

Reimagining the Alhambra at the Aga Khan Museum

Álvaro Siza: Gateway to the Alhambra opens July 23, 2016

Toronto, June 21, 2016 — The work of Álvaro Siza, one of today's greatest living architects, will be showcased at the Aga Khan Museum in an exhibition that explores the creative process — and genius — behind one of Siza's latest projects: the Alhambra's new Visitor Centre in Granada, Spain, entitled "Puerta Nueva" (New Gateway).

Opening July 23rd, *Álvaro Siza: Gateway to the Alhambra* invites visitors into the extraordinary mind of this Portuguese architect and recipient of the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize. Through sketches, renderings, models, videos, and interviews, the exhibition explores the collaboration between Siza and Spanish architect Juan Domingo Santos, both simultaneously inspired and challenged by the mighty Alhambra and its transformation from a modest 9th-century fortress to a luxurious palace complex and citadel, five centuries later. Today, 8,500 visitors enter this World Heritage Site each day, creating a profound need for a multi-functional place where they can access amenities, gain information, and better appreciate the Alhambra's grandeur. Siza's sensibility to the surrounding landscape of Granada, and what he calls the "enchanting atmosphere of the Alhambra," results in a design that services visitors' needs while also preparing them for the sights, sounds, and textures of the Alhambra itself. Exclusive to the Toronto showing of this international exhibition, a selection of artifacts from the Alhambra's own collection will place Siza's intervention plans into context.

Director and CEO of the Aga Khan Museum, Henry Kim, notes: "The Alhambra is the site of the last great Muslim civilization on the Iberian peninsula, inspiring countless artists and architects. With his vision for *Puerta Nueva*, Siza does the seemingly impossible: encompass the history of the Alhambra and achieve a timeless design. Only an architect of Siza's stature could take on such a feat."

On July 2, Álvaro Siza will celebrate the exhibition's Toronto launch by taking part in an interview with architect and Curator of the exhibition, António Choupina, at the Ismaili Centre, Lisbon. Complementary programming at the Aga Khan Museum will focus on the rich culture of the Iberian Peninsula during the exhibition's run. A Flamenco festival is planned for the fall performing arts season, and talks by D. Fairchild Ruggles (University of Illinois) and Judith Cohen (York University) address the cultural history and music of the region. For full details, please visit agakhanmuseum.org or call 416.646.4677.

Álvaro Siza: Gateway to the Alhambra, curated by António Choupina of Porto, Portugal, is a joint project of Aedes Architecture Forum, Berlin, and the Patronato of the Alhambra and Generalife, Granada, in partnership with the Aga Khan Museum. It is generously supported by the National Alliance of Trade Associations.

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.

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