

Press Release

Louvre Abu Dhabi Tells the Story of Luxury over 10,000 Years through Couture Fashion, Art, Jewellery, Design and More

Abu Dhabi, 27 October 2019: This Wednesday, Louvre Abu Dhabi opens the first comprehensive exhibition on the history of luxury in the world. Running from 30 October 2019 to 18 February 2020, *10,000 Years of Luxury* will explore the multifaceted nature of luxury from ancient times to the present day. Visitors will explore luxury through fashion, jewellery, visual art, furniture and design with masterpieces from the collections of international institutions and brands. Highlights among the 350 objects include the oldest pearl in the world, the renowned *Boscoreale Treasure* – one of the largest collections of silverware preserved from Roman Antiquity – and dresses and jewellery from design houses such as Cartier, Maison Van Cleef & Arpels, CHANEL, Christian Dior, ELIE SAAB and Yves Saint Laurent.

The second exhibition in the museum's current season *Changing Societies, 10,000 Years of Luxury* is organised by Louvre Abu Dhabi, Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris and Agence France-Muséums, and sponsored by Tryano, the only luxury department store in Abu Dhabi.

Curated by Olivier Gabet, Director of Musée des Arts Décoratifs, the exhibition draws primarily from the collection of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs and other French, international and local institutions. It also displays works from Louvre Abu Dhabi's collection and offers a rare chance to evaluate our ever-changing fascination with luxury.

Manuel Rabaté, Director of Louvre Abu Dhabi, said: "Our Winter exhibition explores the fascinating concept of Luxury through a long lens, contextualising objects across time and culture to illuminate evolving notions of beauty, wealth and value. This consideration of its varied interpretation throughout history reflects how we consider themes in our galleries, as well as Louvre Abu Dhabi's DNA. Two years after opening the museum, we again turn to additional fields in the history of art to offer unparalleled experiences and bring new and diverse publics. We are grateful to our main partner Musée des Arts Décoratifs and the many institutions, including haute couture icons, who have contributed exceptional pieces to this wonderful story of luxury."

Olivier Gabet, Director of Musée des Arts Décoratifs and curator of the exhibition, added: "Never in the history of humanity has the word 'luxury' been used with such frequency as in these first decades of the 21st century. It is a concept that evolves within a complex, often subtle, sometimes contradictory melting pot of influences. The very identity of Louvre Abu Dhabi, a universal museum, shaped by the dialogue between civilisations, is an invitation to embrace luxury's one thousand and one faces, extending from the earliest times to its most recent manifestations. The project was conceived in line with this unique approach, offering visitors a vision of this pan-millennial phenomenon."

The exhibition opens with two landmark pieces illustrating the history of Abu Dhabi. "Abu Dhabi Pearl" the oldest pearl in the world, dating back to c. 5,800 – 5,600 BCE, discovered on Marawah Island, Abu Dhabi in 2017 and lent by the collection of Zayed National Museum; and an antique natural pearl necklace for Arab diva Umm Kulthum loaned from the collection of Zayed National Museum. "Abu

Dhabi Pearl” is a proof that pearls and oysters were used in the UAE nearly 8,000 years ago and represents the earliest known evidence for pearling found anywhere in the world.

Visitors will begin their journey through the history of luxury in Antiquity. Luxury objects of this time were often characterised by their rarity, precious materials or skilful production, exemplified by an Egyptian gold *Necklace with Fish Pendants* (ca. 1550-1069 BCE) and a skilful *Cameo Depicting Tiberius and Caligula* probably produced in Rome between 31-37. A variety of typical luxury objects from this time will be on display, including precious home décor as well as personal jewellery.

Visitors will be able to discover how trade, and by extension cultural exchanges, constitute a driving force in the development of luxury throughout history. Several of the objects on show are made of a variety of materials or artistic influences from East and West, speaking of the importance of trade routes such as the Silk Road and ancient sea routes. A 15th century *Fragment of Velvet* from Italy includes exotic silk and gold thread and depicts patterns of curling stems and flowers inherited from Ottoman decoration. A 16th century *Shell Spoon* from Germany would have been of particular value, with the extremely rare shell bowl originating from the coast of West Africa.

