



AGA KHAN MUSEUM

ON SCREEN

AGA KHAN MUSEUM INAUGURAL FILM SERIES

CINEMATIC DISCOVERIES ALONG
THE SILK ROAD AND THE SPICE ROUTE



CURATOR'S WELCOME

CINEMATIC DISCOVERIES ALONG THE SILK ROAD AND THE SPICE ROUTE

The inaugural film season at the Aga Khan Museum takes audiences on an exploratory journey to discover the brave new visions and bold voices emerging from countries along the ancient Silk Road and Maritime Silk Route. First works by new and emergent young media artists are presented alongside ambitious and accomplished works by seasoned filmmakers, most of whom are unfamiliar to North American audiences. Almost all the films and videos presented in this inaugural film season depict some form of travel – through familiar terrains where modernity challenges traditions, and through uncharted territories where new aspirations inspire infinite possibilities.

On Opening Night (January 28, 2015), the inaugural film season kicks off with a pair of assured and distinctive first feature films that focus on traditional practices. The next screenings on February 4 highlight the artistic and cultural heritage of South Asia, coinciding with the opening of the exhibition *Visions of Mughal India: The Collection of Howard Hodgkin* at the Museum. On February 25, the centrepiece programs offer glimpses of humour and joy in lives lived in challenging circumstances. Noruz (the Persian New Year) and the arrival of spring inform the March 18 screenings, which explore human connections to the land, as well as the cycles of life, death, and birth that connect us all. The end of one journey is often the beginning of another journey, so on Closing Night (April 8), the last screening of the inaugural film season bids farewell with two itinerant meditations – an ant's meandering and a globetrotting spiritual quest that will hopefully inspire the audience to embark on infinite journeys of their own.

Dr. Paul Lee

Toronto-based filmmaker, producer, festival programmer, and curator

Supported by



RBC Foundation

Program Ticket

**Gets you into
a single program.**

\$13.50 members

\$15 adults

\$12 students and seniors

Evening Program Pass

**Gets you into both programs
in a single evening.**

\$22.50 members

\$25 adults

\$20 students and seniors

Season Film Pass

**Gets you into
the entire series.**

\$108 members

\$120 adults

\$96 students and seniors

Please note: Programming is subject to change. Please visit agakanmuseum.org for the latest updates about each film screening.



IN HER SILENCE AND SOLITUDES

Wednesday, January 28, 7 pm

Three portraits of women's silence suggest the solitudes of suffering – from war, from oppression, and from potential violence. They also allow room for hope.

My Motherland

The psychology of Afghan women under decades of war and oppression is depicted through stunning visual sequences that combine reality and dreams.

*Filmmaker and actress **Fazila Amiri** and sister **Hangama**, a visual artist, fled Kabul in the 1990s. Their recent short film/installation *Dome of Secret Desires* (2012) was shortlisted for the 7th International Arte Laguna Prize (Venice).*

2015, 10 min.
(Canada/Afghanistan)
No Dialogue
World Premiere

Photo

Tongue-in-cheek performances framed as portrait sessions reveal the dynamics of Yemeni gender relations. Winner of the Special Jury Prize, 2012 Mknès Film Festival.

*Filmmaker **Sawsan al-Areeqe** has authored three poetry collections. Her short film *Prohibited* (2010) won the British Council's 2010 Zoom Film Contest.*

2012, 4 min.
(Yemen)
No Dialogue
Canadian Premiere

40 Days of Silence (Chilla)

In an isolated village in Tajikistan's Rangoon Valley, four women from four generations live under one roof, blurring together the similarities of their fates with different times and customs.

*Born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, **Saodat Ismailova** has collaborated with the Aga Khan Music Initiative for the past 12 years, making documentary films on the music of Central Asia.*

2012, 88 min.
(Uzbekistan/Tajikistan/
Netherlands/France/Germany)
Tajik with English subtitles
Canadian Premiere

DAGGERS AND DEVOTION

Wednesday, January 28, 9 pm

These films explore two of the many cultural traditions – *jambeya* dagger craftsmanship and *meshk* training for young musicians – that risk being lost as societies and values change.

