

CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD



Specialist Art Short Course Handbook



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE
Education Programme



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Cover image:

Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2016 Winner:

Hutong Children’s Library and Art Centre Beijing, China

INTRODUCTION TO SOAS

SOAS University of London is unique. It is the only higher education institution in the United Kingdom specialising in the study of Africa, Asia and the Middle East and has the largest specialist faculty concerned with the study of these areas in the world.

Since 2006, SOAS has been delivering **specialist art short courses**, aimed at those from a wide variety of backgrounds wanting to broaden their knowledge on specialised areas in Asian art. Short courses are also ideal for those who do not have the opportunity to attend a full-time programme and are now offered both in-person and online.

For more information regarding future specialist art short courses, please visit:

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/art-short-courses>

This course is a collaboration between SOAS' School of Arts, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture Education Programme and the Barakat Trust.

Due to the generous support of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, the course is being offered free of charge, with all sessions being broadcast live and also recorded and made freely available via Youtube at:

www.youtube.com/@asianartsoas

ABOUT US

The School of Arts at SOAS is a world-leading centre for study and research involving visual and material arts, music and sound studies, curating, media industries and digital cultures of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, and their global diasporas.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture Education Programme aims to promote broader and deeper awareness among young people of the philosophy and values that underpin the efforts of the Trust. We have developed teaching materials and processes to enable the wealth of knowledge accumulated by two of the Trust's key programmes – the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme – to be shared with university and high school students, as well as a broader interested public.

The Barakat Trust is an international charity based in the United Kingdom. It supports the study and preservation of Islamic heritage, architecture, archaeology, art and culture by funding students, academic research, publications, digitisation, conservation, conferences and other impactful projects. It also undertakes and supports projects that raise public awareness about the heritage of the Islamic world.

COURSE INTRODUCTION

This unique course focuses on the modern and contemporary architecture of the Islamic world to reflect on current debates in architecture, using examples from the Muslim world to discuss global challenges and showcase thoughtful responses to issues related to architecture and the built environment.

This online course will draw upon the pioneering initiative of the **Aga Khan Award for Architecture** in helping to shape and lead the discourse on contemporary architecture over the past 40 years, and will feature leading practitioners and thinkers whose work and ideas challenge existing norms and present new alternatives to many of the current issues, and engage with them in a conversational format to encourage participants to contribute to the discussions.

Eight lectures or panel discussions will cover the following themes: Introducing the discourse on contemporary architecture in the Muslim world (focusing on the work of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture); histories of modernity; buildings and identity; addressing the challenges of an urbanising world; environmentally conscious architecture, stories of incremental change, socially responsible architecture; and the challenges and opportunities of the future.

COURSE CONVENOR

Seif El Rashidi is an architectural historian whose work focuses on the preservation of urban, architectural and craft heritage. He is currently the director of The Barakat Trust, a UK charity that supports the preservation of architectural and artistic heritage related to the Islamic world. He was formerly the project manager for Layers of London, a map-based website that enables public contributions to the diverse history of London; the Magna Carta Programme Manager for Salisbury Cathedral; the Coordinator of Durham's UNESCO World Heritage Site; a preservation planner for the Aga Khan Trust for Culture's Historic Cities Programme in Cairo, and a team member at Ahmad Hamid Architects.

He has extensive experience assessing historic urban environments, especially in the Middle East, and in developing urban conservation plans that see local communities and their urban environments as inseparable. He was also a technical reviewer for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, and has developed various educational programmes about architecture and the built environment for The Aga Khan Trust for Culture's Education Programme.

He is the co-author, with Sam Bowker, of the Tentmakers of Cairo: Egypt's Medieval and Modern Applique Craft, published by the American University in Cairo Press in 2018, and has since organised several craft exhibitions and projects to help revive the craft and raise awareness, especially in Egypt.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Session One

Modern Architecture in the Muslim World: An Overview

Farrokh Derakhshani (Director of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture)

Session Two

A History of Modernity in the Muslim World

Abdulrahman & Turki Gazzaz (Bricklab, Jeddah) and Danny Wicaksono (Studio Dasar, Jakarta)

Session Three

Buildings and Identity

Shahed Saleem (Makespace) and Anthony Folkers

Session Four

Modern and Contemporary Architecture in an Urbanising World

Session Five

Environmentally Conscious Architecture

Session Six

Taking the Long View – Stories of Incremental Change

Ghassan Chemali (Muharraq, Bahrain) and Rizvi Hassan & Khwaja Fatmi

Session Seven

Socially Responsible Architecture

Karim Ibrahim

Session Eight

The Challenges and Opportunities of the Future

Hanif Kara (Graduate School of Design, Harvard, AKT II)

MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN THE MUSLIM WORLD: AN OVERVIEW

This introductory session will provide context – discussing the state of architectural affairs of the Muslim world in the 20th century, taking a glance both at modernist movements as well as counter modernist movements, such as the work and writings of Hassan Fathy who championed an approach to architecture that was rooted in tradition.

