Queen of hearts

OPING to spark empathy and deeper connection, a Bahraini designer has created a card game that encourages friends, families and strangers to discover more about each other.

Razan Al Naser, better known as Athena of @wordsfromathena on Instagram, has developed Feel the Connection — a 78-card game focussed on deepening relationships.

“With this game, I am hoping to help people connect with themselves and each other on a deeper level,” she added.

Questions are fairly straightforward, with prompts like ‘What have you learned to accept?’ while Reminders encourage players to affirm positivity into their life – Be a rainbow in someone’s life, for example.

Under the Do It category are activities to plan together with friends, like ‘baking for one another’ while a Double Dare encourages spur-of-the-moment fun actions like ‘choose someone in the group and act like you’re proposing to them’.

There are no strict rules as it is a free play game,” Razan added.

People can pick a card from any one of the categories and ask the person next to them. The game is mainly targeted at those 23 and older.

Razan designed the cards from scratch, after conducting research on relationships and connections, an interest sparked and shared through her Words from Athena Instagram account.

And to top it off, she infused an element of fun and humour into the Double Dare and Do It cards.

“I picked blue to be the main colour since it emphasises deepness, calmness and peacefulness – which is what I prioritise when building connections,” she added.

For Razan, the Feel the Connection cards will sow the seeds for a community “connecting together through a pool of diverse initiatives.”

She has lots of exciting expansions planned for the game. She also recently published The Secret Garden, an e-book that helps readers navigate the pathways to inner wisdom, self-discovery and self-reflection by unveiling the secrets of the soul’s garden.

Feel the Connection is available online and at a number of stores across Bahrain.

For more details, follow @feeltheconnection on Instagram.

COMMUNITY REPORT
By NAMAN ARORA
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ROBERT TUCKER

Hoping to spark empathy and deeper connection, a Bahraini designer has created a card game that encourages friends, families and strangers to discover more about each other.

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PASSIONATE Bahraini artists have taken to social media to showcase their Palestinian-inspired art and declare their unwavering support for the Palestinian people in light of the devastating war, writes Julia Cassano.

Israeli bombardment in Gaza has killed more than 8,300 people, including 3,457 minors, in the besieged territory, according to the Gaza health ministry. UN officials say more than 1.4 million of Gaza’s civilian population of about 2.3m have been made homeless since October 7.

The mounting death toll has drawn calls from several countries and the UN for a pause in fighting to allow more humanitarian aid to reach the enclave.

The conflict has also led to demonstrations worldwide in support of the Palestinians.

Artist Layan Raed feels the pain and has kicked off her own campaign, titled ‘Art for Palestine’, which aims to inspire Bahraini artists, raise awareness of the Palestinian cause and invoke collective change.

“I have initiated a powerful campaign through @creatives.of.bahrain (an Instagram page aiming to nurture local artists), while using the hashtag #creativityforpalestine to invoke collective change.

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“I have initiated a powerful campaign through @creatives.of.bahrain (an Instagram page aiming to nurture local artists), while using the hashtag #creativityforpalestine to invoke collective change.

“This movement encourages people to amplify their voices, stand with Palestine and utilise their creativity to support their pursuit of justice, freedom and peace.”

Layan launched her campaign by creating a mandala, featuring the map of Palestine at its core, and intricate patterns inspired by the Keffiyeh. The Keffiyeh is a chequered black and white scarf that symbolises Palestinian identity.

“This artwork serves as a powerful reminder of the Palestinian struggle and their unwavering spirit,” Layan, who has been honing her art since she was four years old, said.

“It symbolises unity, resilience and the fight for justice. It acts as a visual testament to the strength of the Palestinian people, inspiring hope and fostering a sense of solidarity among those who admire it.

“As viewers engage with the art piece, they are invited to reflect upon the complexities and richness of Palestinian heritage. Through art, we can create spaces for understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures, while also shedding light on important issues,” she said.

Expressionist artist Mai Khalid Alkakabi also shared her artwork on Instagram to raise awareness and express her views on the conflict.

“My art displays emotions through colours and objects,” Mai said.

“My subjects are mostly women as they depict so much power within themselves and their emotions.

“What is happening in Palestine is an issue everyone should educate themselves on, and as a Muslim Arab, it is my duty to speak up and stand for our Palestinian brothers and sisters.”

Mai strongly believes in the power of art as ‘it can affect people mentally and emotionally’.

“When we as artists create a work and share them, it can move people and make them more empathetic to the Palestinian cause in a beautiful way,” the 23-year-old said.

