



Building bridges to connect the world

The Aga Khan Museum in Toronto is bringing enlightenment and changing perceptions. As North America's first and only museum dedicated exclusively to the arts and cultures of Islamic civilizations, it is both a showcase for thousands of years of art and artifacts from around the world, and a catalyst for insights and perspectives into a civilization that is often misunderstood yet central to our lives today. By using art to explore and celebrate generations of cross-cultural dialogue, the Aga Khan Museum is playing a critical role in fostering understanding and building bridges across our fractured world.

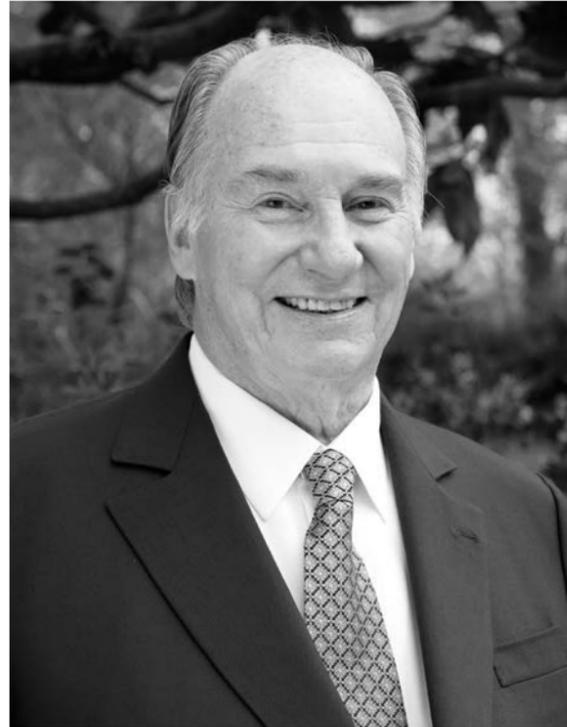
The gaps between cultures have been growing larger, not smaller. Distrust of Islam and anti-Muslim sentiment is rising in many countries of the world, including Europe, the United States, and Canada, where significant percentages of the population have unfavourable feelings toward Muslim people. The Museum is working to change these perceptions through education and art.



The important work of the Aga Khan Museum is even more urgent now than at the time of our founding. At this time, there can be no greater social imperative than to find creative ways of uniting people through education. Only through this kind of social change can we build a more enlightened society, one that works together to overcome global concerns that transcend borders and cultures.

If we are going to be the diverse, tolerant, globally-minded citizens that we aspire to be, the Aga Khan Museum must continue to grow and to innovate, reaching even more people of diverse cultures and emerging as a leader in explaining and revealing Islamic art and culture, thus unleashing the power of art to change minds.

We need the involvement of all of our communities and cultures to realize our goals.



“The aim of the Museum is to offer unique insights and new perspectives into Islamic civilizations and the cultural threads that weave through history binding us all together. My hope is that the Museum will also be a centre of education and of learning, and that it will act as a catalyst for mutual understanding and tolerance.”

—His Highness the Aga Khan



Connecting cultures through exhibitions, performing arts, and education

The Aga Khan Museum was founded by His Highness the Aga Khan, the spiritual leader of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, a community of some 15 million people in more than 25 nations around the world. His Highness established the Museum in Toronto in recognition of the city's multiculturalism and of Canada's leading role in providing a tolerant and respectful home for people of all backgrounds, faiths, and cultures. The Museum is a registered charitable organization governed by a volunteer board and is an initiative of the Aga Khan Development Network, an international network of secular agencies His Highness initiated to foster education, alleviate poverty, promote culture, restore and conserve historic cities and monuments, and facilitate research.

Not just unique in its dedication to the art and culture of Islamic civilizations, the Aga Khan Museum stands apart for its tripartite focus on collections and exhibitions, performing arts, and education. Since its opening in 2014, the Museum has reached hundreds of thousands of visitors and schoolchildren through an expansive array of exhibitions, performances, and education programs that exemplify how we are more alike than different.

