

## Editor's note

LAM A / Lamha/or a glimpse. A window into the vibrant and diverse world of Carnegie Mellon in Qatar.

Ramadan joins us all with community iftars, as we break our fasts together, it feels as though it is a time of reflection. Our year has come to an end, and we are both filled with excitement and sorrow. Seniors will be going off to the real world, whilst the rest of us wait in anticipation for our summer breaks and internships.

Now is a time to both reflect on our pasts and plan for the future. As undergraduates, we're all living the university experience, one we won't get to experience again in the future. It is vital to take charge of the moment, and try to live our lives fully, but it is also just as important to reflect back on these experiences and appreciate them whilst we can. One should never take this experience for granted, and LAM? A is a way of capturing these memories on paper.

With this issue Reminisce, we hope you see other students' memories and experiences they've shared, and reflect on your own past ones that make you uniquely you. This will be our last issue of the semester, and we hope you see the importance of reflection and appreciation of this stage of life.

LAM A is for the students by the students. We are more proud than ever to continue being an anchor for your monthly conversations, and an archive for your university experience.

Sincerely,

A Editor Board ح



Dana Aldisi, Hala Al Darbasti, Mariam Hamad, and Maryam Al Ghanim

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Caged Bird

For the Single Mothers out There







# Welcome to the LAST issue of the

2022-2023 academic

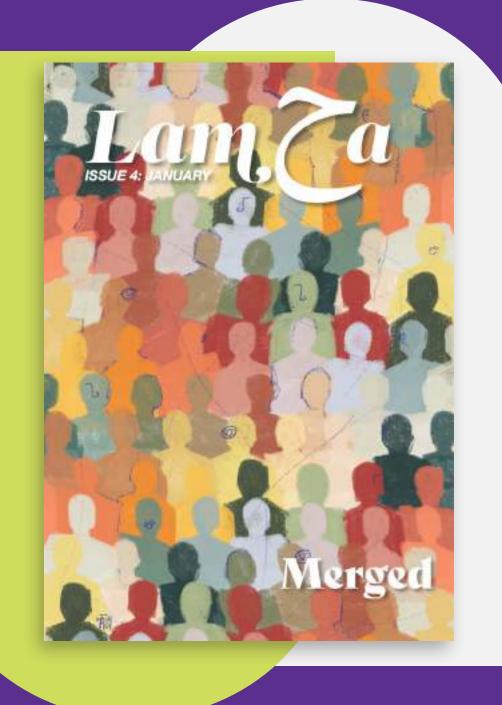
year

# Ready for your Lamza Wrapped?

We asked you to reflect back on all our previous issues and launches... here's what we heard from you...

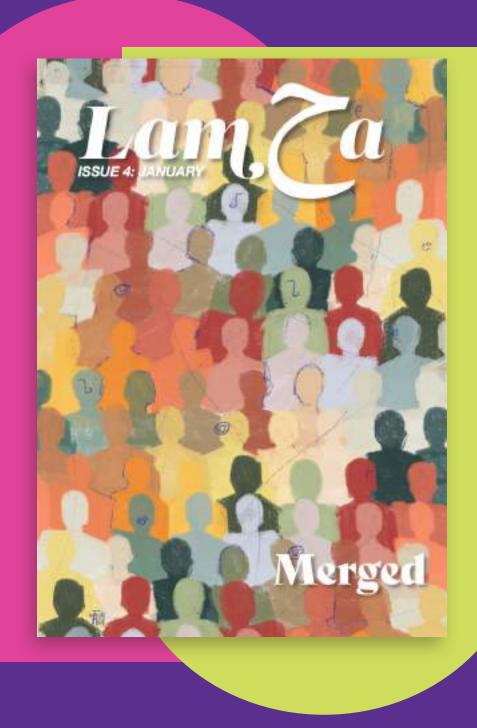
### Over the past academic year we released 5 issues...

### based on your votes the best overall issue was



Issue 5: February - Mirror - 2nd place Issue 2: September - Plugged in - 3rd place Issue 3: October - Embrace - 4th place Issue 1: August - New Beginnings - 5th place

### The best cover was...



Issue 5: February - Mirror - 2nd place Issue 2: September - Plugged in - 3rd place Issue 3: October - Embrace - 4th place Issue 1: August - New Beginnings - 5th place The best section was...

# HUMANS OF CMUQ HUMANS OF CMUQ HUMANS OF CMUQ

Social Synergy - 2nd place Artscape - 3rd place Members Only! - 4th place Verified - 5th place The TOP 3 Social Synergy Articles were...

Tomorrow in Palestine by Ahmad Hallaq

1

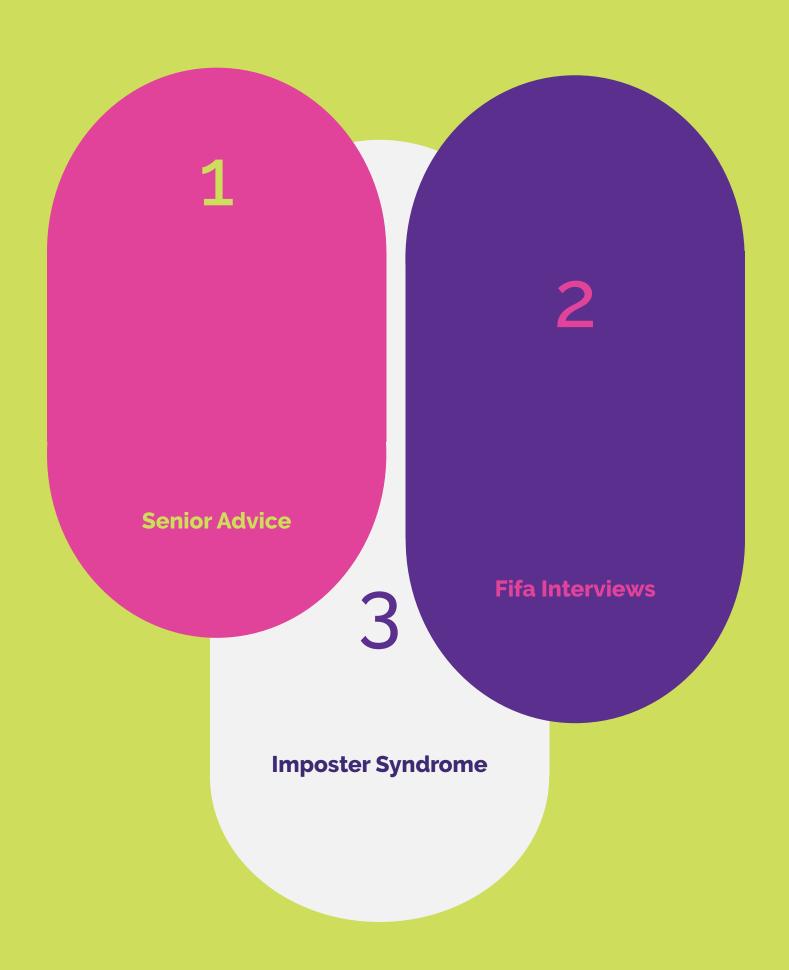
The Best Introvert Places in CMUQ by Mariam Al-Malki

2

A Letter from my Cousin by Ibrahim Abu

3

### The TOP 3 Humans of CMUQ Articles were...



### The TOP 3 Members Only! Articles were...



### The TOP 3 ARTSCAPE submissions were...



## The best Lamza Launch Event was...

Issue 5 Launch in the Mini Majlis with Cloud & Co



### **Our Acknowledgments**

LAM A has been a journey full of ups and downs, happiness and stress, and a lot of plain work. We are so proud to be a part of it, and grateful for the opportunity to be able to create LAM A. So we would like to take some time to thank those who have helped us on our way.