Bahraini artist icon Huda Almarzooq, 27, who has been inspiring the masses with her artwork since she was five years old said: “My paintings depict the narrative of Palestine, showing the contrast between a peaceful past and the current state of turmoil caused by the conflict.”

However, Huda feels art can help people ‘see the truth’.

“Art is a powerful tool to convey experiences, struggles and aspirations. It can serve as a form of protest, remembrance and resistance. It also transcends language and cultural barriers, fostering empathy and understanding among viewers,” she added.

According to the self-taught artist, her painting represents the strength and resilience of the Palestinian people.

“Through art, we tell a story, evoke emotions and encourage dialogue, making a powerful impact during these challenging times.”
STEP into a world of culinary wonder at Bahrain’s legendary Gulf Hotel, running every Tuesday until November 14.

As the sun sets and the stars twinkle above, Gulf Night Out comes to life with a captivating performance by the in-house Latin QBA band. Their melodies set the perfect tone for the night, while a graceful belly dancer adds a touch of magic to the ambience. The real showstopper is the Arabic musical talent of Al Rayyash Band, who create an enchanting atmosphere with their mesmerising melodies under a dazzling spotlight. And for those seeking an extra thrill, there’s the chance to win exciting prizes throughout the evening.

But let’s talk about what truly makes Gulf Night Out special – the food. The Gulf Hotel proudly boasts the highest number of food and beverage outlets within a single property on the island. At Gulf Night Out, you’ll have the opportunity to sample dishes from 17 of these esteemed restaurants and cafes, creating a culinary wonderland.

“The Gulf Hotel is deeply committed to the world of food and beverage. This commitment is evident in the fact that we have 17 F&B outlets, 10 of which are our restaurants,” Gulf Hotel’s Food and Beverage Director Sunuj Deen told GulfWeekly. “Gulf Night Out beautifully encapsulates our culinary excellence, where all these outlets collaborate to create an unforgettable evening, accompanied by exceptional entertainment.”

The Bahraini tikka and grills steal the spotlight, with their sizzling flavours and tantalising aromas. And if you’re a fan of Middle Eastern cuisine, the shawarma station is a must-visit. For a unique fusion experience, don’t miss the duck pancakes from China Garden. They offer a delightful blend of flavours that will leave you craving for more.

The culinary journey doesn’t end with savoury dishes. The dessert station, curated by the talented Executive Pastry Chef Daniel Lajoux, is a sweet adventure inspired by each of the outlets. It’s a symphony of flavours and textures that will satisfy even the most discerning sweet tooth.

“I’m incredibly proud of the culinary diversity we offer at Gulf Night Out. Every dish we serve is a culinary masterpiece, a fusion of flavours, and a celebration of Bahrain’s diverse food scene,” said The Gulf Hotel’s Executive Chef Picco Alapatt. With China Garden’s renowned Peking Duck, Sato’s delectable sushi, Margherita Mexicana’s mouthwatering tacos, and the famous Gulf Hotel barbecue showcasing the iconic Gulf Hotel tikka, Gulf Night Out is a true celebration of culinary excellence. Each restaurant is led by a regional chef, ensuring authenticity in every dish.

In terms of pricing, you have options. The regular entrance fee is BD20, and BD18 for Prestige Club members, exclusive of applicable taxes. Ladies can enjoy the night for BD15 net.

Gulf Night Out is more than just a dining event; it’s a chance to celebrate Bahrain’s rich food and beverage scene and embrace the culture that defines this beautiful island. Whether you’re planning a memorable night out with friends, a family dinner to remember, or even a unique corporate team-building event, Gulf Night Out promises an evening filled with delectable food, lively music, and an atmosphere that brings everyone together.

For further details and bookings, call 36551333.
Weaving the symbols of the past with futuristic materials, one of Bahrain’s most prolific artists is navigating the maze of the region’s heritage with his latest exhibition at the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt.

National Arts Council chairman Shaikh Rashid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa is participating in the ‘Forever is Now’ exhibition, which kicked off on Thursday and runs until November 18, at the heritage site of the Pyramids alongside 13 international artists.

Shaikh Rashid’s art installation Reality is Timeless is based on the labyrinth – a lost underground maze in southern Egypt mentioned in ancient Greek mythology.

