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Record turnout for MIA exhibitions

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DOHA: The Arabick Roots and 1001 Inventions exhibitions held at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) have attracted a record 85,000 visitors.

1001 Inventions, which closed last month, saw 72,000 visitors while the ongoing Arabick Roots expo has already witnessed 13,000 visitors.

Celebrating the richness and diversity of Muslim civilisation's Golden Age, the Arabick Roots exhibition was opened by H E Sheikha Al-Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Qatar Museums Authority (QMA). It traces the untold story of how knowledge from Muslim civilisation inspired the scientific revolution in Europe.

The exhibition is of particular interest to educators and students, as part of MIA's aim to equip and inspire them to be 21st century knowledge transmitters and producers.

"The record-breaking number of children who visited this exhibition has been a great source of pride and also a lesson to us on the substance and design that our young audiences respond to," said Aisha Al Khater, Director of MIA.

"It is true that we owe our rich scientific heritage to cultures and civilizations worldwide, but it is also our obligation towards our youth to inform them about our past achievements, as well as inspire and enlighten their path to move forward," she added.

1001 Inventions was visited by the Emir H H Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, who met with the young science explainers working inside the specially-built marquee that housed the award-winning exhibition.

Ahmed Salim, Producer and Director of 1001 Inventions, commented: "We're amazed by the success of 1001 Inventions in Doha, and honoured that His Highness the Emir endorsed the good work that was achieved here. We're particularly pleased to note that this has been the most popular science show to ever launch in Qatar, and the independent research demonstrates that 1001 Inventions has engendered pride and enthusiasm in this hidden history of scientific excellence in Muslim civilisation."

Wael Sawan, Chairman and Managing Director of Qatar Shell Company said: "We are proud of the great achievement of 1001 Inventions Exhibition and the new country record of 72,000 visitors. This achievement is the result of the solid partnership that we have established with QMA and MIA and 1001 Inventions."

An independent research carried out during the exhibition's record-breaking run demonstrated the exhibition's achievements in changing local people's perceptions about science, with 90 percent of surveyed visitors saying the 1001 Inventions show made them feel more positive about the future of science in Qatar.

A separate survey of local school-teachers who visited the exhibition was even more positive with 90 percent saying the 1001 Inventions content was relevant to the school curriculum and 100 percent of all respondents saying they wanted to see 1001 Inventions included in the curriculum.

The research also showed that the visitor numbers reflected the diverse national mix within Qatar. At least 15 percent of visitors were Qatari nationals, with a third being expats from Asia and the West. The vast majority of attendees spent more than 40 minutes exploring the different 'zones' within the exhibition, with the most popular sections being those dedicated to engineering, medicine and astronomy. Almost three-quarters of those surveyed said they wanted to introduce 1001 Inventions to their friends, family and co-workers.