THE CORNICHE

The representation of Doha's waterfront and its institutional buildings

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On the night of February 22, 1982, the Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel opened its doors to the residents of Qatar. The then ruler of Qatar, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani, and his advisors in addition to pioneering prime ministers, leaders, and respected officials of the Gulf region attended the official opening of the hotel. The ceremony was grand and broadcasted on national Qatari TV. The show host described the programmes and facilities of the hotel, including a bowling alley, health and fitness centre, multiple tennis courts, swimming pool, gift shops, restaurants, multipurpose exhibition space, and convention centre. Towards the end of the broadcast, the camera zooms out to capture an aerial view of the hotel, glistening in light on an empty land. Built on a reclaimed coastline, the hotel served to reflect the nation's progress towards independence and political autonomy from British rule. As such, the Sheraton would represent the ideal type of architecture for future planning of the waterfront, known as the Corniche.¹ The ziggurat-shaped structure, its bold terraces, and strips of punctured windows introduced progressive standards of modern architecture to Doha, the capital city of Qatar. The pre-fabricated materials and construction methods were new forms of technology, distinct from local building practices. Many residents likened the hotel to a spaceship that had slowly landed on a new reclaimed area, known as Al-Dafna (Arabic for 'the buried') district, and inaugurated the development of the Corniche.² One observer was Sophia Al-Maria, the American-Qatari artist and filmmaker, who narrated an account wherein the hotel as a "mothership", a "herald of the future and a promise to the past", in her dystopian fictional memoir.³ In the novel *The Girl Who Fell to Earth*, Al-Maria portrays the Sheraton as a luxurious monument that represents the onset of Doha's modernization period. These two different modes of documentation, the televised and the fictional, reflect the ways in which the Sheraton was a microcosm of Doha as a modernist city emerging in the 1970s. Throughout the late twentieth century, the state of Qatar was committed to the modernization of the Corniche that accompanied the construction of the Sheraton.⁴

The Corniche is a man-made semi-circular road and promenade that connects the city's port to today's Al-Dafna business district. Signalling the start of the Corniche, the port on the south was once a site for customs exchange and for facilitating the flow of goods, information, and knowledge.⁵ Rectangular settlements and cement buildings marked the land behind the port, which served to embody the old part of the city. After Qatar gained independence in 1971, the newly founded state would draw on architectural, infrastructural, and urban projects to establish itself as a nation. The Corniche would be the ideal site for such large-scale investment and for the state to use the aesthetics of modernism to display power. The state's intentional choice to place modern institutional buildings along the waterfront, not in

the historic part of the city, elevated the architectural status of the newly established, central, administrative state as modern, independent, and physically disconnected from the city's old urban fabric. The waterfront promenade and road became characterized by state-funded projects, geared towards modernization of the city's infrastructure, housing, and public services.⁶ In this chapter, I focus on the making of Doha's Corniche and the processes behind the modern state-institutional buildings – the Sheraton hotel, the Ministry Complex, and the Museum of Islamic Arts – that marked the waterfront's architecture landscape. Against an urban examination of the undertaken strategies to define the modern architecture along the Corniche, I trace how the built environment was integral to political ambitions and nation-building. To do so, I use archival material, official documents produced by the Ministry of Urban Planning, sketches, and realized or unrealized proposals for the waterfront. Such study serves as a reflection of the complex relations between the governments, local consultants, and agencies building the image of the nation. Whereas the existence of a nation requires geographical boundaries and borders, it is crucial to situate the nation as a set of ideas, processes, and power relations in my analysis and to identify how architecture was an essential medium in the production of the nation and its architectural landscape. With that goal, I situate the reclamation project as at once a nationalist and a futuristic endeavour, one that endured the city's incongruous development.

The burgeoning discourse examining urban planning in Doha may provide a comprehensive overview of contemporary as well as historical analysis of the city's intensive urbanization. These studies mainly explore the evolution of the capital city from a fishing village to a prime regional and international hub. They are predominantly about the oil economy and consist of narratives on the oil industry that mobilized the spatial transformation of Doha; they often map the transition of the city's urban infrastructure from a pre-oil settlement to a post-oil global city. Described as “an emerging regional metropolis” by Ashraf Salama and Florian Weidmann, Doha is a city depicted as an important global capital capable of positioning and reinventing itself on the map of international architecture and urbanism.⁷ In *Demystifying Doha*, the authors meticulously document and analyse, on the one hand, the city's models of urban governance and, on the other, the effects of place-making strategies and branding mechanisms as by-products of the global condition: they provide a unique, inclusive overview of the city's architecture and urban transformation. In addition, scholar Khaled Adham draws an interconnected relationship between the city's economic transformation and its emerging urban scenes across three different eras. The first one is centred on the pearling industry, territorial disputes, and implications of British geopolitics to curb colonial interests in the region in the 1930s.

