

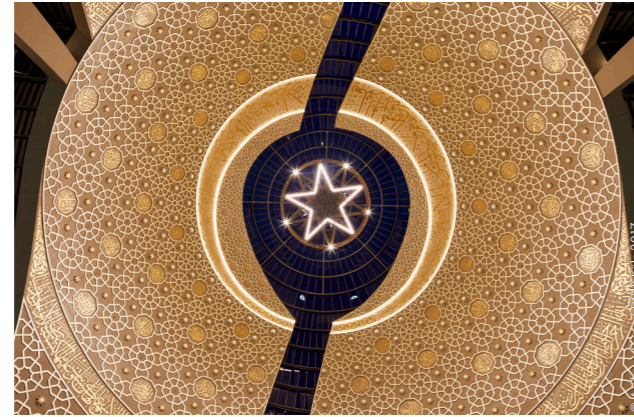


**Hüseyin Kutlu**  
Master of calligraphy art, Islam scholar

*“Everything in the cosmos revolves and praises God again and again, uninterruptedly. In the light of this truth, in the prayer hall, in suras and verses, we wanted to praise the greatness of Islamic culture. Art must have a correspondence in social life. Our culture is based on the fact that everything has a meaning, a wisdom. Of course, this also applies to our art...”*

*In the art of calligraphy, writing abandons the role of knowledge transfer. Giving knowledge is the simplest level of writing. Calligraphy and its art carry a soul, it virtually reveals the entire emotional world. Recognizing and feeling art and beauty is possible with the maturing of the human soul, because art is a matter of the heart.*

*The real art of calligraphy is to learn how to steer the pen. To guide it well, reflects the relationship between hand and pen, between hand and heart, and between heart and creator. “*



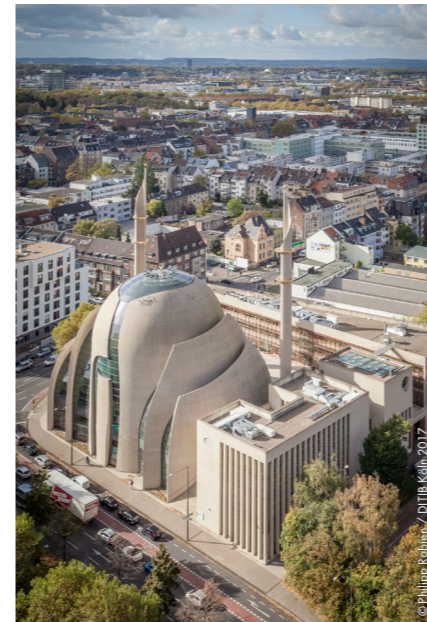
**Merih Aykaç**  
Project Consultant, Architect

*“The Cologne Central Mosque, which was eagerly awaited, enriched the silhouette of the city with its original and aesthetic values and gave its social life a further color.*

The Central Mosque, which is located in Cologne, one of the largest cities in Germany, will take an important place in relevant works of architecture worldwide because of its location, construction, interior design, and ornaments.

Because of the asymmetrical shapes of the mosque, the decorations of the interior, and the covering of its surfaces were made using nine different templates. The traditional motifs were produced directly on the construction site of the mosque and according to the latest state-of-the-art technologies. Over 1.800 plaster plates were produced to cover the inner space. Their finishing and gilding then followed mounted on the wall. This method was used for the first time especially in Central Mosque Cologne.

