

Khalili Research Centre for Art and Material Culture of the Middle East

The Khalili Research Centre (KRC) for the Art and Material Culture of the Middle East opened in its new premises, 2-4 St John Street, Oxford, in July. The centre was opened by **Professor Nasser David Khalili** in the presence of **Lord Patten of Barnes**, the Chancellor of Oxford University.

The KRC was created following a £2.3 million benefaction from The Khalili Family Trust. It brings together for the first time Oxford University's research and teaching in Islamic art, archaeology and material culture, by establishing a community of scholars and students at the heart of the University, near the Sackler Library, the Oriental Institute and the Ashmolean Museum.

The KRC brings together some of the world's leading scholars in the fields of Islamic art and material culture, whose expertise ranges from ceramics and metalwork, painting and iconography, textiles and carpet studies, to archaeology, numismatics, monetary history, and the history of Islamic medicine and science, as well as the interaction between Islamic cultures and their neighbours from the Mediterranean to Southeast Asia.

The KRC is also the home



Professor Nasser David Khalili (right) with Lord Patten, former British Governor in Hong Kong and present Chancellor of the University of Oxford at the opening of the Khalili Research Centre for the Art and Material Culture of the Middle East, Oxford. Below: Dr Khalili with the Centre's plaque at the opening ceremony



of an ambitious project to convert the University's photographic archives of Middle Eastern art and archaeology into a modern digital archive that will provide an indispensable resource for research and teaching.

The KRC becomes the hub for undergraduate and graduate teaching in

Islamic art and archaeology not just in the Faculty of Oriental Studies but also for students in Archaeology and Anthropology, Byzantine Studies, Classical Archaeology and Ancient History, History, and History of Art.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University, **Dr John Hood**, said the creation and

endowment of the KRC not only guarantees provision for the subject in perpetuity but will also establish a firm basis for its future growth. "We shall use it as a means to raise funds to endow existing posts, to create new posts, and – most importantly – to establish scholarships and bursaries for students," he said.

Dr Jeremy Johns, the first director of the KRC, said the KRC plans to build upon the University's present strengths in Byzantine and Islamic art to expand into the art and material culture of Arabia, Central Asia, Iran, Northeast Africa and the Jewish diaspora, in order to create the world's most comprehensive centre for the study of the material and visual cultures of the Middle East from Late Antiquity to Islam. "We also intend to improve the range and depth of our provision in Islamic art by extending to the Maghreb, India and Southeast Asia," he said. "Above all, if we are to attract the best students and young scholars, we must create more bursaries, scholarships and research fellowships. The importance of this project is primarily academic, but not exclusively so, for the study of art and material culture transcends the ethnic, linguistic and religious divisions that plague the modern Middle East. The KRC is founded on the common ground of material and visual culture shared by all the great traditions of the region."

For more information about the centre, visit the KRC website: www.krc.ox.ac.uk

Visit

www.eapgroup.com

for Diary, News and extended Listings, updated regularly