

## Louvre Abu Dhabi to welcome visitors from November

Abu Dhabi, 6 September 2017: Louvre Abu Dhabi today announced it will open its doors to the public on 11 November 2017. It is the first museum of its kind in the Arab world: a universal museum that focuses on shared human stories across civilisations and cultures.

The opening celebrations will include a wide range of public programmes, including symposiums, performances, concerts, dance, and visual arts by renowned contemporary and classical artists.

Located in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Pritzker Prize winning French architect Jean Nouvel has designed a museum city (*Arab medina*) under a vast silvery dome. Visitors can walk through the promenades overlooking the sea beneath the museum's 180-metre dome, comprised of almost 8,000 unique metal stars set in a complex geometric pattern. When sunlight filters through, it creates a moving 'rain of light' beneath the dome, reminiscent of the overlapping palm trees in the UAE's oases.

On display will be the museum's important collection of artworks, artefacts and loans from France's top museums. These span the entirety of human existence: from prehistorical objects to commissioned contemporary artworks, highlighting universal themes and ideas and marking a departure from traditional museography that often separates according to origin. In addition to the galleries, the museum will include exhibitions, a Children's Museum, a restaurant, a boutique and a café.

**His Excellency Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi) and Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC),** said: "Louvre Abu Dhabi embodies our belief that nations thrive on diversity and acceptance, with a curatorial narrative that emphasises how interconnected the world has always been. The museum represents the latest innovation in a long-standing tradition of cultural preservation nurtured by the founding leaders of the UAE.

Louvre Abu Dhabi forms one element of Abu Dhabi's cultural strategy, which safeguards our rich heritage and catalyses creativity. Investment in a vibrant cultural ecosystem supports the UAE's economic diversification and development as a modern, dynamic society. Louvre Abu Dhabi will inspire a new generation of cultural leaders and creative thinkers to contribute to our rapidly-changing and tolerant nation."

Louvre Abu Dhabi's story will begin in the "Great Vestibule", where visitors are introduced to important themes such as maternity and funerary rituals. The dialogue between works from different geographical territories, sometimes far apart, highlights similarities between the canons despite each having its own mode of expression. The galleries will be both chronological and thematic, and subdivided into 12 chapters. Displays include works from

the earliest empires, including the first figurative representations, such as the *Bactrian Princess* created in Central Asia at the end of the 3rd Millennium BCE, funerary practices of ancient Egypt illustrated by a set sarcophagi of Princess Henuttawy, and the creation of new economies with a *Decadrachm* coin of Syracuse signed by the artist Euainetos.

A gallery dedicated to universal religions will feature sacred texts: a *Leaf from the "Blue Quran"*, a Gothic Bible, a *Pentateuch* and texts from Buddhism and Taoism. The artistic exchanges on the trading routes during the Medieval and Modern periods are brought to the fore through a important number of ceramic works. Between Asia and the Mediterranean and then between Europe and America, guests will appreciate how the world's horizon gradually expanded. A set of screens from the Japanese Namban demonstrate the dialogue between the Far East and Europe. From the image of the Prince throughout the world, illustrated by an important Ottoman *Turban Helmet* to a more intimate vision of a new art of living, the museum presents an exceptional chest of drawers made in Red Chinese lacquer by Bernard II Van Risenburgh (BVRB, 1696–1766), created in France. In a section about Modernity are Edouard Manet's (1832–1883) the *Gypsy*, Paul Gauguin's (1848–1903) *Children Wrestling*, Piet Mondrian's (1872–1944) *Composition with Blue, Red, Yellow and Black*. On show will be a monumental work by the artist Ai Weiwei (1957) and his questioning of globalisation.

Louvre Abu Dhabi's first site-specific works installed in the outdoor areas by renowned contemporary artists, interact with the spirit of the museum and the fabric of the architecture. American artist Jenny Holzer (1950) has created three engraved stone walls named *For Louvre Abu Dhabi* (2017). These cite important historical texts from Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*, the Mesopotamian bilingual (Akkadian / Sumerian) *Creation Myth tablet*, and the 1588 annotated edition of Michel de Montaigne's *Les Essais*.

