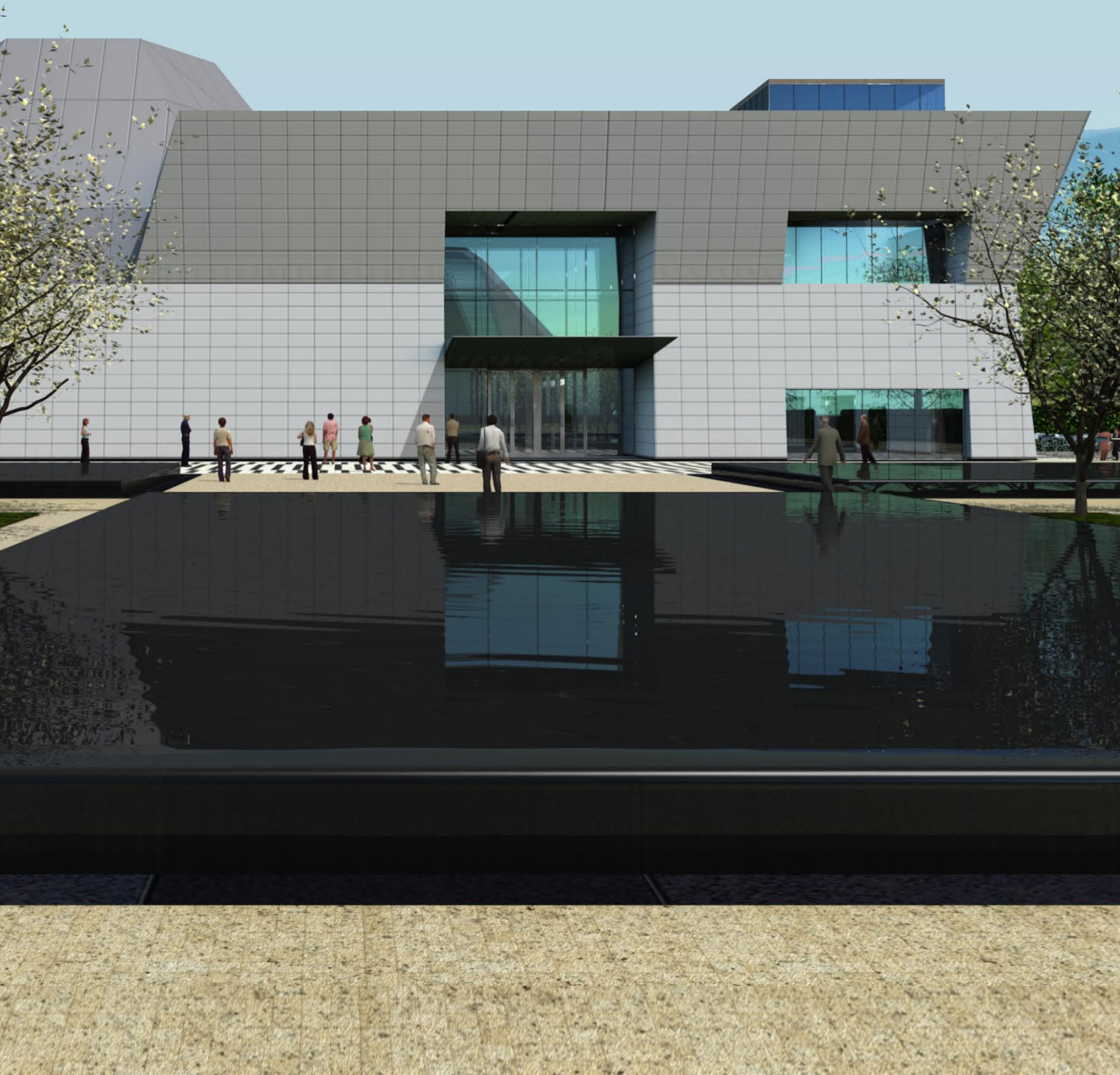


AGA KHAN MUSEUM





The Muslim world has always been wide open to every aspect of human existence. The sciences, society, art, the oceans, the environment and the cosmos have all contributed to the great moments in the history of Muslim civilizations.