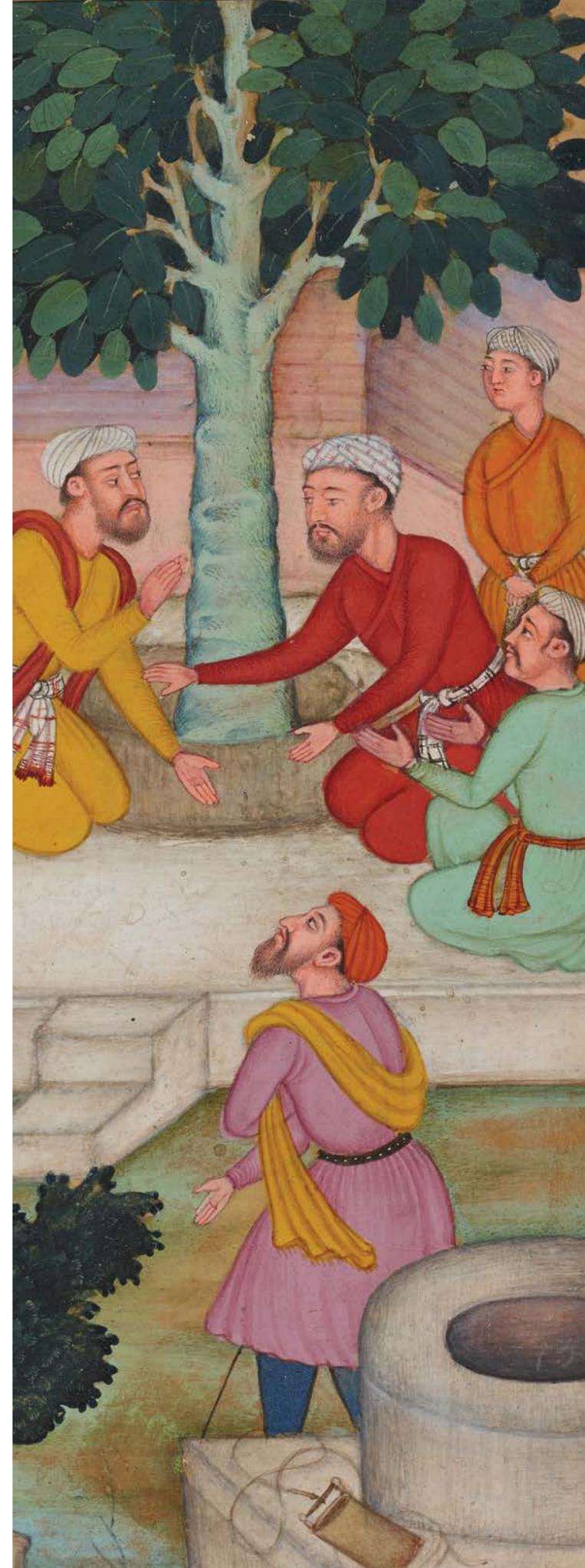
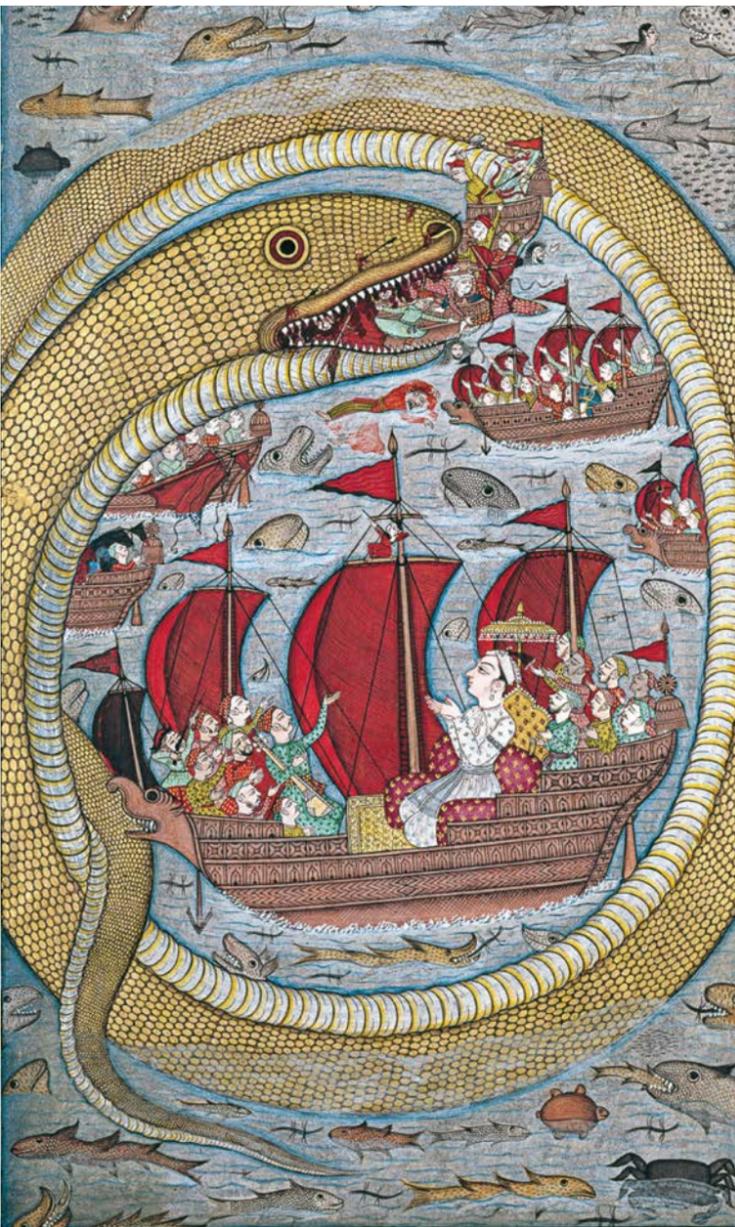




