

## PRESS KIT

### Overview of Louvre Abu Dhabi

Established at the crossroads of cultures in a country where openness is central, Louvre Abu Dhabi is the first universal museum in the Arab world and one of the largest art museums in the Arabian Peninsula. Using art, history and objects in dialogue to foster mutual respect and build cultural understanding, Louvre Abu Dhabi is a museum firmly rooted in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Positioned at one of the great crossroads of humanity, Louvre Abu Dhabi celebrates its trilingual operating model, the development of its own permanent collection, and its unique ability to make landmark loans from its institutional partners that include several of France's greatest museums and cultural institutions, as well as regional and international museums.

Since its opening in 2017, more than four million visitors from all around the world have walked through Louvre Abu Dhabi's 12 galleries, temporary exhibition spaces and Children's Museum and enjoyed a relaxing time in its 270-seat-auditorium, Fouquet's restaurant, bar, Art Lounge, or in one of its two cafés – ending their visit with the museum's boutique.

### The Architecture

Louvre Abu Dhabi's architecture itself mirrors its core values of encounter and communication. Designed by Pritzker Prize winner Jean Nouvel on Saadiyat Island's shore in a medina-like style overhung by a 7,850-stars metallic dome recalling Arabic cupolas, the museum evolves between land and sea, city and nature, light and shade, and embodies the constant dialogue between past, present and future. Fostering its own micro-climate, the dome creates its very own masterpiece, the 'rain of light', which travels across the museum precincts as it follows the sun's path. The museum is inspired by traditional Islamic architecture and its monumental dome creates a rain of light effect and a unique social space that brings people together.

### Louvre Abu Dhabi's Mission

Louvre Abu Dhabi is a place to share and celebrate stories of cultural connections. Through its innovative curatorial approach, the museum focuses on building understanding across cultures through stories of human creativity that transcend civilisations, geographies and time. Informed and enriched by its location in the Gulf region and the diversity of its surroundings, Louvre Abu Dhabi aims to shape new perspectives on the global history of art and to tell much needed tales of connection and exchange, diversity and tolerance.

Also, as the first museum on Saadiyat Island, Louvre Abu Dhabi plays a key role in Abu Dhabi's cultural eco-system and [the development of its museum landscape](#).

### Collection and Exhibitions

Aiming to take its visitors on a journey through humankind's history, Louvre Abu Dhabi has been completing an ever-growing collection of artworks. Spanning from the Paleolithic era to present days, it reflects the complexity of human creativity across History. Unparalleled in the region, this collection is displayed in a chrono-thematic curatorial strategy. For a given period, artworks from different civilizations are shown in dialogue. This echoing structure enhances what is core to human cultures and aims at making universality tangible for everyone.

Through the museum's permanent galleries, visitors can explore more than 600 artworks on display, including over 100 masterpieces featuring a *woman dressed in a woolen garment* from Central Asia, Bactria (2300 – 1700 BCE), a *winged dragon* from Northern China (450 – 250 BCE), an *ewer decorated with the signs of the zodiac* from Afghanistan, Herat (c. 1220), Édouard Manet's *The Bohemian* (France, 1861 – 1862) and Piet Mondrian's *Composition with Blue, Red, Yellow and Black* (France, 1922).

Alongside Louvre Abu Dhabi's own artworks, one can admire significant loans from the museum's French partners and international institutions in the galleries, including a *two-headed monumental statue from Aïn Ghazal in Jordan* (c. 6500 BCE), Leonardo da Vinci's *Saint John the Baptist* from the collection of Musée du Louvre, and a painting of *Queen Marie-Antoinette Seated* by Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun (France, 1788) from Musée national des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon. Since Louvre Abu Dhabi's galleries are rhythmically by rotations, one's visit to the museum is always a renewed experience.

Aside the permanent collections, Louvre Abu Dhabi offers its visitors temporary exhibitions every year. Created in collaboration with the museum's French museum partners, the exhibitions feature loans from the partners' own collections. Curated in seasons and organised in themes that are core to human cultures and civilizations, these temporary exhibitions express the infinite incarnations of humankind's artistic power.

### Digital and Cultural Offering

With the aim of connecting people and tightening links with communities, Louvre Abu Dhabi proposes numerous innovative live performances, talks, discussion panels and film screenings. These activities are linked to the museum's collection and temporary exhibitions, through sensory engaging experiences that bring artworks and the narrative to life. Accessibility is at the heart of the culture programme, extending the experience beyond the galleries and to reach an ever-growing international audience online. By giving access to its collection and programmes through Louvre Abu Dhabi's website and social media channels, the museum takes its visitors on endless discovery experiences ranging from artworks analyses to short films like *We Are Not Alone* (2020).

Louvre Abu Dhabi keeps innovating in the interpretation and creative content, adding new features to its mobile application and interactive devices located in the museum's galleries, and offering a gamification approach that allow visitors to explore the content and narrative from different perspectives. Every year, Louvre Abu Dhabi publishes several books and exhibition catalogues in multiple languages.