Italian artist Giuseppe Penone (1947) has produced several works specifically for Louvre Abu Dhabi. *Leaves of Light* (2017) is a vast bronze tree with mirrors placed in its branches to reflect the 'rain of light'. *Propagation* (2017) is a wall of porcelain tiles that depict hand-drawn concentric circles originating from the fingerprint of Sheikh Zayed, the UAE's founding father. It was produced in collaboration with the workshops of Sèvres – Cité de la céramique in France.

**Her Excellency Ms. Françoise Nyssen, the French Minister of Culture** said (today from Abu Dhabi): "The opening of the Louvre Abu Dhabi on 11 November 2017 will be a milestone in the development of the cooperation between the United Arab Emirates and France, ten years after the signature of the intergovernmental agreement. This museum is one of the most ambitious cultural projects in the world, brought to light by Jean Nouvel's exceptional architectural masterpiece. With the expertise of its cultural institutions and loans from its national collections, France is particularly

proud to play a significant role in the completion and the life of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, and so for several decades to come.

Endowed with an innovative scientific and cultural project combining the expertise of 13 French museums and institutions steered by the Agence France-Muséums, the Louvre Abu Dhabi will indeed offer visitors a unique experience: a brand new journey through major works of art from different civilisations, mirrored to reveal our common humanity. The Louvre Abu Dhabi therefore carries a message of tolerance and peace and stresses the unwavering commitment of our two countries to promote culture and education as a shield against extremism.

The inauguration week will also feature two prestigious events coproduced under the French-Emirati Cultural Programme, that was initiated over a year ago by our two countries and supported by the creative momentum generated by the Louvre Abu Dhabi. I have the hope that the Louvre Abu Dhabi will always bring this energy further, inspire new callings, promote mutual understanding, and always reinforce the strong bonds uniting the United Arab Emirates and France.”

**Manuel Rabaté, Director of Louvre Abu Dhabi,** said: “With a unique global narrative and a vision to explore the history of art in a fresh context, Louvre Abu Dhabi is a place where visitors can come to understand their own and others’ cultures. Its ground-breaking architecture complements a presentation of exceptional treasures that represent a snapshot of humanity’s creativity, and paves the way for new discussions.”

**Jean-Luc Martinez, President-director of the Louvre museum and Chairman of the scientific Board of Agence France-Muséums,** who was also in Abu Dhabi for the announcement said: “This joint announcement honours the completion of a magnificent project with which the Louvre is proud to have associated its name and to claim the spirit of it: the creation of the first universal museum in the Arab World. I am delighted to see that we are entering the final phase of a project with a spirit of openness perfectly aligned with the true nature of the Louvre: I wish that, out of the Saadiyat Island, it will be carrying out this inspiring world awareness mission to the future generations.”

**Jean Nouvel, the architect of the Louvre Abu Dhabi:** “Louvre Abu Dhabi will open in two months. After eleven years of studies and construction, guests will be able to enter this place of light, this revelatory meeting place of a number of planetary cultures beyond the seas and centuries. It is an architecture that is protective of its treasures, it is a homage to the Arab city, to its poetry in geometry and light, and, under the large cupola, it is an evocation of the temporalities which inexorably punctuate the hours, days, and the passing of our lives.”

In the galleries, important artworks on loan from 13 leading museums in France will be presented. Highlights include Leonardo da Vinci's (1452–1519) *La Belle Ferronnière* (on loan from musée du Louvre); Vincent van Gogh's (1853–1890) self-portrait (musée d'Orsay et de l'Orangerie); a rare ivory saltcellar from the Benin Empire (musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac); a Globe by Vincenzo Coronelli (1650–1718) of Bibliothèque nationale de

France; a pair of gui vessels (Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet); Jacques-Louis David's (1748–1825) *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (Château de Versailles); Auguste Rodin's

(1840–1917) *Jean d'Aire* from the group *the Burghers of Calais* (Musée Rodin); a 13th century reliquary chest (Musée de Cluny - Musée national du Moyen Âge); a Chinese *ewer of Persian shape* (Musée des Arts Décoratifs); a *Breastplate of Marmesse* (Musée d'archéologie nationale - Saint Germain en Laye); the *Apollo Belvedere* statue by Primateice (1504–1570) from Château de Fontainebleau; and *Standing Woman II* by Alberto Giacometti (1901–1966) from Centre Pompidou.

