

MASTER JURY REPORT

Statement of the 1998 Aga Khan Award for Architecture Master Jury

The nine members of the Master Jury for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture met three times to select the winners from the 424 projects that were presented in the Award's seventh cycle. After the second meeting, 24 of these projects were reviewed on site by a team of 12 distinguished reviewers, whose presentations made the Jury aware of the many complex aspects of each project.

From the beginning of its deliberations, the Jury was concerned with recognising projects that had a wider global context and meaning, as well as with identifying those projects that had regional relevance. It was also concerned not to duplicate messages conveyed through selections by earlier juries, thus the absence of certain types of work in this Award cycle needs to be understood in that spirit.

The Jury searched for projects which respond creatively to the new crisis situations in the world in general today and in the Muslim world in particular: demographic pressure, environmental degradation, globalisation, standardisation, ethnic tensions, the crisis of the nation-state, the struggle for democracy and human rights, and the like. This search was related to community rebuilding, on the one hand, and to the development of vital modern vernacular styles on the other. The Jury recognised that major social, economic, and political changes are taking place in the world today, and that the countries of the Islamic world are being profoundly affected by these changes. They are developing new lifestyles, cultural values, symbols, and aspirations. The relationships between classes and groups are changing, as well as those between governments and the people at large. Except for social projects, an architecture that reflects these new realities has yet to be recognised. The Award, as a result of its history, is in an ideal position to initiate this discourse.

Seven projects were selected for the Award. Two were seen to have qualities that could be of relevance to a broader, global context: the Rehabilitation of Hebron Old Town and the Slum Networking of Indore City were considered exceptional in ways that are a departure from the conventional approach to upgrading. Both share the idea of reclaiming community space from growing social, physical, and environmental degradation. In the case of Hebron, the project was initiated and managed by a community under siege.

Two projects were seen to respond in an exceptional way to specific social and environmental conditions. The Salinger Residence, an example of excellent architecture, uses local materials and skills to create a spatial vocabulary which is contemporary and yet not alienated from its specific cultural context. The Lepers Hospital, on the other hand, is sensitively designed to respond to the needs of the outcasts of society, providing them with shelter and hope while using minimum resources. Its architectural form is unpretentious, and its proportions and concepts of the highest order.

Three projects, the Tuwaiq Palace, the Alhamra Arts Council, and the Vidhan Bhavan, are important large-scale public buildings. Their form and context were regarded by the Jury as very significant in the continuous process of evolving a contemporary architectural vocabulary within the Islamic world. Their public functions and the relatively large scale of their volumes inevitably add to their importance as social catalysts within their respective societies.

The recipients of the 1998 Aga Khan Award for Architecture are:

Rehabilitation of Hebron Old Town
Slum Networking of Indore City, India
Lepers Hospital, Chopda Taluka, India

Salinger Residence, Selangor, Malaysia

Tuwaiq Palace, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Alhamra Arts Council, Lahore, Pakistan

Vidhan Bhavan, Bhopal, India