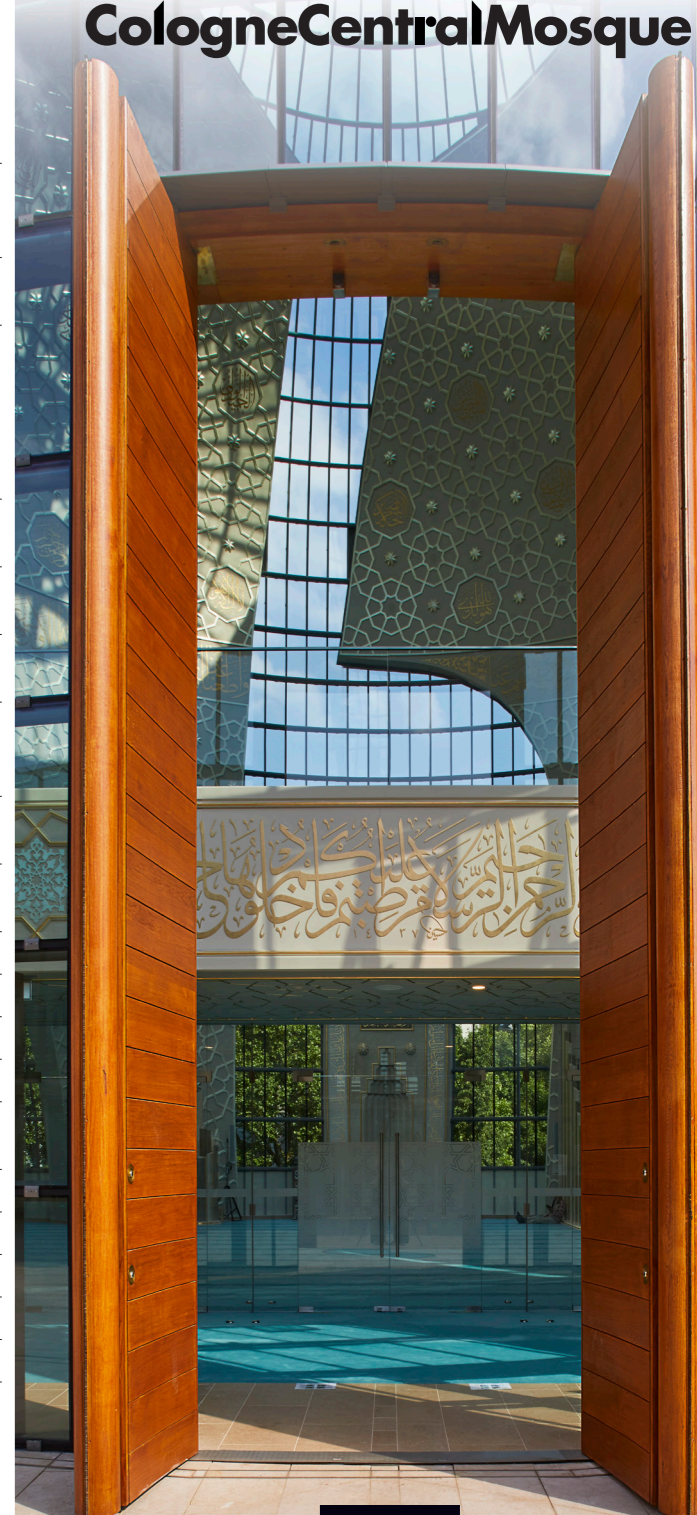
In the end, Central Mosque Cologne gives society a permanent and dignified building where people of different faiths and views meet, read books, drink tea and coffee, do their shopping, have a good time, and get religious support. This building with its mosque in the center assumes an exemplary pioneering role and forms a bridge between the past and the future.”



**Timeline of Cologne Central Mosque\***

1984	Foundation of DITIB as a union of over 200 already existing mosques nationwide. The present location of the Central Mosque in Cologne has been the ancestral seat ever since.
1996	Cologne Council decision to ask all different Muslim communities in Cologne to build and use a representative mosque together. This could not be realized for various reasons.
2001	Request of the DITIB to the city administration to build a mosque from their own resources on their own property.
2005	Semi-open architectural competition in collaboration with the “House of Architecture” with 111 national and international architectural firms participating. The 15-member jury consists of 7 DITIB participants and further 8 political, religious and public figures, experts, and architects. The winning design by Gottfried and Paul Böhm was further developed into a final draft together with DITIB.
2006	Various public measures for the presentation of the mosque construction project
5/2007	Foundation of the Mosque Building Council and open-ended decision on the development city plan amendment
4/2008	Application for planning permission to the building authority of the city of Cologne
8/2008	District Representation of Cologne-Ehrenfeld agrees to the construction project, as well as the Cologne Council of the development city plan amendment.
11/2008	Building Department of the City of Cologne issues the building permit for the Cologne Central Mosque with community center
2/2009	Last Friday prayer in the old mosque on Venloer Straße. Moving to the interim mosque in Herkulesstraße.
3/2009	Relocation of the DITIB Federal Association to Subbelrather Straße
4/2009	Start of the demolition of the old building complex
11/2009	Festive act laying the cornerstone of the new Central Mosque
2/2011	Traditional topping-out ceremony for the completion of the shell
8/2011	Dissolution of the interim mosque and use of the last provisional prayer room on the construction site of Central Mosque on Venloer Straße
1/2014	Move into the offices at the new mosque building on Venloer Straße
2/2015	Permission for use of the conference hall
6/2016	Start of interior design work on site with a duration about 3 months
6/2017	Opening of the prayer hall and the plaza
10/2017	Opening of the shopping arcade DITIB-Center
9/2018	Ceremonial opening of Cologne Central Mosque