We would like to thank our readers first of all. You are the reason why LAM A was able to grow and become what it is today. We want to thank everyone who has ever come to an event (even if it was to just grab a cup of coffee). We give a special thanks to everyone who has submitted something or agreed to be interviewed by LAM A, each and every one of you has given LAM A a little piece of life that makes it what it is today.

We want to thank Student Affairs for making us, specifically Thanos. He has been our biggest supporter from day one, and LAMZA would not be what it is today without his help. We want to thank every member of Student Affairs who has come to our event and shown us love. We give a big thanks to Student Majlis, specifically Yahya and Hallaq for giving us the means to make LAMZA and fulfilling our requests. We thank facilities as well for helping us set up our events and make them as special as possible. We also thank Eaint, our social media manager.

wariam: Being able to have been apart of LAM A is probably going to be the highlight of my CMU-Q experience. I am so thankful to everyone on our team, it was so great to work with you all and create LAM A. I want to thank everyone who agreed to do an interview with me, it was a great experience and I'm grateful to have been able to share a part of you to the rest of the community! I also want to thank my friends for submitting pieces, specifically Mayar and Maya, as well as Shima for helping me out with editing and setting up. I want to thank all of my friends for believing in and supporting LAM A

**Dana:** Thank you to everyone for reading LAM A. and continuously supporting the magazine. I want to specifically thank my friends for supporting me and always pushing me to get involved in things like LAM A.

Hala: I would like to thank everyone who has ever told me how much they loved the covers or the layout of the magazines, it means the world to me. I would like to thank my friends; Sara, Sara, Sara (yes three of them), Lulu, Fatima, Hend, and Noora for supporting LAM\_A. A shoutout to Darwish for always contributing and anticipating every issue of LAM\_A. I also want to specially thank and appreciate Maryam Al-Ghanim who always makes sure every launch event is an incredible and memorable one. Lastly, I want to thank my friend Toomy who may not be part of CMUQ but always encourages me and inspires me to be a better creative.

Thuc: LAM
A is unarguably one of the proudest passion projects for us the editor board. I genuinely love every aspect of creating it, putting together a theme, getting to know people's quirks and stories beyond academics, altogether creating a platform where we can share the experience of being a CMU-Q student, being young, creative and vulnerable. I would like to thank everyone who has been open to sharing your experiences, the parts of you, and open to welcoming what LAM
A has to offer. I remember how happy me and Mariam were receiving the first independent submission, and now it has grown to so many. Articles, poems, paintings, photographs, all that you've shared with us is what I cherish. I hope we keep seeing more of them, and ultimately more of you as LAM
A continues to be the anchor of your monthly conversation, a magazine by the students for the students.

Creative, Memorable, Fun, Amazing, lovely, Stunning, Beautifully written and organized magazine issue. Kudos to all lam7a executives because each issue cos always a very interesting read, The best, Unique, Inclusive, authentic, artistic, Amazing, showstopping, iconic. Always proud of my weathers <3, Great Work!, Keep it up!, Fun inspiring community, A breather and refresher as to who we are and who are as a community is every month, Special, Funnn, Extraordinary, Something New, Creative and ambitious, Pittsburgh could Never, Cozy, Elegant, Love it, <3, Amazing, Outstanding work, More Issues, :), Talented group of people who work hard to compose these monthly issues, timely, inclusive and creative, remarkable, I like how it brings our community together, Amazing, impactful, surprising, Well-rounded, Innovative, Exciting, Iconic, Expressive, Interesting, Personal, informative, Discussion. Creative, Memorable, Fun, Amazing, lovely, Stunning, Beautifully written and very interesting read, The best, Unique, Inclusive, authentic, artistic, Amazing, showstopping, iconic. Always proud of my weathers <3, Great Work!, Keep it up!, Fun inspiring community, A breather and refresher as to who we are and who are as a community is every month, Special, Funnn, Extraordinary, Something New, Creative and ambitious, Pittsburgh could Never, Cozy, Elegant, Love it, <3, Amazing, Outstanding work, More Issues, :), Talented group of people who work hard to compose these monthly issues, timely, inclusive and creative, remarkable, I like how it brings our community together, Amazing, impactful, surprising, Well-rounded, Innovative, Exciting, Iconic, Expressive, Interesting, Personal, informative, Discussion. Creative, Memorable, Fun, Amazing, lovely, Stunning, Beautifully written and organized magazine issue. Kudos to all lam7a executives because each issue cos always a very interesting read, The best, Unique, Inclusive, authentic, artistic, Amazing, showstopping, iconic. Always proud of my weathers <3, Great Work!, Keep it up!, Fun inspiring community, A breather and refresher as to who we are and who are as a community is every month, Special, Funnn, Extraordinary, Something New, Creative and ambitious, Pittsburgh could Never, Cozy, Elegant, Love it, <3, Amazing, Outstanding work, More Issues, :), Talented group of people who work hard to compose these monthly issues, timely, inclusive and creative, remarkable, I like how it brings our community together, Amazing, impactful, surprising, Well-rounded, Innovative, Exciting, Iconic, Expressive, Interesting, Personal, informative, Discussion. Creative, Memorable, Fun, Amazing, lovely, Stunning, Beautifully written and organized magazine issue. Kudos to all lam7a executives because each issue cos always a very interesting read, The best, Unique, Inclusive, authentic, artistic, Amazing, showstopping, iconic. Always proud of my weathers <3, Great Work!, Keep it up!, Fun inspiring community, A breather and refresher as to who we are and who are as a community is every month, Special, Funnn, Extraordinary, Something New, Creative and ambitious, Pittsburgh could Never, Cozy, Elegant, Love it, <3, Amazing, Outstanding work, More Issues, :), Talented group of people who work hard to compose these monthly issues, timely, inclusive and creative, remarkable, I like how it brings our community together, Amazing, impactful, surprising, Well-rounded, Innovative, Exciting, Iconic, Expressive, Interesting, Personal, informative, Discussion. Creative, Memorable, Fun, Amazing, lovely, Stunning, Beautifully written and organized magazine issue. Kudos to all lam7a executives because each issue cos always a very interesting read, The best, Unique, Inclusive, authentic, artistic, Amazing, showstopping, iconic. Always proud of my weathers <3, Great Work!, Keep it up!, Fun inspiring community, A breather and refresher as to who we are and who are as a community is every month, Special, Funnn, Extraordinary, Something New, Creative and ambitious, Pittsburgh could Never, Cozy, Elegant, Love it, <3, Amazing, Outstanding work, More Issues, :), Talented group of people who work hard to compose these monthly issues, timely, inclusive and creative, remarkable, I like how it brings our community together, Amazing, impactful, surprising, Well-rounded, Innovative, Exciting, Iconic, Expressive, Interesting, Personal, informative, Discussion. Creative, Memorable, Fun, Amazing, lovely, Stunning, Beautifully written and organized magazine issue. Kudos to all lam7a executives because each issue cos always a very interesting read, The best, Unique, Inclusive, authentic, artistic, Amazing, showstopping,



# **Campus Connections**

### By Mariam Hamad

I sat down with Batoul El-Taguri, an exchange student who is here in CMU-Qatar for a semester from CMU-Pittsburgh.