The inaugural special exhibition, *From One Louvre to Another: opening a museum for everyone*, opens on 21 December 2017, and traces the history of Musée du Louvre in Paris. Divided into three sections, the exhibition will look at the royal collections at Versailles under King Louis XIV, followed by the residency of the Academy and Salons in this palace for artists, and conclude with the creation of the modern Musée du Louvre. It will feature approximately 145 significant paintings, sculptures, decorative arts and other pieces from the collections of Musée du Louvre and Château de Versailles. The exhibition is curated by Jean-Luc Martinez, President-Director, Musée du Louvre, and Juliette Trey, Curator, Prints and Drawings Department, Musée du Louvre.

The intergovernmental agreement includes the loan of the Musée du Louvre's name for 30 years and 6 months, temporary exhibitions for 15 years, and loans of artworks for 10 years.

Tickets for the museum will cost 60 AED for general admission and 30 AED for ages between 13 and 22, as well as UAE education professionals. Free entry will apply to members of the museum's loyalty programme, children under 13 years, ICOM or ICOMOS members, journalists, and visitors with special needs (referred to visitors with determination in the UAE) as well as their companion.

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**Notes to editors:**

Follow Louvre Abu Dhabi on social media: Facebook ([Louvre Abu Dhabi](#)), Twitter ([@LouvreAbuDhabi](#)) and Instagram ([@LouvreAbuDhabi](#)).



## ABOUT LOUVRE ABU DHABI

[Louvre Abu Dhabi](#) is a universal museum on [Saadiyat Island](#) that exhibits art and artefacts from ancient times to the present day, its mission is to celebrate cultural exchange and diversity. Designed by French architect Jean Nouvel, the museum represents an Arab *madina* (city) with its 23 permanent galleries, exhibition galleries, Children's Museum, auditorium, restaurants, retail and a research centre. Surrounded by the sea, visitors can walk the promenades beneath the museum's stunning dome. They can experience Nouvel's enchanting 'rain of light', inspired by the shadows of overlapping palm trees in the UAE's precious oases where travellers once crossed paths.

Artworks on display originate from civilisations all over the world. They have been brought together to highlight universal themes and similar influences. This marks a departure from many traditional Western museums which separate objects from different civilisations. Themes at Louvre Abu Dhabi include: the portrayal of power; the representation of the divine; exploring unknown lands; and the dawn of globalisation. Louvre Abu Dhabi has acquired more than 600 artworks to date including individual works, series and collections. Many of these will be exhibited alongside 300 works on loan from 13 leading French institutions.

Louvre Abu Dhabi was born of an intergovernmental agreement between the governments of Abu Dhabi and France in 2007. The agreement includes the loan of the name of Louvre is on loan for a period of 30 years and 6 months; art works from French institutions for 10 years on a decreasing basis as the permanent collection grows; and the programming of temporary exhibitions for 15 years.

## ABOUT AGENCE FRANCE-MUSÉUMS

[Agence France-Muséums](#) has been entrusted with the task of carrying through the commitments of France to the project of the universal museum of Louvre Abu Dhabi, and of structuring the expertise of the French cultural institutions involved. It provides assistance and expertise to the authorities of the United Arab Emirates in the following areas: definition of the scientific and cultural programme, assistance in project management for architecture including museography, signage and multimedia projects, coordination of the loans from French collections and organisation of temporary exhibitions, guidance with the creation of a permanent collection, and support with the museum's policy on visitors.

