

The United Arab Emirates Ministry of Culture Enters a Memorandum of Understanding with the Aga Khan Museum

The groundbreaking agreement will create exciting educational and developmental opportunities for young curators, artists, art practitioners, and museologists

Toronto, Canada – January 10, 2024 – The United Arab Emirates Ministry of Culture and the Aga Khan Museum announce a formal collaboration emanating from the **Al-Burda Grant Programme**, to advance their shared and individual missions, priorities, and strategic objectives. Effective from December 19, 2023, to December 18, 2026, the Memorandum of Understanding will enrich educational and artistic initiatives for young professionals, intellectuals, art practitioners, and students through collaboration, and empower opportunities for learning and artistic creativity through training and mentorship.

Fuelled by a shared mandate of pluralism, inclusivity, and diversity, the collaboration aims to present a diverse range of offerings at museums and cultural institutions in the United Arab Emirates and the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto for young curators, artists, art practitioners, and museologists.

The innovative opportunities will include: annual residencies for young, emerging art and performing art practitioners; educational opportunities, such as learning initiatives and educational workshops for Emirati high school, post-secondary students, and young professionals focused on intercultural dialogue, local museology, museum education, and Islamic art; professional internships and fellowships for young Emirati curators and museum professionals in the areas of curation, conservation, museum education, collection management, and academic research.

His Excellency Sheikh Salem bin Khalid Al Qassimi, Minister of Culture of the UAE, said, “Guided by the ambitious vision of our wise leadership, the Ministry of Culture in the United Arab Emirates is committed to creating opportunities for professionals and intellectuals across the country – to sharpen their skills, expand their knowledge, and embrace and develop their creative ideas. The Ministry has launched a myriad of initiatives and programmes to that very end, while also working to grow and strengthen our network of partnerships to drive progress towards these strategic objectives.”

“This agreement, which we are proud to be signing with the prestigious Aga Khan Museum, brings us a significant step forward in that direction, while also presenting us with a prominent platform to share our own expertise and insight into various cultural sectors with world-renowned and likeminded institutions,” H.E. Sheikh Al Qassimi added.

“This Memorandum of Understanding is built on a joint commitment to showcase the creativity and contributions of Muslim cultures and foster intercultural learning, dialogue, and capacity building through the arts,” said Dr. Ulrike Al-Khamis, Director and CEO of the Aga Khan Museum. “We are deeply honoured by the trust invested in our Museum with this partnership, and we very much look forward to working with our Emirati colleagues.”

The collaboration was celebrated at a ceremonial signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by H.E. Mubarak Al Nakhi, Undersecretary of the UAE Ministry of Culture and Dr. Ulrike Al-Khamis, Director and CEO of the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, on the evening of December 19, 2023, at the Louvre, Abu Dhabi in the presence of H.E. Sheikh Salem bin Khalid Al Qassimi, Minister of Culture of the United Arab Emirates and Dr. Thomas L. Lentz, Vice Chairman of the Aga Khan Museum.

The Al Burda Award 2023 ceremony was attended by H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, H.E. Noura bint Mohammed Al Kaabi, Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and high profile dignitaries from the region and UAE.

About The United Arab Emirates Ministry of Culture

The Ministry of Culture works to enrich the cultural ecosystem of the UAE by supporting the country's cultural, art and heritage institutions. It provides a platform for artists and innovators, promotes cross-cultural dialogue, and delivers dynamic productions and experiences that represent the UAE's rich and eclectic culture on a national as well as international level.

About the Aga Khan Museum

[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). Through permanent and temporary exhibitions, educational activities and performing arts, the Museum's mission is to spark wonder, curiosity, and understanding of Muslim cultures and their connection with other cultures through the arts. 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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