Aga Khan Museum opens to public with inaugural exhibitions and performing arts programme

Two temporary exhibitions open: The Garden of Ideas: Contemporary Art from Pakistan and In Search of the Artist: Signed Drawings and Paintings from the Aga Khan Museum Collection

Performing Arts programme begins on September 20th with Routes of Andalusia and on 21st with Qalandar: Mugham, Dastgah, and Maqam

Toronto, Canada, 18 September 2014 - The Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, which is dedicated to presenting an overview of the artistic, intellectual and scientific contributions that Muslim civilisations have made to world heritage, opened its doors to the public today.

Two temporary exhibitions were also opened. The first, entitled In Search of the Artist: Signed Drawings and Paintings from the Aga Khan Museum Collection, celebrates famous artists from Iran, India and Central Asia who were active during the golden age of the art of the book: the 16th and 17th centuries.

The second of these temporary exhibitions, The Garden of Ideas: Contemporary Art from Pakistan, features the work of six internationally acclaimed Pakistani artists: Bani Abidi, Nurjahan Akhlaq, David Chalmers Alesworth, Aisha Khalid, Atif Khan, and Imran Qureshi. Through diverse media – including film, textiles, painting, site-specific installations, and photography – these artists explore the theme of the garden, which has long held significance in Muslim civilisations. Several pieces directly respond to works in the Aga Khan Museum Collection and to the Museum’s own reinterpretation of an Islamic garden (the chahar bagh) as designed by Vladimir Djurovic.

In a speech delivered at the official inauguration of the Museum, on 12 September 2014, Prince Amyn Aga Khan noted “the special role that we expect the Aga Khan Museum to play, as a gateway into the history and artistic traditions of the Muslim world – nearly a fifth of humanity – for those non-Muslims and even Muslims who wish to better understand that world. The Aga Khan Museum will play this role at a time when such a gateway is profoundly needed.”

The Museum’s Permanent Collection of over 1,000 objects includes masterpieces that reflect a broad range of artistic styles and materials. These portraits, textiles, miniatures, manuscripts, ceramics, tiles, medical texts, books and musical instruments represent more than ten centuries of human history and a geographic area stretching from the Iberian Peninsula to China. But its collection is complemented by programmes in performing arts and education.
The performing arts programme begins on September 20 with *Routes of Andalusia: David Buchbinder and Ensemble* and on September 21 with *Qalandar: Mugham, Dastgah, and Maqam*, both in the Museum’s state-of-the-art auditorium.

“The Aga Khan Museum showcases the artistic creativity and achievements of Muslim civilisations from Spain to China,” said Henry Kim, Director of the Museum. “We believe it will contribute to a better understanding of Muslim civilisations in all of their religious, ethnic, linguistic and social diversity.”

For more information about the Aga Khan Museum, its upcoming exhibitions and programming, please visit [www.agakhanmuseum.org](http://www.agakhanmuseum.org)

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**NOTES**

The *Aga Khan Museum* 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 *Aga Khan Trust for Culture* (AKTC) focuses on the physical, social, cultural and economic revitalisation of communities in the developing world, but some of its programmes, including the Museum, span both the developed and developing worlds. AKTC is composed of several individual programmes and units: the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme, which promotes the conservation and reuse of buildings and public spaces in ways that spur socio-economic development; the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, which awards a prize for architecture every three years; the Aga Khan Music Initiative, which supports talented musicians and music educators who strive to preserve, transmit and further develop their musical heritage in contemporary forms; the online architectural resource ArchNet.org ([www.archnet.org](http://www.archnet.org)) and the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The *Aga Khan Development Network* (AKDN), a private, international, non-denominational development organisation, is active in 30 countries and employs over 80,000 people globally. Its ten agencies address complex development issues, including the provision of quality healthcare and education services, cultural and economic revitalisation, micro-enterprise, entrepreneurship and economic development, the advancement of civil society and the protection of the environment. For more information, please see: [www.akdn.org](http://www.akdn.org)