



MAIMONIDES  
INTERFAITH  
FOUNDATION

## PROFESSOR NASSER D. KHALILI & THE KHALILI COLLECTIONS

Professor Nasser D. Khalili PhD, KCSS, KCFO is a world-renowned scholar, collector and philanthropist, who has often been called the 'cultural ambassador of Islam' by leaders of Muslim countries.

After completing his schooling and national service in Iran he moved to the United States of America in 1967, where he continued his education. In 1978 he settled in the United Kingdom.

Since 1970 Professor Khalili has assembled, under the auspices of The Khalili Family Trust, eight of the world's finest and most comprehensive art collections: Islamic art (700–2000), Hajj and the arts of pilgrimage (700–2000), Aramaic documents (353–324 bc), Japanese art of the Meiji period (1868–1912), Japanese kimono (1700–2000), Swedish textiles (1700–1900), Spanish damascene metalwork (1850–1900) and Enamels of the world (1700–2000). Together, the eight collections comprise some 25,000 works. Each of the eight collections is on its own merit the largest and most comprehensive in the world. The Khalili Collections will be fully represented in a series of 88 books, including exhibition catalogues, of which 70 have already been published.

These eight collections have been shown in over 40 major museums worldwide. Furthermore, the Khalili Collections have been major contributors to more than 50 international exhibitions. Selections from the eight collections have been exhibited in museums such as the British Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum and Somerset House (London); the State Hermitage Museum (St Petersburg); the Alhambra Palace (Granada); the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York); Portland Art Museum (Oregon, USA); and the Van Gogh Museum (Amsterdam), amongst many others. *The Arts of Islam. Treasures from the Nasser D. Khalili Collection* was shown in 2007 at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (Sydney), in 2008 at the Emirates Palace (Abu Dhabi), in 2009 at the Institut du monde arabe (Paris), and in 2010 at De Nieuwe Kerk International Exhibition Centre (Amsterdam). *Enamels of the World 1700–2000* opened at the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg in December 2009.

Professor Khalili is a frequent lecturer. He has also made notable contributions to the scholarship of Islamic art, having founded in 1989 the Nasser D. Khalili

Chair of Islamic Art and Archaeology at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, the first of its kind in the world devoted to the decorative arts of Islam. Professor Khalili is a graduate, Associate Research Professor and Honorary Fellow of the University of London. He is Honorary Fellow of Wolfson College, and member of the Chancellor's Court of Benefactors, University of Oxford. He has also supported a research fellowship in Islamic art at the University of Oxford. The Khalili Research Centre for the Art and Material Culture of the Middle East at the University of Oxford was opened in 2005 by the Chancellor, Lord Patten, thanks to the significant endowment of the Khalili Family Trust, whose sustaining support continues to the present day, notably with an additional substantial donation in 2011. He was appointed to the International Board of Overseers at Tufts University, Massachusetts, USA in 1997, and in 2003 received the honorary degree Doctor of Humane Letters from Boston University, also in Massachusetts.

In May 2005, he also received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of the Arts London. In early 2011, The Trust endowed The Nasser D.Khalili Visiting Professorship in Islamic studies at Queens College, City University of New York, where he graduated in the early 1970s.

In 1995, Professor Khalili founded the Maimonides Interfaith Foundation ([www.maimonides-foundation.org](http://www.maimonides-foundation.org)), a charity which promotes peace and understanding between the three great monotheistic faiths, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. As chairman of the Foundation, he is leading a major education project for all primary schools in England and Wales: Maimonides Interfaith Explorers ([www.interfaithexplorers.com](http://www.interfaithexplorers.com)), which is solely funded by the Nasser D. Khalili Charitable Settlement. It was launched at the Central London Mosque in the presence of its patrons HRH The Duke of York and HE The Ambassador of the UAE representing HH Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak al Nahyan, United Arab Emirates Minister of Culture, Youth, and Social Development, to coincide with the celebrations of HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. Senior politicians and religious leaders representing the monotheistic faiths were also present.

He has been awarded many other honours, including Trustee of the City of Jerusalem, and in 2007 the High Sheriff of Greater London Award for his cultural contribution to London. He is Knight Commander of the Royal Order of Francis I (KCFO). He is exceptional in having received knighthoods from two Popes. His Holiness the late Pope John Paul II honoured him as Knight of the Pontifical Equestrian Order of St Sylvester (KSS) and His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI further elevated him to Knight Commander in the said order (KCSS) for his work in the pursuit of peace, education and culture amongst nations.

In 2012, he was further honoured in this field by UNESCO, as a Goodwill

Ambassador. In 2014, he was the recipient of the Dialogue of Cultures Award at the French National Assembly.

## **HONOURS AND AWARDS**

- 2014 Laureate of the Dialogue of Cultures Award
- 2013 Queens College President's Medal in recognition of his outstanding service to humanity
- 2012 UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador
- 2010 Queens College President's Award
- 2009 Knight Commander of the Pontifical Equestrian Order of St Sylvester (KCSS)
- 2007 High Sheriff of Greater London Award
- 2006 Member of Chancellor's Court of Benefactors, Oxford
- 2005 Honorary Fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford
- 2005 Honorary Doctor of the University of the Arts London
- 2004 Knight of the Pontifical Equestrian Order of St Sylvester (KSS)
- 2003 Knight Commander of the Royal Order of Francis I (KCFO)
- 2003 Honorary Degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, Boston University
- 1996 Trustee of the City of Jerusalem
- 1991 Honorary Fellow, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London