Convivial Futures
Public Programme

An exhibition at Qatar Preparatory School (QPS)
and the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ)

Archipelagoes
عوالم من ماضٍ

Interconnected oases, like islands
واحات مترابطة، وكذلك جزر
can be modes and models
يمكن أن تكون أنماطًا ونماذج

# of Future-Pasts
مستقبل:

for constructing
livable futures
لبناء مستقبل صالح للعيش

Doha, Qatar
November 2025

متحف قطر الوطني
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF QATAR
أمة التطور
Evolution Nation

Archipelagos Of Future-Pasts

Archipelagic thinking offers an alternative to singular master plans. It suggests distributed constellations of resilience: multiple, situated, relational futures composed of interconnected nodes. Oases, like islands, offer perspective for how we think about the future.

To be convivial toward the future is not to design crisis, but to treat the future as something we design-with rather than design-over. Future-pasts persist in fragments: water-sharing agreements, seasonal mobility, distributed land use, communal governance, and seeds lying dormant for decades awaiting rain. The countryside need not be abandoned nor intensified beyond recognition. It can be reconfigured through archipelagic spatial thinking that links wetlands, mangrove corridors, aquifer basins, and cultivated patches into living systems. Technology can participate too — when aligned with reciprocity rather than enclosure.

"Dormancy is not absence. It is stored possibility."

"We need a renewal of critical, perhaps even radical, imagination."
— Bram Büscher



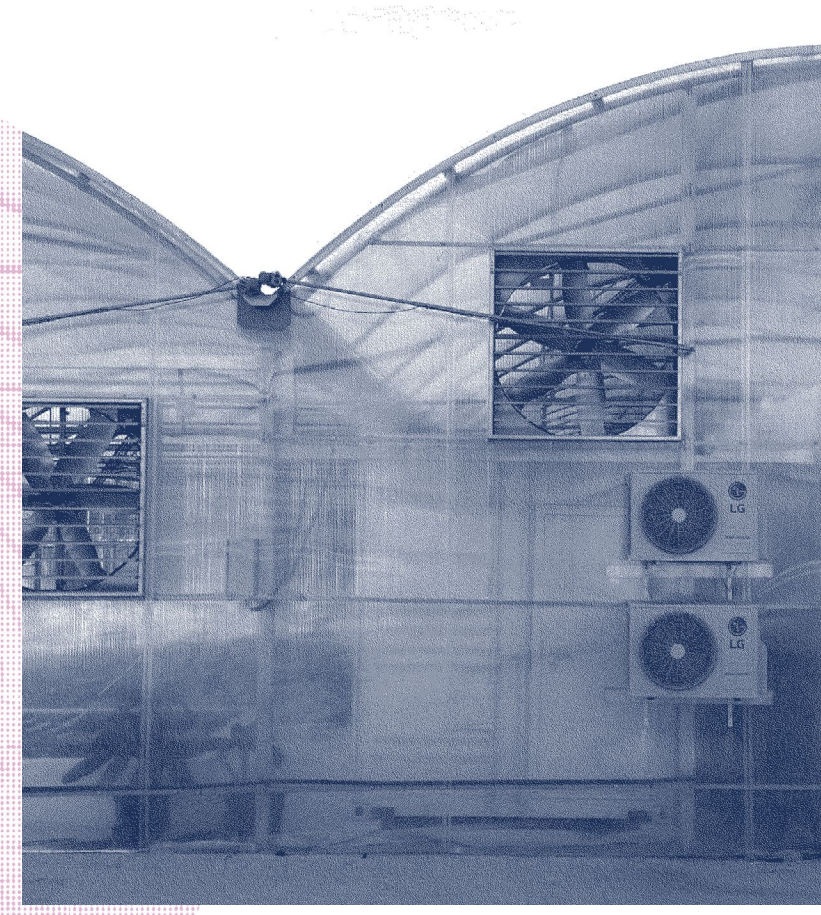
A hay shipment traveling along Salwa Road near Mukaynis, close to the Satellite Earth Station–Doha and the Markhiyat Al Darb hiking area, fodder moving through Qatar's transport corridors, linking oases of livestock and agriculture infrastructure.

