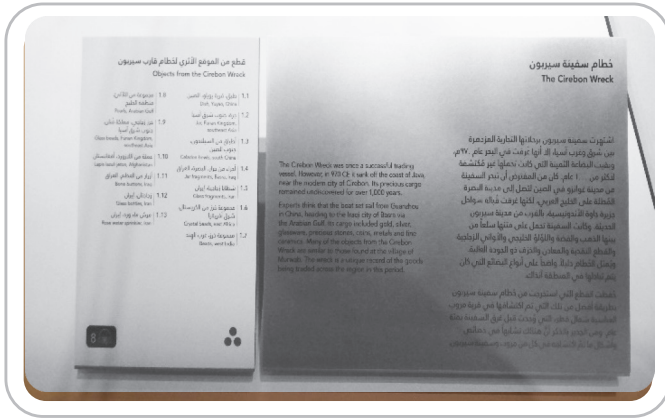
1. White saxaul tree (*rimth*), *haloxylon salicornicum* or *haloxylon persicum*.
2. Pan dropseed (*sukhan*), *sporobolus ioclados*.
3. Desert grass (*thummam*), *panicum turgidum*.
4. Bermuda grass (*theel*), *cynodon dactylon*.
5. Small whorled cheeseweed (*gilgilan*), *savignya parviflora*.
6. Bold-leaf launaea (*huwa ghanam*), *launaea nudicaulis*.
7. (*hamd al arnab*), *anabasis setifera*.
8. Callous-leaved gromwell (*halam*), *moltkiopsis ciliate*.
9. (*hama*), *cullen plicata*.
10. Pot marigold (*hawzan*), *calendula officinalis*.

### Group 3: Medicinal plants

Many plants have medicinal properties. Experts prepared different parts of plants to cure illnesses and injuries. For example, the *ja'ad* plant was used to cure fever and loss of appetite. The leaves, roots and fruits of colocynth, or *sheri*, were each used to treat specific ailments:

- Felty germander (*ja'ad*), *teucrium polium*.
- Kapok bush (*twaim*), *aerva javanica*.
- (*askhabar*).
- (*jfeiah*).
- Colocynth (*sheri*), *citrullus colocynthis*.
- Spiny zilla (*shubrum*), *zilla spinsosa*.
- Fagonia (*dhreima*), *fagonia bruguieri* or *fagonia indica*.
- Heliotrope (*ramram*), *heliotropium bacciferum*.
- Camelthorn (*aaqool*), *alhagi maurorum*.
- (*meseika*), *haplophyllum tuberculatum*.

### Appendix 3: An image of the Cirebon Wreck collection label



The Cirebon Wreck	حُطام سفينة سيربون
<p>The Cirebon Wreck was once a successful trading vessel. However, in 970 CE it sank off the coast of Java, near the modern city of Cirebon. Its precious cargo remained undiscovered for over 1,000 years.</p> <p>Experts think that the boat set sail from Guanzhou in China, heading to the Iraqi city of Basra via the Arabian Gulf. Its cargo included gold, silver, glassware, precious stones, coins, metals and fine ceramics. Many of the objects from the Cirebon Wreck are similar to those found at the village of Murwab. The wreck is a unique record of the goods being traded across the region in this period.</p>	<p>اشتهرت سفينة سيربون برحلاتها التجارية المزدهرة، إلا أنها غرقت في البحر عام 970م، وبقيت البضاعة الثمينة التي كان تحملها غير مكتشفة لأكثر من 1000 عام.</p> <p>كان من المفترض أن تبحر السفينة من مدينة غوانزو في الصين؛ لتصل إلى مدينة البصرة المُطلّة على الخليج العربي، إلا أنها غرقت عام 970م قبالة سواحل جزيرة جاوة الإندونيسية، التي تقع بالقرب من مدينة سيربون الحديثة. وكانت السفينة تحمل على متنها سلعة من بينها الذهب والفضة والأواني الزجاجية والقطع النقدية والمعادن والخزف ذو الجودة العالية. ويُمثل الحُطام دليلاً واضحاً على أنواع البضائع التي كان يتم تبادلها في المنطقة آنذاك.</p> <p>حُفّلت القطع التي استخرجت من حُطام سفينة سيربون بطريقة أفضل من تلك التي تم اكتشافها في قرية مروب، التي وُجدت قبل غرق السفينة بمائة عام. ومن الجدير بالذكر أنّ هنالك تشابهاً في خصائص وأشكال ما تمّ اكتشافه في كلا الموقعين.</p>