The guest for this session, Mr Farrokh Derakhshani, director of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture will discuss the changing architectural landscape over the past 4 decades, thinking of trends, challenges, realities and dreams in the urban realm.

SPEAKER BIOS

Mr Farrokh Derakhshani is Director of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and has been associated with the Award since 1982. His main field of specialisation is the contemporary architecture of Muslim societies. He lectures widely, and has organised and participated in numerous international seminars, exhibitions, colloquia, workshops, and international competitions. He has served as a Jury member at various international competitions and schools of architecture and collaborated on a large variety of publications on architecture.

Mr. Derakhshani is trained as an architect and planner at National University of Iran and later continued his studies at the School of Architecture in Paris (UP1).

SUGGESTED READINGS

Fathy, Hassan, *Architecture for the Poor*.

Alhasani, Nadia M. "Tradition vs. Modernity: The Quest for a Cultural Identity." *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 7, no. 2 (1996): 35–41.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41757196>.

Anderson, Stanford. "Memory without Monuments: Vernacular Architecture." *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 11, no. 1 (1999): 13–22.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41757728>.

Khan, Hasan-Uddin. "Developing Discourses on Architecture: The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, the Journal 'Mimar: Architecture in Development,' and Other Adventures." *Journal of Architectural Education* (1984-) 63, no. 2 (2010): 82–84.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20778816>.

Rabbat, Nasser. "The Right To Architecture." *Thresholds*, no. 41 (2013): 98–103.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43876501>.

A HISTORY OF MODERNITY IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

This session will discuss the state of architectural affairs of the Muslim world in the 20th century, taking a glance both at modernist movements as well as counter modernist movements, such as the work and writings of Hassan Fathy who championed an approach to architecture that was rooted in a deeper understanding and appreciation of tradition.

We will be joined by three guests who will discuss modern architecture in two very different contexts: that of Saudi Arabia, where the oil boom led to dramatic urban growth and a wide array of building types to accommodate a changing urban landscape, and Indonesia, where a strong tradition of using local materials to respond to the climate led to very innovative modern architecture.

SPEAKER BIOS

Abdulrahman & Turki Gazzaz are Jeddah based architects whose work explores the boundaries between art, material research, and the built environment. Abdulrahman graduated from the University of the West of England in Bristol with a Bachelor's degree in Architecture and Planning in 2012. Turki completed a Master's degree in History and Theory of Architecture from McGill University in Montreal in 2011.

Together they founded Bricklab, an interdisciplinary design studio located in Jeddah. Their projects range from public space interventions, installations, retail, and housing. In 2018, they designed the inaugural Pavilion of Saudi Arabia titled "Spaces in Between" at the 16th Venice Architectural Biennale. Their work was exhibited in 21,39 Jeddah Arts, Al Serkal Avenue during Dubai Art Week, and Salone del Mobile in Milan.

Danny Wicaksono is an architect from Indonesia. He graduated from Trisakti University, Indonesia. He founded studiodasar an architecture design studio, in 2014, and co-founded jongArsitek! a free architecture publication, with several of his friends, in 2008. He curates architectural exhibitions and actively writing for national and International publication. As a member of Indonesian Institute of Architect, he was given an award for his contribution in Indonesia's architecture scene. He now resides in Bintaro, Indonesia and is the member of The International Committee for Architectural Critics (CICA).

SUGGESTED READINGS

Saudi Modern: A new podcast with Abdulrahman and Turki Gazzaz

<https://barakat.org/latest-news/saudi-modern-a-new-podcast-with-abdulrahman-and-turki-gazzaz/>

Colombijn, Freek, and Joost Coté. "Modernization of the Indonesian City, 1920–1960." In *Cars, Conduits, and Kampongs: The Modernization of the Indonesian City, 1920-1960*,

edited by Freek Colombijn and Joost Coté, 1–26. Brill, 2015.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76ts6.6>.

Ivkovska, Velika. “Reinventing Vernacular Traditions to Reveal National Identity: A Case Study of the ‘Macedonian Village.’” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 27, no. 2 (2016): 71–83. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24720021>.

Maneval, Stefan. “Architecture and Religious Reform: Architectural Discourse from the 1970s to the 1990s.” In *New Islamic Urbanism: The Architecture of Public and Private Space in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia*, 108–38. UCL Press, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv13xprrv.10>.