Collections and Exhibitions

Our Permanent Collection includes works on paper, along with ceramics, metalwork, architectural elements, textiles, and glass. The Collection covers more than one thousand years of artistic accomplishment by artists and artisans from the Islamic cultures that stretch from Spain to China.

We also partner with institutions around the world, including the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, the Louvre in Paris, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, to present four or five special exhibitions each year that tell the stories of people, communities and countries shaped by Muslim culture. *Rebel, Jester, Mystic, Poet*, for example, illuminated the many identities in the artwork – most never before seen in the West – of today's Iranian artists; we brought together art and artifacts from Syria's past and war-torn present in *Syria: A Living History*; we presented the ground-breaking *Lost Dhow* exhibition that revealed the ancient connections between China and the Arab world; and showcased *A Thirst for Riches*, a special exhibition of 17th century Eastern carpets, which brought to light their influence in paintings by Western artists.



Performing Arts

Within a 350-seat auditorium, in other areas of the Museum, and at partner venues like Roy Thompson Hall, local and international artists introduce audiences to unique performances of live music, dance, spoken word, theatre, and multidisciplinary arts. Poets from South Asia, Iran, Turkey, and Spain headlined the sold-out Great Poets Series; the Focus on Flamenco series explored the art form's roots in the Arab, Ladino, and Gitano cultures; indigenous throat singers Tanya Tagaq and Radik Tyulyush showcased their culturally-distinct singing traditions on the Aga Khan Museum's stage; and the Arab Jazz Series blended traditional Western jazz with jazz-inspired Arab music.



Education

The Aga Khan Museum engages more than 7,000 elementary and secondary students each year through programs like *Pattern Play in Art and Math* and *Colours in Islamic Art*, which link the Museum's exhibitions with school curricula. Lectures, studio workshops, and tours are also offered for adults, and the Aga Khan Museum partners with leading academic and cultural institutions, Harvard University, MIT, and the Aga Khan University among them, to present conferences and symposia, as well as master classes for art students.





Art is a powerful tool for changing minds. It stimulates new ideas and experiences and inspires us to contemplate our identity, celebrate our history, plan for the future, and see the world through different eyes. Through art, we have the capacity to bring together people of all races, cultures, genders and religions, to spark important dialogue, break down stereotypes, and foster social inclusivity. According to a national survey by Business for the Arts, engagement in the arts is helping to improve creativity, empathy, and understanding, and nurture healthier, more integrated communities. Increasing globalization and the emergence of new technologies makes such empathy and understanding more essential now than ever.