Appendices

Objects from the Cirebon Wreck - Murwab, Qatar	قطع من الموقع الأثري لحطام قارب سيربون المكتشفة في قرية مروب
1.1. Bowl fragments, Iran, ARC.1981.23.053, ARC.2007.7.736.1, ARC.2009.7.359, .361-2,695	1.1. أجزاء من أواني، إيران، ARC.1981.23.053, ARC.2007.7.736.1, ARC.2009.7.359, .361-2,695
1.2. Glass ingot, Iran, ARC.1959.21.172	1.2. سبيكة من الزجاج، إيران، ARC.1959.21.172
1.3. Bottle rim and neck, Iran, ARC.1981.23.068	1.3. رقبة زجاجة وحافتها، إيران، ARC.1981.23.068
1.4. Jar fragment, Iran, ARC.1959.21.155, .181	1.4. أجزاء من جرار، إيران، .181, ARC.1959.21.155
1.5. Glass bottle base, Iraq, ARC.2009.7.659	1.5. قاعدة قنينة (غرشة) زجاجية، إيران ARC.2009.7.659
1.6. Glazed ceramic jar, Basra, Iraq, QNM.2011.406.1	1.6. جرة من الخزف المزجج، البصرة، العراق، QNM.2011.406.1
1.7. Stone vessel fragment, Iraq, ARC.2007.7.655	1.7. جزء من إناء حجري، العراق، ARC.2007.7.655
1.8. Bone button, Iraq, ARC.2009.7.206	1.8. خرزة من العظم، جزيرة، محافظات العراق، ARC.2009.7.206
1.9. Bowl fragment, south China, ARC.1959.21.199	1.9. جزء من وعاء (ملة/طاسة)، ساحل الصين الجنوبي، ARC.1959.21.199
1.10. Oyster shells, north Qatar, ARC.1982.23.070, ARC.2007.7.676	1.10. مجموعة من فلقات المحار، شمال قطر، ARC.1982.23.070, ARC.2007.7.676
1.11. Stone vessel fragments, Asir Mountains, Saudi Arabia, ARC.1979.23.018, QNM.2011.430.1-12, QNM.2011.462.1	1.11. أجزاء من أواني حجرية، الرياض، جبال عسير، ARC.1979.23.018, QNM.2011.430.1-12, QNM.2011.462.1
1.12. Crystal bead, east Africa, ARC.2007.7.691	1.12. خرزة أسطوانية من الكريستال، ديميني (جزيرة مايو)، ARC.2007.7.691
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## **Museum Treasures for All**

### *The Role of Museum Curators in Public Communication*

**Ahmed Sheik el Arab**

For over decades the curator's profession has evolved into multiple roles within museums. Aiming to provide visitors with enjoyable experiences by engaging visitors mentally, physically and emotionally in a dialogue with the artifacts. This book reveals the role of curators in contemporary museums by developing and implementing different interpretive approaches for interpreting the cultural heritage of countries. Besides, the main role of curators in developing methods of interpretation is to guide visitors on how to conduct within museums to protect its collections. Using Gallery 4 at the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) in implementing a variety of interpretation methods that expose visitors' senses to different ways of seeing Qatar's heritage. Answering the question, what are the interpretive approaches developed by curators to guide visitors through the narrative of the National Museum of Qatar in Gallery 4 "The People of Qatar"? In addition, why have these approaches been developed?

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