The artist, who has had an illustrious 50-year creative career, creates “fragments of a labyrinth, relics that emerge from the ground, tilted at varying angles,” with each of the 12 pieces ranging from 200cm x 300cm x 30cm to 500cm x 200cm x 40cm. Every surface of the steel frame panels with perforated electroplated aluminium, brass and copper is covered in motifs and symbols, inspired and sourced from a 1679 work Turris Babel (The Tower of Babel) written by the Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher.

“This book, which refers to a lost underground maze in southern Egypt mentioned in ancient Greek mythology, includes a collection of drawings and virtual maps of the maze, from which the idea for the massive work expressing Egypt’s history and civilisation was born,” Shaikh Rashid explained.

In addition to the conceptualisation of the mock-up, the production of the large panels – measuring 18,000cm x 900cm in total – took four months, and the piece will return to Bahrain after the exhibition ends on November 18.

The event is organised by Art D’Egypte under the patronage of Unesco as well as Egypt’s Tourism and Antiquities ministry as well as its Foreign Affairs ministry.

“It aims to establish a dialogue between the past and the present by blending ancient archaeological heritage with contemporary art, highlighting the importance of Egypt’s ancient heritage, and being a source of inspiration, imagination, and creativity,” the organisers of the ‘Future is Now’ exhibition added.

“This year’s edition is centred on the concept of ‘play’ that will see the Giza Plateau transformed into a space of serendipity, chance and experimentation featuring interactive sculptural artworks set to invite viewers to actively engage with each installation.”

Shaikh Rashid is a well-known figure within Bahrain’s artistic scene, with his works ranging from realism to impressionism to individualism.

He painted his first piece at the age of 14 and had his first personal exhibition, when he was just 18, before heading to Brighton University in the UK to study art.

Never one to rest on his laurels, Shaikh Rashid is already working on the Crossing the Nile series of paintings, which draw inspiration from the ancient Egyptian tradition in which people would settle along the
Melodic teachings

ONE of the kingdom’s popular performers is paying homage to a great Qawwali musician and family from Pakistan as well as his late father through his first solo song.

Khalil Quraishi, one of the Hotboxgroove band leaders who is currently serving in the US Navy as operations lead for entertainment on the base in Bahrain, who goes by artist name Quraishi, will be debuting in In Your Light, featuring Ustad Azam Bakhshi on Thursday for all to enjoy.

“I want this song to be a crossover bridge between the Middle East and Pakistan, India and the subcontinent region,” Khalil told GulfWeekly.

“It will be released by the Karachi-based record label ‘A for Aleph Records’, that also boasts indie bands in the country including Takatak, Malang Party, Junaid Khan, co-VEN, Wajia Naqvi, Irfan Ali Taj, Shariq Lalani, Ali Subhi and many others.”

Khalil and the label came together to preserve the legacy of Ustad Azam Bakhshi, the father of the Bakhshi Brothers, known to be one of the masters of Qawwals, a form of devotional music that expresses the mystical Sufi practice of Islam in South Asia, and Eastern classical music in the subcontinent. The three-minute 13 second song, which Khalil describes as ‘psychedelic world fusion’, was inspired from his trip to northern Pakistan in 2019 where he learned about the legendary Qawwali singer.

During my stay in Karachi, before leaving out on my journey to the mountains, I met Iram whom you can hear on this track as a female student repeating after Ustad Azam Bakhshi, learning the pakarof Raag Barwa,” he said.

Raag Barwa is a rarely heard ancient Hindustani classical raga that is similar to Raag deshi.

“Iram and I struck a conversation on music and she mentioned that she was, at the time, involved in taking classical vocal lessons,” explained Khalil who is Bahraini with Pakistani roots. “I asked her if I could hear her sessions and that is when she gave me the phone recording sample that you can hear in my song.

“I received the sample and really enjoyed the wisdom and purity of a teacher and student relationship musically. I continued on my journey up north and back. I sat on this sample for about four years and forgot about it.”

In 2023, as he casually went over the sample while reviewing footage of his journey, he began reminiscing over his trip which he took to reset himself after the passing of his father Abdul Qadir Bakhshi, learning the pakar of Raag Barwa,” he said.

“He was very generous in allowing me to use this sample and offered that if I ever needed anything related to a collaboration in the future, he and the Bakhshi Brothers would be honoured to do so.

“This validated and blessed memory into a song.

“That is when I came to find out that Ustad Azam Bakhshi had passed away the year after I received the sample. Iram asked me to reach out to the Bakhshi family as well and so I did.”

