

## **New Exhibition Marking the Aga Khan Museum's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Illuminates the Omnipresence and Impact of Light**

*Light: Visionary Perspectives will take visitors on an immersive exploration of the centrality of light and its significance as a unifying symbol for the world*

TORONTO, ON – July 2, 2024 – Marking the Aga Khan Museum's 10th anniversary, [Light: Visionary Perspectives](#), the Museum's newest major exhibition opening on July 13, 2024, will explore light's multifaceted impact. Featuring contemporary installations by prominent international and Canadian artists, including Anila Quayyum Agha, Tannis Nielsen, Olafur Eliasson, Kimsooja, and Anish Kapoor, the exhibition delves into how light shapes history and continues to influence our perceptions, emotions, and understanding of the world. These installations illustrate various physical properties and symbolisms of light, showcasing the unseen force's universal ability to unite individuals, inspire empathy, and highlight the significance of diversity.

Extending beyond the galleries, *Light: Visionary Perspectives* will also explore how light interacts with the building's architecture and design. In a letter to Pritzker Prize-winning architect Fumihiko Maki, His Highness the Aga Khan highlighted the ephemeral yet essential qualities of light, setting the tone for the building's design inspiration. From the stunning granite exterior to the shadows cast by the mashrabiya pattern on the Courtyard's surrounding glass, the omnipresence of light is felt and seen even on the gloomiest days. The notion of light was built into the Museum, serving as a metaphor for the pluralistic unity that flows through its exhibitions, performing arts programs, and educational offerings.

"As we celebrate our 10th anniversary of fostering intercultural connections, we were inspired by the original concept for our spectacular Museum building and foundational ethos," says Dr. Ulrike Al-Khamis, Director and CEO of the Aga Khan Museum. "Over the past decade, we have consistently looked to the arts to provide light and enlightenment, with the aim to contribute to more inclusive, pluralistic communities. Light, in all of its manifestations, is a powerful metaphor for the positive change that we are aiming to drive in everything we do at our Museum. This exhibition reminds us of light's power over darkness and the crucial role of creativity in showing us new, hopeful horizons. At the same time, this exhibition reflects our ongoing mission and vision, serving as a luminous reminder that art has the unrivalled power to shine a light on all that we share, bringing us together in peace and hope."

From mesmerizing mirrored sculptures that offer moments of self-reflection, to the *Opticae Thesaurus* – a significant 16th-century Latin translation of an 11<sup>th</sup>-century text on optics – the exhibition, displayed throughout the Museum’s spaces and galleries, offers a captivating glimpse into the contemporary and historical impact of light. Co-curated by the Museum’s Associate Curator Bitu Pourvash and Special Projects Curator Marianne Fenton, the installations and historical works explore all realms of light – the light of eye, mind, and heart.

“Light is one of the oldest most meaningful and profound symbols across diverse cultures and faiths worldwide. As a universally experienced phenomenon, it has forged bonds between people, past and present,” says Pourvash. “The installations and objects in the exhibition explore our shared humanity, encouraging us to experience light through the perspectives of these artists who have captured its emotional, spiritual, and physical presentations,” adds Fenton.

Highlights from the exhibition include:

- *To Breathe* – Artist Kimsooja’s kaleidoscopic installation makes the invisible visible through the use of a special film applied to the Museum’s Courtyard glass. As time and weather change, an array of rainbow colours float across the Atrium, embodying the concept of pluralism. This installation is a beautiful reminder that, despite our differences, we are all essential elements of a unified whole.
- *mazinibi’igan / a creation* – Through the striking visual dance of electromagnetic energies and a compelling narration of an Anishinaabe creation story, Tannis Nielsen’s looped video installation allows for many beginnings and endings to exist simultaneously. This cyclical format binds parallel dimensions together in an abstract layering of time and story.
- *A Thousand Silent Moments (Rain Forest)* – Inspired by objects in the Museum Collections, Anila Quayyum Agha’s installation emphasizes harmony amid seemingly conflicting elements. Visitors are invited to contemplate the ways in which they shape each other and the environment around them by being immersed in an interplay of light and shadow.
- *Opticae Thesaurus* – The Latin translation of *Kitab Al-Manazir* (Book of Optics), highlights the transmission of knowledge from the Islamic world to the Western world in the Middle Ages. The original text by 10<sup>th</sup>-century Iraqi scholar and mathematician Ibn al-Haytham showcases the revolutionary contributions of Muslim scientists to our understanding of vision and optics, which lay the foundation for many of the ideas explored in the contemporary installations within the exhibition.

*Light: Visionary Perspectives* will be on display in the Temporary Exhibitions Gallery, Museum Collections Gallery, and Atrium from July 13, 2024, to March 17, 2025.

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*To Breathe* by Kimsooja is presented through the generous support of the Faris D. Virani Fund for the Living Arts.

*A Thousand Silent Moments (Rain Forest) 2024* by Anila Quayyum Agha is commissioned with the support of Partners in Art.

### **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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