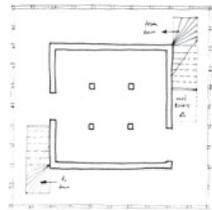




ARCHITECTURE + ART

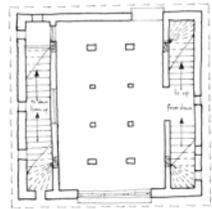


Level Four

Samples of exhibition artefacts:



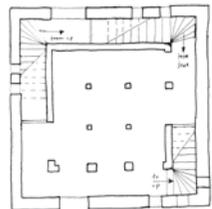
Reminiscences



Level Three



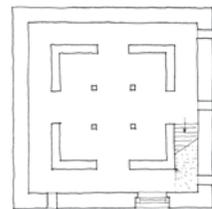
Artefacts



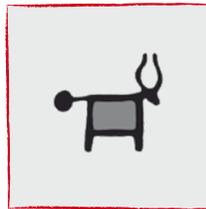
Level Two



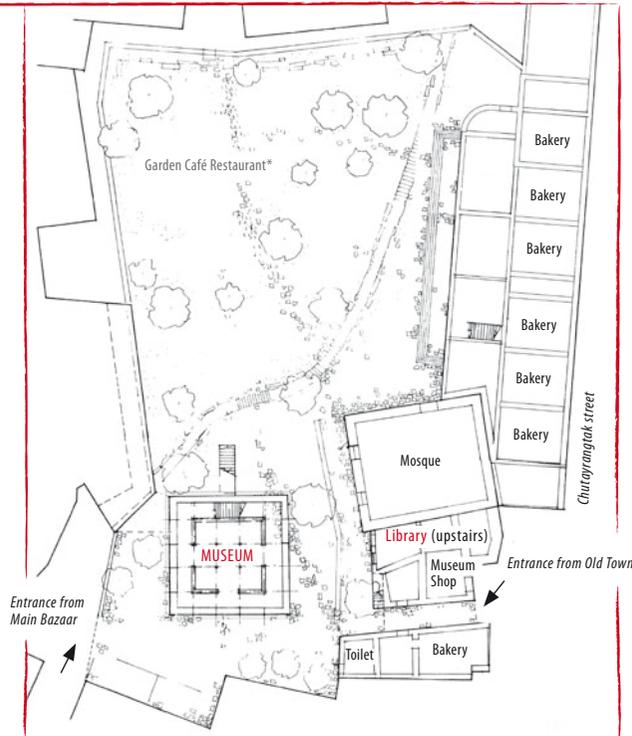
Fabrics



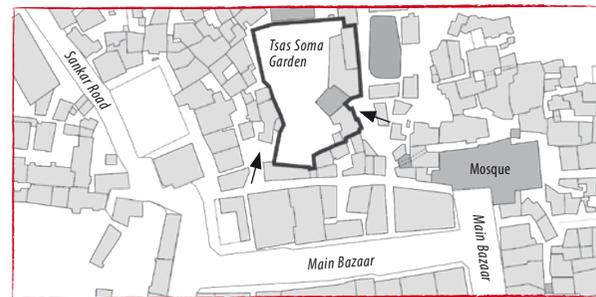
Level One



Petroglyphs



\*in planning



Central Asian Museum, Tsas Soma, Chutayrangtak, Leh 194101  
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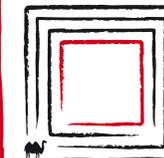
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CENTRAL ASIAN MUSEUM LEH



The Central Asian Museum Leh and the Trans-Himalayan Research Library are supported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Jammu & Kashmir State, the Shelly-and-Donald Rubin Foundation, Max Ma, the China Exploration & Research Society (Hong Kong), Virginia Yee and the Embassy of Finland in New Delhi.



CENTRAL ASIAN MUSEUM LEH



## CONCEPT

For centuries, Ladakh has been an important crossroads of Central Asian caravan trade. Like few other regions, Ladakh's culture has been shaped by the transmission of goods and ideas from such disparate regions as Tibet, Yarkand, Kashmir, Afghanistan and city states like Samarkand and Bukhara, connected by the various branches of the Silk Road.

The political events of the mid-20th century in the region have put an end to cross-border trade for the time being, plunging Ladakh into relative geographic and cultural isolation.