Khalil contacted Bilal Bakhshi, son of the teacher who had passed away. “He said to me ‘this is my father’s voice on the track’ and asked ‘how did you receive this sample?’”, shared Khalil.

“I could tell the emotions Bilal was feeling and I gave him the story on how I got it. “He was very generous in allowing me to use this sample and offered that if I ever needed anything related to a collaboration in the future, he and the Bakhshi Brothers would be honoured to do so.

“This validated and blessed my mission. “The song is a tribute to Ustad Azam Bakhshi (may he forever rest in peace) from the esteemed Bakhshi family and son of the legendary Ustad Bakhshi Salamat Qawwal.

The family belongs to the lineage of Qawwals. This debut is also dedicated to my father.”

Khalil is also involved in three other music projects – Posthypnotik, Native Habitats and Tourists and Harriet. For details, follow @khalil_qureshi on Instagram.
AROUND THE WORLD IN MUSIC, TV, BOOKS AND MORE - BY JULIA CASSANO

TAYLOR Swift's much-anticipated 1989 album (Taylor's version) is officially here, and is already topping the charts. The Anti-Hero singer had made the announcement earlier in August on the social media platform, Instagram, and Swifties (fans of the performer) have been excited ever since.

The build-up for the release has been intense since the much-loved singer made the announcement as the re-recorded album is already aligning with high-grossing album releases. After just one day, it sold more than 250,000 copies in the US, and became the third-largest sales week of 2023. The only bigger weeks were Swift's own Speak Now (Taylor's version) album, that sold more than 507,000 copies in its first week and Travis Scott's Utopia selling over 252,000 in its opening week.

The performer took to Instagram to announce the re-release of the 1989 album that read: “My name is Taylor and I was born in 1989.” Not only is the pop-star breaking records through sales, but Swift's 1989 (Taylor's version) topped this week's music poll as well. A poll published on Billboard on Saturday let music fans pick their favourite new album of the past week – and 1989 brought in 89 per cent of the vote, beating the likes of David Guetta and Brent Faiyaz.

Sales of 1989 (Taylor's version) is expected to increase in the coming days, with the current tracking week ending tomorrow.

Five Nights at Freddy's took over the box office last weekend, grossing $78 million domestically, making its way into the rankings of the most profitable horror movies ever. Taking movie theatres by storm, the hair-raising thriller has become the biggest horror film in 2023, surpassing SCREAM VI at $84.4m.

In the works since 2015, Five Nights at Freddy's is based on the first entry in Scott Cawthon's beloved video game series, where the original game challenges players to work a night shift at Freddy's as a watchman, and the players are then made to fend off the pizzeria killers. Starring Josh Hutcherson, the movie shows a troubled security guard who begins working at the restaurant, Freddy Fazbear's Pizza. However, the job is not as it seems, and during his first night on duty, he learns the horror that actually takes place at Freddy's.

The movie was initially expected to gross $50m in the US and Canada, but became box office smash as it is now projected to top $399m by the end of its showings.

ICONIC Britney Spears released her much-awaited memoir, The Woman in Me, which recounts her rise to fame, turbulent relationships and personal struggles. The Toxic singer took to Instagram to share her heart-felt thoughts on the release that read: “I have moved on and it’s a beautiful clean slate from here. This is actually a book I didn’t know needed to be written... and it has given me closure.”

She went on to say that she had seen the headlines at the time of the book release which she did not appreciate. “That’s exactly why I quit the business four years ago!” she wrote. “My book’s purpose was not to offend anyone by any means. That was me then … that is in the past !!! I don’t like the headlines that I’m reading.”

According to Gallery Books, the memoir is described as “a brave and astonishingly moving story about freedom, fame, motherhood, survival, faith and hope.”

It goes on to say that it reveals Spear’s journey through her fame, the power of music and love as well as the value of a strong woman revealing her story to the world. Spears wrote in her book that it took her a long time for her to ‘feel ready’ to tell her story. She, however, hopes that her tale and battles can ultimately inspire people and ‘touch hearts’.
**ICAN Sergio Perez said he took a risk and would do it again after a first corner collision with Ferrari’s Charles Leclerc ended his hopes of a home grand prix win on Sunday.**

The Red Bull driver, under pressure after a run of poor form, tried to pass around the outside but made contact and was pitched up and onto the run-off with sidepod damage. He got his car back to the pits where he retired.

“I am aware that I took a big risk today but I forgot about the championship and I forgot about everything else, I was only thinking about winning today,” Perez told reporters. “I forgot about the championship and when I had the chance I risked it and maybe risked too much, but I would do it again,” added the Mexican.

