

PRESS RELEASE

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Louvre Abu Dhabi's Exhibition *Cartier, Islamic Inspiration and Modern Design* Opens to the Public

The exhibition brings together over 400 works from Louvre Abu Dhabi, partner museums, the Cartier Collection and private collections, to explore over a century of artistic influence.



Fragment of architectural decoration
Iran, Ray, 14th–15th century

Ceramic mosaic with coloured glazes
Paris, France, Musée du Louvre, Department of Islamic Art, AFI
1917

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Cigarette case
Cartier Paris, 1930

Gold, lapis lazuli, turquoise, sapphire, diamonds
Cartier Collection, CC 91 A30

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Noor/Seeing Things

Abu Dhabi, UAE – 15 November 2023: H.E. Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of Louvre Abu Dhabi, inaugurated the ground-breaking exhibition *Cartier, Islamic Inspiration and Modern Design*, opening from 16 November 2023 to 24 March 2024. Co-organised by Louvre Abu Dhabi, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Musée du Louvre and France Museums, with the support of Maison Cartier, the exhibition explores the influence of Islamic art on Cartier's design from the beginning of the 20th century to the present day.

Cartier, Islamic Inspiration and Modern Design is co-curated by Judith Henon-Raynaud, Chief Curator and Deputy Director of the Department of Islamic Art at the Musée du Louvre and Évelyne Possémé, Former Chief Curator of Ancient and Modern Jewellery at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, with the assistance of Fakhra Alkindi, Senior Curatorial Assistant at Louvre Abu Dhabi. This exhibition builds upon a project titled *Cartier and Islamic Art: In Search of Modernity* (Paris-Dallas 2021-2022), which was initially conceived and co-organised by the Dallas Museum of Art and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, with the exceptional collaboration of the Musée du Louvre and the support of Maison Cartier. The exhibition was curated by Heather Ecker, Judith Henon-Raynaud, Évelyne Possémé and Sarah Schleuning.

At the turn of the 20th century, the organisation of major exhibitions dedicated to Islamic art and the massive arrival of works, particularly Persian and Indian paintings and manuscripts, led to the development of a true Persian fashion in Paris.

Louis Cartier, grandson of the founder of the Maison, was deeply intrigued by these artistic traditions that he discovered in the Parisian art market. In search of new sources of inspiration, he enriched the Maison's study library with the latest publications dedicated to Islamic arts and architecture. This

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library would be an endless source of patterns for the Maison's designers, possibly the original source. In the 1910s, Louis Cartier initiated a personal collection of Islamic art, which he made available to the Maison's designers. In 1911, his brother Jacques Cartier travelled to India to reinforce ties with maharajas, and to the Arabian Gulf region to investigate the pearl market. The discovery of the patterns and shapes in architecture, artworks, and literature unlocked a new realm of modern artistic expression for the Maison, right up to the artistic direction of Jeanne Toussaint and even today.

The exhibition's chapters explore the Maison's sources of inspiration and its creative process through over 400 objects from the collections of Louvre Abu Dhabi, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Musée du Louvre, and Cartier Collection and Archives, as well as exceptional loans from Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la ville de Paris and other lenders, spanning masterpieces of Islamic art, jewellery, drawings, design sketches, miniatures, textiles, photographs and archival material.



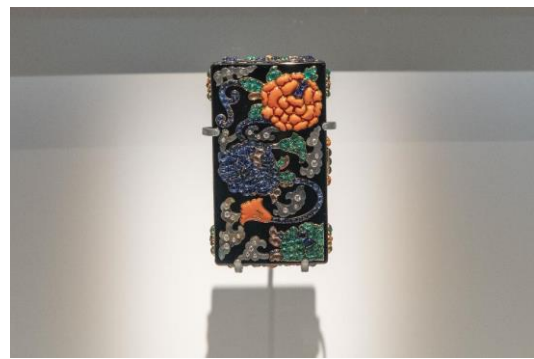
Dish with a blue saz leaf

Turkey, Iznik, ca. 1580

Ceramic with painted underglaze

Abu Dhabi, Louvre Abu Dhabi, LAD 2012.045

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Vanity case with decoration inspired by Iznik ceramics

