

Exhibition: LIVING UNDER THE CRESCENT MOON
IVAM Centre Julio González
June 17th to August 15th 2004

Curator: Mateo Kries,
Alexander von Vegesack, Director del
Vitra Design Museum

Organised by: Vitra Design Museum

Travelling to: Vitra Desing Museum de Berlin
July 2003 - January 2004.
IVAM Valencia
June-August 2004
Vitra Desing Museum Weil am Rhein
January - May 2005

From 17 June to 15 August 2004 the Institut Valencià d'Art Modern (IVAM) is presenting the first major exhibition to make an in-depth exploration of domestic culture in the Arab world, both in the past and in the present. "Living Under the Crescent Moon", produced by Vitra Museum, reveals the interiors of tents of the Tuareg and Bedouin nomads, rural settlements such as the Moroccan kasbahs, modern constructions by architects such as Hassan Fathy, Pierre Khoury and Elie Mouyal and splendid houses with patios in Marrakech, Cairo and Damascus.

To approach this wide variety of lifestyles the exhibition presents an extensive selection of architectural models, dwellings, photographs, films and household objects, divided into four sections: nomad domestic cultures, the home in sedentary rural populations, the home in the traditional Arab city and the influence of western modernity since the middle of the nineteenth century.

This classification allows us to look at the relationships between living context, domestic form and commonly used objects. The exhibition is presented in chronological order, beginning with nomadism as the oldest way of life and ending with modern influences, which are increasingly defining the reality of the Arab world.

The visitor can enter dwellings and discover the rich tradition of Arab habitats, which provide samples of surprising modernity and have a wide range of solutions that harmonise with their own traditions. Architects such as the Egyptian Hassan Fathy and the Moroccan Elie Mouyal have included a large number of these solutions in their own constructions, combining them with elements of modern architecture. The designs for houses by Arata Isozaki or Studio 65 in the Arabian Peninsula and the Institut du Monde Arabe by Jean Nouvel in Paris bear witness to the importance that the Arab world now has for international architecture.

The show also presents the drawbacks of radical modernisation of Arab architecture, the decline of entire districts in the cities, the depopulation of the countryside and the uniformity of some dormitory towns.

The exhibition is sponsored by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is a collaboration with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Geneva and the Fondation Arabe pour l'Image in Beirut and is subsidised by the Berlin Cultural Fund.

The catalogue published to accompany the exhibition contains essays by renowned specialists on Arab traditions such as Eugen Wirth, Stefano Bianca, Annegret Nippa and Mateo Kries, and spectacular photographs by Deidi von Schaewen.