The Jambeya: Yemen from the Waist of a Man

The 1,000-year-old tradition and craftsmanship of the *jambeya*, a curved dagger worn by many Yemeni men, is threatened by the influx of Chinese imports.

Filmmaker **Sara al-Zawqari** also works as a journalist and radio producer/presenter at The Yemen Times.

Breath of the Beloved (Mâşuk'un Nefesi)

An intimate portrait of the master-apprentice relationship (*meshk*) that has long informed classical music training in Turkey.

Murat Pay has created award-winning shorts and documentaries since 2007. *Breath of the Beloved* is his first feature-length film.

2012, 15 min.

(Yemen)

Arabic with English subtitles

Canadian Premiere

2014, 84 min.

(Turkey)

Turkish with English subtitles

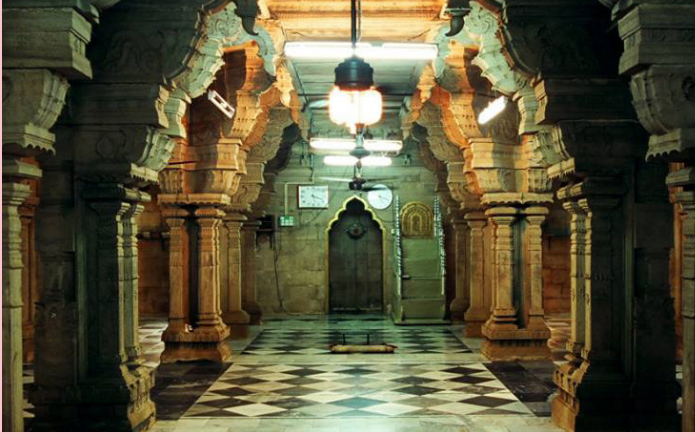
North American Premiere

The Jambeya



PROGRAM

2



ECHOES OF THE MUGHAL DREAM

Wednesday, February 4, 7 pm

A boy's poetry recital, a filmmaker's search for his roots, and a cross-country musical showcase provide engaging contexts in which to explore the diverse and pervasive influence of the Mughal legacy on Indian arts, culture, and society.

Capital Dreams

A meditation on the intersection of art, religion, politics, and the human quest for transcendence in India.

Raised in Calcutta and based in Toronto, Mark Haslam is a documentary filmmaker who also works as Media Arts Officer at the Ontario Arts Council.

Yaadhum

An insightful journey about Tamil Muslim history and identity in South India, incorporating interviews with well-known historians and forays into literature and archaeology.

Kombai S. Anwar began his career as a freelance journalist and photographer before discovering filmmaking. Yaadhum earned Best Documentary Film in 2013 from the Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers Cultural Association.

Sama: Muslim Mystic Music of India

Visually stunning and musically rich, this film explores how the Islamic musical traditions in India have been influenced, informed, and inspired by the country's diverse cultures.

Shazia Khan's work has helped bring the nuances of Indian people, regions, and religions to international attention. She has directed 10 documentaries and produced work for such channels as Dutch National Broadcast Television and France-24.

2015, 6 min.

(Canada/India)

English and Urdu
with English subtitles
World Premiere

2013, 56 min.

(India)

Tamil with English subtitles
North American Premiere

2012, 52 min.

(India)

English, Hindi, and various
Indian dialects with
English subtitles
Canadian Premiere

ON THE WAY TO MECCA

Wednesday, February 4, 9 pm

After saving for years for their respective Hajj pilgrimages, two elderly patriarchs change their course – and find answers in unexpected places.

The Way to Mecca (Mekkege Karai Jol)

After many years of saving for his pilgrimage, 80-year-old Sulaiman Turdubaev decides to use his funds to support a Second World War monument instead.

Asel Zhuraeva made her first short film, *Cradle of Happiness*, in 2010. *The Way to Mecca* earned the Grand Prix (National Competition) at the 2011 *BirDuino (One World) International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival*.

Television

A local leader bans access to television and other technology in his village. However, en route to Mecca, he experiences his own religious experience via a television.

Film director, producer, and screenwriter **Mostofa Sarwar Farooki** is one of the key filmmakers in the Bangladeshi New Wave cinema movement and founder of the “Chabial” avant-garde filmmakers’ movement.