### Why did you choose to come to Qatar?

I was friends with some of the Qatar exchange students when they came to Pittsburgh, and they spoke about how great the culture and environment was here, so I decided to apply I especially enjoyed talking to Nihad, Lojain, Mariam, Maria, and Ihsane!!! I also wanted to be in the Middle East. I decided to go to Qatar because it's very safe and calm, and I was looking for that. I'm also interested in Middle Eastern culture, as I am Libyan, and I wanted to get closer to my culture because I have lived in the USA my whole life. I also wanted to spend Ramadan in a muslim country.

### How has your experience been?

It's been a very great experience. The academics were more challenging which surprised me. The classes hold you more accountable to the work that you do, and it takes more time to study hard. There is definitely a "Work hard, Play hard" mentality here, because there's more events and clubs. In Pittsburgh, you need to be in a club to be able to go to an event, but here the events are open to everyone, which is more welcoming and open. I feel like people here are more welcoming and willing to chat, because the student body here is a lot smaller. I like that you walk around here and see familiar faces,

in Pittsburgh that doesn't happen a lot. I also really like living in Qatar, my friend took me on a tour and it only took 3 hours, which was surprising. I find it very accessible here and it's a lot safer.

# What's the most different parts of the Qatar campus?

The architecture here is much more planned and thought out; they deserve a round of applause. Everything here is pretty and very student oriented. You can tell that they care about the students because everything revolves around them, from academics to activities. In the Pittsburgh campus, I feel as though it's oriented more towards the graduate students.

Something that was surprising to me was I feel as though there's a lack of diversity here, because most of the students are Arab. In Pittsburgh though, it's not diverse at all.

### What's your favorite part?

The welcoming culture here is my favorite part. It's really nice to be able to just chat with anyone about anything, and everyone is very welcoming and kind.

# What's something you miss about the Pittsburgh campus?

I miss my friends Sara and Mina. I also miss the lack of focus on attendance, here it's very emphasized. Other than that, I am loving the Qatar campus.





### Advice Column

### By Mariam Hamad and Dana Aldisi



### Lam7aMag

How has your Senior/Junior/Sophomore/First year been?



### ShahrazadElNatsheh (Senior)

Senior year has been a mix of emotions - exciting yet bittersweet, challenging yet rewarding. With all my core courses completed, I took this time to enjoy taking on new challenges, such as doing research that interests me, and participating in various extracurricular activities. Of course, I still struggle with managing my time and balancing my responsibilities, some may call it senioritis, but we've all struggled with procrastination and imbalances throughout our time here and we just come to live with it.

As the year went on, I realized how much I would miss my friends and the sense of community I had built during my time at CMU. This year got filled with excitement for the future and nostalgia for the past. Saying goodbyes will be difficult, but I know that we are ready to take on the next chapter in our life, and the connections and experiences we've gained at CMU will surely stay with us for the rest of our lives.



### AndreiHoriaPacurar (Junior)

I have much more freedom, beforehand most of my courses were fixed, but now I got to choose my courses and was able to take ones I enjoyed. I also have more free time, as my time management skills have improved throughout the years. I can go to more events and be more active on campus, compared to my sophomore year. It's more enjoyable.



### NizarRadi (Sophomore)

Sophomore year has been a great year. After settling into CMUQ, it feels like I'm much more a part of the community than I was in freshman year. I attended a lot more events and went on a campus trip to Spain which was an incredible experience. Can't wait to see what junior year has



### MozaAlThani (Freshman)

I felt like it was crazy, there were a lot of new changes. For a first year, a lot of things were happening at the same time, there's the world cup, and the fact that we came into this after a short summer because of the world cup. I felt like everything coming into this was such a big shock, and no matter what you try to expect from university, no matter who you talk to, you never know what it's like until you're here. That was my biggest shock, genuinely experiencing what it's like to be in CMUQ.

This year has been a lot of learning. In the beginning I was disappointed in myself when I'd see myself struggle, but now I feel like I've grown a lot because of that. That's one of the greatest things you can get out of CMU, it's only been a year and I've already changed a lot.



### Lam7aMag

What advice would you give to an incoming Senior/Junior/Sophomore/First year?



For incoming seniors, I would advise you to be open to new experiences and opportunities. As you've reached the stage where you've completed most of your core courses and have more options with electives as well as more time, take this time to take risks and try new things, such as pursuing personal projects, studying abroad, participating in service projects, or even initiating events and clubs. These experiences can help you grow as a person and prepare you for life beyond college. It does build your resume, but it also gives you memories you can cherish, and experiences that will teach you skills and lessons beyond academia that can help you for a lifetime.



### Advice Column



### AndreiHoriaPacurar (Junior)

Generally, be open with the selection of courses. Beforehand, you had no freedom with your course choices, but now you do. I recommend choosing courses from different fields. But you should still make sure to prioritize your core courses compared to other electives. For computer science juniors, it's common to take heavy courses and overload. I overloaded last semester and I don't recommend it because it's not worth it. You can distribute your coursework throughout your four years instead of overloading in one semester.



### NizarRadi (Sophomore)

DO NOT OVERLOAD YOUR SEMESTER. I know it may seem like fall semester is not that bad and you can take 6 courses, don't. You'll be on campus for what feels like 7 days a week.



### MozaAlThani (Freshman)

You'll never know what to expect. Everything that happens here will be a lesson and you'll learn and grow from it. CMUQ is all about that struggle which is all worth it in the end because the hard work will pay off, even if it doesn't feel like it in the beginning. I wish I could tell myself that when I first came in.



### Lam7aMag

People say students usually can have one or two of these three things: Sleep, Social life, or Academics. What do you think about this and does it apply to you?



### ShahrazadElNatsheh (Senior)

I completely agree, but that's what makes university life an adventure, a roller coaster, or a bicycle as my friends like to say. By striving to find your balance, you eventually find the right balance for you to take care of yourself and make the most out of your experience in CMU – in my case though, sleep was out of the picture.



### AndreiHoriaPacurar (Junior)

This semester, I was able to balance all three, but the previous semester I was getting 4 hours of sleep, spending 12 hours studying, and the rest with my friends. I prioritized academics and social life over sleep. Because of this, I learned to prioritize my time and manage it better, and now I can balance all three.



### NizarRadi (Sophomore)

Sleep has always been a struggle, more so than ever this year since I took an 8AM class everyday. I would wake up and rush to make it to class everyday which may have gotten me a speeding ticket or two, but that's okay. Can't miss out on any attendance points.



### MozaAlThani (Freshman)

When I came in I was like "I'll definitely find the balance for myself!" but I think that some days you'll have to prioritize one over the other. I think you can have a balance, but the balance is with prioritization. You'll have to know that one week you won't see your friends as much but it'll be worth it because you would get the work out of the way and have time for your friends the next week. I feel like in the moment that's really hard to understand, like when you know your friends are having so much fun and you want to ditch your work to join them. But you really learn prioritization with CMU. It's hard to come to terms with it, but you have to realize that if you prioritize, things will come together eventually. You can't have them all at the same time maybe, but you can have a social life, and sleep and academics are important, it's just about prioritization.

# Social Synergy

# World Cup Reminisce

By Anonymous





It's been over three months since the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar ended. I feel like I, and many others, are still not over the events that occurred from November 20th to December 18th of 2022. I believe many of us can agree that it was an event full of unexpected turns and pleasant surprises. I genuinely miss the atmosphere of the World Cup; the small interactions, the hospitality, the festivities, the sportsmanship, and most importantly, the people that visited from all around the globe.

I often find myself on my phone looking at photos and videos that were taken during the World Cup, and I can't help but feel a sense of nostalgia and overwhelming longing for those days. It was amazing seeing people from different backgrounds embrace a culture different from their own. They were able to

experience Qatar for what it is, and not what the media portrayed it to be. It truly felt like everyone in Qatar was united, everyone was here to enjoy the matches and cheer for their teams.