The race drew a record three-day crowd of 400,639, according to Formula 1, with most of them coming to cheer a home hero who said before the weekend that it was his most important of the season.

Perez had stood proudly at the singing of the national anthem but the cheers were soon replaced with tears of frustration.

The Red Bull driver made a quick getaway from fifth and attacked Leclerc on the outside as triple champion Max Verstappen went past the Monegasque on the inside.

“Of a home grand prix win on Sunday,” Horner said. “His performance. Had it not been for the red flag he would have finished there,” he said.

The top motoring and motorsport news

**BRAIN-BUSTERS**

Q: Who has been entertaining people across the island with his brain-teasing quiz night sessions, has offered to put Gulf Weekly readers’ general knowledge to the test? Join in the fun every Wednesday with Shannon’s seven brain-busters.

1) France is currently facing a national panic over a massive manifestation of what?
2) If you speak two languages you’re bilingual, if you speak three you’re trilingual. If you speak more, you may be considered a what?
3) In the last 100 years, who is the only US president not to have a dog while in the Oval Office?
4) What is the most common flavour of Turkish Delight?
5) Bahrain won silver in the Asian games final after being beaten by Qatar in which sport?

**ANSWERS**

1. Bedbugs
2. Polyglot
3. Calvin Coolidge
4. Rose Water
5. Basketball
6. Unplugged
7. Final Destination

**RICCIARDO IS ‘LOOKING LIKE HIS OLD SELF AGAIN’**

Red Bull boss Christian Horner hailed the return of the Daniel Ricciardo on ‘red flag day as the Australian raced to AlphaTauri’s best result of the season at the Mexico City Grand Prix.

The points for seventh place were the first that Ricciardo, winner of eight career grands prix, has scored in four starts since making a comeback with Red Bull’s sister team last July.

They were also a strong statement after five races out with a broken hand and a contrast to Red Bull’s Sergio Perez, the Mexican whose seat he may one day take and who retired after a first corner collision.

“You couldn’t fail to be impressed by Daniel this weekend,” Horner said. “His qualifying was outstanding yesterday and he showed his maturity and experience and pace in the race. “I think fighting a Mercedes in an AlphaTauri for their best result of the season is great performance. Had it not been for the red flag he might have actually finished even further up.


**ALL SMILES:** Perez waves to fans during the drivers’ parade

**RACING FEVER:** Fans hold up a cutout of the face of Perez

**Motoring Weekly**

The top motoring and motorsport news
ACROSS
4. Show-case (7)
8. Charro (6)
9. Scorn (7)
10. Diversion (6)
11. Diseased (6)
12. Widespread
disease (8)
18. Feelor (6)
20. Inuit (6)
21. Sturdy (6)
22. Include (7)
23. Dread (6)
24. Under (7)

DOWN
1. Laggard (7)
2. Sheerias (7)
3. Sanctuary (6)
5. Of the U.S. (8)
6. Overhang (6)
7. Make certain (6)
9. Car driver (8)
10. Obtain (7)
14. Reading desk (7)
16. On land (6)
17. Tiny (6)
19. Mason’s tool (6)

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN
WHO... won the men’s singles Luge event at the
2006 Winter Olympics?
WHAT... island is located at 57° 35’ 48” N, 13° 41’
18”W? WHERE... in Central America is the Gulf of
Futua?
WHEN... did Sienna Miller and Jude Law get
engaged?
WHO... wrote the novel The Case of the Drowning
Duck?
WHAT... nationality is the golfer Arron Oberholser?
WHERE... did the Southerly Hills Volcano erupt in
1995?
WHEN... did the Surrealist artist Hans Bellmer die?

Solutions in next week’s issue.

ACROSS
5. Crust & Crema (7)
7. Cerebrally (6)
13. TimeOut (6)
15. The Sun (6)
19. Crisp (9)
25. Face (6)

DOWN
2. Who (7)
3. What (7)
4. Where (7)
5. When (7)

So you think you’re good enough at Sudoku to crack this baby? Remember, we were the first in the Gulf to bring you this hit of Japanese mayhem... so we don’t kid around.

Last week’s solutions:

6 5 4
7 8 9

6 5 4
7 8 9

Just so:
To all intents and purposes, Money for old rope. No two ways about it, common sense.

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN:
Christopher Fry; Eric Clapton; Berlin, Germany; 1973; David Bowie; Pygmalion; Romania; 1971.