



**DEBORAH POPE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DORIS DUKE'S SHANGRI LA,  
TO STEP DOWN AT THE END OF 2015**

**After a decade and a half of visionary leadership and an extraordinary legacy as Shangri La's first executive director, Pope announces plans to leave her post in December 2015.**

HONOLULU, HI, March 2, 2015—Deborah Pope, whose 15 years of oversight and guidance transformed Doris Duke's Shangri La from a remarkable private home into a vibrant center of Islamic arts and culture, announced today her intention to step down as executive director at the end of the year.

Under the leadership of Pope, Shangri La first opened to the public for visitation in the fall of 2002 and gradually expanded to include a variety of offerings that deepen public understanding of the arts and cultures of Muslim societies. Lectures and performances as well as residency programs featuring renowned artists, such as Shahzia Sikander and Amir ElSaffar, and esteemed scholars, such as Dr. David Roxburgh and Dr. Linda Komaroff, have greatly added to Shangri La's value and purpose as an institution. In addition to these programs and events, Pope has overseen the cataloguing, preservation and restoration of Shangri La's architecture and art collections, and with each step, made them available for public viewing. The most recent achievement on this front was the restoration of the Mughal Suite, Doris Duke's Mughal Indian-inspired bedroom and bathroom, which opened for tours in October 2014. Pope has also overseen the development of Shangri La's traveling exhibition *Doris Duke's Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape and Islamic Arts*, and its accompanying book published by Rizzoli, which is now in its fourth printing. The exhibition, which opened in September 2012, has appeared in museums in seven cities across the continental U.S. and is currently at the Honolulu Museum of Art, its final stop on the tour.

"I have had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of a true 'start up,' and I have relished every step of the way," said Pope. "It was quite visionary of Doris Duke to foresee the importance of her collection and home as a place for improving public understanding of Islamic arts and cultures and to ensure that purpose in her will. Shangri La is a uniquely wonderful set of cultural resources with a stunning site, important architecture and collections, thriving programs and ever-more potential. Thanks to the devoted and capable staff members who bring both a high level of stewardship and a commitment to public engagement to their work, Shangri La is well positioned for a change in leadership. I am proud to have been associated with the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art for so many years."

A lifelong resident of O'ahu, Pope has worked for more than 40 years in the fields of museum administration, education and historic preservation. Prior to assuming her post at Shangri La, Pope served as executive director of the Hawai'i Museums Association from 1994-2000, providing training and support to museums, historic sites, botanical gardens and cultural centers throughout the state. She previously served as director of the Mission Houses Museum, a National Historic Landmark, in Honolulu from 1988 - 1994, as assistant director from 1986 -

1988 and Curator of Education from 1978 - 1986. Pope has served as an advisor to the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Historic Hawai'i Foundation.

"It is a joy to celebrate Deborah Pope's accomplishments," said Ed Henry, president of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art. "Shangri La, now a national treasure and an international resource, started as a vision of Doris Duke and has been realized through Deborah's extraordinary work and insight. The importance of the collection, the site and the learning opportunities blossomed under Deborah's leadership. She has been a magnificent colleague and a true steward of the legacy of Doris Duke."

**ABOUT SHANGRI LA.** Built in Honolulu, Hawai'i from 1936-1938, Shangri La overlooks the Pacific Ocean and Diamond Head and houses Doris Duke's collection of Islamic art. Of the many homes that Duke inhabited, Shangri La is the only one that she built from the ground up and filled from the inside out.

Doris Duke decided to build a seasonal home in Honolulu after her honeymoon in 1935, which took her through the Muslim world for the first time and included an extended stay in Hawai'i. Finding herself captivated by Islamic art and architecture and enamored with Hawai'i, Duke designed her new home in collaboration with American architect Marion Sims Wyeth to evoke the beauty and character of each.

The five-acre complex integrates a 14,000-square-foot house, a Playhouse and a pool, comprising a series of interlocking spaces, both indoors and out: rooms, courtyards, lanais, terraces, gardens and numerous water features. While design and early construction were underway, Duke traveled extensively in the Middle East, visiting historical monuments and providing the architect with photographs of architectural elements to be incorporated into Shangri La's design. She also placed large commissions with contemporary artisans in India, Morocco, Iran and Syria to create art and architectural elements, utilizing traditional forms, patterns and means of fabrication. Throughout the property, traditional Islamic art and architectural forms blend with a modernist sensibility; for example, the contrast between the ornate Moroccan living room ceiling and the adjacent glass wall that fully retracts into the basement is a key example of the synthesis of tradition and modernism that defines the house's aesthetic.

For nearly 60 years, Doris Duke continued to collect Islamic art, ultimately forming a collection of about 2,500 objects, many of which are embedded into the structure of the house. Iranian ceramic tile panels, carved and painted ceilings from Morocco, *jali* (perforated screen) doors and windows, and textiles and carpets create a living environment of Islamic art and architectural decoration. Today, Shangri La is nationally recognized for its high artistic value and as one of Hawai'i's most architecturally significant homes. It is open to the public for guided tours and educational programs such as lectures, performances and occasional symposia. Shangri La also supports residencies for contemporary artists and for scholars researching Islamic art.

*Doris Duke's Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape, and Islamic Art*, the first comprehensive exhibition of collections from Shangri La, is concluding a nationwide tour of seven cities and is now showing at the Honolulu Museum of Art through June 7. For additional information about Shangri La, the Mughal Suite and the traveling exhibition, please visit [www.shangriolahawaii.org](http://www.shangriolahawaii.org).

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