It feels surreal how 12 years of planning, preparation, and waiting ended in a short span of 29 days. Everything was executed beautifully, from the decorations scattered across the country to the closing ceremony. The event was successful thanks to everyone who worked behind the scenes, from organizers, workers, volunteers, and everyone else involved in the preparation of one of the biggest sporting events in the world.

The FIFA World Cup 2022 was definitely the experience of a lifetime and will forever have a special place in my heart.

عندما يستوي أنف الطائرة مع ذيلها، و تنطفئ الأضواء التي تؤشر بوضع حزام الأمان، تكون لدي الفرصة للتخلص من الملل بطرقٌ غير تلك الأفكار، و لكن بمجرد رؤية خط سير الطائرة، تعود لخاطري الأفكار، فكل المسارات تتجنب الأجواء السورية! و تلك ليست بمصادفة، ففي شهر مارس الحالي تمر الذكرى الثانية عشر لانتفاضة الشعب السوري أمام الظلم و الإستبداد، مؤدية إلى إندلاع حرب أهلية في البلاد، و تأخذني الأفكار مجدداً لتسألني عن معنى إنتمائي لسوريا، فليس من الممكن أن يقبل ضميري بالتطبيع مع نظام مستبد في مقابل الحصول على الإحساس بالإنتماء، و ما هو ذاك الإنتماء بين أطلال الحرب هنا، و أناس شردوا من أرضهم هناك، بين مهاجر ولاجئ؟ ولكن في نفس الوقت، من ذا الذي يعترف بي و يقبل وجودي في أراضيه بدون جواز السفر الخاص بي؟ فكل سوريٍ أسير جوازه، أراد ذاك الإنتماء أم لم يرد!



عندما تبدأ الطائرة بالهبوط، ينتابني شعوران متناقضان، أولهما شعور بالحماس لإستكشاف

المدينة التي أقدم إليها، والآخر شعور بالخوف من فقدان هويتي، مهما كانت هي. فبالرغم من المعركة التي تدور داخلي عن معنى الوطن بالنسبة لي، لم تكن تلك المعركة قط منوطة بمعنى هويتي بالنسبة لي، بالعكس، إن تلك الهوية هي برأيي من تصنع الوطن! فبداخل كل حمصي حمص، و بداخل كل مقدسي قدس، و كذا بالعدني و الطرابلسي و الموصلي... و قد يكون بداخل مقدسي دوحةٌ، وبداخل طرابلسي قاهرةٌ! فمهما كانت أختلفنا في تعريف الوطن بالنسبة لنا، لن ولا يمكننا أن نختلف في تعريف أنفسنا من منظار الإنتماء، فبداخلي جزء من مسقط رأسي جدة و إن لم أكن من أهلها. فهل يا ترى ذاك الخوف من فقدان الهوية مبرر؟

بالرغم من وجود تهديد حقيقي على مسح الهوية، فأنا أعتقد أن الهوية، على العكس من الوطنية، اختيار شخصي و مثابرة أبدية، فإن كنت مهملاً في الحفاظ عليها، ذهبت تلك الهوية مع الريح، وإن رعيتها و أنعشتها، غت تلك الهوية و أغرت، و أنا أرى أن تلك المسؤولية بحد ذاتها حرية، و تضع عن كتفي ذاك الهم الذي يطاردني عند كل هبوط.

خلال لحظات قصيرة، تنتقل الطائرة من ذاك الجسم العملاق ذو الزخم المهول إلى مجرد عربة تتنقل بطيئاً على المدرج بإنتظار الإخلاء، و تعود مجدداً تلك اللحظات التي قد كنت عشتها قبل الإقلاع، فتلك الأم العشرينية لا تزال تحاول إسكات طفلها، و ها أنا أرى العجوز يحاول أن يأتي بحقيبته من القمرة، و أرى في تلك اللحظة أناس قادمون إلى أوطانهم، و آخرون قد تركوا أوطانهم بالفعل، و بين كل تلك الخواطر حول فكرة الإنتماء، تستوقفني مقولة الشاعر العراقي أحمد مطر:

"غوت كي يحيا الوطن .. يحيا لمن ؟ نحن الوطن .. إن لم يكن بنا كريماً آمنا ولم يكن محترماً ولم يكن حراً .. فلا عشنا ولا عاش الوطن."



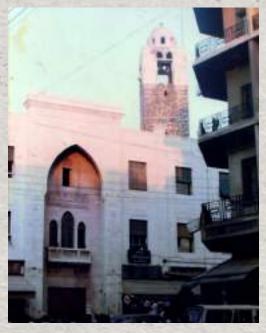
Tamer Tabaa, 1993

أعذروني، فإن أبواب الطائرة قد فتحت للتو...

# من نافذة الطائرة

ديرام تامر الطباع

في سويعة من سويعات الفجر، و على منظر تحول ألوان السماء، راودتني بعض الأفكار التي نادرا ما تزور كياني، و نادراً ما تحيا إن زارت، ولكن على خلاف كل مرة، استطاعت تلك الخواطر أن تستوقفني وتنال مني ، فهل لمصاحب الضجر حيلة في ضجره؟ وبين ضجيج الركاب الذين يسعون جاهدين للوصول إلى مقاعدهم، و منظر ذاك العجوز الذي يناضل ليضع حقيبته في الحجرة، و تلك السيدة العشرينية التي تكافح لإسكات مولودها الأول ، اعتلت تلك الأفكار منبر وعيي، و بدأت أتلفت حولي بحيرة من أمري ، فهل لدى هؤلاء الناس جميعا، عربٌ كانوا أو عجم، وطن؟ وهل لدي أنا وطن؟ و ما إن عاد نظري إلى النافذة مجدداً، بدأت أتساءل عن معنى هذا المنظر لكل مسافر، فهل يستوي من جعل من السفر والغربة حال قراره في مراعاة هذا المنظر مع من يتغرب عن أرضه و أهله لأول مرة ؟ وهل لتلك البيوت التي في الأفق سكان قد ودعوا أحباءهم من ركاب هذه الرحلة ليلة الأمس؟ و بين فكرة وأخرى، أتى إعلان الإقلاع من قائد الطائرة ليدلي الستار على مسرحية تلك الخواطر...



جامع النوري حمص سوريا

من نعومة أظافرنا، تربى معظمنا على الأفكار الوطنية، من حب الوطن والفداء من أجل الحفاظ على أهله و أرضه، ولكن من النادر أن يستوقفنا توارث هذه المعتقدات جيلاً بعد جيل، فما هو ذاك الوطن؟ هل نأخذ بإجابة الشاعر الفلسطيني محمود درويش عندما عرف الوطن بأنه "ليس سؤالا تجيب عليه وتمضي .. إنه حياتك وقضيتك معاً" أو نتفق مع المفكر الروماني إميل سيوران قائلا "لا يسكن المرء بلاداً بل يسكن لغة، ذلك هو الوطن ولا شيء غيره"؟ مهلا، إن الطائرة قد أقلعت بالفعل!



Tamer Tabaa, 1993

لم تخيبني قط لحظة إقلاع الطائرة و ما يلي تلك اللحظة من عرض بانورامي للمدينة وهي تتلاشى بين السحاب، فإذا بي أرى شارعاً قد عشت دهراً أقطعه، أو مبنى قد أعتادت عيناي رؤيته في الأفق، و تداهم المرء في تلك اللحظات مشاعر جياشة، فهل هذا ما يقال عنه حب الوطن؟ و للوهلة الأولى، قد يبدو الجواب بديهي، فأنت لست مفارق مجرد قطعة أرض، أنت تفارق قطعة منك شخصياً، ذكريات الطفولة، الأهل و الأصحاب، الجيرة الطيبة... ولكن في تلك اللحظات، أتذكر أيضاً أني لا أنتمي لتلك الأرض، إن كنت بسائل جواز السفر الخاص بي! فبالرغم من مولدي و ترعرعي في مدينة جدة، إلا أننى في نهاية المطاف لا أزال سوري الأصل!