*- His Highness the Aga Khan -
“Musée-Musées” Round Table, Louvre Paris*

Mission

Muslim societies comprise a quarter of the world’s population, yet there is limited knowledge of the people and their faith in the West. This considerable lack of understanding spans all aspects of the peoples of Islam: their pluralism, the diversity of their interpretations of the Qur’anic faith, the chronological and geographical extent of their history and culture, as well as their ethnic, linguistic and social diversity.



His Highness the Aga Khan has taken the initiative to create a museum of Muslim culture: the Aga Khan Museum, in Toronto, Canada. Due to open in 2013, the Museum will be established as a permanent institution with an international scope and mission. It is dedicated to the collection, research, preservation and display of works of art, objects and artefacts of artistic, cultural and historical significance from various periods and geographic areas of the Muslim world.

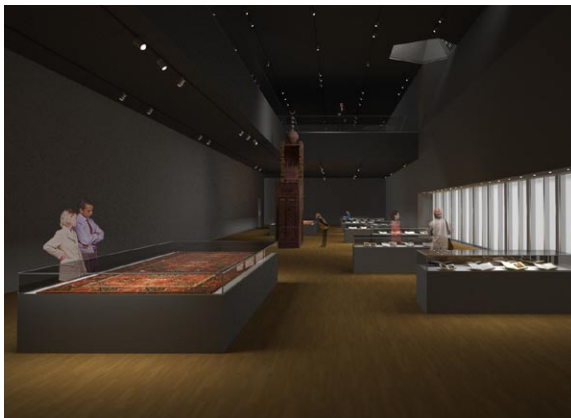
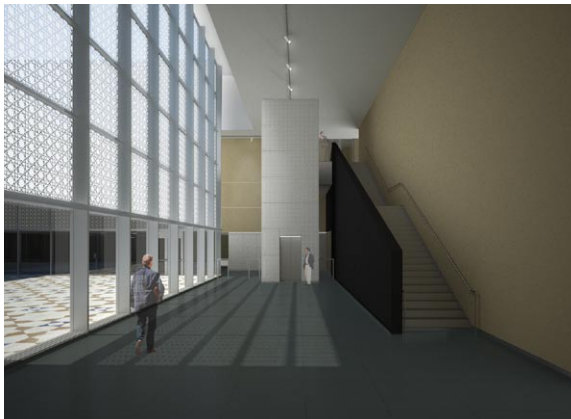
The Aga Khan Museum’s educational and cultural mission is to provide visitors with an understanding of the artistic, intellectual, scientific and religious heritage of communities, both Muslim and non-Muslim. The Museum, through its permanent and temporary exhibitions, education programmes and cultural activities, will offer unique insights and new perspectives into Islamic civilizations, which will foster knowledge and understanding both within Muslim societies and other cultures.



Folio from the Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp, Iran, Safavid, c. 1540

Programme

The Aga Khan Museum will have a programme of activities with a strong educational impact, aimed at both general and specialized audiences. It will present and host exhibitions, music and theatre, films, lectures and cultural activities that will emphasize the plurality of creative expressions inspired by the world of Islam. It will encourage an appreciation of the shared legacies of world civilizations and act as catalysts for better understanding and mutual respect.



- A large permanent exhibition space will house art and artefacts acquired by His Highness the Aga Khan and his family and donated to the Museum. Up to 200 pieces from the Museum's collection will be showcased in the permanent gallery that will combine state of the art display systems with innovative approaches to design and interpretation.
- Major temporary exhibitions concerning the Islamic world will be presented in historic, geographic or thematic terms. These exhibitions will draw upon private collections and institutional holdings from all parts of the world. Smaller exhibitions on specific artists and topics will also be hosted in the temporary exhibition space.
- An auditorium with 350 seats will host music performances and theatre productions, book launches and readings, films and conferences. In addition to providing a platform for the Aga Khan Music Initiative, the auditorium will host conferences with sister institutions such as the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, the Aga Khan University, and the University of Central Asia, as well as seminars and symposia in collaboration with museums and cultural institutions from within and outside Canada. These events will offer the public a varied and exciting cultural programme throughout the year.
- A world class reference library and multi-media centre, as well as classrooms and workshops for educational activities will be aimed at a broad public and all age groups.