Adham emphasizes that two interrelated socio-economics forces, tribal affiliation and the pearling industry, influence urban structure during the early decades of the twentieth century.⁸ The second era covers the modernization of the city and its transition from a British protectorate to an independent nation-state and from a pearl- to an oil-based economy. In the third and last era, from the 1990s to the present, Adham states that the sea was treated as a commodity space captured by an increasing, global, real estate market. For any urban scholar examining the transformation of Doha, the Corniche is an important site of inquiry. The reclaimed land has been the locus for the articulation of social, spatial, and symbolic structures across different stages of the city's growth and remains an important site for the state until today.

Contributing to this rich literature on Doha's urbanism, my analysis of the Corniche registers the processes behind the waterfront's urban governance as a way to map the past and future pathways of the Corniche's urbanism. My contribution to the architecture and urban discourse is focused on the figures involved and the mediums used in the spatial articulation of the Corniche. In what proceeds, this chapter is divided in three sections, focusing on the myriad of architecture along the Corniche and the negotiations behind the built landscape. Each built structure reveals a particular narrative about the dynamic interaction between certain figures and local agencies. Taken together, they illustrate the numerous strategies embedded in personal invitations, design briefs, and international competitions, launched by officials in the government to build the city's future.

Reclaimed land and local agencies

The formation of a central government and administrative system led by Sheikh Khalifa, coupled with the onset of the oil industry, catalysed the city's architectural transformation starting in the early 1970s. The introduction of a centralized administration signified a shift in Doha's urban fabric.⁹ As the Sheikh stepped in as ruler, a formal institutional environment was enshrined, and the responsibility for urban planning was distributed among specialized branches of the growing bureaucracy. Annual British reports on Qatar discuss the improvements in the structure of the government in the early 1950s, stating that a comprehensive government system was formed in the mid-1970s.¹⁰ There thus emerged mainly two ministries tasked to administer Qatar's urbanization: the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture and the Ministry of Public Works. Both were responsible to build the image of Doha as the "Modern City Centre".¹¹ In the article "Dressing up Downtown: Urban Development and Government Public image in Qatar", Sharon Naggy indicates that urban interventions and proposals for the Corniche would be one of the many consequences of the state's bureaucratization procedure and discovery

Hisham Qaddumi at the Amiri Diwan, 1976 (Courtesy of Hisham Qaddumi.
Source: Atlas Bookstore. Reuse not permitted).

fig.1

of oil. She provides a critical account of the ideologies and technologies recommended by foreign consultants and demonstrates how they transformed existing local infrastructures. Such drastic urban reformations were not fully embraced by government officials; one official criticized this form of urbanism, stating that “we have caught all of [your] Western social ills”.¹² However, the procedure involved far more than consulting foreign architectural and urban firms. When the Amiri Diwan (the state’s governmental house) would step in to take charge of a particular high-profile project, relations within and between the different ministries were complicated, especially in the case of the Corniche: the project of conjuring land from the sea was executed by the Amiri Diwan throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

The development of Doha’s Corniche was coordinated through a network of ministries, local figures, foreign architects, and urban planners – all working together. There was a dedicated urban planning office at the Amiri Diwan, mainly responsible for the development of major urban schemes. Hisham Qaddumi, the president and founder of the architecture consultancy Arab Architects in Jordan, ● was appointed as the planning and development advisor at the Amiri Diwan and the director of the Diwan’s technical office in Qatar. While working with the government from 1974 to 1987, Qaddumi was not only responsible for supervising

fig.1

fig.2

The former Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Khalifa, looking at an elevation drawing of the hotel, n.d. (Source: Ministry of Public Works, Qatar. Reuse not permitted).

