



Aga Khan Award for Architecture

Turkish Project on 2019 Shortlist for Aga Khan Award for Architecture

Master Jury to decide share of US\$ 1 million prize

Istanbul, Turkey, 25 April 2019 – A restoration of the **Beyazıt State Library**, in Istanbul, has been shortlisted for the 2019 Aga Khan Award for Architecture. The announcement was made by Farrokh Derakhshani, Director of the Award, in a ceremony in Kazan, Russia, today.

For information about the other 19 projects on the shortlist, please see www.akdn.org/architecture and the full on-line press kit, which includes briefs on each project and high-resolution images: www.akdn.org/2019ArchitectureAward.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture is one of the oldest major awards in the field of architecture. It selects projects – from slum upgrading to high-rise “green” buildings – that not only exhibit architectural excellence but also improve the overall quality of life. The Award rewards architects, but also identifies municipalities, builders, clients, master artisans and engineers who have played important roles in the realization of a project.

“When an old library undergoes a restoration,” said Farrokh Derakhshani, Director of the Award, “it must be handled as carefully as an old book. The **Beyazıt State Library**’s restoration not only handled the restoration of the rare and old manuscript rooms skilfully, introducing contemporary desing elements in a historic structure, it also uncovered evidence of even earlier civilisations.”

Founded in 1884 inside a 16th century building, **Beyazıt State Library**, one of the oldest and largest libraries in Istanbul, underwent an important restoration. A reorganisation of the library space brought the public through the library, from the square to the backyard, passing through spaces devoted to the display of over 25,000 rare manuscripts and reading rooms grouped around the courtyard. The existing 1980s concrete roof, covering the courtyard, was replaced with a new structure, which filters light and provides a controlled atmosphere. The Library, now open 24/7, hosts exhibitions and cultural events. The public can admire the Byzantine remains that were uncovered during the work.

The sites will now undergo a rigorous investigation by experts who visit and evaluate each project on-site. Their reports are the basis for the Master Jury’s selection of the eventual laureates. It should be noted that projects commissioned by the Aga Khan or any of the institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) are ineligible for the Award. To be eligible for consideration in the 2019 Award cycle, projects had to be completed between 1 January 2012 and 31 December 2017, and should have been in use for at least one year.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture was established by the Aga Khan in 1977 to identify and encourage building concepts that successfully address the needs and aspirations of communities in which Muslims have a significant presence. The Award recognises examples of architectural excellence in the fields of contemporary design, social housing, community improvement and development, historic preservation, reuse and area conservation, as well as landscape design and



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improvement of the environment. Since the Award was launched 42 years ago, 116 projects have received the award and more than 9,000 building projects have been documented.

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Notes

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). It currently operates 1,000 or so programmes and institutions in 30 countries.. It employs approximately 80,000 people, the majority of whom are based in developing countries. The AKDN's annual budget for non-profit development activities is approximately US\$ 950 million. Its economic development arm, the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED), generates annual revenues of US\$ 4.3 billion, but all surpluses generated by its project companies are reinvested in further development activities, usually in fragile, remote or post-conflict regions.