Through these programmes, the Museum will provide visitors with an understanding of the art, ideas, literature and cultures of Muslim civilizations that have had a profound impact on humanity.



Architecture

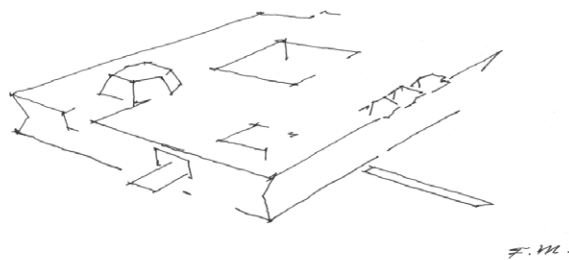
The abstract notion of light was a source of inspiration for the design of the Aga Khan Museum by the renowned Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki.

Born in Tokyo in 1928, Fumihiko Maki is one of the foremost architects in the world. Following his undergraduate studies in architecture at the University of Tokyo (1952), Maki went on to obtain Master's degrees from both the Cranbrook Academy of Art (1953) and the Harvard Graduate School of Design (1954). After working in the United States, Maki established his own firm, Maki and Associates, in Tokyo in 1965.

For the design of the Aga Khan Museum, Maki and Associates worked closely with Toronto based and internationally recognized Moriyama & Teshima Architects.

Designed to be modern and efficient, the Museum is contained in a 10,500m² building within a simple rectilinear footprint 81 metres long by 54 metres wide. The four primary functions (exhibition spaces, an auditorium, classrooms and workshops, and library and media-centre) will revolve around a central courtyard, which will act as the heart of the building and will integrate the different functions into a cohesive whole while allowing each space to maintain its independence, privacy and character.

The Aga Khan Museum contains exhibition spaces designed to be flexible, bold and innovative. These spaces will showcase objects in a visual setting that will allow visitors to be inspired by the great diversity of the arts of Islam.



The Museum will share the 6.8 hectare site with the Ismaili Centre, designed by Charles Correa Associates with Moriyama & Teshima Architects, and will be surrounded by a landscaped park, designed by Vladimir Djurovic Landscape Architecture with Moriyama & Teshima Architects. Together, they will constitute important landmarks and green space for the city of Toronto.



The Park

Connecting the Ismaili Centre and the Aga Khan Museum will be a beautifully landscaped Park designed by landscape architect, Vladimir Djurovic, in collaboration with Toronto-based Moriyama & Teshima Planners. Djurovic has worked to create a simple yet expressive space that will unite the two distinctive buildings and describes his vision for the Park as one that “captures the essence of the Islamic garden and translates it into an expression that reflects its context and contemporary age.” The Park will incorporate the Islamic “chaar bhag” or formal garden with reflecting pools, walkways, and components suited to the climate of Toronto, so that the garden captures the stark beauty of the Canadian winter as well as the flowering of summer. It will include spaces for educational programming and outdoor gatherings as well as offering a place of tranquility and relaxation.



Working with the City of Toronto, additional areas will be landscaped to enhance the green spaces available to the visiting public. The goal is to ensure that the Park, through its design and extensive use, becomes a permanent legacy to Toronto and Canada. For His Highness the Aga Khan, buildings and public spaces are physical manifestations of culture in societies, past, and present. They aim to represent human endeavours that serve to enhance quality of life, foster self-understanding and community values. For the developing world in particular, they aim to expand opportunities for economic and social development in the communities they serve.



