

## STEERING COMMITTEE BRIEF

The Award has an open perspective that promotes architectural projects that contribute to the transformation of the quality of life for Muslim communities. The setting of these transformations can be either urban or rural, national or diasporic. Within these contexts, the Muslim *umma* represents a pluralistic coming together of diverse values. In a world where the freedom of cultural expression is increasingly challenged, the Award aims to identify positive modes of practice that enable Muslim communities to take on the challenges of global transformation. Furthermore, the Award seeks to enable emerging Muslim communities to negotiate their role within the multicultural context of their host countries. Architecture and design provide alternative opportunities for promoting understanding, respect and reconciliation.

In its 12th Cycle, the Award will be considering projects in many Muslim societies that are at a critical political juncture. The significance of Muslims within the transnational networks of commodity production and consumption, which are expanding in emerging economies, can also be explored. The impact of such developments on local communities has been enormous, with social changes often lagging behind economic development. The impact, however, has not been uniform. Consequently, issues of equity, sustainability, scalability and good governance have become key factors that affect architecture and the built environment. But what is the effect of architecture on equitable governance? The Master Jury is urged to take these factors into consideration as part of its deliberations.

The Award is committed to the promotion of innovative responses to the built environment while recognising the importance of traditional methods and forms of architecture. The Award proposes an integrated approach that works towards the utilisation of best practices. In addition to architecture, master planning, landscape architecture and

other modes of addressing and managing urban development, public transportation and infrastructure are high priorities for the Award. Of equal importance are places of work, sites for industrial production, public spaces, residential sectors, and spaces of retail and leisure. This interpretation of the built environment must also place a high premium on the issues of economic opportunity that profoundly affect the welfare and security of vulnerable people and communities.

In the context of these conditions, it is necessary to consider projects both for their overall architectural excellence and for the way they contribute to emerging paradigms for places of work, planning conditions, public spaces, housing and spaces of domesticity, health and welfare, conservation and adapted reuse.

In addition, it would be desirable to consider the following criteria: excellence in design, workmanship and craft, risk and reliance, sustainable practices, resource management, community activism, innovative governance and specific forms and manifestations of technical knowledge.

While it seems unlikely that any individual project fulfils all the above criteria, we hope that the projects premiated by the Master Jury will exemplify the historic and enduring aspiration of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. This aspiration remains the understanding of, and appreciation for, the contributions that the built environment makes to the enhancement of the quality of life.

Excerpts from the Steering Committee brief to the 2013 Master Jury