2011, 19 min.

(Kyrgyzstan)

Kyrgyz with English subtitles

North American Premiere

2012, 106 min.

(Bangladesh)

Bengali with English subtitles

Toronto Premiere



The Way to Mecca

PROGRAM

4



RUMI'S WISDOM AND SOUNDS OF THE SEA

Wednesday, February 25, 7 pm

The two films in this program follow the personal journeys of their protagonists: an egotistical young man who is humbled by an expert in deceit; and an elderly folksinger who wishes to perform a traditional sea song one final time.

The Young Man and the Cunning Tailor

Based on a Rumi fable, this cut-out animation film tells the story of an overconfident young man who is determined to outwit the wiles of the local crooked tailor.

Artist and book illustrator **Rashin Kheiriyeh** belongs to both the French and the Iranian Institutes of Illustrators. Rumi's Wisdom is her directorial debut in animation filmmaking.

Sounds of the Sea

A glimpse into the folklore of Emirati fishermen and pearl divers as told through the story of an aging singer who attempts to cross the Umm al-Quwain Creek one final time.

Nujoom al-Ghanem, a published poet, has been an active filmmaker since the late 1990s. Films include: *Ice Cream* (1997), *Al-Mureed* (2008), *Hamama* (2010), and *Amal* (2011).

2008, 9 min.

(Iran)

Farsi with English subtitles

Canadian Premiere

2014, 82 min.

(U.A.E.)

Arabic with English subtitles

North American Premiere

FOR A LITTLE BIT OF HEAVEN

Wednesday, February 25, 9 pm

A Palestinian refugee camp, a cultural landmark in Baghdad, a Lebanese cultural centre for Syrian refugees, and a Lebanese detention camp are sites of displacement, hope, and artistic inspiration.

Gateway to Heaven

A portrait of Jordan's Al-Talibiyah Palestinian refugee camp and its inhabitants, who seek a return home and an escape from desperate realities.

*An accomplished artist in many media, **Bashar Alhroub** has exhibited in Palestine and internationally.*

A Candle for the Shabandar Café

In 2007 a deadly car bomb destroyed a café and bookshops in Baghdad. Poets and artists later held a wake in the ruins of their beloved street.

*A film student in Baghdad, **Emad Ali** was nearly finished this project in 2006. He was shot when he returned to the area for additional footage in 2007.*

Art of Resilience

A war-ruined building near Beirut becomes Art Residency Aley, a unique cultural centre where Syrian refugees make art to regain creative energy.

*Civil engineer/activist **Raghad Mardini** worked on the restoration of Art Residency Aley and collaborated with Syrian artists who sought refuge there.*

Khiam

Six prisoners recount their lengthy internment in the Khiam detention camp. Deprived of everything except dreams, they still create art.

***Joana Hadjithomas** and **Khalil Joreige** collaborate as filmmakers and artists to explore representations of their home country, Lebanon.*

2014, 5 min.
(Palestine)
No Dialogue
North American Premiere

2007, 25 min.
(Iraq)
Arabic with English subtitles
Canadian Premiere

2014, 27 min.
(Syria)
Arabic with English subtitles
Canadian Premiere

2000, 52 min.
(Lebanon)
Arabic with English subtitles
Canadian Premiere

Khiam



PROGRAM

6



THE GARDENS OF PAST AND PRESENT

Wednesday, March 18, 7 pm

This program offers two portraits of elderly couples with vital connections to land and home. For one couple, home is the distant land and gardens they left behind many years ago. For the other couple, home is the land and gardens they refuse to leave.

Seeds of the Past

Inspired by gardens in their homeland of Afghanistan, Amina and Abdul Bari Jamal transform their Canadian backyard.

Aisha Jamal is a Toronto-based documentary filmmaker who was born and raised in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Her films include: *Dolls and Bombs* (2008), *Stories from Little Kabul* (2010), and *Bridge Day* (2014).

Nabat

An elderly couple live in a small house in the mountains where they survive on milk from their only cow. One day the cow goes missing, and the shadow of war encroaches.