### Education and Community Engagement

Aiming at fostering everyone's curiosity towards alterity, the museum has been developing a wide range of educational resources and programmes engaging audiences of all ages and backgrounds. From innovative programmes to community-based activities and projects, Louvre Abu Dhabi offers students, teachers, adults, seniors and families the opportunity to be active participants in learning and interpreting art together in ways going from courses to games, enrolling all the family.

As part of its civic mission, Louvre Abu Dhabi hosts community activities tailored for senior Emiratis; engages teachers in training courses and public programs such as group guided tours, self-led visits, and free learning resources; and holds community activities for People of Determination (POD) and orphans, including roadshows, Creative Interpreters<sup>1</sup>, yoga under the dome and volunteering. The museum engages schools and universities in active programmes and daily activities, organising school guided tours to allow students to explore the museum's collection in a fun and engaging way. The launch of the *University Take Over the Museum* program engaged more than 2,000 university students from across the UAE responding to the challenge question - 'What does it mean to be Human'. Students engage with museum professionals before producing artistic interpretations connecting the public to the museum's collection.

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<sup>1</sup> Creative Interpreters is an onsite programme empowering students to explore the museum's collection by inviting them to create unique and engaging ways to present the artworks using their own creativity and voices as young guides.

The museum also offers the wider community access to enriching activities such as Art and Art History, Express tours, online masterclasses, seasonal programs: Art Lab and many more. Experience is at the core of programs for all audience groups including art workshops, learning resources, long-term projects, training, and other activities.

Louvre Abu Dhabi offers a different approach to cultural spaces with a range of sports activities from yoga to kayak, as well as key events like the International Day of Yoga or the Louvre Abu Dhabi run.

### Building the Next Generation of Museum Professionals

Core to the intergovernmental agreement from which Louvre Abu Dhabi is born, the training of UAE's next generation of museum professionals is key to the museum's future as a mature and prominent cultural institution in the Middle East. Since the project was initiated, and with the support of France Muséums and its French museum partners, Louvre Abu Dhabi has provided its staff with a high-quality training. Today, these long-term efforts result in more than 50 per cent of Louvre Abu Dhabi's team being UAE nationals, including curators, researchers and education specialists.

To complement its staff training, and because learning and research are essential in a museum's life, Louvre Abu Dhabi also houses two leading facilities for the region. On the one hand, the Resource Centre offers students, researchers, professors and the general public the opportunity to explore and learn about Louvre Abu Dhabi's permanent collection. On the other hand, the Research Laboratory, first of its kind in the UAE, will give scientists and curators access to state-of-the-art research tools to investigate the materiality of Louvre Abu Dhabi's artworks.

### Sustainability

Louvre Abu Dhabi prioritizes sustainability in all aspects, including environmental care, social fabric, and economic viability. From the design of the building to its day-to-day operations, the museum creates space suitable for the highest calibre of artworks - offering a world-class visitor experience within a unique environment.

To minimize its environmental impact, the museum's dome produces its own self-regulated microclimate that reduces energy consumption by protecting the buildings and outdoor plaza from sunlight and heat. Using design techniques – some inspired by traditional Arabic architecture – improve climatic conditions, including:

- Solar shading from the dome's roof and self-shading of buildings.
- Patterned roof perforations in the dome that allow daylight in without overheating.
- Stone floor and wall cladding to keep the buildings cooler for longer.

In addition to environmental sustainability, Louvre Abu Dhabi is dedicated to fostering a strong cultural and social fabric through inclusive educational programs and community engagement initiatives. These efforts encompass a wide range of activities such as talks, community events, school tours, public workshops, and masterclasses.

Furthermore, the museum prioritizes financial viability through various strategies such as hosting corporate events, offering educational programs, and diversifying revenue streams. Louvre Abu Dhabi achieves this by establishing partnerships and aligning with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations.

### A pioneering Cultural Project – A Brief History

Louvre Abu Dhabi was born from the 2007 partnership between Abu Dhabi and the government of the French Republic. Setting in stone an unprecedented bilateral collaboration on the global stage of culture, this agreement built either on the Emirati values of openness, hospitality and generosity and

on the French museums' prominent expertise and excellence in the art field to propose a new incarnation of the universal museum idea.

Overseen by the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi, Louvre Abu Dhabi aims to change the focus to foster the United Arab Emirates' and the Arab world's perspective on universality and cultural exchange. First of the museums of Saadiyat Cultural District ecosystem to have opened to the public, Louvre Abu Dhabi intends to pave the way for inscribing Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates as a key cultural area in the world.

To that end, Louvre Abu Dhabi works closely with its French partners, and especially Musée du Louvre in Paris, in a tailor-made formula unique in the museum world. Born following the 2007 agreement, the French consultancy, France Muséums, has been playing a key role in accompanying Louvre Abu Dhabi on its journey as a young museum, managing the museum's relationship with its French partners.

### Images

Click [here](#) to download a selection of images.

### Contact

For all press-related inquiries, editorial and/or commercial filming and photography requests, please email [press@louvreabudhabi.ae](mailto:press@louvreabudhabi.ae)