the design and construction management of projects along the Corniche, but he was also a key figure in developing national and regional plans for Doha as well as defining necessary strategies. For instance, as he held graduate degrees in economics and in architectural engineering from the University of Texas, he was involved in producing, reviewing, and evaluating the national budget for the city's urban development. In an interview during the 2014 Global Art Forum in Dubai, Qaddumi spoke about his fascination with William Pereira's work while studying architecture in Texas.¹³ He describes coming across the American architect's photo on the cover of *Time*, accompanied with the September 6, 1963, article title "Vistas for the Future" on the left side of the cover, while he was working at the Amiri Diwan. Qaddumi remembers calling the

firm based in California in 1975 right after reading the *Time* article and commissioned Pereira to design the planned Sheraton. He indicates that two weeks after the phone call Pereira arrived in Doha. The American architect was enthralled by the size of the city, in particular the undeveloped part that would be later known as New Doha, consisting of the Corniche and Al-Dafna districts. Sheikh Khalifa had a clear vision of the Corniche as an important site to build the city's new infrastructure, and Qaddumi was entrusted with a role to execute the vision. The planning office run by him overrode the jurisdiction of any other ministries involved in planning the Corniche, gaining full control and supervision of the development of the Corniche.

Subsequently, the local planner, the foreign architect, and the government engaged in a series of epistolary exchanges, outlining that the architectural proposal was to be initially designed by Pereira, supervised by Qaddumi, and then approved by the government. According to Qaddumi, Pereira was neither an influential architect nor a leading pioneer of the modernist movement; nevertheless, he was a prolific architect who produced over 400 projects during his lifetime.¹⁴ William Pereira and Associates had in 1976 designed a training facility in Iran and would later design the Baghdad International Airport in 1978. In addition, Pereira's architectural practice had a bland connection with the modernist narrative; his pioneering futurist visions, reflecting his synergetic design, appealed to the Jordanian architect. When the American architect came to Doha in 1975, Qaddumi referred to Pereira as a young architect eager to be part of building the image of a new nation. His contribution would be of excitement, confidence, and change. Pereira shared his unrestrained enthusiasm with Sheikh Khalifa as he would partake in attuning to the visions of the urban planners and architects; ● Qaddumi was equally excited because Pereira was "simply rooted in the modernist movement".¹⁵ Both would draw future plans for Doha starting from the Corniche, which would be the main backbone connecting different parts of the city together. This period in Doha's urban planning was marked by optimism and determination, reflecting the patron's willingness and determination to develop the architecture of the waterfront promenade. The government's direct interference in the Corniche's public sphere was crucial since the reclamation project was not subject to the same financial and bureaucratic limitations as other sites.

In 1976, the main focus in the urban planning of Doha was the reclamation project that began from the northwest of the city, the site of the new Sheraton. ● The deep water was dredged, and the total project area covered 2,000 hectares. In planning the execution of the project, Pereira indicated that the newly constructed and engineered "city edge" would be the "defined interface between the land and the sea", one that would "not [be] ambiguous".¹⁶ To execute this vision, Qaddumi and Pereira

fig.2

fig.3

fig.3 Shaping Doha Bay, 1976 (Courtesy of Hisham Qaddumi. Source: Atlas Bookstore. Reuse not permitted).

took long walks along the Corniche and discussed how to plan the waterfront border. They conversed about the genesis of the Corniche and its uses for the future, speculating on what type of public space would attract the citizens and residents of Qatar and what the private use of the reclaimed land would be like. Qaddumi alluded to the body of water as the “generator” and any other institutional buildings as “magnets”.¹⁷ He outlined three objectives to develop the Corniche. The first objective was to distil the nearby water from any impurities. The second was to complete the semicircular sweep of the Corniche. The last aim was to increase the availability of lands at a reasonable price to accommodate different ‘magnets’ along with the ‘generator’. Both Qaddumi and Pereira drafted over 40 different sketches of the Corniche. In these sketches, Pereira proposed to position the Sheraton at the southern end of the Corniche and a national university around the northern outskirts of the city, a location intended to encourage the future growth of the city. Pereira proposed a potential location for another important landmark to be built. The location would be in front of the port at the southern end of the road, and he suggested to design two grand buildings, marking the start and end of the waterfront promenade and road. Evident in the sketches, there were many propositions for the future growth of the Corniche and visions of how the reclamation project could act as a gateway for

William Pereira, concept diagrams for the Corniche, n.d.
(Courtesy of Johnson Fain, Los Angeles. Reuse not permitted).

fig.4

the city's future development and circulation.¹⁸ The Corniche road would consist of five consecutive roundabouts: each would connect to the neighbourhood surrounding the bay and would extend to potential developments on the outskirts of the city.