In a recent survey, two-thirds of Aga Khan Museum visitors said their visit contributed to their awareness of the connections between cultures. **By connecting cultures through the arts, the Aga Khan Museum is opening the eyes of tens of thousands of people each year to positive truths about a civilization that represents almost one-quarter of the world's population, includes a diversity of cultures, and boasts a rich history of contributions and connections to world heritage that have shaped and touched us all.**

Few, if any, public institutions anywhere in the world are making this kind of outcome a priority today.

The power of art to change minds



Our mission is bold.
So is our vision.

In the short period of time since its opening, the Aga Khan Museum has made significant advances toward our mission of fostering a greater understanding and appreciation of the contribution that Islamic civilizations have made to world heritage. However, changing beliefs and attitudes takes time – along with a bold vision, strategic leadership, and the support of the very community we aim to impact. The Museum’s senior leadership and Board of Directors are committed not just to maintaining our trajectory, but to accelerating it, responding to urgent global issues, and impacting even more people across the Greater Toronto Area, Canada, and beyond.



“Museums, like countries, can be responsive; they can be brave; and, despite growing instability in many parts of the world, they can build bridges between the East and the West.”

– Henry Kim, Director & CEO, Aga Khan Museum

Our vision for the future is ambitious. As the first museum in North America devoted exclusively to Islamic art and culture, we aspire to become a world-leading:

THOUGHT LEADER

We will emerge as a national and international thought leader in Islamic art and culture with an expanded array of art, artifacts, and performances; collaborations with artists, curators, academics, and institutions; and original research leading to publications, workshops, conferences, and symposia that reveal, educate, and promote dialogue among cultures.

EDUCATOR WITHOUT WALLS

We will continue to digitize our collection and performances, promote travelling exhibitions and partnerships, and introduce educational programming on the arts and culture of Islamic civilizations that can be scaled up and adopted by museums, school boards, and organizations across the country and around the world.

CENTRE FOR INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

We will grow the Museum into a place of both innovation and creativity where artists of diverse cultures and genres connect, and powerful new works of performing and visual art are conceived.

Through investments in this bold vision, the Aga Khan Museum will leverage our impact nationally and internationally, emerging as a powerful, sustainable force for critical social change, a catalyst for new connections and relationships among diverse constituent communities, and a prime source of positive truths about a people and civilization too often misunderstood and marginalized at this point in time.





