Convivial Futures
Public Programme

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

Conviviality

التآلف

For millennia
على مدى آلاف السنين

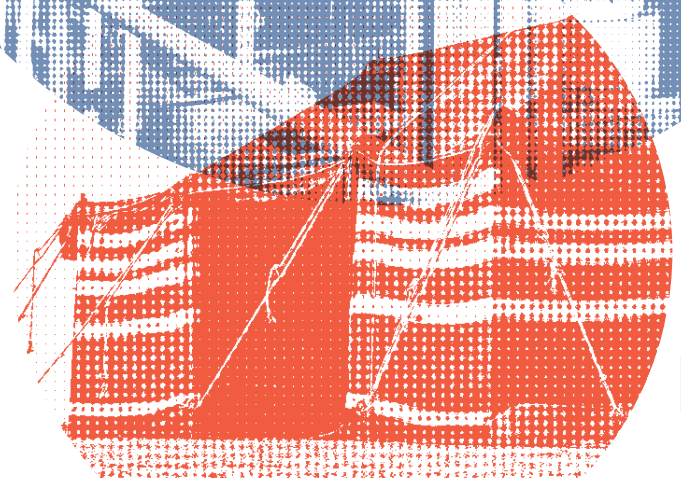
Desert dwellers survived
نجا سكان الصحراء

as living with
على التعايش مع

Uncertainty
حالة عدم اليقين

not through control
من خلال السيطرة

but through rhythm
بل من خلال الإيقاع



Doha, Qatar
November 2025

FOOD (IN)SECURITY

Countryside: A Place to Live, Not to Leave

متحف قطر الوطني
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF QATAR

50 أمة التطور
Evolution Nation

Conviviality as Living With Uncertainty

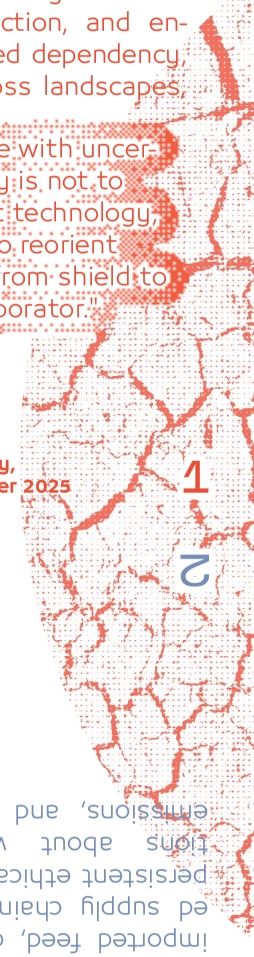
Part of a series of reflections from the November 2025 public programme for Countryside: A Place to Live Not Leave. Through symposia, excursions, tastings, and shared dialogue, "Convivial Futures" approached the countryside through Convivial Conservation — asking how just coexistence might replace logics of separation, cultivating conditions for human and more-than-human flourishing.

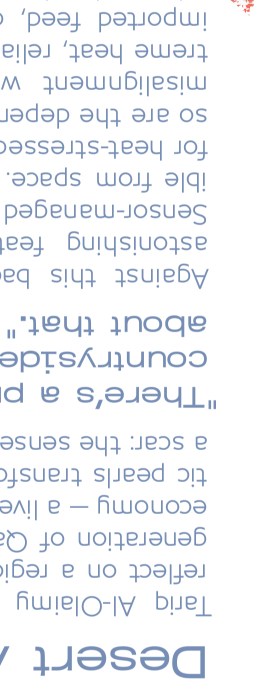
"Uncertainty is not a failure, it is part of the terrain."

In the programme, uncertainty emerges not as failure but as part of ecological systems. Desert lifeways evolve through rhythm, mobility, and attunement to heat and irregular rainfall. Modern security answers uncertainty with protection, overproduction, and enclosure. These are ingenuities that breed dependency, shifting ecological and social costs across landscapes, especially in times of crisis. To live convivially with uncertainty is not to reject technology but to reorient it toward securities that are rooted in interdependence between soil and seed, water and wind, humans and wider webs of life.

"To live with uncertainty is not to reject technology, but to reorient it — from shield to collaborator."

