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**Tasmeem Doha 2015: 3ajeeb! Concludes On A High Note With Filmmaker And Social Media Phenomenon Casey Neistat**

Doha, Qatar –Tasmeem Doha 3ajeeb!, the 2015 edition of the biennially-held international art and design conference, launched Sunday 8 March at Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar (VCUQatar) in partnership with Qatar Foundation (QF), and featured an exciting five days of creative workshops, presentations and performances by cutting-edge artists and designers. The event came to an end on Thursday 12 March with the Festival Day and an inspiring presentation by filmmaker and social media phenomenon, Casey Neistat.

Tasmeem Doha focused on the theme of ‘playfulness’ as expressed by the Arabizi word 3ajeeb! (ahh-jhee-b) meaning “strange in a strange way, cool in a cool way, and slightly weird in a slightly weird way.” Tasmeem Doha: 3ajeeb! brought together leading designers, artists, architects, musicians and creative thinkers. Through presentations, events and 25 different workshops, VCUQatar students, staff and guests were inspired to take part in the culture of creative innovation.

Wednesday featured the Day OFFF, curated by Barcelona-based post-digital culture festival, OFFF. A variety of speakers showcased their creative journeys; Sougwen Chung talked about the “Century of the Self(ie)” and how we have become our own alter egos by mediating our experiences through photography. Physical interaction design was presented by Jan De Coster, as he shared his unlikely path to robot-making and “raising.” Gavin Strange of Aardman Animations reminded the audience to “be the change [they] want to see” in their creative pursuits. Other speakers included Steve Simpson, award-winning illustrative designer; and Hungry Castle, a creative duo using design thinking in offbeat, unexpected ways to foster cultural impact.

Google Hangouts enabled the ‘Tokyo to Doha 3D Print Exchange’ workshop participants to interact with a class in Tokyo, learning about Japanese culture and language. ‘Face-Painted People’ was another workshop that took students Far East, this time to explore traditional face painting worn by Beijing opera performers. Students learned about the significance of color and the importance of facial expression in Chinese theatre.

Other student groups learned to work with new materials such as bamboo to build bike frames. Portable, visual storytelling was the main focus of the workshop, ‘Magic Stories

for the Wonder Box.’ ‘Touch the Sound’ taught students to connect sounds with objects, both conceptually and audibly, using a digital framework. This interactive design installation inspired the audience to consider the sensory power of objects they might typically overlook.

‘The House that knew too much’ delved into speculative design. This inquiry is not future-based, but question-based, and students proposed fictional “improvements” to familiar household appliances. They developed prototypes, such as a super-intelligent calendar that can read your current mood and reschedule your events accordingly.

The results of all workshops were showcased during Festival Day, a comprehensive, university-wide exhibition, held Thursday March 12. Visitors could test their skills on the artist mini-golf course, engage in playful performances, and purchase goods from local artists, designers and creative makers.

During the closing event, VCUQatar Dean Allyson Vanstone thanked HH Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of QF, for her inspirational, unwavering support and for enabling Tasmeeem Doha 2015: 3ajeeb!. Closing speaker Casey Neistat upheld the importance of passion, reminding all to “do what you love, not what you get paid for,” and highlighting the importance of defining success on one’s own terms in the creative world.

## Notes 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.

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](http://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 Amir, 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>*