The Loss of the Common Earth

Karl Widerquist reminded us that private property — often treated as natural — is historically recent. "We are led to believe that it benefits everyone... but the system we have did not develop naturally — it was imposed."

"Private property is not natural. It was imposed."
— Karl Widerquist

Before enclosure, most human societies governed land as commons: overlapping, flexible, negotiated systems of shared access and responsibility. Around 400 years ago, enclosure and colonial expansion advanced together. European elites transformed themselves from administrators of shared land into exclusive owners. Rural populations were expelled. Commons were fenced. Subsistence was severed. What was dismantled was not only access to land, but the relational webs that sustained ecological balance. Enclosure introduced a new ontology: land as commodity. Nearly half of Earth's habitable surface has been converted for human consumption. Land-use change remains the leading driver of biodiversity collapse. The countryside feeds the city, yet is metabolised in the process.



Ventilation fans and cooling systems regulate the greenhouse environment at the former Doha Boys' School, site of the Countryside: A Place to Live Not Leave exhibition installation by Hassad Foods—a microclimate where engineered airflow, shade, and irrigation sustain cultivation in both Qatar's desert conditions and Doha's urban ones.

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Qatar Oilfield Supply Centre, Al-Rayyan Industrial Area — a modest storefront within Doha's industrial supply district, providing equipment and components for oilfield engineering, pipelines, and communications systems that underpin the region's energy infrastructure.

Design as Remembrance

Dr. Safouan Azouzi reframes design not as invention, but remembrance. His grandmother asked, "Do you really need to win the Nobel Prize to talk about permaculture?" — revealing how traditional knowledge was never lost, only devalued. Colonial governance dismantled biocultural commons both materially and epistemically: traditional water-sharing systems, lineage-based land management, and seasonal rhythms were replaced by private ownership and centralised technocratic control.

"Permaculture is one way of saying 'agriculture' in a traditional oasis."
— Dr. Safouan Azouzi

Safouan critiques the paternalism of "design for the other 90%." Instead, he advocates design from lived territorial knowledge — commoning practice, not capital's turbocharger. "Designers are storytellers. We can create convergence spaces." Archipelagic thinking, drawn from Édouard Glissant, offers an alternative to mainland, centralised models. Islands are distinct yet connected; they resist hierarchy and monoculture. Oases are archipelagos too — nodes of life distributed across harsh terrain, bound by shared water and reciprocal governance.

In Tunisia's Nefzaoua region, colonial reorganisation replaced elected Water Chiefs with centralised regimes. Oases merged into a single 38,000-hectare industrial zone. The water table now drops 3–5 metres per year. Yet oases remain design models for the future: distributed, relational, adaptive.

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Design by Nur Studio: Judy Kessba & Ayşe Demirel

What emerges from the Countryside Exhibition and the Autumn 2025 Convivial Futures programme is a more intertwined view of what sustains life: reproduction as earth-care, labour as metabolism, and care as the infrastructure beneath every food system and conservation claim. Across dates and dairies, soil memory and microbial work, enclosure histories and wage dependency, the same question returned: what does the countryside reproduce — life, or extraction? The work of being alive is never only human, and never only economic.It is the shared labour of bodies, species, waters, and worlds, shaped by governance, property, metabolic processes and the technologies that modulate them. Convivial futures begin where this work is made visible and supported: where commons replace isolation, where technology deepens relation rather than domination,and where nourishment becomes a practice of remembering interdependence.

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This publication traces how conservation, commons, property, ecology, and sovereignty intersect in a time of planetary burnout — across deep-time histories that shape such conditions.

We imagine a countryside not defined by extraction or enclosure, but by relations spanning ancestral, generational, and geologic time. In November 2025, a public programme unfolded through field visits and symposia across oases, farms, springs, and historical settlements — reflecting on shared land, mobile rhythms, communal water, and multispecies coexistence.

"Pasts become design principles for living otherwise."

"Interconnected oases, like islands, can be modes and models of future-pasts for constructing livable futures."