

# Building Islam in Detroit: Foundations, Forms, Futures

An Exhibition of Research in Progress with  
Photography Installation by Visiting Sudanese Artist  
El Shafei Dafalla Mohamed

Building Islam in Detroit is an interdisciplinary research project designed to document the growth of mosques and Muslim communities in metropolitan Detroit over the last century.

So far, team researchers have visited over fifty of the city's mosques, prayer spaces, Islamic associations, charities, and schools. This exhibit offers a preliminary glimpse of the rich cultural and historical terrain in which we have worked since Building Islam was launched in May, 2004.

The panels, screen installations, and voices you will encounter here reflect several distinct ways of experiencing Islam in Detroit. Some members of our team approach mosques as architectural forms; others see them as cultural spaces, or historical processes, or aesthetic frameworks in which sacred images can be displayed and beautiful sounds can be heard. Detroit's mosques are all these things, but they are also places of communal prayer. Some of our team members have prayed in these mosques, and all of us have seen how effectively Muslim communities take shape (today and in the past) around spaces of prayer.

We hope this exhibit will help you appreciate the historical richness, diversity, and influence of Islam in Detroit. If you are a Muslim from the Detroit area, we also hope this exhibit will prompt you to participate in the Building Islam project, to improve and expand its coverage, and to make it a constructive, viable part of the communities it portrays.