The Corniche underwent intense urbanization and represented the materialization of the nation. The project would also showcase advanced mobility in the city. The goal was to create a road linked to the movement of the city: of people, of goods and cargo moving from and to the port, and of the circulation between neighbourhoods. Both architects agreed that the transformation of the waterfront was linked to the representation of the city as consisting of and functioning through the Corniche's networks of circulatory systems.¹⁹ ● In addition, another objective was to populate the road with a series of 'magnets' and form a Ministry Complex. Across different stages of design and development, Qaddumi would work towards achieving these two goals. He was a key figure in coordinating the planning of the Corniche as he would mediate between the ruler's vision to establish the physical infrastructure for the independent nation and the architect's practices affiliated with modernism. As such, a reading of the dialogues behind the construction of the Corniche highlights the role of local actors in mobilizing the waterfront's development, often overshadowed by the attention casted on the urban transformation of the city from barren land to a modern one. ●

fig.4

fig.5

The hotel and ministry complex

The development of the Corniche was isolated yet also crucially connected to the rest of the city. The Corniche became a place of site of experimentation and architectural invention, distinct from the rest of the city. Whereas William Pereira was the

main urban planner of the Corniche and the newly reclaimed area, other urban planners were later invited to develop other parts of Doha.²⁰ Unlike other neighbourhoods, the Corniche would consist of megaprojects, such as ministries and government branches, which would reflect the state's political and economic investment in modern architecture. The hope was that these modern state institutions would change the perception of the city as well as afford it global status. Hence, the urban position, programmes, and function of the buildings as well as the architectural motifs and visual language were critical strategies considered by the technical planning office when they articulated the design brief for the government's physical infrastructure. For instance, the position of the buildings forming the Ministry Complex and the governmental palace would be parallel to the arc of the Corniche at a straight angle; the Sheraton was to be built on a distinct man-made island, strategically designed to accommodate the hotel's exterior programmes and landscape design. According to Qaddumi, the position of these ministries in relation to the hotel was carefully planned by him and Pereira.²¹ The ziggurat shape, in this context, and the building's unprecedented shape and scale would contrast strikingly with the uniform line of the rest of the governmental buildings, forming a visual backdrop to the Sheraton. The construction of the hotel took more than five years, due partly to the introduction of pre-fabricated concrete panels and steel structures. The interior of the Sheraton was a space of modern luxury; the spacious grand atrium was identified by many locals and residents as 'the majlis' as it functioned as a social gathering space. Qaddumi would speak highly of the hotel as the emblem of the Corniche, using the analogy of the Sheraton as a spaceship that inaugurated the rapid modernization and growth of the Corniche.

At the same time the Sheraton was under construction, a brief for the Ministry Complex was distributed to many international architects already visiting the Gulf and designing projects for these newly independent nations. The content of these briefs stressed the importance of designing institutional/governmental branches with a modern, formal language. From there, Qaddumi would direct the architects about the scope of these projects, the given opportunities, and the limitations, emphasizing the maintenance of a specific cultural element to drive the design concept. In Hisham Qaddumi's personal archive, many submitted proposals for the Corniche visualize the Ministry Complex differently and engage in various ways with modern aesthetics. For instance, in October 1976, Kenzo Tange presented a proposal for the Ministry Complex to the technical office of the Amiri Diwan. In his proposal, Tange accommodated the various operations and functions of the ministries in a logical and systematic manner by consulting with each ministry representative about the ministry's main operations. He intended on forming "an inter-ministerial and

fig.5

Master plan by William Pereira showing north district of Doha, n.d.
(Courtesy of Johnson Fain, Los Angeles. Reuse not permitted).

intra-ministerial function to help identify the respective needs and requirements” and on generating a “well trailed program”.²² Therefore, the resolution for the Ministry Complex design was dependent on adapting a modular system along with a series of plazas and enclosed pedestrian walkways in conjunction with the inter-ministry complex. Such design would be flexible; it would accommodate any unaccounted facilities as well as any potential reorganization and extensions according to future demands. Studying the relationship between each ministry and the Amiri Diwan, Tange was way highly critical of the significance of the Corniche as “the ceremonial boulevard serving the Government Centre”.²³

