

## Aga Khan Museum Set to Reopen after Three-Month Closure with New Safety Measures and Reinvented Programming

*The Museum's Rebuild 2020 program features three exhibitions highlighting human stories of strength and resilience*

**Toronto — Monday, June 22, 2020** — The Aga Khan Museum is set to reopen its door with a slew of new programming and safety measures encouraging visitors to reconnect with art and culture in an inspiring, physical-distancing-friendly environment.

Following a provincial directive allowing the reopening of museums and galleries in Toronto, the Museum, including all galleries, the Shop, and the Diwan restaurant, will open its doors on **Saturday, June 27, 2020**.

A host of new safety measures is already in place. All visitors, staff, and volunteers will be expected to follow new guidelines designed to protect everyone who steps inside the building. The flow of visitors will be controlled through the use of timed-entry ticketing, and new signage will help prevent clustering and remind visitors to maintain proper distance. The Museum has implemented enhanced cleaning protocols, installed touch-free automatic doors, and added new hand-sanitizing stations to limit the spread of germs.

“The safety of our visitors and staff is our primary focus,” said Henry Kim, the Museum’s Director and CEO. “Our intention is to make their return to the Museum a safe and enjoyable experience. For this reason, we have instituted a number of measures that don’t just comply with public health directives, but exceed them to ensure the highest standards for keeping people safe.”

In addition, the Museum has announced its redeveloped slate of programming for the year. *Rebuild 2020* channels the Museum’s commitment to reconnect and reinvigorate communities through the arts. “The world has changed, and so have we,” said Kim. “As we rebuild our lives and livelihoods over the next few months, we hope our visitors can look to the Museum as a source of hope and inspiration.”

To celebrate its reopening, the Museum is also implementing pay-what-you-can admission until July 26, 2020. Awaiting visitors will be three art exhibitions focused on the human drive to find sanctuary, make connections, and express themselves creatively in the face of upheaval and adversity. Highlights of the Museum’s Summer/Fall 2020 program include:

- **Sanctuary.** For this exhibition, 36 contemporary artists meditate on the central theme through the unexpected medium of woven rugs. These arresting artworks, including pieces by U.K.-based Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum and Canadian Brendan Fernandes, challenge viewers to think about sanctuary in the context of conflict, mass migration, and the personal quest to arrive and belong.
- **Chrysalis.** For this portrait series, artist Olga Stéfátou photographed 11 refugee women living in Greece and asked them to reflect upon their journeys to Europe. Together, image and text give the women a platform to present themselves to the world as they wish to be seen: as individuals, each

with her own reasons for leaving home, and each with her own expectations and hopes for the future.

- ***Don't Ask Me Where I'm From.*** In this innovative collaboration between the Aga Khan Museum and Luciano Benetton's Fondazione Imago Mundi, 15 artists from around the world navigate their blended identities and act as emissaries between the cultures they inhabit. All the artists use their chosen art forms — including painting, textiles, sculpture, conceptual art, multimedia, and calligraffiti — to visualize the complex ways an individual's ancestral past interacts with the realities of their present and the promise of the future.
- ***Wagner Garden Carpet.*** On loan from the Burrell Collection in Glasgow, Scotland, this piece is one of the oldest and grandest Persian carpets of its kind still in existence. Measuring an astonishing four-by-five metres, the 17th-century Iranian masterwork reveals a walled "paradise" garden, resplendent with a fountain, water channels, and a cornucopia of trees, flowers, birds, and other wildlife. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to gaze upon one of the most famous works of Islamic art.

On top of displaying works by leading contemporary artists and masters from history, the Museum will showcase new art submitted by community members from Toronto and around the world. Earlier this spring, the Museum called on art lovers to submit original photographs and short videos representing how and with whom they have found sanctuary during the COVID-19 lockdown. Participants' visuals and stories will be featured in a new interactive art display that will serve as a companion to the *Sanctuary* exhibition. The deadline for submissions is June 30, 2020. More details, including information on how to contribute, can be found at [www.agakhanmuseum.org/whatsyoursanctuary](http://www.agakhanmuseum.org/whatsyoursanctuary).

As part of *Rebuild 2020*, the Museum has modified its talks, performances, and other events to comply with physical-distancing guidelines. For example, the Lapis Benefit, an annual signature fundraising event celebrating the Museum's achievements, diverse community, and mission, will take place on September 25, 2020 and boast both in-person and virtual elements. "This year's event will incorporate all the enhanced safety measures we have enacted Museum-wide, while still delivering the intimacy and the emotional connection people expect from a fundraising gala," says Robert Baker, the Museum's Chief Development Officer. "Connecting cultures through the arts starts with building and nurturing relationships, which is what Lapis is all about."

**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.

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