

Date 22 April 2010

PRESS RELEASE

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum announces its upcoming transformation:

"Towards a Museum of Hope"

(Geneva) – **The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum (MICR) has commenced its transformation and selected three internationally-renowned designers for the new permanent exhibit. The current permanent exhibit, which focuses primarily on the history of the Red Cross itself, will be restyled into various thematic spaces that illustrate modern humanitarian action. The renovation, expected to take approximately one year, will begin in June 2011.**

"The nature of humanitarian action has changed and communication channels have evolved. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum (MICR) should reflect these realities," Roger Mayou, director of the museum, told the press today.

The planned design for the new permanent exhibit includes an introductory zone and three thematic areas, entitled: **"Defending human dignity"**, **"Reconstructing the family link"** and **"Refusing fatality"**.

An international jury* led by Luc Hafner, president of the museum's Foundation Board, selected, from a pool of nine candidates, the three designers who will develop these new areas. The skill of the chosen designers is equal to the MICR's ambitions: to become the museum that reveals the challenges of humanitarianism.

Brazilian architect and designer **Gringo Cardia**, known for both Rio de Janeiro's Oi Futuro and its Telecommunications Museum, is set to design the area focused on the defence of human dignity.

Francis Kéré of Burkina Faso, celebrated for his strong support of durable, modern architecture in Africa, will design a vivid, moving space dedicated to reconstructing the family link.

Shigeru Ban, a talented visionary in Japanese architecture and renowned for infusing his architectural works with poetry – such as the "Paper Arch" project at New York's MOMA or the Centre Pompidou-Metz – will focus on designing the area entitled "Refusing fatality".

"We are delighted to have engaged the interest of such esteemed designers from different continents, for our project. We had hoped for this diversity. At this early stage, we are exploring their ideas and concepts, but we are certain that these ideas will be transformed into attractive projects that will ensure the museum's future success," said Luc Hafner. As requested, the three designers will integrate contemporary works of art into their designs.

The “**Atelier Oï**” in La Neuveville, Switzerland, will be coordinating the work of the three designers. “It is truly a wonderful opportunity to work so closely with such great names in the field of architecture,” enthused Patrick Reymond, one of the Atelier’s architects. The Atelier will also be handling the design of the areas dedicated to current events, as well as temporary exhibitions.

The Museum’s transformation will begin in June 2011. The current permanent exhibition will be open until work commences.

++++

Quotes from the three designers

Gringo Cardia

“It is fundamental that this exhibition should have the mission of changing people in relation to how they act in the world, using the activities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent as an example. The exhibition, through its use of spatial and artistic displays, added to true life stories, will ensure a visit is a pivotal moment in people’s lives”.

Francis Kéré

“Throughout the past, mankind has always been willing to return to its roots and remain close to nature. That is still the case today. This reconciliation with the environment allows human beings to look forward and move towards a sustainable future. The exhibition accordingly aims to reveal the various aspects of this topic by involving the visitor on different sensory levels.”

Shigeru Ban

“Creating a coloured and warm space with natural material will relate to the importance and expectations of prevention as a key part of the Red Cross mission. It can further be a sensitive experience to sit and get together around a round table for a session of role play regarding prevention.”

Members of the Jury

Mr Luc Hafner, President of the Museum’s Foundation board
Mr Aurel Aebi, architect at Atelier Oï in La Neuveville (Suisse)
Mr Walter Anderau, member of the Museum’s Foundation Board
Mr Sergio Cavero, architect at Architectures Générales in Zurich
Mr Michel Côté, Director of the Confluence Museum in Lyon
Ms Catherine de Marignac, member of the Museum’s Foundation Board
Mr Roger Mayou, Director of the Museum
Mr Klaus Vogel, Director of the Deutsches Hygiene-Museum in Dresden

Contact :

Musée international de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Corinne Liardon
Chargée des relations publiques
Tél : 022 748 95 01 – courriel : c.liardon@micr.org