"Usually when we comment on buildings, we criticise the architect and design team for the result. We seldom take into account the role the private patron, government body, or planning authority has played in the realisation of that project. Thus it is not only the design professional who must be encouraged, but also the other decision makers who must seek contemporary solutions that are sensitive to the regional and cultural characteristics of the Islamic world. We may have the means, but do we have the right attitude or the taste to allow those inspired, intelligent, and creative members our Islamic world to strive for solutions? Can we be courageous or brave enough to support them when they do? ...

"Many of us here speak several languages, and I am sure we would agree that our ability to communicate in several tongues sometimes impedes our expressing ourselves clearly in any one of them. If our command over several languages can erode our precision of expression, I wonder how much more quickly our eyes lose their ability to discern the integrity of a visual language. The undiscriminating exposure to many different kinds of visual languages must not lead to blindness. Surely one day we will be asked why we have done nothing to develop our own system of a physical environment rather than replacing it wholesale with a garble of other languages."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 1978 Welcome Address, First Seminar, The Aga Khan Award For Architecture (Aiglemont)

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