BUILDINGS AND IDENTITY

This session explores the very idea of the expression of identity in architecture – looking at both the conscious and the subconscious ways in which identities are expressed in architecture.

In this session we look at what might be thought of as the peripheries of the Islamic world: Europe, and specifically the case of British Islam, and Sub-Saharan Africa and the context of architectural identity there.

We will also reflect on how identities change over time, reflecting global, regional and very local developments.

SPEAKER BIOS

Shahed Saleem is the founder and director of Makespace architectural practice in London, especially noted for its innovative designs for faith communities. His design work has been nominated for the Victoria & Albert (V&A) Jameel Prize and the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. He is the author of *The British Mosque: An Architectural and Social History*, which informed his co-curation of the V&A pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale. In recent years, Saleem’s architectural, scholarly, and curatorial work has inspired a growing body of visual art, from painting and printmaking to public installations, including a collaborative structure for the Folkestone Triennial. His diverse creative practice is connected by an abiding curiosity about how traditions and cultures are transmitted across time, generations, and geographies. Through vibrant, eclectic compositions, Saleem examines what happens when historic forms are dismantled, displaced, and reconstructed.

Antoni Folkers (1960) is an architect and urban designer. He commenced his studies in art and art history at John Carroll University in Cleveland, USA and obtained his masters in Architecture and Urbanism at Delft University of Technology in 1986. He commenced his professional career as researcher and designer in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso before joining the Institute for Tropical Building (IFT) of Dr G Lippsmeier in Starnberg, Germany. For

Lippsmeier he became Resident Architect for East Africa in 1988. In 1992, together with Belinda van Buiten and later Geoffrey Wilks, he founded FBW Architects with offices in Manchester, Dar es Salaam, Utrecht, Kampala, Nairobi and Kigali. Since, he has been director and senior designer in the firm.

In 2001, together with colleagues Janneke Bierman, Belinda van Buiten, Berend van der Lans and Joep Mol, he founded ArchiAfrika, platform for research and news on African architecture.

Since 2006, he has been guest researcher and lecturer on African architecture and urbanism with Delft University of Technology, the University of Pretoria, FAPF in Maputo, Ardhi University in Dar es Salaam and ENSA in Mauritius, amongst others.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Folkers Antoni and Belinda Van Buiten, *Modern Architecture in Africa: Practical Encounters with Intricate African Modernity*, Springer; 1st ed. 2019 edition (8 Aug. 2019)

Marchand, Trevor H. J. "The Djenné Mosque: World Heritage and Social Renewal in a West African Town." *APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation Technology* 46, no. 2/3 (2015): 4–15. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43556448>.

Saleem, Shahed. "The Mosque in Britain Finding Its Place." In *Religious Architecture: Anthropological Perspectives*, edited by Oskar Verkaaik, 185–204. Amsterdam University Press, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wp6sx.13>.

Salama, Ashraf M. "Urban Traditions in the Contemporary Lived Space of Cities on the Arabian Peninsula." *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 27, no. 1 (2015): 20–39. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24719998>.

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE IN AN URBANISING WORLD

In this session we will focus on intelligent design solutions to common challenges, especially of land and economic scarcity, urban density, soaring housing costs and population growth. What these solutions show us is that even with limited resources, thoughtful architectural and urban interventions can be transformative.

We will focus on examples of projects that were considered for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

RELATED VIEWING

2013 Aga Khan Award for Architecture Winner - Salam Centre for Cardiac Surgery, Khartoum, Sudan

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_Q1f1e2UCM

Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2022 | Award recipient | Banyuwangi International Airport

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCd1sINPnbE>

Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2004, Sandbag Shelters

<https://the.akdn/en/how-we-work/our-agencies/aga-khan-trust-culture/akaa/sandbag-shelters>

An Architectural Journey to Jeddah

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpMTaK8g94c>

ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS ARCHITECTURE

This session will focus on architecture that is very attuned to the environment, uses local materials, and ‘touches the earth lightly’.

It is especially pertinent to think of local materials and the environment in the context of modern architecture as it is often assumed that modern architecture and the local environment are at odds – these examples are a reminder that that best examples of modern architecture draw from their environment and rather than work against it.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Cairns, Rebecca. CNN “*Meet the award-winning architect building flat-pack homes for flood victims*”

<https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/marina-tabassum-architect-bangladesh-hnk-spc-intl/index.html>

Rademacher, Anne. “Ecology in Practice: Environmental Architecture as Good Design.” In *Building Green: Environmental Architects and the Struggle for Sustainability in Mumbai*, 1st ed., 40–64. University of California Press, 2018.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt2204r4v.7>.

Robertson, Sarah. “More Affordable and More Sustainable?” *Sanctuary: Modern Green Homes*, no. 35 (2016): 80–83. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/sanctuary.35.80>.