\*short version



**CologneCentralMosque**

**Donations account:**

Turkish-Islamic Union  
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Turkish-Islamic Union  
for Religious Issues  
Venloer Str. 160, 50823 Cologne, Germany

+49 221 / 50 800 0  
info@ditib.de

www.zentralmoschee-koeln.de  
facebook.com/zentralmoschee



Old Central Mosque building (1984–2008) at the same place: religious and common homestead and first contact point for Muslims in Cologne

## A milestone in providing a spiritual home

The history of the DITIB Central Mosque Cologne begins on July 5th, 1984 with the formation of the DITIB Federal Association in Cologne. The first domicile, a makeshift back yard mosque, was an old industrial building and hence could not be recognized as a place of prayer. Due to its location in a former working class area and its state of construction, the building was inadequate for the multitude of religious, social and cultural services. These circumstances required a new construction.

The visions connected to the construction of the new mosque include diverse aspects. Primarily, that Muslims need worthy places of worship and community centers. In the process of inclusion into society, they outgrow the provisional facilities. In addition, the community and local society requested mosques to be designed more appealing in terms of their architecture to lower fear and contact barriers, and actively allow for normality.

The representative Central Mosque in and for Cologne, holding space for about 1.100 worshippers, creates a dignified Muslim community center that provides for religious, social and cultural needs and offers rooms for these specific services. Being a model project, the construction demonstrates how sustainable, vivid places emerge in the course of public discussions and collective compromise.

Only through mosques that are visible and appealing, can a conscious and confident localization in one's living environment take place. Because "those who build, will stay".



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## Visionary building culture

The Central Mosque with its design and history provides a bridge from the past to a lived present and a common future. The new mosque is fascinating with its interplay of concrete, glass and wood and is accentuated by a transparent dome 35.5m in height, which is surrounded by two filigrane minarets that are 55m high. The construction has a modern and welcoming character due to its interplay of curved concrete bowls, generous glass facade, and its unique feeling of space. In its clear design language, and choice of materials, the mosque is a development of a traditional building culture, as well as a modern one.

The generous outside staircase opens up the building to all visitors. The architectural address achieved through the outside staircase enhances the feeling that the public space runs from the inviting stairs into the building complex. This removes contact anxiety, and emphasizes the welcoming character of the building and the community. The building removes all barriers of access with its distinctive design and interaction with visitors, and at the same time increases curiosity and fascination. The lower base area (passage and conference hall) already offers a first breath of the atmosphere. Visitors can get closer, open up, and are attracted by curiosity and expectations to discover the building as a whole. The mosque construction thus opens up many new perspectives and approaches to the alleged, and at the same time very familiar, stranger.

*With its simple and memorable design language on the inside and outside, the building embodies a development from tradition to modernity.*

### Elements of the prayer hall

A mosque becomes a sacred place due to the sacred activities within it. It is not ordained or blessed. In principle, there also is not a liturgy in the construction of a mosque, although there is, of course, a traditional design type.

On the outer wooden entrance portal the confession of faith is written: "There is no god but God. (Lā ilāha illāllāh)" and "Muhammad is the messenger of God. (Muhammedun rasulullah)".

On the inside area Sura az-Zumar (Quran verse 73) is visible: "And those who had feared their Lord will be led to the Garden in groups fill, when they arrive there, and its gates will already have been opened, its keepers will say: Peace be with you! You have done well. Enter here to dwell forever."

While not a ritual requirement, a dome is a symbolic representation of the vault of heaven. Inscribed at the highest point of the dome is the Throne Verse (Ayat al-Kursi) that is said to grant spiritual protection. It is incorporated in a sickle-shaped, illuminated ribbon. The gold-plated chandelier (7m Ø) is mounted at the dome's vertex to make sure the height effect of the room is not affected.