قبل أن تتلاشى المدينة من نظري، يكون اعتقادي بفكرة الانتماء للوطن كتلك الفكرة الكلاسيكية اعتقاد صارم لا يتخلله الشك، ولكن بمجرد أن تختفي المدينة من مرآي، أبدا بمراجعة تلك الأفكار، وتلك هي معركة تدور في خاطري، لم تنتهي منذ أن أورثت تلك المعتقدات الوطنية. فكيف أنتمي إلى بلد قد كنت دائما زائراً فيه، و كيف أكون زائراً في بلد قضيت جُل عمري فيه! و هنا تكون نقطة الصدام مع كل هذه المعتقدات التي ألفناها، فهل يا ترى يكون لدي عدة أوطان، أم أنا مجرد زائر في كلاهما؟

# Perspectives from the Sky

### By Diram Tabaa English Translation

In the early hours of the day, by the sky's colorful gradient, a few thoughts managed to sneak into my conscience. These thoughts were not strangers, but they were seldom welcome into the space of my mind. However, unlike our usual encounters, such adversarial musings were able to overcome my guards; for boredom was the worst of two devils!

The chatter of passengers as they board the plane, the view of an elderly man trying to place his luggage in the overhead cabin, and that of a restless mother trying her best to keep her new-born son quiet; nothing unusual for a routine boarding. But with a simple survey of the environment, these musings came to ask a rather bizarre question: "Do these passengers have a homeland, and more importantly, do I have a homeland?". As my vision went back to the view of my window, new thoughts emerged: "What would this view mean to someone who has made a dedication to the life of expatriation vs. someone who is leaving his country and family for the first time? Did the occupants of the faintly visible houses in the horizon perhaps have loved ones on this trip who they had to say goodbyes to last night?" One thought followed another, until the pilot made the take-off announcement, thereby bringing down the curtains on my encounter with such reflections...

From a very young age, most of us, if not all, have been indoctrinated with patriotic ideas, the likes of the love for the homeland and the sacrifices that are ought to be made to protect its land and people. Yet rarely do we stop and ask ourselves, what do these thoughts, which we have been simply inheriting from one generation after the other, really mean? In other words, what is a homeland? Do we take the words of the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish for it, who exclaimed: "Such a question is not something you simply answer and move on, it is your life and its cause altogether"? Or do we agree with the Romanian philosopher Emil Cioran, who believed: "It is no nation that we inhabit, but a language. Make no mistake; our native tongue is our true fatherland."? Hold on, the plane has already started to take off!

The view from the window seat as the plane takes off has never disappointed me, for through it I have a panoramic view of the departed city as it disappears within the clouds. In the corner of my eye, I could see streets I have crossed countless times during my lifetime, or buildings that formed a skyline that's familiar to my eyes, and at that point, one can't help but feel a wide variety of strong emotions, from sorrow to nostalgia, and

perhaps then, this might be what the love of the homeland means! At first sight, such a conclusion seemed all but unreasonable, because you aren't simply leaving behind a piece of land, you are leaving behind a piece of yourself: childhood memories, friends and family, your warm neighborhood...yet through these seemingly logical reflections, a different, strongly contradicting thought arises, a reminder to the lack of belongingness to this land, if you were to refer to my passport. Despite being born and raised in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, at the end of the day, I am an expat resident with Syrian nationality.



Tamer Tabaa, 1993

Before the city completely disappears from my view, my belief in the idea of belonging to a homeland in the classical sense would be a firm resolution without doubt, yet as soon as the view disappears, I begin reconsidering such thoughts and beliefs, and so it has always been an eternal, internal fight ever since I have inherited the classical ideologies of what "homeland" means. For how can I belong to a country I have always been a visitor, and be a visitor in a country where I have spent my whole life? Does that mean I belong to both countries, or does it imply that I am nothing more than a visitor in both!

By the time the nose of the airplane is vertically on level with its tail and the seatbelt lights are switched off, I finally get an opportunity to escape both boredom and the daunting reflections I have been dealing with since the moment I boarded, but as soon as I see the trajectory of the trip, the same thoughts come back again, for all commercial airlines avoid the Syrian air space! Such avoidance is not coincidental; this past March marks the 12th anniversary of the start of the Syrian revolution against oppression and tyranny, leading to the breakout of the Syrian civil war. The persistent musings



Tamer Tabaa, 1993

don't fail to make me question the meaning of my belongingness to Syria as a homeland, for it is not remotely plausible for my conscience to be on good terms with a tyrannical system in exchange for a much needed sense of patriotic identity, and what sort of patriotism can such a system provide on the ruins of war along with the millions who were displaced from their lands as refugees and migrants? Yet at the same time, what sort of entity anywhere around the globe would even accept my existence without my Syrian passport? Indeed, every Syrian, whether they appreciate the patronizing patriotism or not, are bound by their passports!

As the plane begins its descent, two conflicting emotions are felt, one that fills me with excitement to discover my destination, and another that fills me with fear of identity loss, whatever that identity is ought to mean. Despite hosting an internal conflict to determine the meaning of homeland, never once was such a debate involved in the personal meaning of identity, it is on the contrary in fact! I believe that such identity is what defines homeland. Said otherwise, I see Syria through every Syrian, I see Palestine through every Palestinian, similarly with Yemen, Libya and Iraq, and perhaps you could observe Doha through a Palestinian, and Cairo through a Libyan! Regardless of how we choose to define homeland, we could never disagree on how to define belongingness through our own vision. For me personally, I see Jeddah as part of my identity, even if I am not officially a citizen. Which brings us to an important question, is such fear of loss of identity justified?

Despite the existence of a tangible threat to the persistence of identity, I believe that identity, unlike patriotism, is a personal choice and an eternal struggle. If you don't attempt to preserve your identity, then it will be gone sooner or later, and conversely, if you put effort to nourish it, your identity will be preserved and will flourish, and I see that responsibility in of itself freeing, and takes away from my mind that worry which accompanies every landing.

In a few short minutes, an airplane goes from a large structure with scarily huge momentum, to a chariot that crawls slowly on the runway, waiting for its passengers to finally disembark, and slowly but surely the scene that started it all comes back to view, as the restless mother still attempts to keep her new-born baby quiet, and the old man is now trying to get his luggage back from the overhead cabin, and I see people coming back to their countries, and others who have left their countries when we departed, and between all such scenery, I am reminded of a quote by the Iraqi poet Ahmed Matar:

"We die so that the homeland may live.. Long live for whom? We are the homeland.. If it isn't to us safe and respectful, with us generous and for us providing freedom ... then we shall not live, and neither shall the homeland"

Apologies, the doors of the aircraft have just been opened...

# Piano: the Melody of Neuroscience

### By Mariam Almalki

A wandering mind is painted with amendments as piano notes wash upon the ears. The potions of white chatter that were splashing loudly in the background of my environment are now silenced by the melodies of Gibran Alcocer's "Idea 1".