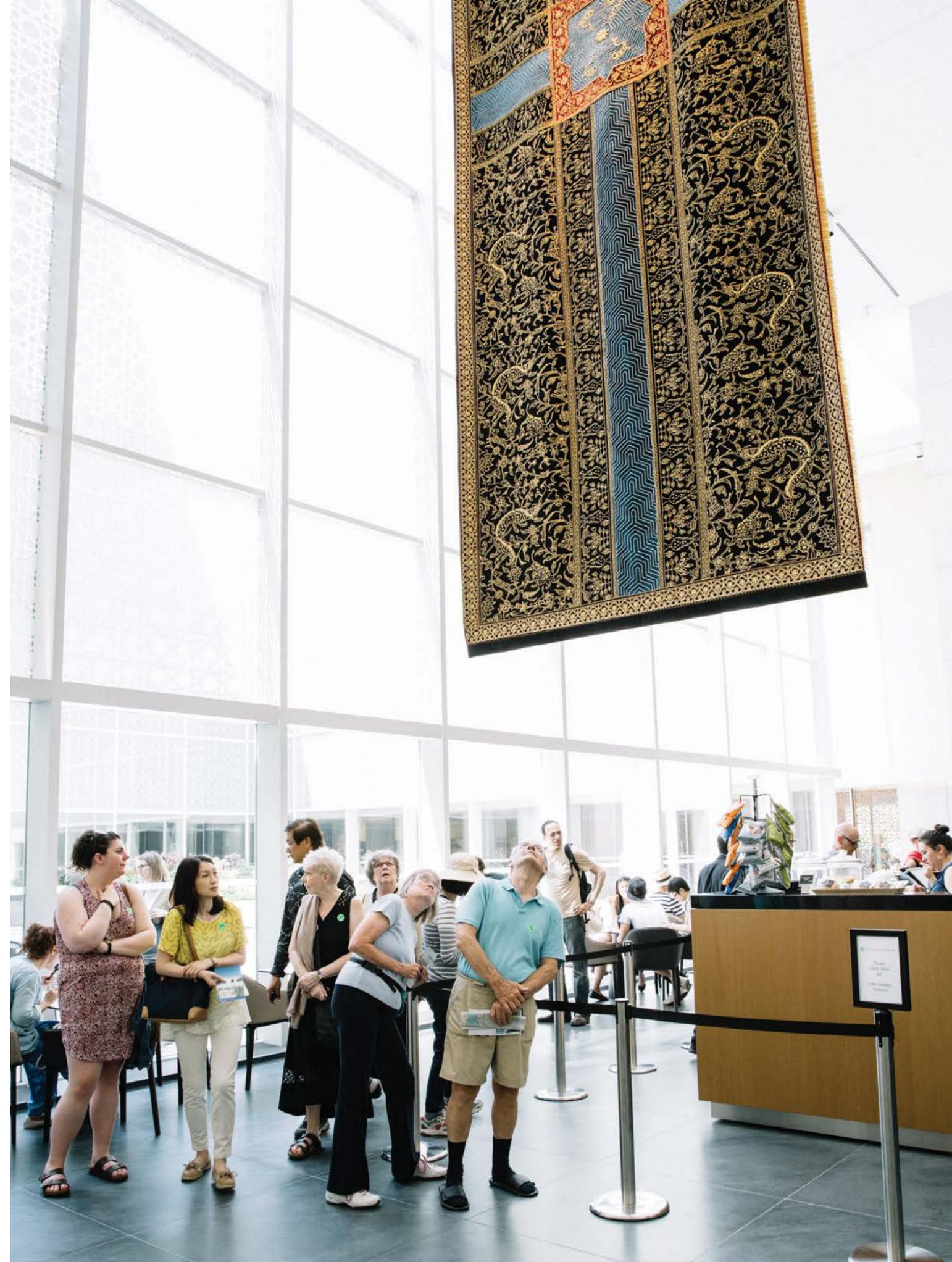
The Changing Perceptions Campaign \$25 million over five years

His Highness the Aga Khan invested generously to construct the Aga Khan Museum and provided the Permanent Collection. We continue to benefit from annual operating grants from the Aga Khan Foundation. While this solid base of support remains critical to the Museum's operations, the Board of Directors of the Aga Khan Museum firmly believes the community has a critical role to play in supporting our ongoing efforts to build bridges and strengthen global community ties.

Each year, the Aga Khan Museum's Founding Friends contribute approximately \$5 million to support the Collection and exhibitions, performing arts, and education programs.

The Museum also benefits from a significant volunteer base that supports all of its activities. Stretching beyond this support to realize our vision for the future will require new investment and donors who share our commitment to art and pluralism.

In 2017, the Aga Khan Museum launched the Changing Perceptions Campaign to fulfill our vision for the future. Together with our community, we will raise \$25 million over five years in support of three cornerstone goals: Thought Leadership, Educator Without Walls and a Centre for Innovation and Creativity.



Help us grow, create, and innovate

In founding the Aga Khan Museum, His Highness the Aga Khan envisioned a place where people of all cultures could come together and unite through the arts. It was an ambitious mission then and is even more so now.

However, the hardest things to do are also sometimes the most necessary. Countering anti-Muslim rhetoric and misunderstood prejudice and eroding the barriers between cultures is a goal shared by many. Art – the universal medium that transcends culture, language, and religion – is a powerful way to achieve it.

The Aga Khan Museum is connecting cultures through art. And now, through our \$25 million Changing Perceptions Campaign, we will grow, innovate, and impact even more people with our Collection and exhibitions, performances, and education programs.

“For the Museum to achieve its goals depends upon the same collaborations and connections it can inspire through its realization. We are calling upon all our communities and cultures to join together in celebrating our shared ideals, common humanity and love of art.”

—The Honourable Hilary M. Weston
Member, Board of Directors, Aga Khan Museum
Honourary Co-Chair, Changing Perceptions Campaign



With your gift to the Aga Khan Museum, you
can unleash the power of art and culture to
unite people in the face of adversity to spread
peace through understanding.

We hope you will join us in Changing Perceptions.