As visitors continue their journey through time, they encounter a new definition of the notion of luxury in terms of production technique, which led to a boom in the luxury market in 17th and 18th-century Paris. As a result, factories such as Meissen, Sèvres and Chantilly rose to fame and many of their exquisite productions are on display, including an extravagant porcelain *Clock with Shepherd and Shepherdess*, produced around 1740 by the Meissen factory.

Looking at luxury in modern times, the exhibition goes on to showcase how the Industrial Revolution led to the emergence of the *nouveaux riches*, an elite with a more democratic access to luxury. As a result, department stores came into fashion, offering items such as jewellery, haute couture, dinner services, luggage and furniture to a wider audience than ever before. Women’s demands for emancipation also had far-reaching effects on the arts and in the 1920s, and Gabrielle Chanel’s *Little Black Dress* became an iconic example of couture for the modern woman.

Luxury fashion features prominently throughout the exhibition with exceptional loans from major couture houses including Christian Dior, Givenchy, Chloé, Azzedine Alaïa, Maison Schiaparelli, Lanvin and more. A brocaded silk dress from the late Ottoman Empire blends Turkish and Parisian designs, on loan from the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. Contemporary fashion pieces include an organza evening dress by Karl Lagerfeld for CHANEL, horse riding accessories adorned in cockerel feathers by Hermès and an embroidered sequin gown from ELIE SAAB’s Spring/Summer 2019 collection.

Dr. Souraya Noujaim, Scientific, Curatorial and Collections Management Director at Louvre Abu Dhabi, added: “Luxury is a multifaceted idea, and defining what makes an object precious is an intriguing task. This exhibition challenges preconceived notions with a scientific approach that goes beyond the tangible materials, techniques or value of objects and considers luxury as a feeling, a desire or a freedom to enjoy.”

Commenting on the sponsorship of the exhibition, **Sharmila Murat, Vice President of Tryano**, said: “Louvre Abu Dhabi is one of the key cultural and tourist destinations in the region, and we are proud to support *10,000 Years of Luxury*. We are committed to investing in the dynamic arts and culture scene in Abu Dhabi, and look forward to experiencing this landmark exhibition for both the museum and the UAE.”

Alongside the exhibition, Louvre Abu Dhabi will present the olfactory art installation *USO - The Perfumed Cloud* (*USO = Unidentified Scented Object*) from 30 October to 8 November and 23 November to 1 February. Created by Maison Cartier’s in-house perfumer Mathilde Laurent with Transsolar KlimaEngineering and curated by Juliette Singer, Chief Curator for modern and contemporary art at

Louvre Abu Dhabi, the installation invites visitors to climb a spiral staircase to immerse themselves in a scented cloud.

10,000 Years of Luxury will be accompanied by a rich cultural programme curated by internationally respected artistic director Ruth Mackenzie CBE. Centered around creating rare experiences that “money can’t buy”, the programme will feature pop-up performances by international artists, musicians and dancers. On view from 6 to 9 November, these surprise performances will offer visitors a unique personal encounter with world-renowned artists set against the backdrop of the exhibition and Louvre Abu Dhabi’s permanent collection and outdoor spaces. Performers include the L.A. Dance Project led by French choreographer Benjamin Millepied, Moroccan singer and actress Hindi Zahra, Emirati jazz and pop singer Khalifa Naser, the Chinese musician Wang Li and classical music quartet *Quatuor Diotima*, among others.

Two talks will explore objects and themes highlighted in *10,000 Years of Luxury*. On 29 October, curator Olivier Gabet will discuss the exhibition, which celebrates a world history of the lavish and the luxurious. Dr. Mark Beech, Head of Archaeology for Al Dhafra and Abu Dhabi at the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi, will give a talk on the discovery of the Abu Dhabi Pearl on 26 November. Dr. Beech’s talk will be accompanied by an excerpt from the new documentary series *History of the Emirates*, produced by Image Nation Abu Dhabi. In addition, there will be a virtual reality experience based on the series that will take viewers on an immersive journey through the lives of the Emirati forefathers and the history of the UAE.