The melody builds the escalation with grace, articulating tension of some sort, like a buildup of an innocent chase that ruptures into the desperate need for the capture. Simultaneously, as if an entity has the strings of my consciousness wrapped around its fingers, I sway ever so delicately in harmony with the mystical overtones that the composer spectacularly delivers, and it causes an influx of inspirations and ideas in my mind. They come in flashing images, these ideas, and sometimes it makes me feel like I'm out of time; as if I need to catch each fast-paced idea as it falls like hurrying droplets of rain before I forget it, before it escapes into a purgatory, waiting to be resurrected again.

The flow of information that neuroscience presents with its stories fit perfectly with each other, like two lovers performing a waltz as their memories sing the tune. Lectures upon lectures, I'm painted with all the purple hues of fascination as my professor recites a story of multiple parts; a neurotransmitter's journey as it travels through the synapse, eager to be released, only to be betrayed by a sly inhibitor. During these times I find myself desperate to prevent the treacherous touches of stress from decaying the layers of fascination that I hold towards this content, and I find piano to be the perfect preservative.

Comptine D'un Autre été: L'Après-midi, for example, gives personality to the characters I'm studying: the mellow progression of the melody makes me imagine Kinesin, a motor protein, as a charismatic, brooding man committed to doing his job of moving a chromosome forward, whereas Dynein, a backward motor protein, is the exuberant side-kick who tends to halt plans and make them go backwards. The song starts with discipline, with its pace spaced out in a manner that is symmetrical and sensible as you hear the notes carry themselves with an air of formality that can only accompany the still climate of someone like Kinesin. At the intermission, Dynein is introduced while the notes grow an impulsive desire for rebellion and a dash of mischief, for it is not afraid to walk in a direction opposite to everyone else. The song then blooms into an episode of their adventures as they navigate different ends of the universe of a microtubule, bringing both performances to a rousing conclusion.

Notes of different tones weave together to interlace different scenes of what goes on in the troughs of one's cells, and I start to wonder, which euphonious melody will speak the story of my research? As I manipulate the activity of neurons with light, will I have a soundtrack composed by a genius pianist to direct the steps of my experimental procedure? As long as a choreography commences by fingers dancing along ivory and obsidian keys, and the piano sheets are turned to yield a heavenly strain, then the planets shall remain in place and my endearment for neuroscience shall be preserved.

# Layered with Love

By Hiba Hamad



Around two years ago, I got into baking as a hobby and specifically enjoyed cake decorating. I began to experiment with different types of frosting and designs. If you saw the first few cakes I made, you would probably laugh, but I promise they tasted good! I love baking and decorating cakes to share with friends and family, and these mini cakes were made along with a dear friend of mine.

My favorite part about baking is that it takes my mind off of everything else. When I'm in the kitchen, I'm able to put all of my focus and energy into creating something beautiful and delicious, and baking cake takes a lot of time and energy. A lot goes into making cake, there's baking the cake, leveling it, freezing beforehand, making frosting, frosting a crumb coat, refrigerating, and FINALLY the best part, decorating! There's also those little breakdowns when things go wrong in the process. But even so, I still enjoy every part of the process. I'm the kind of person that likes taking my time and carefully doing things.

If you're a fan of baking and have some free time, I highly recommend giving cake decorating a try. It's even more enjoyable with a friend or two. Oh, and if you do decide to give it a go, do yourself a favor and try using Swiss Meringue Buttercream Frosting;)









# Our Adventures in Kazakhstan

By Fadia Hussain and Yahya Elkhatib

Once upon a spring break, a group of 15 curious students set off on an adventure to Kazakhstan, led by the wise and wonderful trio of Nurkin, Tatiana, and Professor Gianni. They landed in the historic city of Almaty, where they spent a few days exploring and learning about the local culture. But the real excitement began when they traveled to Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, to visit fascinating companies, universities, and startups. Join us as we take a stroll down memory lane and recount some of the amazing activities the group participated in during their 8-day stay.







### **Snow Rafting**

**Yahya:** After moving to Astana, some of us decided to discover the city and since the temperature was around -17°C, we came across a frozen river. So what did we do? Yep, you're right, we walked over it and crossed it from one side to the other, which was stressful but very entertaining. We didn't know if the river was going to melt, so we started off walking very carefully but ended up running around towards the end.

As we headed back towards the hotel, we heard a few people screaming and quickly realized that they're snow rafting so we lowkey got jealous and wanted to try it out. 8 of us ended up sitting on the dinosaur-like structure and the motorcycle took us around the river at a high speed. Even though it was freezing, our adrenaline levels were skyrocketing. The experience was very enjoyable to the point

where we came the next day with more friends to try it out again.



### **Late Night Shenanigans**

**Yahya:** One night, Fadia, Ahmad, and I decided to wander around the hotel and check out their balconies. For some reason, Fadia had snacks from Qatar, so whenever we would feel hungry, we would hit her up.

On the last day, Ahmad and I decided to host a mini-game night where we played charades for hours and that's when I realized some people could be very smart at academics but terrible at describing movies (I'll let your imagination decide who these people are). By the way, Ibrahim is playing "undercover" with everyone in the food court these days so I just wanted to let you all know he got introduced to it when we came back after his friends started playing it in Kazakhstan.

Side note: Fadia could have 10 pairs of shoes and she would still walk around the fancy hotels in her panda socks. That's why we crop her feet off of every picture.





### **Horror Escape Room**

Fadia: During the entire trip, we were finding ways on how to replace sleep with fun activities. One night, we came across this horror escape room. Despite the eerie location, the group decided to give it a try, eager to test our problem-solving skills and perhaps even scare ourselves a little. And we got scared just fine. In the group of 15 people, about 2-3 were actually looking for clues to help us get out of the room, whilst the rest of us were busy screaming. I thought I could scream. But this escape room made me realize that the boys can scream even louder and reach unthinkable pitches.





The escape room wasn't just a game of puzzles and clues. The ghost characters in the room were so convincing that they tested the group's friendships as well. Khadija had to make one of the hardest decisions in her life - saving herself or saving her best friend Aiman. When the ghost threatened to drag someone out of the room, Khadija handed her best friend Aiman's hand to the ghost, hoping that it would satisfy the ghost and leave her

alone. Overall, it was an adventure we will never forget, one that taught us about what NOT being brave looks like.

### **Breakfast with Hallag Series**







Fadia: For those of you who are on a diet, having breakfast with Hallaq is the most painful experience you would ever have to go through. He usually has a 5 course meal (sometimes even more). His breakfast journey starts off with some juice and fruits, then he moves on to his yogurt, followed by the proteins and hash browns. He has a sweet tooth, so he includes dessert in his breakfast and finishes off the journey with some tea. You would imagine that he would skip one of his courses when the rest of us are rushing to catch the bus. But no, he is still taking his sweet time sipping his tea.

At our last breakfast in Kazakhstan, I sat across from Hallaq, I couldn't help but notice a somber look on his face. Initially, I assumed it was due to the fact that we wouldn't be able to continue our breakfast tradition once we returned home. However, it soon became clear that the sorrowful expression meant anything but that.

I had scolded him for wanting to ditch us on our last day in Kazakhstan - just to go shopping for clothes. "Clothes". This guy has not changed his wardrobe in the last 3 years that I have known him, but had suddenly made it a priority while on a one-week trip with friends.

Side note: Hallaq is a very sweet boy with a high GPA and fear of Allah. For all the ladies out there, shoot your shot by sliding into his dms on instagram: ahmad\_hallago2

### **Final Reflection**

**Fadia:** To wrap it up, we couldn't have asked for a better group of people to join us on this incredible trip to Kazakhstan. When it was time to share our trip highlights at the Thursday Majlis, Issaoui couldn't help but ask if we would win a prize for having the most fun trip. To answer the innocent question, if it was a competition of which Global Learning Trip was the best, it would undoubtedly be ours. The memories we made together will forever be engraved in our hearts, and we feel so grateful that CMUQ offered us this life-changing experience.

