

VCUQatar's 2014 Summer Program a hit with students

Doha, Qatar – Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar's July Summer Art and Design Community Classes by noted local and international instructors, for students aged 4 and above, were a great success with the participating students.

In the three-week Design Intensive course for students aged 16 and above, they were introduced to art and design through the exploration of painting, drawing, printing, mixed media, dyeing, computer graphics and photography. Students also created individual projects related to fashion, interiors, graphics, painting & printmaking and art history, and participated in museum and gallery visits with presentations by practicing artists.

Creative Discovery, a two-week course targeting students aged 13-15, introduced them to art and design through classes in painting, drawing, illustrating, printing, and using computer graphics programs as well as creativity exercises, and group activities. Activities spread out over ten days included a visit to Anima Gallery, group challenges, mounting of work for the exhibition.

This summer, for the second consecutive year, VCUQatar offered opportunities for younger students, hosting week-long classes – two Art Exploration classes: 'Aboriginal Arts' for 9 to 10 year olds and 'Distorted Portraits' for 11 to 12 year olds; and two Art Fun classes for students aged four to five (Jungle Art Exploration) and six to eight (In the Jungle).

'Jungle Art Exploration' activities spread out over five days included making life sized portraits of self as jungle explorers, printing exotic birds, exploring the mammals of the jungle in mask making, creating Kandinsky-inspired collage trees, and discovering and reproducing patterns from the jungle to conclude with collectively assembling a jungle giant from recycled materials, constructing a selection of reptiles and printing with sandpaper. The 'In the Jungle' class similarly drew their inspiration from artist Henri Rousseau's work with the young students constructing a final jungle picture, writing stories and presenting their work.

In the 'Aboriginal Art' class, students worked on dot painting techniques, meanings behind "dreamtime" stories, and wrote their own dreamtime stories using the symbols from Aboriginal Art work. They also designed printing tiles using their stories and printed and completed an Aboriginal inspired piece of artwork collage. In the 'Distorted Portraits' class, students were introduced to portraiture, creating self-portraits using mirrors and photographs, and also studying the work of Edvard Munch's *The Scream*, and Gargoyles to make clay portraits in relief using slab-building techniques and 3D distorted portraits using pinch pots. They also decorated clay, adding texture and color, writing descriptions about their characters and presented and mounted their work.

97 students – 43 Qatari and 54 expatriate – participated in the classes and received certificates while also showcasing their work in an exhibition open to family and friends. Current secondary educator and previous VCU art educator Jan Johnston, Associate Professor of Art Education at VCU Richmond Dr. Melanie Buffington and Community Art Class lecturer Verity Watkins taught the various programs with the assistance of VCUQatar students and alumni.

Design Intensive class instructor, Johnston said: “I find working with the students in the Design Intensive course very rewarding. The course structure encourages participants with diverse arts backgrounds to work together, try new techniques and share ideas. There was a good energy level, even during Ramadan, and I am always excited to see their final projects.”

Meriem Aiouna, a student assistant said: “I had the chance to work with Melanie and Jan and I learned a lot from their teaching techniques and new art perspectives. I was also privileged to be an assistant for two different classes: design intensive and creative discovery. In those classes I was able to see how the students’ creativity changed and how they had such different perspectives despite small age differences. It was a great experience and it just made want to enhance my art skills and creativity and to inspire.”

Certificates were handed to the students of all the programs in the presence of faculty, alumni, students and their families at the end of the course. The next set of Community Classes and Portfolio Development Classes will start in October 2014. Details will be available on the VCUQatar website www.qatar.vcu.edu.

Note to Editors:

About Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar:

VCUQatar is the Qatar campus of the prestigious Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Richmond, Virginia. Established in 1998 through a partnership with Qatar Foundation, VCUQatar offers students the opportunity to earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in fashion design, graphic design, interior design and painting & printmaking, a Bachelor of Arts degree in art history and a Master of Fine Arts degree in design.

Through all its programs, research projects and community activities, VCUQatar continues toward its vision of a Qatari society that innovates through art and design. In addition to a comprehensive annual public events program that includes a wide range of exhibitions, lectures and fashion events, the University hosts the biennial international design conference Tasmeeem and the biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Islamic Art Symposium, attracting globally recognized designers, academics and thinkers while fostering sustainable, university-community partnerships that enhance the educational, economic and cultural vitality of Qatar. For more information please visit www.qatar.vcu.edu

Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organization that is supporting Qatar on its journey from carbon economy to knowledge economy by unlocking human potential, for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. Founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir, QF is chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

QF’s work encompasses education, research and community development. World-class universities are brought to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy. At the same time, QF builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing and commercializing solutions

through key sciences. The Foundation also works to foster a progressive society while enhancing cultural life, protecting Qatar's heritage and addressing immediate social needs in the community. For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>

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