However, the state did not have enough funds to execute the construction of Tange’s ambitious proposal. Instead, the Ministry Complex was built by a wide range of international architects whom Qaddumi invited, reflecting how architecture had become a vehicle for the application of Qatar’s state sovereignty. The Ministry of Finance was designed by Kenzo Tange while the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and the National Theatre were designed by Triad Cico. The post office, a building that embodies the essence of Doha’s global communication network, was designed by Twist Whitley Architects and ComConsult. The four sides of the tapered roofs are carried by a semi-monocoque series, mimicking the traditional means of delivering messages. Moreover, two housing structures by George Candilis, one at the Corniche and the other one at Umm Said north of Doha, were designed to accommodate 216 international staff persons. The social housing at Umm Said is still present whereas the second one behind the post office was demolished in 2003. Qaddumi indicated that social housing at the Corniche was “very problematic” since the modular design was a hasty response to accommodate the increasing government staff and the influx of immigrants.²⁴

Here, I want to highlight that the ministries of the Ministry Complex are not only representative of the modernization project but also stand until today as important landmarks and artefacts. Naggy indicated these buildings consolidated the public’s appreciation towards the government’s investment in this form of architecture, stating that “the public overwhelmingly applauds the Diwan’s role in ‘preserving a Gulf architecture’”.²⁵ In addition, the aim behind the intentional preservation of these modernist buildings, as Trinidad Rico sets forth in her overview of preservation practices across different parts of Doha, does not align with dominant policies of preservation that consider materiality and cultural values. ▲ Instead, the survival of these buildings reflects ‘informal ways’ for keeping a certain visual language and preservation practice.²⁶ They, in addition, promote certain powerful narratives about nationalist agendas to maintain grand institutional projects. On

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that account, encountering the architecture of these government branches is not about encountering certain aesthetics and affiliated designers. These buildings also set the groundwork for the spatial infrastructure of the current and upcoming generations of the nation's architecture. The landscape of the waterfront promenade is now populated by a series of governmental buildings contrasting against the background of the city's incongruous commercial and business towers located in West Bay.

The museum

The bloodless coup and the change of Emir in 1995, coupled with the reorientation of Qatar's economy towards expanding its economic tier, led the state to invest over \$130 billion dollars in the city's architecture. Adham states that these changes mark a turn in the urban growth of Doha, concurrent with many political and economic transformations in the 1990s.²⁷ Malls, skyscrapers, gated residential communities, iconic museums, and the new stadium and sports facilities represent the urban and real estate explosion. These emerging urban scenes and their "phantasmagorical architectural forms", as described by Adham, were fulfilling Doha's visions to be a global city – museums in the Gulf region, in particular, played a strong role in the creation of a public sphere and in marking an entry to the global stage.²⁸ To accommodate these new ideals, the Corniche still visibly remained as a site for expansion and investment in architecture and the image of the nation. It would set the context for these emerging architectural forms as the Corniche presented itself with a rich history and multiple narratives.

In 1997, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture announced an architectural competition to design a Museum for Islamic Arts, on the side opposite the Sheraton, in coordination with the urban planning ministry. At that time, the main architectural features of the Corniche's landscape were the Sheraton, the state ministries, and a social housing structure by George Candilis accompanied by a few commercial buildings and future proposals. One of these future projects was the Tower of Doha by Pereira, to be built at the southern edge of the Corniche. The building's terraced landscape would seep into the edges of the sea; the main circulation core would act as a supporting system for the suspended volume, holding programmes such as an observation deck, a plant conservatory, restaurant, and a museum. Another was the Qatar National Library, proposed by Arata Isozaki to be built by the end of the twentieth century, characterized by the suspended terraced slabs and three supporting piers. The library would be the second-largest building on the Corniche because of its unprecedented form and height. Next to the library would be another two eminent projects: the first one was a theatre space by Isozaki with a prominent prismatic sphere floating above ground, the second by Zaha Hadid who

proposed a design for an exhibition space.²⁹ Even though these projects were unrealized due to the lack of state funding and the decrease of oil production in the early 1990s, these proposals do not only showcase the different visions for the Corniche but also reveal the different stages of the Corniche's development at the nexus of nation-building and architectural invention. Most importantly, these unrealized projects were conceived as part of the Corniche's built landscape, which the assigned architect had to acknowledge and respond to as part of the exiting spatial environment and infrastructure.

