

ARCHITECTURE CANADA

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RAIC honours His Highness the Aga Khan with 2013 Gold Medal

OTTAWA Nov. 13, 2013 – The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) is pleased to announce His Highness the Aga Khan as the 2013 recipient of the RAIC Gold Medal—its highest honour.

The selection of His Highness marks the first time in more than 30 years that a non-architect has been chosen to receive the Gold Medal, and recognizes the Aga Khan's extraordinary achievements in using architecture as an instrument to further peaceful and sustainable community development around the world.

The RAIC Gold Medal was established to recognize “a person of science or letters related to architecture and the arts” and these terms aptly describe a man who has dedicated his life to the betterment of society, His Highness the Aga Khan.

His Highness became the 49th Imam (spiritual leader) of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims on July 11, 1957 at the age of 20, succeeding his grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan.

He is also the Founder and Chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), whose agencies work to improve the welfare and prospects of people in the developing world, particularly in Asia and Africa, without regard to faith, origin or gender. The underlying ethic of the AKDN is compassion for the vulnerable in society. Its annual budget for non-profit development activities is in excess of US\$600 million.

The **RAIC Gold Medal** is awarded each year recognizing significant contribution to Canadian architecture.

In nominating His Highness, 2010 Gold Medal recipient **George Baird, FRAIC** noted his remarkable accomplishments in various aspects of the field of architecture as part of his broader social and economic development work, particularly the specialized cultural programming undertaken through the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. This includes the Historic Cities program, which has been responsible for the restoration of many heritage sites throughout the Muslim world, as well as the Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture is given every three years to projects that set new standards of excellence in architecture, urban and regional design, conservation and landscape architecture. The Award seeks to identify and encourage building concepts that successfully address the needs and aspirations of societies in which Muslims have a significant presence.

His Highness the Aga Khan's visionary architectural patronage has extended into Canada with such projects as the Ismaili Center in Vancouver; the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam in Ottawa; the Ismaili Centre, Aga Khan Museum and their Park currently being developed in Toronto; and an Islamic garden to be built within the University of Alberta's Devonian Botanic Garden outside of Edmonton.



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Inspired by Islamic heritage, these projects contribute to Canada's pluralistic fabric and reflect the conviction that architecture not only provides for people's physical, social and economic needs, but also stimulates and responds to their cultural and spiritual expectations.

The Gold Medal will be presented at a ceremony to be announced later this year.

Architecture Canada | RAIC is a voluntary national association established in 1907 as the voice for architecture and its practice in Canada. Representing more than 4,600 members, the RAIC is the leading voice of architecture in Canada. Its mission is:

- To affirm that architecture matters;
- To celebrate the richness and diversity of architecture in Canada; and
- To support architects in achieving excellence.

For further information on His Highness the Aga Khan or the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, please visit www.akdn.org

- 30 -

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