



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture



NMEC: An Initiative for Egyptian Culture and History

First museum of civilization in the Arab world, NMEC will present a comprehensive view of Egyptian civilization from prehistory to the present day taking a multidisciplinary thematic approach designed to highlight Egypt's tangible and intangible heritage.

NMEC was created at the initiative of the Egyptian government. Its aim is to go far beyond a 'traditional' museum showcasing treasures of the Antiquity mainly targeted to foreign visitors.

Museum of a new kind, unknown so far in Egypt and the entire Middle East region, one of NMEC's main goal is to "share knowledge" and to connect with the surrounding Egyptian society as well as to offer international visitors a richer and deeper insight of what Egyptian culture can mean throughout the ages. Six major themes will help the visitors to get a better understanding of the museum's purpose: *Dawn of civilization, The Nile, Writing, State and society, Material culture, Beliefs and thinking.*

With its various collections, spanning thousands of years, numerous cultures, ruling powers, systems of beliefs, religions, aesthetic expressions, NMEC will offer an exceptional and unique visit inside the Egyptian history. Embarking all visitors in a journey within the Egyptian history and culture, NMEC will provide invaluable insights in the long history of one of the oldest countries in the world, focusing on shifts of values, major changes as well as hidden continuities and traditions up to the present day.

Major New National Egyptian Institution, NMEC will:

- Provide a dynamic and innovative vision of past and current Egyptian civilization.
- Serve as a world-wide communication centre on Egyptian civilization.
- Display and preserve for future generations exceptional collections belonging to history of humankind.
- Develop close cooperation with other Egyptian and international institutions.
- Develop new practices of cooperation and exchanges.

The conception of the building reflects several aspects of Egyptian civilization with such features: a large, square shape recalling the base of a pyramid, a gallery equivalent to a pyramid ramp, and a shaped top to emphasise the pyramid-shape of the complex.

Arata Isozaki is in charge of the interior design of the museum. He previously intervened on the interior design of the Olympic Stadium in Barcelona, The Gumma Prefectural Museum of Modern Art of Takasaki in Japan and at The MoCA (Museum of Contemporary Arts) of Los Angeles.

Reception building	surface area	13,500 sqm
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- Reception and information
- Educational services
- Museum shop
- Cafeterias, restaurants
- Auditorium, cinema
- Commercial areas

Museum building	surface area	49,200 sqm
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- Permanent and temporary exhibition galleries
- Storages areas
- Conservation laboratories and workshops
- Administration
- Services

Additional outdoor spaces	207,300 sqm
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- Museum garden and lakeside
- Archaeological walking path to the Fatimid dyers houses, the Saladin wall, and the El Fustat archaeological site.
- Archaeobotanic garden on the theme of ancient Egyptian gardens
- Outdoor auditorium and theatre for concerts, performing arts, festivals and other cultural events

Exhibition Galleries

NMEC's permanent collections will be displayed in three main types of spaces:

- **A Core exhibition** highlighting the main achievements of Egyptian civilization according to eight period of times:
 - *Prehistoric, Archaic, Pharaonic, Greco-roman, Coptic, Islamic, Modern & Contemporary.*
- **Thematic galleries** showcasing collections around six principal topics:
 - *Dawn of civilization, the Nile, Writing, State and Society, Material Culture, and Beliefs and Thinking.*
- **The Royal Mummies gallery**, which will be the climax of the visitor's experience:
 - This gallery will recreate the experience of visiting a royal tomb in the Valley of the Kings.

Collecting and Preserving Intangible heritage

NMEC wants to implement and pioneer a comprehensive strategy for collecting and preserving traditional arts and crafts once popular in Egyptian society, especially during the 19th and early 20th centuries. It will implement the best methods and means of support that will enable skilful craftsmen to practice their art. The goal is to keep these traditions alive and serve as sources of inspiration for contemporary designer.



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NMEC Chronology

- 1978** The Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt announces its intention to create two new museums:
The Nubia Museum in Aswan — to host the Nubian artefacts from the excavations carried out during the UNESCO International Campaign for the salvage of the Nubian monuments (1960-80) — and the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC) in Cairo.
- 1982** At the request of the Arab Republic of Egypt, UNESCO launches an International Campaign for the Establishment of the Nubia Museum in Aswan and the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo.
- 1983** Creation of an Executive Committee of international experts from 15 UNESCO Member States, the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), and the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), covering the fields of Egyptology, museum planning, museology, architecture and landscape architecture.
- NMEC architectural competition won by Egyptian architect, Dr El Ghazzali Kousseiba, in association with a team of designers, landscape architects and engineers.
- 1984-** During this period, priority is given to the construction of the Nubia Museum in Aswan, which opened in 1997.
- 1999** Selection of NMEC's new site in the El Fustat area.
- 2000** Prior to the construction, archaeological survey and excavations are carried on NMEC site. UNESCO revises architectural project and museological programme.
- 2002** Egypt's First Lady, Mrs Suzanne Mubarak, lays the NMEC's foundation stone.
- 2004** Construction begins.
- 2007** Collections are transferred in the storage and conservation areas of the new building.
- 2007-** Completion of the exhibition areas and installation of collections in the galleries.
- 2008**
- 2009** NMEC opens to the public.