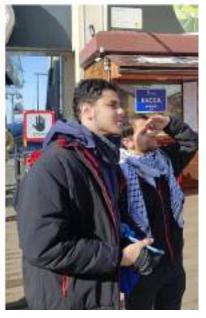
I would also like to take this space to appreciate how everyone always had each other's backs. The boys especially turned into true gentlemen, helping us carry our bags and being our protectors. You all could pass off as our brothers, Ramadan Kareem!











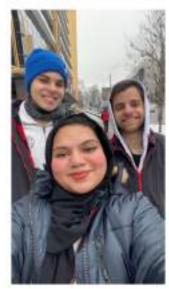






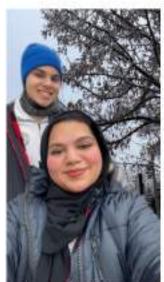






- HALLAQ +





# A Healthy Tartan in Spain

By Abeeha Shoaib

After a long first year full of online, offline, and hybrid modes of university life, I finally found the opportunity to experience a non-Covid Carnegie Mellon spring break this semester. I was fortunate enough to have the golden opportunity to participate in CMU's Healthy Tartans global learning trip to Spain! This trip changed my perspective of health and wellbeing by introducing me to a different way of life followed by people in Barcelona.

The first thing I noticed after landing in the city was that the majority of the people relied on walking, cycling, or even skate-boarding to get to their destination. This was very fascinating for me, since I am very reliant on using any kind of four-wheeler for transit in my home country Pakistan. Throughout my time there, I realized that I was achieving a personal record of 20,000 steps every day! Ever since coming back to Doha, I have tried to keep up with this habit by walking to and from campus for my classes. Although I am quite not there yet, I do believe that the trip inspired me to stay persistent in all of my similar goals. The best part of the trip was that all the learning was experienced together as a group.





The amazing company of other Tartans made everything much more memorable. From the time when someone held my hand while hiking Montserrat to when someone gave me the little push I needed to try something new, I always felt supported even in a foreign country.

Thanking our trip leaders, Amie and Dalia, wouldn't be enough! They planned a mindfulness activity at the Barceloneta beach that showed us the art of being present in the moment and adopting a positive perspective towards life. We also took a Spanish paella cooking class with amazing Spanish chefs who also taught us how to make a quick and healthy breakfast- tomato bread! This saved a majority of us from surviving on instant noodles for the rest of the semester:)

All in all, this trip was a great experience for me, full of reminders about the significance of wellness in our day to day lives. It taught me that taking care of ourselves does not have to be complicated and time-consuming, rather very fun and creative! Whether it is a short walk with our friends or cooking a delicious meal, these little things can make a big difference. So, let's move towards improving our health and wellbeing-one step at a time!

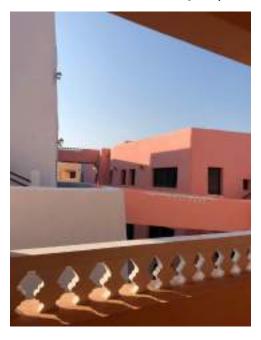
# My Qatar through Photowalks

By Mariam Al Thani

A massive introvert, growing up, and even to this day, I feel like I never really saw my country. And, I thought, I can always see these places. That's true for some places but my Qatar, the neighborhoods I grew up in, the neighborhoods my parents, and grandparents grew up in, are now closed off with Ashghal banners, if not already gone. So I wanted to make more of an effort.

Lo and behold, @qatarphotowalk posted a story on Instagram "Doha port photo walk on Saturday from 7:30-9:30". Was I really going to wake up at 6 am to go across the country, alone, to meet a bunch of people I don't know, just to finally see the new Doha port? Yeah, I did. And to be honest, it was not great because I felt really awkward just being there but... the hardest part was over. And, it was still worth it!! I got to see the beautiful port and snap some (in my humble opinion) cool pictures.

So, I decided this is it. I'm gonna keep going to these photo walks and I'm gonna build my relationship with this country and these people. It was one of the best decisions of my life so far, and here are just some of the places in the country I grew up in that I would have never seen if I didn't make this jump.



### **Souq Waqif**

Next, we went to Souq Waqif. This time I was determined, I was going to talk to people because it's what I wanted. I didn't want to feel awkward and I didn't have to be. And I didn't:) It was much more fun and we got to walk through the rubble and remains of what once was and what was left of the old neighborhoods. Also, it was from this photo walk onward that we started noticing the pattern of finding cats everywhere, and I made it a habit to picture them all.



### **Al Khor Port**

The week after the Souq Waqif we got special access to the Al Khor Port and I realized I had never been to Al Khor at all. It seemed that not many people visited this port and all the fishermen were ecstatic and intrigued by this group of very different people who were joined together by the many cameras on them. The boats and the life that seeped through them were so beautiful and I hope to visit that place again. It was great to interact with the fishermen, see their work, see the fish, and even walk through the boats!!



### **Um Ghuwailina**

While we went to more places, I want to center this piece on the Qatar I really got to see and never did. On this walk, we went to an area called Um Ghuwailina. I certainly had never heard of it but was excited to see all the neighborhoods and corner stores. I was especially touched when our organizer, Mr. Khalifa Al Obadily, informed us that we were looking at his childhood home - where his dad used to sell bike parts. This place was different from Souq Waqif because - while the neighborhoods were traditional and worn down, people still lived here, and it was great. It felt alive and like it was a place that has aged and had been alive all this time.

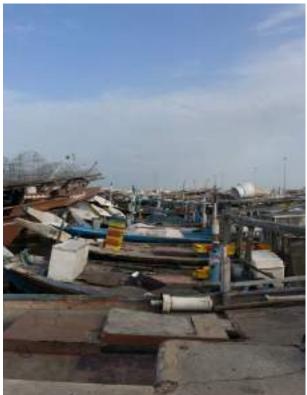


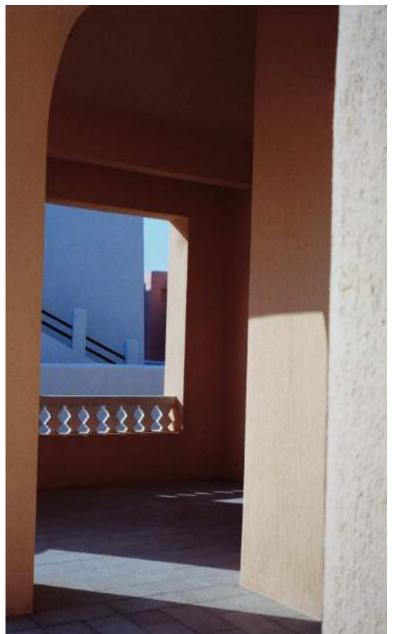
### WHAT NOW

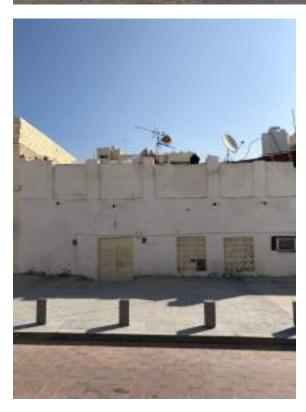
From these places and all these photo walks, I learned a few things. Firstly, I love my country and what it was, what it is, and what it will be. I can only hope that with my pictures and memories, I can capture the memories of the places I grew up and am growing up in. Secondly, people will stare. People will be intrigued, confused, scared, excited, and more, when they see someone walking with a camera, especially if it is a group of people, and especially in areas where they think there is nothing to be photographed. We even got asked if we worked for the sanitation department (lol). The point is, who cares. I enjoyed my time through all of these reactions and am so glad I got to interact with all of these people and see all of these places and hope to continue my adventures in the future and that this inspires others to do the same as well:).