The Central Asian Museum Leh has been set up to commemorate this important facet of Ladakh's history, and to educate the public about it.

Mainly sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Jammu & Kashmir State, the Museum is currently being built in the Tsas Soma Gardens, on land where the caravans used to camp. Ladakhi king Senge Namgyal gave permission to some traders to build Leh's first mosque on these grounds. After Tibet Heritage Fund (THF) in cooperation with the Anjuman Moin-ul Islam society restored the mosque in 2007, the idea for the museum was launched by the Director of J&K Tourism, Saleem Beg, and eminent Ladakhi historian Abdul Ghani Sheikh. The museum was conceived and designed by André Alexander and the THF Ladakh team, with participation of the Habitat Unit, School of Architecture, Berlin University of Technology, with important input from local artisans and international volunteers. Construction by THF started in 2008.

A committee to run the museum was formed, registered as the Society for the Preservation of Trans-Himalayan Art and Culture. Presided by A. Ghani Sheikh, members include Nazir Khan, Dr. Mohammed Deen, Captain A. Qadir, Mohammed Ayub and THF's André Alexander, and additional advisors Saleem Beg, Monisha Ahmed and Janet Rizvi. Alexander, A.G. Sheikh & the THF team are currently designing the permanent exhibition.

The museum is designed in the shape of a Tibetan-Ladakhi fortress tower, with a contemporary edge. The square ground plan is based on ancient Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim places of worship, with a circumambulation corridor that becomes a passage to the upper floors. Each of the four floor levels has a different architectural interior, reflecting the thematic organisation of the building. Mainly traditional Ladakhi construction materials of stone, timber and mud have been used. Each piece of granite stone was individually shaped by masons on site. Ladakhi carpenters have carved timber elements that reflect local, Kashmiri and Tibetan designs.

The exit opens to the Tsas Soma gardens, an idyllic oasis in the center of Leh, with ancient willow trees and a water channel.

Preview opening is in August 2011, with the first artefacts on display, art installations from Liechtenstein and a temporary exhibition of historic photographs of Ladakhi caravan trade.

Full opening is scheduled for July 2012.

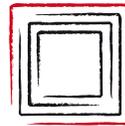
The affiliated Trans-Himalayan Research Library has opened in June 2011.



View of the completed Museum Aug. 2011.

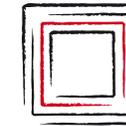


Ground floor exhibition space.



**LEVEL ONE / LADAKH**  
ལྷ་ཁོང་གོ་བླ་ ལ་དྭགས་

The ground floor level is the Ladakh floor, and serves as introduction. There will be the large map of Central Asia, and a definition of the purpose of the museum. The map shows the different trade routes converging on Leh. This floor also informs about the history of Ladakh, from the earliest signs of human civilization manifested in petroglyphs, through the reigns of the Ladakhi kings up to the present. On display will be artifacts connected with the daily life of caravan traders, and traditional Ladakhi household items.



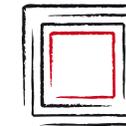
**LEVEL THREE / TIBET**  
མཚུངས་ཐོག་ བོད་ཡུལ་

The third floor level is the Tibet floor, here there will be artefacts from the Lhasa-Leh trade, the bi-annual Ladakhi Lopchag mission to Lhasa, and information about the Buddhist culture, art and architecture of Ladakh.



**LEVEL TWO / CENTRAL ASIA**  
ཧི་མ་ཤི་ཐོག་ ལ་ཆེ་ཡུལ་

This is the Central Asian floor, here will be the items of Central Asian Muslim states and regions, such as dresses, carpets, and other handicrafts and trade items, as well as general information about Muslim culture. The regions featured include Baltistan, Kashmir, Altashar (today Chinese Xinjiang) and Uzbekistan.



**LEVEL FOUR / BALTISTAN / CHANGING EXHIBITIONS**  
བཞི་ཐོག་ ཡར་དང་འོ་རྒྱུག་

The fourth floor level has an open gallery on the outside, allowing a 360 degree view over Leh and central Ladakh. The central room, in Baltistani architectural style, serves for changing exhibitions and multi-media installations. The first exhibition will consist of historic photographs depicting Central Asian caravan trade, from the collection of the Alkazi Foundation for the Arts in Delhi and the Herrnhuth Archive in Germany.