

Aga Khan Museum Launches Friends of the Aga Khan Museum in the Gulf and South Asia at Concrete in Dubai, UAE

New organization furthers global dialogue on the contributions of Islamic civilizations to world heritage

Dubai, October 17, 2017 — As it enters its fourth year, the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, Canada, is pleased to announce an important advancement of its mission to educate, inspire, and connect cultures through the arts: the launch of the Friends of the Aga Khan Museum in the Gulf and South Asia. The launch took place Tuesday, October 17, at Concrete, the acclaimed new space on Alserkal Avenue in Dubai, UAE.

The Aga Khan Museum has had a close relationship with UAE since 2014, when the first international preview of the Museum was held in Dubai, and has partnered regularly since then with the Ismaili Centre, Dubai. Friends of the Aga Khan Museum in the Gulf and South Asia will strengthen that foundation by bringing together those in the region who share the Museum's belief that the arts can build a better tomorrow through cultural exchange and dialogue. It will also highlight in the region the work of the Museum and its programs.

The Aga Khan Museum offers a window into worlds that are often unknown or unfamiliar to museum goers: the many Muslim civilizations that have made artistic, intellectual, and scientific innovations across centuries and spanning regions from the Iberian Peninsula to China.

The chapter aims to build a network of like-minded individuals and highlight the artistic, intellectual, and scientific heritage of Islamic civilizations. "I am especially honored by the request of Prince Ayn Aga Khan, the Chairman of the Museum Board, to serve as the Honorary Chairman of the Patrons Circle, here in the United Arab Emirates. The interaction between the museum and the patrons will benefit not only the museum and its patrons but also the global society of the UAE. I sense that you patrons who are willing to share your resources and your personal collections with the Aga Khan Museum fully understand the essential value of pluralism. The artifacts in the museum convey a clear sense of Muslim diversity, a diversity that deserves global prominence. They invite dialogue and with that dialogue an informed understanding of similarities and differences. I am proud to be the Honorary Chairman of such admirable global citizens." said His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development.

"This launch is a landmark event for the Museum," said Aga Khan Museum Director and CEO Henry S. Kim. "By establishing a presence beyond our physical location in Toronto, we will reach more visitors, have fresh opportunities to present the work of exciting artists, and spark intriguing new conversations. Ultimately, we will expand our global reach, which has always been critical to our mission."

"The Aga Khan Museum in Toronto is a leading cultural institution in the West mandated to showcase the arts and culture of the Muslim world," said Zaki Nusseibeh, Aga Khan Museum Board Member, Assistant Minister Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation UAE, and Cultural Advisor, Ministry of Presidential Affairs. "It has been a singular honour for me to be asked to join its Board to help promote its mission as it seeks to build bridges of tolerance and understanding between all

civilizations by illustrating how we are all connected to one another through art, science, and literature. This mission is all the more important in today's conflicted world in which the forces of ignorance and darkness cloud mankind's future. I would urge all our friends to support and help this museum in fulfilling its important role.”

Zaki Nusseibeh and Henry Kim both expressed thanks to Abdelmonem Bin Eisa Alserkal, founder of Alserkal Avenue, and to the venue of the launch event, Concrete, for their important support of the Friends of the Aga Khan Museum in the Gulf and South Asia.

Friends of the Aga Khan Museum in the Gulf and South Asia, established by the efforts of early supporters living in the Gulf, will provide a small group of intellectually curious and artistically inclined members with elevated access to the Museum. This will include the ability for Gulf and South Asia Region Patrons to participate in the Museum's world-class programming, which was previously only accessible in Toronto. The Chapter will also present events and travel opportunities that generate a global dialogue in support of the Aga Khan Museum's mission to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of the contributions that Islamic civilizations have made to world heritage.

The Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, Canada, has been established and developed by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), which is an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). The Museum's mission is to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of the contribution that Muslim civilizations have made to world heritage while often reflecting, through both its permanent and temporary exhibitions, how cultures connect with one another. Designed by architect Fumihiko Maki, the Museum shares a 6.8-hectare site with Toronto's Ismaili Centre, which was designed by architect Charles Correa. The surrounding landscaped park was designed by landscape architect Vladimir Djurovic.

The Ismaili Centre, Dubai is one of six Ismaili Centres, located in Vancouver, London, Lisbon, Dushanbe, and Toronto. The Ismaili Centre, Dubai facilitates the promotion of cultural, educational, and social programs from the broadest, non-denominational perspectives. Since its opening in 2008, the Centre has hosted numerous arts, cultural, social, and educational activities in collaboration with various diplomatic missions, government and civil society organizations. A central purpose of the Ismaili Centre is to encourage mutual exchanges and understanding between diverse peoples, communities, and institutions. The Centre is, therefore, a space for broadening intellectual horizons and fostering an appreciation of pluralism. The Ismaili Centre Dubai has been a proud recipient of the prestigious 2010 Patron of the Arts Award by HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum in recognition of its contribution to Dubai's cultural landscape.

Concrete is a multi-disciplinary space conceptualised by Alserkal Avenue and the first building in the UAE to be completed by the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), founded by Rem Koolhaas. Located in Alserkal Avenue, Dubai, Concrete is an adaptable venue whose ability to metamorphose to bring creative visions to life makes it suitable for international, museum-grade exhibitions as well as events across art, design, fashion, and the performing arts.
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