# 



I sat down with Jamil Daoud, the football captain of the CMUQ football team. They have recently won the Qatar Foundation football tournament.

#### What does it feel like to win the tournament?

It's a good feeling and very satisfying, especially because our team was the runner-up last year, so this is a comeback for us. We worked harder this semester and had more training and practices, and I think we deserved the win.



#### What do you believe made your team able to win?

What happened is that the first two games went really badly. We played in a formation that worked in the practices, but not the games. I spoke to the coach and we figured out a new formation and implemented it in practice. The first time we played with the new formation, we won 4-0. The coach, Professor Yilma and I would always speak to the team and try to motivate them, as the team's spirit is important for a successful game.

### As a leader, how has your role influenced the team?

From my personal experience, I learned to manage my time and manage a team of 20. People have different personalities and you have to deal with them in different ways. Telling someone they're not gonna play in the game might make them angry and I had to be able to deal with it in a correct manner, which is difficult. From the team's perspective, I think I motivated them a lot. But in the end it was all a team effort.

### What do you have to say about the fan's enthusiasm towards the matches?

I appreciate that the fans make an effort to come and support us. I like the enthusiasm and support and how they back us up. I really appreciate people coming and cheering us on in the games, as it gives the team more energy and motivation.

### What was the most difficult aspect of the tournament?

The most difficult game for us was the group stage game with Texas. We were losing 2-0 for a long time and if we lost the game we wouldn't make it to the semifinals, but we ended up tying. Also, getting players to come to practices is sometimes difficult, because everyone is busy with university, but everyone put in a good effort and tried to come.

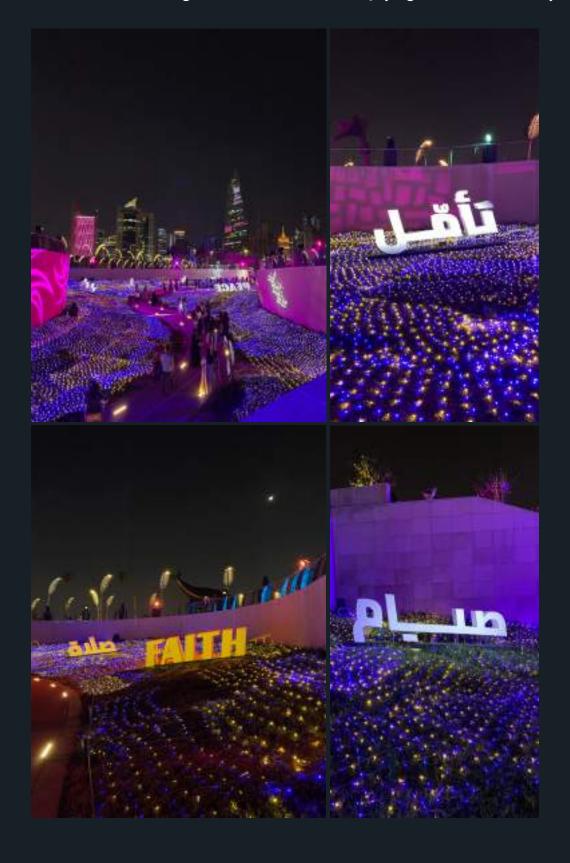


## Artseape Artseape Artseape Artscape Artseape Artseape Artscape

# Into the Lights of Ramadan

By Sara Al-Sabbagh

I captured some shots of Doha Light 23's festival, whilst enjoying Ramadan's breezy nights.



# The Light of Guidance

By Nour Ali

**Historical Context:** This particular design was the front piece of a Quran that was owned by several Islamic rulers, including the 15th-century Mamluk Sultan Qaytbay, and was later found in Damascus, Syria.

**Behind the Title:** The title of this painting, 'The Light of Guidance', is a metaphor for the Quran, on which it was originally painted. Just as a window lets light into a dark room, the Quran is like a window into the darkness of the soul, illuminating it with its divine teachings and wisdom. It is the light that guides one to become their best self and brings clarity to their spiritual journey. Through its guidance, one can discover the true purpose of life and attain a sense of inner peace and fulfillment. This painting is a tribute to the transformative power of the Quran and its ability to enlighten and inspire the human spirit.

**Personal Inspiration:** I've always been fascinated by Islamic Art. As someone who loves making art, but can not draw free-hand to save my life, I found myself drawn to this geometric type of art, where every line was ruler-straight, every angle calculated. It soothed the perfectionist in me.

#### **The Process Behind:**

This painting was created in several stages:

- 1. First, I sketched the entire design in pencil this step probably takes the longest as it requires high precision to make sure the construction lines intersect in the right places and at the right angles.
- 2. Second, I outlined the actual design using masking tape this step is hard and really makes or breaks the painting.
- 3. Third time to paint! I used metallic pearl paint, as it gave soft luminescence to the painting, kind of like a mosaic window with sunlight flowing through.
- 4. Fourth, my favorite & most satisfying step peeling the tape!
- 5. Last but not least, is the marker outline. This step is the icing on the cake, the cherry on top, as it truly brings the painting together. I chose metallic silver for this color scheme, as again it accentuated the mosaic vibe I was going for.





#### By Anonymous

surrounding him from all corners, and more a part of him than his own shadow the bird believed he was cursed from birth

his curse came in the form of nine bars of metal on top of a golden plate, a cage and this cage would determine the extent of his freedom

see the bird was free to fly in his cage, he would do backflips, glide forwards and backwards, he'd race with himself, over and over again, breaking his personal records time and time again

so the bird would try to push the boundaries of the cage, daring to be free, because he would see the world from the confines of his cage, and he would dream of the world;

and he would dream of seeing the sun, rising over the horizon, casting a shimmering pink on the skyline racing with his friends in a gleeful blur

and he would dream of seeing the moon, radiating at its fullness, illuminating the faces of his friends as they shared stories, while being warmed by the heat of a fire

and he would dream of resting on the top of the trees, standing taller than everything in his view, feeling the warmth of god's sun, while also feeling the coolness of god's wind

but these dreams were not the bird's reality, for the caged bird is by himself in this world, alone

his beautiful songs are heard by no one his longing cries are felt by no one and his ever-lasting time is shared with no one

he sees this gift of life, given to him in the form of wings and a beating heart as a curse

left helplessly to face this cage on his own, the bird looks up at his Creator and asks him; "why me?"

but the caged bird asks this question knowing the answer

he knows that his curse is no worse than the bird without his tongue or the bird without his wings his cage is his trial, and in being tested he knows that he is loved by his Creator

so the caged bird accepts his fate, and he accepts his destiny knowing that he will never fly freely



### For the single mothers out there

"With wounds deeper than ravines, and grappling with life since sixteen. Now, she was cradling a mini figurine.

Her eyes were devoid of emotion – almost serene.

Fueling on grotty caffeine, brittle like polystyrene, She was on her own team - like a bloody queen.

But her demons would disarm, every time "Mama" he would scream.

With rage whizzing through her bloodstream, She was addicted to success like nicotine. and so, she drowned her troubles in alcohol and glycine.

For never was there an in-between.

No matter how she may seem, But for her child, she was a living daydream, and to me she was a creation of *Frankenstein*."

-Eman Ansar