Elchin Musaoglu is the writer and director of over 50 documentary films. *Nabat* is his second feature film, and Azerbaijan's official submission to the Best Foreign Language category at the 2015 Academy Awards.

2015, 7 min.

(Canada/Afghanistan)

Pashto with English subtitles

World Premiere

2014, 105 min.

(Azerbaijan)

Azeri with English subtitles

Canadian Premiere

IN LIFE AND DEATH

Wednesday, March 18, 9 pm

With Noruz (the Persian New Year) welcoming spring and the onset of another life cycle, these films meditate on the passage of life through stories about health and illness, struggle and hope.

Raneen

Young Muntadher doesn't know why he practically lives in the hospital. He learns from Kifah, a bed-bound girl who shares his many adventures.

*Filmmaker and orthopedic surgeon **Maitham Al Musawi** produced his first film in 2004.*

2011, 11 min.

(Oman)

Arabic with English subtitles
Canadian Premiere

Voices

A woman diligently follows her daily routine despite encounters with ghosts of her past.

***Hussain Al-Riffaei** has worked as an assistant director and actor in theatre, film, and television.*

2012, 4 min.

(Bahrain)

Arabic with English subtitles
Canadian Premiere

The Good Omen

A man performs *al bishara* – a Bahraini tradition of hanging a woman's traditional dress over one's roof to announce a family member's return – in the hopes of re-encountering his wife.

***Mohammed Rashed Bu Ali** is an award-winning director/producer recognized widely for his short films.*

2009, 27 min.

(Bahrain)

Arabic with English subtitles
Canadian Premiere

Aayesh

A lonely security guard at the hospital morgue finds his daily routine altered for 10 minutes. The results are life-changing.

*Saudi filmmaker **Abdullah Al-Eyaf** also writes a weekly column for the Saudi newspaper AL-Riyadh.*

2010, 29 min.

(Saudi Arabia)

Arabic with English subtitles
Canadian Premiere





THE INFINITE JOURNEYS

Wednesday, April 8, 7 pm

Often when one journey ends another begins. The final films of this series depict two extraordinary journeys, both infinite in their own way.

Infinite Travel

Set to a poem written by the artist, the wanderings of an ant become an occasion for meditating about the infinite possibilities of spiritual quests.

Muhammad Habib Akram is an Associate Lecturer at the University of Gujrat. *Infinite Travel* is his first video, and part of an installation that consists of video, poetry, and drawings.

Looking for Muhyiddin

To honour a promise made to his father, a man embarks on a journey that will take him to 10 countries. The film explores the life of poet, thinker, and mystic Sheykh Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi (1165-1240).

Writer, storyteller, artist, and filmmaker **Nacer Khémir** was fascinated from an early age by classical Arabic culture. His first film, *L'Histoire du pays du Bon Dieu* (1975), features the desert settings and spiritual overtones that figure prominently in his later work.

2014, 2 min.

(Pakistan)

Urdu with English subtitles

North American Premiere

2012, 183 min.

(Tunisia)

Arabic, English, French, Italian,

Spanish, and Turkish with

English subtitles

Canadian Premiere

PLAN YOUR VISIT

MUSEUM HOURS AND TICKETS

Visitors are welcome to view collections in the Bellerive Room, browse in the Museum Shop, or dine in Diwan at the Aga Khan Museum without purchasing a ticket. Tickets are required for entrance to galleries and for participation in most Performing Arts and Education programs and events.

Hours

Open Tuesday to Sunday 10 am to 6 pm, except Wednesdays, when the Museum has extended evening hours until 8 pm. Closed Mondays.

Museum Admission

Adults	\$20
Seniors (65+)	\$15
Students (ID: 15–25)	\$15
Children (3–14)	\$15
Members	Free

Phone Numbers

General Information	416.646.4677
Group Reservations	416.646.4677 ext. 7730
Membership	416.646.4667
Diwan Restaurant	416.646.4670
Museum Shop	416.646.4677 ext. 7805

Multimedia Guides

Access exclusive interviews with Museum experts and stories about the Museum's Permanent Collection. Multimedia Guides are available to rent from the Tickets Desk (\$5).

agakhanmuseum.org

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