Yemen’s Taiz National Museum Reopens After Four Years of Closure
Yemen’s historic institution this week re-opened, following a restoration of its exterior and roof

The Taiz National Museum closed its doors in 2016 amid the ongoing civil war

DUBAI: Established in 1967, Yemen’s Taiz National Museum closed its doors in 2016 amid the ongoing civil war.
The six-year-long conflict in the country has resulted in hundreds of thousands of casualties and the destruction of many historic sites and cities across the nation, including the museum situated in the southern city of Taiz, which was destroyed in a fire caused by shelling from Houthi rebels.

Finally, four years later, the historic institution this week re-opened, following a restoration of its exterior and roof.

The restoration was made possible by a $130,000 grant from the British Council’s Cultural Protection Fund as well as a private US donor, awarded to the World Monuments Fund (WMF) Britain in late 2018 and signals a glimmer of stability and calm to the war-torn country after a Houthi coup in Sanaa led to a devastating war.

The move was an attempt to preserve and protect the institution’s artifacts from damage and looting from rebel fighters after the museum’s housed items, which included items belonging to the last Yemeni Imam, Ahmed Hamid Al-Deen, as well as 1,000-year old manuscripts and a ceremonial turban that belonged to an ancient king all succumbed to flames.

The restoration of the institute was done by Yemen’s General Organization of Antiquities and Museums (GOAM) from April to November.
With restricted air travel to and from Yemen, WMF arranged for the GOAM staff to drive to the French Centre for Archaeology and Social Sciences in Kuwait training, where they dreamed up a restoration plan for the National Museum.

According to The Art Newspaper, WMF also provided the Taiz restoration team a camera for documentation and a computer as well as solar panels and a generator to run it when the local electricity supply failed.

Meanwhile, The Aliph Foundation, a Geneva-based non-profit fund solely dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage in conflict areas, has announced a $589,000 grant that will support the next phase: salvaging the museum’s objects buried underneath it.
Reebok’s latest campaign for the Middle East is a bold step for diversity (/node/1609506).
The latest campaign for the Reebok x Pyer Moss collaboration is one of the first to feature an all-black cast to come out of the region. Photographed by Aqib Anwar

- Eschewing traditional models, the campaign stars three non-model models who reside in the UAE
- The new campaign signals a promising new direction for the historic English fitness and lifestyle brand

DUBAI: When sportswear giant Reebok named Kerby Jean-Raymond, Pyer Moss designer, as the artistic director of the company's newest division, Reebok
Studies, in July 2019, we knew it was only a matter of time before underserved communities received international recognition.

Captured by Dubai-based photographer, Aqib Anwar, the latest campaign for the Reebok x Pyer Moss collaboration is believed to be one of the first to feature an all-black male and female cast to come out of the region.

Anwar, who was carefully handpicked by the brand over a number of other photographers presented, decided to eschew traditional models and instead tap three non-model models who reside in the UAE, Rihab Nubi, Hala Kashif and Marwan Elhussein, to star in the campaign.

“I knew that I had to select an African cast since Jean Raymond Kerby advocates for the uplifting of the black community in all of his work,” explained Anwar to Arab News.

Indeed, the new campaign signals a promising new direction for the historic English fitness and lifestyle brand, which has been criticized in the past by none other than Beyonce for a lack of diversity.
The campaign stars three non-model models who reside in the UAE, Rihab Nubi, Hala Kashif and Marwan Elhussein. Photographed by Aqib Anwar.

“Being a person of color myself, I know how much representation can mean to an entire generation of young people,” he reveals. Perhaps that’s why, he shares,
for the last two years, he’s been actively trying to shoot minorities.

“I really hope that kids of the newer generation find inspiration in seeing people like them in campaigns,” he muses.

For the images, Anwar was tasked with reimagining the collaboration’s core concept of “Sankofa”— a Twi word from a Ghanaian tribe that translates to “Go back and get it”— via artful portraits.

Once he discovered what the new collection stood for, the 30-year-old photographer realized that this was an opportunity for him to showcase a side of Dubai to the world that isn’t the usual glitz and glamour so he decided to go back to the streets where he grew up, in Deira, close to the Fish Roundabout.
It was lensed around several locations in Dubai. Photographed by Aqib Anwar

“The idea was to walk around and shoot at certain spots that stood out to me,” he shared. The photographer and his subjects walked along the paths that he would take as a kid to play football or meet up with his friends.
“The models in the shoot were integral in making the images as beautiful as they turned out,” he notes. “There was no elaborate plans on types of poses, it all came together naturally as we shot. It was real, vulnerable and powerful.”