

MASTER JURY REPORT

Critical Discourse for Creative Transformations

Statement of the 1995 Aga Khan Award for Architecture Master Jury

The Master Jury for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture met three times, October 3-5, 1994; January 25-27, 1995; and June 5-9, 1995. We reviewed 442 projects, twenty-two of which were reviewed in situ by technical reviewers. The jury deliberations led to a consensus that we should bring a more critical dimension to the message of the Awards. We became convinced that the Award, having well established its pluralistic message, must move to a sharper critique of the architectural and social problematic confronting the Muslim world. Such a critique, we believe, will have relevance beyond the Muslim world and will make a contribution to the international architectural and social discourse on the eve of the third millennium.

From the 442 nominations, we selected twelve projects and grouped them in relation to three themes:

- projects that address a critical social discourse
- projects that address a critical architectural and urbanistic discourse
- projects that introduce innovative concepts worthy of attention

The emphasis on the word critical is intentional. The Award is uniquely placed to engender a critical discourse on architecture and society, more so now than ever before. Today, the virtues of pluralism are overshadowed by intolerance, and ideological pressures restrict the space of freedom so necessary for critical discourse.

It is our belief that these projects illustrate an important message for the Muslim societies of today. More importantly, we feel that these messages are of universal relevance and constitute an important contribution that the architecture of the Muslim societies of today can make to the architectural and social discourse of the world. The jury wants to highlight not only the specificity of the solutions, but also their generic contributions and replicability.

We see the role of a new critical discourse as being projective rather than retrospective and so have introduced the category 'innovative concepts', explicitly geared to encourage risk taking by future aspirants to the Award. Only thus will imaginations be unleashed to generate new ideas; and through ideas, even now, we are inventing the future.

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