Collections

“The 1,428 years of the Ummah embrace many civilizations and are therefore characterized by an astonishing pluralism. In particular, this geographic, ethnic, linguistic and religious pluralism has manifested itself at the most defining moments in the history of the Ummah. The Aga Khan Museum Collection will highlight objects drawn from every region and every period, and created from every kind of material in the Muslim world.”

- His Highness the Aga Khan -
“Musée-Musées” Round Table, Louvre Paris

The Museum collection contains some one thousand artefacts and artworks. This collection, which will continue to evolve and grow, spans over one thousand years of history. The ceramic, metalwork, ivory, stone and wood, textile and carpet, glass and rock crystal objects, along with rare works on parchment and illustrated paintings on paper present an overview of the artistic accomplishments of Muslim civilizations from the Iberian Peninsula to China.



Portrait of Sultan Selim, Turkey, Ottoman, c. 1570

The Museum will house and exhibit some of the most important works of Islamic art in the world. The collection incorporates miniatures and manuscripts brought together by the late Prince Sadruddin and Princess Catherine Aga Khan with Islamic artefacts and works of art collected by His Highness the Aga Khan over the last two decades.

To prepare the research on the art works, to test various musicological themes, and to develop relationships with key international partners, a series of exhibitions featuring selections from the Museum’s collection have been organized since 2007. To date, major exhibitions have taken place in Parma, London, Paris, Lisbon, Toledo, Madrid, Barcelona and Berlin. Over the next two years, further exhibitions are envisaged in Istanbul and five other cities in the Muslim world. By 2012, these exhibitions will have been seen by nearly one and a half million people and will have created a framework for cooperation and collaboration with museums and institutions throughout the world.



Emerald green bottle, Iran, Safavid, 17th Century

A Museum in Canada

“While some North American museums have significant collections of Muslim art, there is no institution devoted to Islamic art. In building the museum in Toronto, we intend to introduce a new actor to the North American art scene. What happens on that continent, culturally, economically and politically, cannot fail to have worldwide repercussions – which is why we thought it important that an institution capable of promoting understanding and tolerance should exist there.”

*- His Highness the Aga Khan -
“Musée-Musées” Round Table, Louvre Paris*

Canada has for many years been a beacon to the rest of the world for its commitment to pluralism. This tradition of tolerance and inclusiveness has permitted diversity to flourish, enriching the life of each individual and community that has sought to make Canada its home.

It is within this framework that the Aga Khan Museum will act as both a repository of heritage and a source of inspiration, complementing the work of the Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa, another new initiative of His Highness the Aga Khan, that seeks to share Canada’s experience of pluralism with the world.



Standard (alam), Iran, late 16th Century

This Museum is one of three new buildings established by His Highness the Aga Khan in Canada. Taken together, the Museum, the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam in Ottawa, and, the Ismaili Centre in Toronto, affirm the intent to share within a western setting, the humanistic traditions of Islam and reflect His Highness’ conviction that buildings can do more than simply house people and programmes; they can also reflect our deepest values.





- His Highness the Aga Khan and The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada -

His Highness the Aga Khan

His Highness the Aga Khan is the 49th hereditary Imam (spiritual leader), of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims and Founder and Chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network. In the Ismaili tradition, the Imam's responsibilities involve not only the interpretation of the faith for the Ismaili Community, but also the relationship of that faith to conditions in the present. For the Aga Khan, this has led to a deep involvement with development, as a process grounded in the ethics of Islam, in which economic, social, and cultural factors converge to determine quality of life.

Aga Khan Development Network

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) was founded and is guided by His Highness the Aga Khan as a group of development agencies, institutions, and programmes that work primarily in the poorest parts of Asia and Africa. AKDN focuses on health, education, culture, rural development, institution-building and the promotion of economic development. It is dedicated to improving living conditions and opportunities for the poor, without regard to their faith, origin or gender.

The AKDN works in over 25 countries around the world and employs approximately 60,000 people, the majority of whom are based in developing countries.