Beneath that, God's 99 names or attributes (al-asmā al-husnā) are depicted on 59 panels. The calligraphic ribbon separating the upper from the lower area of the dome depicts parts of Sura al-Baqara (verse 285–286).

In exposed size, there are the names "Allah" and prophet "Muhammad" (peace be upon him), as well as the

caliphs Abu Bakr and Omar and on the other side Osman and Ali.

Moreover, the prophets Adam, Noah and Abraham (peace be upon them) are also depicted calligraphically.

Sura al-Hujurat (verse 13) is shown at the seam of the concrete shell.

The translation means: "O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and then rendered you nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most honourable among you in the sight of Allah is who is the most pious. Allah is Knower, Aware."

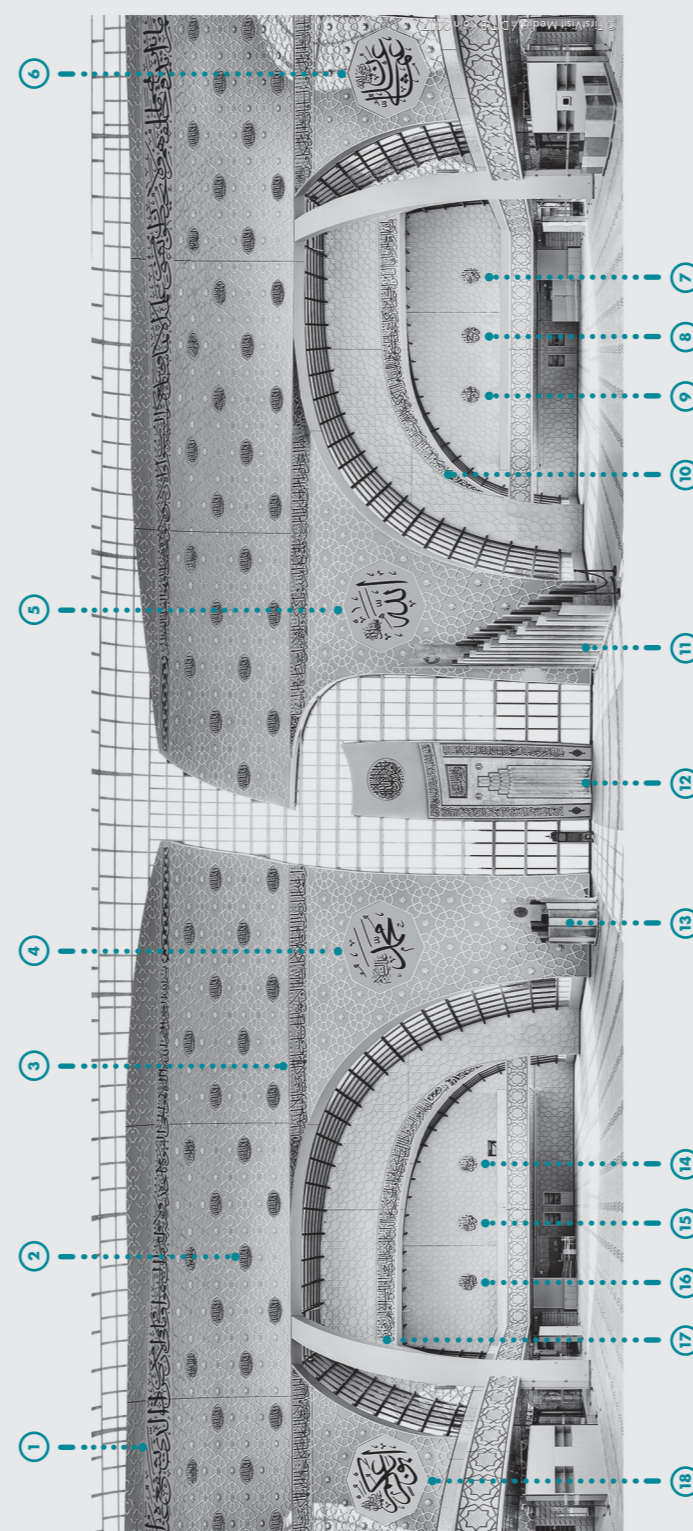
The following elements are essential in a mosque's architecture: The pulpit (Minbar), a raised platform for sermons on Fridays, the Mihrab —

a niche in the wall that indicates the direction of Mecca, and the kursi or chair, which is used by Islamic scholars. These elements are in the jurisdiction of the Islamic theologian.

