



## THE DORIS DUKE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF KONRAD NG TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DORIS DUKE'S SHANGRI LA

**HONOLULU, HI, November 9, 2015** — The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation today announced the appointment, following a nationwide search, of Konrad Ng as executive director of Doris Duke's Shangri La, a center for the study of Islamic arts and cultures. Ng is an accomplished scholar, curator and arts administrator who brings national experience to the organization and holds strong ties to Hawai'i and its creative culture. Most recently, Ng has been serving as the director of the Smithsonian Institution's Asian Pacific American Center in Washington, D.C.

"We are thrilled to welcome Konrad Ng to Shangri La and excited by his dynamic vision for continuing the legacy of Doris Duke," said Ed Henry, president of DDCF. "Konrad is well poised to contribute to the global conversation about Islamic arts and cultures and, more broadly, human creativity as a means for increasing knowledge and understanding across our complex society. His experience at the Smithsonian and within Hawai'i will further enrich the unique dialogue that is stimulated by the important collections and beauty of Shangri La."



"I am honored to have been chosen to lead Shangri La and help advance the work of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation," said Ng. "Shangri La is an extraordinary part of Hawaii's art and design landscape. It is a privilege to have the chance to build on the incredible work done by Shangri La's staff, volunteers and partners. I look forward to working with the team and with the community at large to further local, national and global dialogues about creativity and culture."

As director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, Ng oversaw all programmatic, philanthropic and operational activities. He led a pan-institutional team that produced collaborative exhibitions, public programs and digital initiatives about Asian Pacific American history, art and culture. During Ng's tenure, the center worked with Smithsonian museums and offices to create groundbreaking work that included *Portraiture Now! Asian American Portraits of Encounter*, *I Want the Wide American Earth: An Asian Pacific American Story*, *Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation*, *The Smithsonian Asian-Latino Project* and several digital heritage programs. Ng established the Smithsonian's first curatorial positions in Asian Pacific American Studies and in Digital and Emerging Media. He also led the center's participation in the Smithsonian's first organization-wide, \$1.5 billion fundraising campaign and organized the center's first Advisory Board consisting of leaders in academia, business, culture, philanthropy, politics and technology. Ng also coordinated the Smithsonian's efforts to organize and increase its work and research in Hawai'i and the Pacific.

Prior to his work at the Smithsonian, Ng was an assistant professor in the Academy for Creative Media at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa where he taught and researched the critical and cultural study of cinema and digital media forms. Ng was also the first curator of film and video at the Honolulu Museum of Arts. As curator, he programmed the museum's Doris Duke Theater and contributed to the museum's contemporary multimedia exhibition projects. Ng was also a film programmer for the Hawaii International Film Festival, the largest film festival in the Pacific.

Ng continues to publish scholarship about the intersection between creative media and the production of Asian and Asian American cultural identity. He received his Ph.D. in political science at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, where his dissertation explored the political aesthetics of Asian cultural identity in film and video; his Master of Arts degree in cultural, social and political thought at the University of Victoria, BC, Canada; and his Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy and ethnic studies at McGill University in Montreal, QC, Canada.

Beginning March 2016, Ng will lead Shangri La's work in promoting the mission of the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art (DDFIA), which is to promote the study and understanding of Islamic arts and cultures. He succeeds Deborah Pope, the first and previous executive director of Shangri La, in bringing Shangri La and its collection of Islamic art and arts programming to the wider public.

## **ABOUT SHANGRI LA**

Originally conceived by Doris Duke as a seasonal residence, Shangri La is now a center for the study of Islamic arts and cultures. Situated on a spectacular, five-acre, ocean-side property in Honolulu, Hawai'i, it is open to the public for guided tours and offers residencies for contemporary artists, such as visual artist Shahzia Sikander and jazz composer Amir ElSaffar, and for scholars, such as David Roxburgh, the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor of Islamic Art History in the Department of Art and Architecture at Harvard University, and Linda Komaroff, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's Curator of Islamic Art. The center also hosts a variety of educational programs, lectures, performances and occasional symposia and events, which have included meetings of the East-West Center's Senior Journalists Seminar and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Ministers' Dinner among many others.

Built from 1936 to 1938, Shangri La overlooks the Pacific Ocean and Diamond Head and houses Doris Duke's collection of Islamic art. Of the many homes that Duke inhabited, Shangri La is the only one that she built from the ground up and filled from the inside out.

Doris Duke decided to build a seasonal home in Honolulu after her honeymoon in 1935, which took her through the Muslim world for the first time and included an extended stay in Hawai'i. Finding herself captivated by Islamic art and architecture and enamored with Hawai'i, Duke designed her new home in collaboration with American architect Marion Sims Wyeth to evoke the beauty and character of each.

The five-acre complex integrates a 14,000-square-foot house, a playhouse and a pool, comprising a series of interlocking spaces, both indoors and out: rooms, courtyards, lanais, terraces, gardens and numerous water features. While design and early construction were underway, Duke traveled extensively in the Middle East, visiting historical monuments and providing the architect with photographs of architectural elements to be incorporated into Shangri La's design. She also placed large commissions with contemporary artisans in India, Morocco, Iran and Syria to create art and architectural elements, utilizing traditional forms, patterns and means of fabrication. Throughout Shangri La, traditional Islamic art and architectural forms blend with a modernist sensibility; for example, the contrast between the ornate Moroccan living room ceiling and the adjacent glass wall that fully retracts into the basement is a key example of the synthesis of tradition and modernism that defines the house's aesthetic.

For nearly 60 years, Doris Duke continued to collect Islamic art, ultimately forming a collection of about 2,500 objects, many of which are embedded into the structure of the house. Iranian ceramic tile panels, carved and painted ceilings from Morocco, *jali* (perforated screen) doors and windows, and textiles and carpets create a living environment of Islamic art and architectural decoration. Shangri La is now nationally recognized for its high artistic value and as one of Hawaii's most architecturally significant homes.

*Doris Duke's Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape, and Islamic Art*, the first comprehensive exhibition of collections from Shangri La, recently concluded a nationwide tour of seven cities and was accompanied by a sumptuously illustrated book published by Skira-Rizzoli. For additional information about Shangri La, please visit [www.shangri lahawaii.org](http://www.shangri lahawaii.org).

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