Emirati artist Hind Mezaina has curated a series of films that feature luxury in the worlds of fashion and art, including *Phantom Thread*, an acclaimed biopic of Reynolds Woodcock; Academy-award winning musical *The King and I*; the classic 1960s rom-com *How to Steal A Million*, starring Audrey Hepburn and Peter O’Toole; the documentary *Time Thieves*; and *Have You Seen My Movie?*, which features clips from 1,000+ films cut together to create a new cinema experience, directed by Paul Anton Smith. Artist Rinku Awtani will also present a programme of family films for all ages.

Finally, Louvre Abu Dhabi will premiere the interactive installation, Digital Snow Globes, from 12 December 2019 to 10 January 2020, which will bring a festive winter spirit to the museum with visitor-activated snowstorms surrounding life-sized reproductions of artworks from *10,000 Years of Luxury* encased in snow globes.

Visitors can tour the exhibition through guided group tours, free mini tours and a multimedia guide with the voice of curator Olivier Gabet. The catalogue of the exhibition is available in Arabic, English and French.

Lenders to the exhibition include: Musée des Arts Décoratifs de Paris; Musée du Louvre, Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac; Louvre Abu Dhabi; Zayed National Museum; Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris; La Fondation des Artistes; BACCARAT; Cartier Collection; Direction du patrimoine CHANEL; Collection Chaumet, Paris; Chloé Archive, Paris; Maison Christian Louboutin; Christian Dior Couture; ELIE SAAB; Givenchy; Maison Guerlain; Hermès; Maison Alaïa; Hervé Van der Straeten; HG Timepiece – Switzerland; Mellerio; PIERRE HARDY; Maison Rabih Kayrouz; Maison Schiaparelli; Maison Van Cleef & Arpels; Victoire de Castellane, *Fleurs d'excès* collection; Studio YMER&MALTA. Scenography of the exhibition is by studio Adrien Gardère.

Other exhibitions on view as part of Louvre Abu Dhabi’s 2019/2020 season include *Rendezvous in Paris: Picasso, Chagall, Modigliani & Co. (1900-1939)* (18 September – 7 December 2019), *Furusiyya: The Art of Chivalry between East and West* (February 19, 2020 – May 30, 2020) and *Charlie Chaplin: When Art Met Cinema* (April 15, 2020 – July 11, 2020).

Visiting *10,000 Years of Luxury* and *USO - The Perfumed Cloud* is free with the museum's general admission ticket. Pre-booking is highly advised due to the peak period. To book tickets, please visit www.louvreabudhabi.ae or call Louvre Abu Dhabi at +971 600 56 55 66. Admission is free for children under the age of 13.

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Notes to editors:

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

Visitor Information

Louvre Abu Dhabi hours are: Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 10 am–8 pm; Thursday and Friday, 10 am–10 pm. The museum is closed on Mondays.

Last entries and ticket purchases end 30 minutes prior to closing. Special visitor hours will be in effect during some holidays and Ramadan.

General admission tickets are 60 AED (excluding 5% VAT). Tickets are 30 AED (excluding 5% VAT) for visitors ages 13-22, UAE education professionals, and members of the military.

Admission is free for members of the museum's loyalty programme, children under the age of 13, ICOM or ICOMOS members, journalists and visitors with special needs and their companions.

ABOUT LOUVRE ABU DHABI

Created by an exceptional agreement between the governments of Abu Dhabi and France, Louvre Abu Dhabi was designed by Jean Nouvel and opened on Saadiyat Island in November 2017. 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 celebrates the universal creativity of mankind and invites audiences to see humanity in a new light. Through its innovative curatorial approach, the museum focuses on building understanding across cultures: through stories of human creativity that transcend civilisations, geographies and times.

The museum's growing collection is unparalleled in the region and spans thousands of years of human history, including prehistoric tools, artefacts, religious texts, iconic paintings and contemporary artworks. The permanent collection is supplemented by rotating loans from 13 French partner institutions, regional and international museums.