Yasmeen Lari Interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnlgJfaJEvM>

TAKING THE LONG VIEW – STORIES OF INCREMENTAL CHANGE

In this session, we will explore how the process of incremental change and gradual evolution can be a truly beneficial one in architecture and design. We will explore what we can learn from projects that take the time to listen to people and work with them over years or decades.

We will look at two exemplary projects: urban rehabilitation in Bahrain, and Community Spaces in a refugee complex in Bangladesh.

SPEAKER BIOS

Ghassan Chemali is an urban conservation consultant working in Muharraq, Bahrain for the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities. He studied at Oxford University and at L'Ecole Supérieur Nationale D'Architecture in Paris and at the Academie Libanaise des Beaux Arts.

Rizvi Hassan and **Khawja Fatmi** are Bangladesh-based architects who have completed a number of innovative projects in their home country. Their recent works include a collection of buildings at a refugee camp in Bangladesh which was one of the winners of the 2022 Aga Khan Award for Architecture

SUGGESTED READINGS

Archidea.com, interview with Rizvi Hassan

<https://www.archidea.com/archidea-65/rizvi-hassan>

How Buildings Learn, Stewart Brand, (6 parts)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=maTkAcDbrEY&list=PLrg_Ji1S58TneckCIFNskj-Q3P2NV0pw

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ARCHITECTURE

In this session we will focus on examples of projects where local communities had a significant part in shaping the projects and where architectural projects were determined by community, low-cost architecture, and emergency architecture. We will focus on the participatory processes in architecture and design across the world.

SPEAKER BIOS

Kareem Ibrahim is one of the four founding partners and CEO of Takween Integrated Community Development, a Company now celebrating over 10 years in business. Headquartered in Cairo, Egypt, Takween has grown and developed the reputation as “experts” in participatory urban design, upgrading and development; heritage conservation and management; and urban policy research. Currently, Takween has a staff of over 50 architects, urban planners, researchers, and conservation experts.

Kareem Ibrahim is an Egyptian architect and urban researcher who graduated from Cairo University in 1995. He worked on UNDP’s Historic Cairo Rehabilitation Project. He then worked for Aga Khan Cultural Services-Egypt as the Built Environment Coordinator (1997-2010) of the Darb al-Ahmar Project, one of Cairo’s most ambitious urban revitalization programs. Between 2010 and 2017, he worked as Senior Development Manager for Al-Futtaim Group Real Estate - one of Cairo's largest real estate development projects.

He also worked as a senior expert with a range of international development agencies, including UNESCO, UNHCR, UN Women, AFD, EIB, GIZ, World Bank, USAID, and the British Museum to develop and implement various projects in areas of urban conservation and revitalization, participatory urban development, upgrading of informal areas, gender-sensitive urban design, placemaking, and development of urban policies.

In 2018, he received the Egyptian State Award for architecture (design and building for local communities in informal areas.) He was also selected as a member of the Master Jury of the 2019 cycle of the prestigious Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Björgvinsson, Erling, Erling Björgvinsson, Pelle Ehn, and Per-Anders Hillgren. “Design Things and Design Thinking: Contemporary Participatory Design Challenges.” *Design Issues* 28, no. 3 (2012): 101–16. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23273842>.

Shehayeb, Dina K., and Khaled M. Abdelhalim. “Issues Of Participation In Egypt.” *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 29, no. 1 (2012): 45–64. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43030959>.

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE FUTURE

In this final session, An Aga Khan Award Steering Committee Member, a jury member, and a project reviewer share their thoughts on the challenges and opportunities of the future with respect to architecture relation to the Muslim World.

SPEAKER BIOS

Professor Hanif Kara is a practicing Structural Engineer and Professor in Practice of Architectural Technology at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard. He is recognized for linking design, research, education and practice. He co-tutored a Diploma Unit at the Architecture Association, London from 2000 to 2004 and was a Visiting Professor of Architectural Technology at KTH Stockholm from 2007 to 2012. As Design Director and co-founder of AKT II (est. 1996), his particular 'design-led' approach and interest in innovative form, pushing material uses, sustainable construction and complex analysis methods have allowed him to work on numerous pioneering projects at the forefront of many challenges facing the built environment. The practice has won over 350 design awards including the RIBA Stirling Award for the Peckham Library, London in 2000, for the Sainsbury Laboratory, Cambridge in 2012, and for the Bloomberg European HQ, London in 2018 as well as the RIBA Lubetkin Prize for the UK Pavilion at Shanghai Expo in 2010. The practice also was awarded by Building Magazine as 'Engineering Consultant of the Year 2019'.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Architecture of Pluralism

<https://www.archnet.org/publications/14479>