The six finalists were Richard Rogers, James Wines, Zaha Hadid, Rasem Badran, Oriol Bohigas, and Charles Correa.³⁰ At the end, the jury selected Charles Correa and Rasem Badran as the finalists, choosing Badran as the final winner of the competition. His design focused on creating a dialogue between the citizens, city, and museum. Badran's concept was centred on certain principles of Islamic architecture. For instance, each mass was oriented around a courtyard, while both, the courtyard and the mass, were covered with a structural skeleton and wood panels, recalling older parts of the city. However, Badran's project did not move forward; Luis Monreal, general manager of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Geneva, who was part of the original jury of the competition, later persuaded the Emir that I. M. Pei would be a good fit to design the museum.³¹ Moreover, the Museum of Islamic Arts would hold more programmes than originally planned, for the Emir wanted to establish a cultural and education centre in conjunction with the museum. The change of the architect and brief reflects how ongoing discussions between the ruler and officials can unforeseeably dictate the physical structure of the Corniche.

Concerned by future projects overshadowing the museum, the Chinese-American architect changed the location from territorial to reclaimed land 60 metres from the shore, at the southern end of the Corniche. Similar to the hotel's site, the position of the museum was physically isolated on a man-made island so that the building would be visible against the city's skyline. The formal composition of the museum was inspired by the eminent Mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo, misplacing one culture and reconnecting with another one. This form of cultural displacement contributes to the homogeneity of Islamic architecture; it serves as a "principal unifier" that legitimizes the museum as the premier vessel of Islamic art and artefact.³² This was in favour of the architect as his intention for the design was to embrace different cultural narratives.³³ The conceptual design of the museum would, nonetheless, align with the new regional development conditions that consolidated the city in an international network based on personal interests. Moreover, the landscape of the museum mimics the semicircular shape of the Corniche and acts as an extension to the Corniche's promenade. Writ large, the museum serves as

another critical landmark contributing to the waterfront's modern institutional buildings. The overall transformation of the Corniche is rooted in accumulated strategies and projects led by figures within Qatar's governance and leadership. The Corniche landscape was built by representatives of different architectural styles, symbolic actors invited by certain figures, representing the capital city as an international hub comprised of different values, cultures, narratives, and identities.

Corniche's future pathways

The Corniche is a place of layered historical imaginaries and visions. It's a place of an idealized past and possible future. To analyze the Corniche is to reveal a history rich with stories, concepts, and aspirations. This narrative of the hotel, Ministry Complex, and museum dominating the landscape of the Corniche aims to contribute to the existing literature about Doha's urbanism and to expand the tools used for these studies. Architecture and urban discourse are multifaceted and can be enriched with personal anecdotes, design briefs, forgotten proposals, or competition entries. Such narratives and tools can promote the exchange of ideas and values between different actors as well as reveal the mediums essential in building Doha's Corniche.

In this chapter, I highlighted the practices and strategies behind the Corniche's built landscape. In foregrounding the historical context of the government's structure and ways of executing projects, the present development of the Corniche is apparent. The Corniche would be constantly revisited and replanned by other architects, urban planners, and designers. Their proposals would be driven by government and private investment. In 2003, another competition by the same Aga Khan board was launched in coordination with the government. The aim of the competition was to design a new multipurpose venue, the International Arts and Culture Centre, emphasizing an innovative landscape design for the promenade of the Corniche. The brief stressed the importance of the institutional buildings that hold a prestigious place in Doha's modernist landscape. The finalists were Kamel Louafi, Martha Schwartz Partners, Patrick Berger, Jean Nouvel, and Zaha Hadid. However, a final winner was not selected, and the project remains unrealized. These competition entries are, arguably, an epitome of the dynamic ways in which the urban planning and architecture of the Corniche grow and transform according to different visions, institutional figures, and political ambitions.

As previously noted, the investment in the waterfront's architecture can shift according to capital concentration and power relations. The Corniche was once empty land occupied by few cement buildings eventually demolished and replaced by new, modern, and potentially 'Gulf' architecture that reflects the agency and role of the Diwan office in articulating Doha's waterfront. The

constellation of the Corniche's institutional buildings signposts a corresponding history between the visions of the government and the purpose of these modern buildings, a relationship important for future developments. As the Corniche is becoming progressively characterized by commercial and real estate projects, the modern buildings linger as the skeleton of the waterfront's built environment. The spatial infrastructure of the Corniche remains as it is, and these buildings' persistent existence sets the stage for further growth. The Sheraton, Ministry Complex, and Museum of Islamic Art are symbolic representations of progress as well as political and economic independence. They form a body that endures through time and into the future: these buildings are inscribed in a vehicle of political aspiration that mediates between a forged past and potential futures. They captured the Corniche's form of future that the city would long live with.