Louvre Abu Dhabi is a testing ground for new ideas in a globalised world and champions new generations of cultural leaders. Its international exhibitions, programming and Children's Museum are inclusive platforms that connect communities and offer enjoyment for all.

In 2019—the declared Year of Tolerance in the United Arab Emirates—Louvre Abu Dhabi will continue to be a hub for all cultures and a symbol of openness, hope, tolerance and inclusivity in the Arab world.

ABOUT MUSÉE DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS

The Musée des Arts Décoratifs (MAD) is a private organisation governed by the law of 1901 on not-for-profit associations and recognised as being in the public interest. It originated in 1882, in the wake of

the Universal Exhibitions, when a group of collectors banded together with the idea of promoting the applied arts and developing links between industry and culture, design and production. The museum preserves around 800,000 artworks from the French national collections including glass, ceramic, gold and silverware, jewellery, design, fashion and graphic design.

For many years it was known as the Union centrale des Arts décoratifs (UCAD), but in January 2018 it changed its name to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (MAD) while staying true to its original aims of safeguarding the collections, promoting culture, providing art education and professional training, and supporting design.

An original, multi-faceted institution, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (MAD) pursues the objectives it was given at the outset: "to keep alive in France the culture of the arts which seek to make useful things beautiful" and to maintain close links with industry, forging numerous partnerships with firms operating in various fields.

The Musée des Arts Décoratifs (MAD) is divided between three major sites in Paris:

- At 107 rue de Rivoli, the Rohan and Marsan wings of the Louvre house the Musée des Arts Décoratifs and the Library
- At 63 rue de Monceau, the Musée Nissim de Camondo is installed in the Hôtel Camondo
- And 266 boulevard Raspail has been the home of the Ecole Camondo, a school of design and interior architecture, since 1988 (so-called because it was formerly in the outbuildings of the Hôtel Camondo).

The art and craft workshops known as the Ateliers du Carrousel operate on all three sites.

ABOUT AGENCE FRANCE-MUSÉUMS

Created in 2007 following the intergovernmental agreement between Abu Dhabi and France, Agence France-Muséums has been for 10 years a key link between France and the UAE in the accomplishment of the Louvre Abu Dhabi.

By gathering for the first time the collections and the expertise of the French cultural institutions involved, AFM has provided since its creation 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.

AFM now continues its missions for Louvre Abu Dhabi after its opening with the training of the museum's professionals, the coordination of loans from French museums for 10 years and the organisation of temporary exhibitions for 15 years.

Agence France-Muséums brings together the Louvre Abu Dhabi partner institutions: Musée du Louvre, Centre Pompidou, Musées d'Orsay et de l'Orangerie, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Réunion des Musées Nationaux et du Grand Palais (RMN-GP), Château de Versailles, Musée national des arts asiatiques-Guimet, Musée de Cluny – musée national du Moyen-Âge, École du Louvre, Musée Rodin, Domaine National de Chambord, Musée des Arts Décoratifs (MAD), 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).

ABOUT TRYANO

Tryano is a concept department store offering exceptional experiences through a carefully curated edit of international and regional luxury, fashion and beauty brands. Tryano's award winning design invites its guests to journey through a seasonal garden of imagination exploring thousands of innovative

products in over 15,000 sqm of retail space across the beauty, handbags, shoes, jewelry, children's apparel and women's and men's ready-to-wear categories. Anchoring Yas Mall in Abu Dhabi and available online, Tryano offers an extensive array of distinctive services including concierge, complimentary valet parking, VIP lounge, home shopping, and home delivery.

ABOUT MUSÉE DU LOUVRE

The Louvre in Paris opened in 1793, during 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 10.2 million guests in 2018, the Louvre is the most visited museum in the world.

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 guests with unique exhibitions, permanent collections, productions and performances. Its groundbreaking 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 THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND TOURISM – ABU DHABI

The Department of Culture and Tourism 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 organization 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 programs relate to the preservation of heritage and culture, including protecting archaeological and historical sites and to developing museums, including Zayed National Museum, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, and the Louvre Abu Dhabi. DCT - 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 create synergy in the destination's development through close co-ordination with its wide-ranging stakeholder base.