

Aga Khan Museum Launches Digitized Manuscript Collection Portal with Contribution from the Government of Canada Museums Assistance Program - Digital Access to Heritage Component

The innovative digitization project represents a significant advancement in sharing cultural heritage by making historical manuscripts more accessible

Toronto, ON – July 22, 2024 – With the contribution of the Government of Canada Museums Assistance Program - Digital Access to Heritage component, the Aga Khan Museum has leveraged digital technology and bilingual content to provide accessible cultural heritage learning opportunities by digitizing 12 historical manuscripts. Set to continue its growth beyond the launch of the online portal on July 22, 2024, the project will allow global access to the Museum’s manuscript collection both online and in person through online interactive readers on the newly designed website, as well as through in-gallery readers, which will be used in future exhibitions.

The 12 manuscripts, containing more than 3,000 pages and 500 paintings, include significant works such as two early volumes of the *Canon of Medicine* by Ibn Sina. Translated into Latin in the 12th century, the *Canon of Medicine* was a core of medical education curricula in Europe through the 18th century, making it among the most important texts in the history of medicine.

By digitizing the manuscripts, the Museum has developed unique bilingual interpretive content that will be available to all Canadians and global audiences via online interactive readers. The portal, which can be accessed on July 22 by visiting agakhanmuseum.org/collections, will allow visitors to immerse themselves in the Museum Collections. Alongside some of the most important texts in the history of medicine, visitors will be able to view manuscripts that include beloved poetry by 13th-century Persian poet Rumi, a comprehensive work of natural history from the medieval Islamic world, an astronomical treatise, stories from the *Book of Kings (Shahnameh)*, and striking illustrations and paintings.

“Through this significant funding opportunity from the Government of Canada, the Aga Khan Museum can now provide global audiences and learners a window into the great Muslim scientific minds of the past, who were instrumental in expanding medical scholarship and making groundbreaking discoveries,” said Dr. Ulrike Al-Khamis, Director and CEO of the Aga Khan Museum.

The Digital Access to Heritage component of the Museums Assistance Program (MAP) provides funding to heritage organizations to digitize collections, develop digital content, and enhance their capacity in these areas.

“Digitizing museum collections promotes access to culture, heritage, art, and history. By supporting the Aga Khan Museum’s initiative to digitize its unique [Collections], our government is giving Canadians a unique perspective on science and art from around the world, from the 9th to the 21st century. This digitization project will certainly enrich our shared Canadian identity,” said the Honourable Pascale St-Onge, Minister of Canadian Heritage.

The digitization of the collection has been made possible in part by the Government of Canada. La numérisation de la collection a été rendue possible en partie grâce au gouvernement du Canada.



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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