Countryside Reflections, on living with uncertainty, field notes from Convivial Futures, Doha, November 2025





Desert Ecologies

No being survives alone, especially in desert ecologies. The mangroves Dr. Aspa Chatziefthimiou helps regenerate stabilise coastlines and sediments; they are nurseries where marine life reproduces. Their resilience is entanglement: roots, tides, microorganisms, juvenile fish, salt, and mud exchanging energy across the land–sea threshold.

"Human security is not separate from biodiversity. It is nested inside it."

Farms reveal similar dependencies: pollinators as partners; shrubs anchoring soil; aquifers storing ancient water; microbial cultures animating soil and stomachs; seedbanks carrying ecological histories. "Soil memory" names this durability — life persisting through dormancy, waiting, cycling, regeneration. Yet modern systems respond to uncertainty by intensifying control: more cooling, more desalination, more enclosure. Technology becomes a shield rather than a collaborator; governance a fortress rather than a corridor.





A shaded pond at Torba Farm, Ash Shafallahiyah, north-central Qatar, an oasis-like micro-ecology where stone, palm canopy, and circulating water create refuge from desert heat and sustain a carefully manicured and curated agroecological landscape.

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.

With gratitude to

Qatar Museums; OMA/AMO; the Countryside 2 curatorial and coordination team; Torba Farm (Nasha, Muhammad, Fatma and the Torba staff); Mazzraty Dairy (management, engineers, guides, handlers, and herd teams); Qatar Preparatory School (QPS leadership, staff, and facilities teams); Chef Noof, Chef Jihad, John Mari, Roxanne, and the research kitchen team; the media, documentation, and logistics crews supporting all public programme events; the symposium and field-visit speakers and contributors — Aspa Chatziefthimiou; Lorato Thahane; Nitin Rai; Robert Carter; Safouan Azouzi; Karl Widerquist; Tarek Al-Olaimy — and all participants, students, attendees, volunteers, and colleagues.

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Design by Nur Studio: Judy Kessba & Ayşe Demirel



Street 967, Qatar — a thin ribbon of asphalt cutting through open desert, where scrub, sand, and sky stretch outward toward the vastness of both desert and sea.

Desert Agriculture

Tarig Al-Olaimy and ecologist Dr.Aspa Chatziefthimiou reflect on a regional inheritance of precarity. A founding generation of Qataris made their way through the pearl economy — a livelihood undone when cultured and synthetic pearls transformed global markets. Such stories leave a scar: the sense that nature-based economies are fragile.

"There's a precariousness to the countryside... we inwardly have a scar about that." — Tarig Al-Olaimy

Against this backdrop, desert agriculture becomes an astonishing feat of control. Climate-controlled barns. Sensor-managed dairies. Pivot-irrigated fodder circles visible from space. Desalinated irrigation. Cooling systems for heat-stressed livestock. The ingenuity is undeniable — so are the dependencies: high water and energy demand, misalignment with extreme heat, reliance on imported feed, disrupted supply chains, and persistent ethical questions about welfare, emissions, and waste.

"Conservation has too often been cleaning the mess behind a destructive machine." — Bram Büscher

Food Security

When nations secure food, water, energy, or materials for one place, the costs often reappear in another countryside — displaced through trade regimes, supply chains, and land markets. "Self-sufficiency" may stabilise one territory while destabilising another. During the 2017 diplomatic rift, sand was extracted from local dunes — formations shaped by geological time, woven into desert habitats. Emergency logic treated dunes as inert stockpiles; desert ecology insists otherwise. The pattern repeats through slower mechanisms: water-stressed regions export water through industrial agriculture and tourism; pollution concentrates where fertiliser is produced; land acquisition extends food-security strategies into places already facing hunger and hydrological stress. The countryside becomes a ledger where risks are hidden and redistributed.

"Resource security has geography."

"One area's safety becomes another area's insecurity."

Mazzraty Dairy Processing Factory, Al Wakrah, Qatar, part of the National Group for Agriculture and Animal Products, vertically integrated system, where automated processing, by-product recycling, and controlled production environments anchor Qatar's contemporary food-security infrastructure.