Chaired since its creation by Marc Ladreit de Lacharrière, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, Agence France-Muséums brings together Louvre Abu Dhabi's partner institutions: musée du Louvre, Centre Pompidou, musée d'Orsay and musée de l'Orangerie, Bibliothèque nationale de France, musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac, Réunion des Musées Nationaux et du Grand Palais (RMNGP), Château de Versailles, musée national des arts asiatiques-Guimet, musée de Cluny, École du Louvre, musée Rodin, Domaine National de Chambord, musée des Arts Décoratifs de Paris, Cité de la Céramique – Sèvres & Limoges, musée d'Archéologie nationale – Saint-Germain en Laye, Château de Fontainebleau, and OPPIC (Opérateur du patrimoine et des projets immobiliers de la culture). Jean-Luc Martinez chairs the Scientific Council of Agence France-Muséums.

## ABOUT SAADIYAT CULTURAL DISTRICT

[Saadiyat Cultural District](#) on Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi, is devoted to culture and the arts. An ambitious cultural undertaking for the 21st century, it will be a nucleus for global culture, attracting local, regional and international visitors with unique exhibitions, permanent collections, productions and performances. Its ground-breaking buildings will form a historical statement of the finest 21st century architecture; [Zayed National Museum](#), [Louvre Abu Dhabi](#) and [Guggenheim Abu Dhabi](#). These museums will complement and collaborate with local and regional arts and cultural institutions including universities and research centres.

#### **ABOUT ABU DHABI TOURISM & CULTURE AUTHORITY**

[Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority \(TCA Abu Dhabi\)](#) conserves and promotes the heritage and culture of Abu Dhabi emirate and leverages them in the development of a world-class, sustainable destination of distinction which enriches the lives of visitors and residents alike. The Authority manages the emirate's tourism sector and markets the destination internationally through a wide

range of activities aimed at attracting visitors and investment. Its policies, plans and programmes relate to the preservation of heritage and culture, including protecting archaeological and historical sites and developing museums, including the Louvre Abu Dhabi, Zayed National Museum and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. TCA Abu Dhabi supports intellectual and artistic activities and cultural events to nurture a rich cultural environment and honour the emirate's heritage. A key role is to build synergy in the destination's development through close co-ordination with its wide-ranging stakeholder base.

#### **ABOUT MUSÉE DU LOUVRE**

The Louvre in Paris opened in 1793, after the French Revolution, and from the very beginning was intended to provide inspiration for contemporary art. Courbet, Picasso, Dalí and so many others came to its hallowed halls to admire the old masters, copy them, immerse themselves in masterpieces and improve and fuel their own art. As an ancient royal residence, the Louvre is inextricably linked to eight

centuries of French history. As a universal museum, its collections, among the best in the world, span many millennia and miles, from the Americas to Asia. Over 38,000 artworks are grouped into eight curatorial departments, including universally-admired works such as the *Mona Lisa*, the *Winged Victory of Samothrace* and the *Venus de Milo*. With over 7.4 million visitors in 2016, the Louvre ranks as one of the world's most visited museums.

#### **ABOUT ATELIERS JEAN NOUVEL**

[Ateliers Jean Nouvel](#) (AJN) is a world-renowned design firm that combines the disciplines of architecture, urban planning, interior design, landscape design, graphic design, and product design into a single integrated practice.

Jean Nouvel has been the recipient of numerous prizes and awards over the years. In 1989, The Arab World Institute in Paris was awarded the Aga-Khan Prize. In 2000, Jean Nouvel received the Lion d'Or from the Venice Biennale. In 2001, he received the Royal Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Praemium Imperiale of Japan's Fine Arts Association and the Borromini Prize for the Culture and Conference Center in Lucerne. Jean Nouvel was the recipient of the prestigious Pritzker Prize in 2008. The



design of the Louvre Abu Dhabi began in 2006 with Jean Nouvel's Partner Architect Hala Wardé ([HW architecture](#)).

Among Jean Nouvel's principal completed buildings are the Arab World Institute, the Cartier Foundation and the Quai Branly Museum in Paris, the Lucerne Cultural and Congress Center, the extension to the Queen Sophia Museum in Madrid, the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis and the Philharmonic Concert Halls in Copenhagen and Paris. Among the ongoing projects: the 53W53 Tour de Verre MoMA extension in New York, the Hekla and Duo office towers in Paris, the "The Artists' Garden" cultural complex in Qingdao and the National Art Museum of China (NAMOC) in Beijing.