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Notes

- 1 See Sharon Nagy, "Dressing up Downtown: Urban Development and Government Public Image in Qatar", *City and Society* 12, no. 1 (2008): 125–147; Khaled Adham, "Rediscovering the Island: Doha's Urbanity from Pearls to Spectacle", in *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity and Urban Development*, ed. Yasser Elsheshtawy (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 218–257.
- 2 Amongst those who identify the hotel as a spaceship are Sophia Al-Maria, author of the fictional novel *The Girl Who Fell to Earth*, and Hisham Qaddumi.
- 3 For more on the description of the Sheraton Hotel, see Sophia Al Maria, *The Girl Who Fell to Earth: A Memoir* (London: Harper Perennial, 2012).
- 4 Nagy, "Dressing up Downtown", 125.
- 5 Mehran Kamrava, ed., *Gateways to the World: Port Cities in the Persian Gulf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3.
- 6 Adham, "Rediscovering the Island", 228.
- 7 Ashraf Salama, and Florian Wiedmann, *Demystifying Doha: On Architecture and Urbanism in an Emerging City* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 1–5.
- 8 Kaltham Al-Ghanim, *Al-mogtama' al-Qatari men al-ghawss ila al-tahadour* (Doha: Dar Al-Sharq, 1997), 222.
- 9 Florian Weidman, Ashraf Salama, and Alain Theirsteins, "Urban Evolution of the City of Doha", *Metu Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* 29, no. 2, (2012): 46.
- 10 Nagy, "Dressing up Downtown", 128–129.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 "Global Art Forum 8: 1972–82: Spaceship Sheraton and the Making of Doha's Masterplan", Art Dubai conference with Hans Ulrich Olbrist, Shumon Basar, Hisham Qaddumi, Sophia Al-Maria, May 8, 2014, accessed March 25, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OG4QdVR8JWc>.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 William Pereira Associates, *New Doha Planning Studies: Project Book* (Los Angeles, 1975), 3.
- 17 "Spaceship Sheraton and the Making of Doha's Masterplan."
- 18 William Pereira Associates, *New Doha Planning Studies*, 14.
- 19 "Spaceship Sheraton and the Making of Doha's Masterplan".
- 20 For instance, Qaddumi hired the British-based firm Llewelyn Davis from 1975 to 1977, which conducted several statistical studies and estimated the increase of population in the upcoming years. The firm proposed changing the urban layout of the city by adding a series of consecutive roundabouts. He later commissioned the Lebanese firm Dar Al-Handasah and design consultancy firm Shankland Cox in the late 1970s.
- 21 These comments were made by Hisham Qaddumi in the *Modern Qatar: Architecture & Planning* public talk at Museum of Islamic Art on 31st of March, 2018.
- 22 Office of the Emir, *Master Plan for Government Centre* by Kenzo Tange (Doha: September 1977), 40–41.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 "Spaceship Sheraton and the Making of Doha's Masterplan".
- 25 Nagy, "Dressing up Downtown", 142.
- 26 See Trinidad Rico, "Modernism in Qatar: Survival through Reuse", chapter 12 in this volume.
- 27 Adham, "Rediscovering the Island", 237.
- 28 For more on the museum bloom in the Gulf linked to global developments, see Sonja Atassi and John Schwartz, eds., "Introduction: Challenges and Directions in an Emerging Field of Research", in *Archives, Museum and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 1–33.
- 29 This set of proposals was on display in the *Making Doha* exhibition at the Qatar National Museum, which was curated by Fatma Al Sehlawi, Samir Bantal and Rem Koolhaas. The exhibition was on view from March 28 through August 30, 2019.
- 30 "International Competition for the Museum of Islamic Arts Doha, Qatar", *Medina Magazine*, April–June 1998, 104–111.
- 31 Oliver Watson, *Museum of Islamic Art: Doha, Qatar* (London: Prestel Publishing Ltd, 2008), 25.
- 32 Amale Andraos, "The Arab City in Representation", in *The Arab City: Architecture and Representation*, ed. Amale Andraos and Nora Akawi (New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2016), 15.
- 33 Watson, *Museum of Islamic Art*, 18.