Another element is the reinforced gallery (Dikka) in the back area for the call to prayer (Ezan). The skills of the muezzin requires years of vocal and technical training.

The names of the prophets Jesus, Moses, Ishmael (peace be upon them) are depicted on the left; above this, at the indented seam of the concrete shell, is Sura al-Baqara (verse 186) shown.

"When My servants question you about Me, (tell them) I am surely near. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he prays to Me; therefore let them hear My call and put their trust in me, that they may be rightly guided."



Semih Irteş  
Artist of interior design, architect

"That this building, which in a Christian city and has the status of a Central Mosque was interpreted in a modern and original way by a German architect, fitting to present technology, is an important work. The naked architecture does not always mean a lot. The meaning and the works of art with which the architecture is being furnished help this place to gain its identity of culture and civilization.

Guided by the thought of this exceptional construction project, it became clear in the meetings with Architect Böhm that the decoration of the place, the selection of materials, colors and patterns are crucial criteria. We can say that we also implemented his thoughts into our concept of decoration.

The architectural form of the mosque was imagined in a shell shape. The decorations were adjusted to the shell shapes that make up the building whereat traditions were conceptional kept. The traditional geometric system builds up the base for architectural decorations of the mosque in the whole world of Islam. The system is imagined in the symbolism of balance in nature and the expression of infinity. I want to point out that the Islamic ornaments were oriented for centuries especially on the different styles of Seljuk and Ottoman ornamental styles. Adapted in this work to the architectural forms an original and a new style was designed.

The most important interior architectural elements of the mosque, the prayer niche, the sermon pulpit and the chair of the scholar, were designed in architectural lines and launched as a completely new project. The places in the construction where the calligraphies, which give the mosque ornaments its meaning, are appropriate, were selected by us. The choice of the verses of Quran that pass on messages in mosque culture followed consultations between DITIB and calligrapher Hüseyin Kutlu. The calligraphy project was realized by Mr. Kutlu in cooperation with my studio NAKKAŞ (Istanbul).

At the center of the dome, which forms the main space of the mosque, stands the crescent, whose symbolic expression has always existed in Islamic culture, and the Quranic Throne Verse placed therein. The geometric embellishments and stars embracing the entire dome area and symbolizing the infinite, with the most beautiful names of God written in them. The dome design, like the sun, illuminates the entire world."

Paul Böhm  
Architect of Cologne Central Mosque

"I have often been asked how a Christian designs a Muslim house of worship. Of course every new construction job is a challenge for us. In this case, however, it has been particularly difficult, or particularly easy, because in both cases it is about practicing a belief.

We wondered in advance if we could apply the experience, we had to the task of building a church that we had built a few years earlier. Of course, the requirements of rite and liturgy are different for Muslims and Christians. But the need for a space that invites through its qualities to prayer, which enables intimate meditation as well as a common-grounds, which enables and supports one another, is something that all who practice a belief have in common.

In addition, the yearning for a space of transcendence, a space that removes one from the everyday, the mundane, is intrinsic to both Christians and Muslims. We tried to meet these requirements for the space by arranging six doubly curved bowls, which stand freely apart from one another. The individual bowls and their curved, arched shape downs out the rectangular form of the room, which was set transversely to the direction of prayer and was a requirement. Despite the utmost openness and transparency of the room, it creates a feeling of concentration and security. The glazed roof-lights between the shells develop an ever changing spatial experience over the changings during the day and the different seasons. Outside and inside merge into one unit. Especially in the evenings, when the room is lit, is the impression of this space carried outside.

Part of this spatial experience is the way one enters this space. A central square, which acts as a public urban space on the one hand, and as a paradise garden between the bustle of the city and the tranquility of the prayer room on the other. This is also symbolized by the fountain, which is located in the depth of the square and attracts many visitors. This is achieved by the fact that this place is located on an elevated level in the city, and is reached primarily through a spacious outside staircase. It is always important to us that such a building is able to communicate the functions it serves on the inside, through its outside appearance. It is an essential component in our understanding of urban planning: that the buildings for the community should stand out as special buildings from the texture of the city, while the secular, private buildings must fit into the texture of the city. In this project, for example, we have assigned the profane uses in a structure that fits into the texture of the surrounding city."



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