



MEDIA ALERT
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**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
PRESENTS
LA / ISLAM ARTS INITIATIVE**

**Citywide Exhibitions and Public Programs
Celebrate Islamic Arts and Culture**

Doris Duke’s Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape, and Islamic Art

and

Shangri La: Imagined Cities

on view at

Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery

October 26 to December 28, 2014

Los Angeles – Launching this fall, the ***Los Angeles / Islam Arts Initiative (LA/IAI)*** brings together nearly 30 cultural institutions throughout Los Angeles to tell various stories of traditional and contemporary art from multiple Islamic regions and their significant global diasporas. The celebration of Islamic art and culture has been initiated by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) in partnership with the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Community Foundation, the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), and the Barnsdall Park Foundation.

Debuting in September 2014, ***LA/IAI*** is the first-of-its-kind, wide-scale citywide initiative on Islamic arts. Anchoring ***LA/IAI*** are two connected exhibitions, ***Doris Duke’s Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape, and Islamic Art*** and the DCA-commissioned contemporary art exhibition, ***Shangri La: Imagined Cities*** to be held at DCA’s Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (LAMAG) at Barnsdall Park.

Los Angeles’ substantial populations from areas with strong Islamic roots make LA a compelling location for this initiative. ***LA/IAI*** casts a wide net, being inclusive and welcoming, with art as its central focus. The term “Islamic art” includes work created by non-Muslim artists from Muslim-dominant countries, work by Muslims creating art in non-Muslim dominant countries, and work by artists culturally influenced by Islam. Designed to build a greater understanding of the role of Islamic arts, ***LA/IAI*** seeks to stimulate the global conversation in connection to cultural, political, and social issues.



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From September through December, DCA is collaborating with nearly 30 partner institutions and community organizations throughout Southern California to present an innovative and inspiring mix of complementary cultural programs. Among them are: **The Getty, CalArts, REDCAT, the Goethe-Institut, Japanese American Cultural Community Center, Islah LA, and Discostan** which will host video installations, scholarly symposia, films, concerts, theatrical productions, and other activities.

“Los Angeles is a global city, and we’re proud to showcase Islamic Arts through this citywide initiative,” said **Mayor Eric Garcetti**. “The *Los Angeles / Islam Arts Initiative* will offer engaging exhibitions and programs that showcase our city’s cultural richness and spark dialogue.”

LAMAG is the fifth and final mainland stop on the national tour of a major traveling exhibition chronicling how tobacco heiress Doris Duke came to amass an impressive collection of Islamic artworks from throughout the Islamic world. *Doris Duke’s Shangri La* also showcases how she went on to commission architect Marion Sims Wyeth to build her *Shangri La*, the five-acre estate in Honolulu to house the collection.

Organized by the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, *Doris Duke’s Shangri La* was masterminded by curators Donald Albrecht and Thomas Mellins, who interwove architectural documents and vintage photographs along with more than 60 objects from the collection including ceramics, textiles, jewelry, paintings, tile panels, and full-scale architectural elements, to demonstrate a distinct balance between the house and its collection. Interspersed among these artifacts are works by six former artists-in-residence at *Shangri La*, who blend Islamic tradition and 20th-century modernism. A book of stunning new color photographs of the home and gardens taken by nationally recognized Los Angeles photographer Tim Street-Porter accompanies the innovative exhibition.

The DCA-commissioned companion exhibition, *Shangri La: Imagined Cities*, provides a critical juxtaposition to *Doris Duke’s Shangri La* through the presentation of contemporary works that produce a multiplicity of worlds, interpretations, and investigations without ignoring the implications of organizing around particular geographic or religious lines. The exhibition is produced by Baghdad-born **Rijin Sahakian**, a guest curator selected by DCA for her intimate knowledge of the contemporary art scene and pioneering work in the Middle East. Ms. Sahakian’s ambitious curatorial project, along with a companion catalogue, explores issues of travel, mobility, and collection making while reflecting on the journeys that inspired and ignited Doris Duke’s Islamic Art collection. The exhibition provides a powerful framework for discussions around the politics of production and acquisition, and the mechanisms of global capital, power, and violence in the circulation and “making of” individual identities and aesthetics.

“Los Angeles is perhaps one of the epicenters of visual constructions regarding Islam and the Middle East, through both its film industry and its large Middle Eastern and Islamic populations,” says Ms. Sahakian. “This makes LA a ripe environment to examine these narratives and how they are formed, disseminated, and circulated.”

Imagined Cities artists and their respective works will explore these themes through the mediums of video, installation, works on paper, and photography. Artists include: **Haig Aivazian, Jananne Al Ani, George Awde, Taysir Batniji, Charles Gaines, Mariam Ghani, Gelare Khoshgozaran, and Adrian Paci**. DCA is also collaborating with CalArts to offer Ms. Sahakian an opportunity to develop the *Shangri La: Imagined Cities* exhibition further as a visiting faculty member at CalArts in the 2014 winter semester.



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Serving as the LA/IAI Project Director, **Olga Garay-English** secured the final stop of *Doris Duke's Shangri La* in Los Angeles and expanded the initiative by developing the idea of commissioning a companion contemporary art exhibition with a prominent guest curator, and creating broader related programming with a wide range of local partners.

LA/IAI Project Manager, **Amitis Motevalli**, combining her experience as an exhibiting contemporary artist with her work in LA's communities as the director of DCA's William Grant Still Arts Center states, "Art is a great vehicle to ignite dialogue and ensure the complex voices of the communities are heard, seen, and experienced. With significant Islamic populations in Asia and Africa and their diasporas, Los Angeles is a compelling location for this multi-faceted initiative."

The LA / Islam Arts Initiative is presented by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) with major support from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Community Foundation, the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), and the Barnsdall Park Foundation.

About the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

The **Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)** generates and supports high quality arts and cultural experiences for Los Angeles' 4 million residents and 40 million annual visitors. DCA advances the social and economic impact of the arts and ensures access to diverse and enriching cultural activities through: grantmaking, marketing, development, public art, community arts programming, arts education, and building partnerships with artists and arts and cultural organizations in neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles.

DCA's operating budget and managed portfolio totaled \$56 million in fiscal year 2013/14. It consisted of: \$13.4 million in City related and indirect cost allocations; \$10.5 million in Transient Occupancy Tax funds; \$9 million in one-time City funding; \$9 million in funds from the Public Works Improvements Arts Program (PWIAP); \$7.5 million from the Private Arts Development Fee Program (ADF); and \$6.3 million in private and public funds raised from foundation, corporate, government, and individual donors.

DCA significantly supports artists and cultural projects through its Public Art Division by administering a portfolio that totaled \$16.5 million in PWIAP and ADF funds in FY13/14. Of this amount, typically 15% to 20%, or between \$2.5 and \$3.3 million, was attributable to artists' fees.

DCA's Marketing and Development Division has raised \$34 million over the last 12 fiscal years to re-grant to LA-based artists and arts and cultural organizations, and to support DCA's special programming and facilities. DCA also grants approximately \$2.3 million annually to 268 artists and nonprofit arts and cultural organizations through its long-established Grants Administration Division. Additional special project support of more than \$1.5 million is also awarded annually for a total of approximately \$3.8 million invested each year in LA's creative community.

DCA provides arts and cultural programming through its Community Arts Division, managing numerous neighborhood arts and cultural centers, theaters, historic sites, and educational initiatives. DCA's Marketing and Development Division also markets the City's arts and cultural events through development and collaboration with strategic partners, design and production of creative catalogs, publications, and promotional materials, and management of the culturela.org website visited by over 3 million people annually.