Cartier Paris, 1927

Gold, platinum, enamel, sapphires, emeralds, topazes, coral, moonstones, diamonds

Cartier Collection, VC 41 A 27

Nils Herrmann, Cartier Collection

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Manuel Rabaté, Director of Louvre Abu Dhabi, said: “As the first universal museum in the Arab World, Louvre Abu Dhabi seeks to broaden our visitors’ perspectives by bringing unique art and cultural experiences to Abu Dhabi. Through this exhibition, and thanks to the precious loans from our partners - Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Musée du Louvre and many other lenders, our visitors will not only be able to discover new connections between cultures and gain a better understanding of modernity, but they will also be inspired by the rich technicalities and unique materials of Islamic art, architecture and Cartier jewellery on display. The *Cartier, Islamic Inspiration and Modern Design* exhibition at Louvre Abu Dhabi is also a testament to a longstanding and successful partnership between our institution and Cartier.”

Exhibition curators Judith Henon-Raynaud and Évelyne Possémé, said: “This exhibition is the result of almost five years of research in archives, drawings and photographs to discover the links between Cartier creations and Islamic art, and to identify the sources of inspiration. The result is a true immersion into the creative process and a journey through the sources that inspired some of the most innovative pieces in French jewellery. The exhibition allows us to understand the importance of the discovery of Islamic art for artists at the beginning of the 20th century, and the way in which this aesthetic influence was at the origin of many masterpieces produced in Europe, and a real fashion phenomenon. We hope that this exhibition will be the first of many to bring this history to light and pave the way for many other discoveries.”

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Guilhem André, Acting Director of Curatorial, Scientific and Collection Management Department at Louvre Abu Dhabi, said: "Cross-cultural influence has always been central to the narrative of Louvre Abu Dhabi, evident in both our permanent galleries and temporary exhibitions. The exhibition *Cartier, Islamic Inspiration and Modern Design* is a prime example of this, showcasing how the past continues to inspire the present. We have seen our visitors deeply appreciate the craftsmanship and ornamental beauty of Islamic art over the years. With this exhibition, featuring previously unseen works, visitors will be able to delve into the creative process behind the craftsmanship that combines the rich heritage of Islamic art with the creative innovations of the 20th century Parisian workshops. It also presents an exciting opportunity to engage various audiences, particularly the growing design community in the UAE."

Pierre Rainero, Image, Style and Heritage Director at Cartier, commented: "Islamic art has played a significant and structural impact on Cartier's creative language since the beginning of the 20th century. This vocabulary continues to grow even today, thanks to the richness of geometric patterns and their many combinations. This exhibition underscores the living language of the Cartier style, and in turn highlights how important jewellery is to the artistic field. Cartier's true pioneering spirit is also revealed, along with the role the Maison played in the birth of modernity at the start of the 20th century."

Highlights from Louvre Abu Dhabi's collection displayed in the exhibition include a wooden **Carved ivory panel with scrolls** (1334 – 1339, Cairo, Egypt); a **Dish with a blue Saz leaf, dotted tulips and roses** (ca. 1580, Iznik, Turkey); a **Glass vessel in the shape of a mosque lamp** by Joseph Brocard (1871, Paris, France). Masterpieces from Musée des Arts Décoratifs include a **Basin** by Théodore Deck (1863, Paris, France) and a binding and title page of the **Rubaiyat** by Omar Khayyam (1912, Paris, France). Highlights of loans from Musée du Louvre include a **Fragment of a mosaic panel with geometric decoration** (14 - 15th century), **Three tiles from a wall panel** (1550 – 1600, Damascus, Syria), a **Pen box said to have belonged to Mirza Muhammad Munshi** and a **Pen box in the name of Shah Abbas** (late 16th - early 17th century, Deccan, India) and a **Casket** (19th century, Iran). The Cartier Collection is lending special works including a **cigarette case** (Cartier Paris, 1930), a **vanity case with decoration inspired by Iznik ceramics** (Cartier Paris, 1927), a **Hindu necklace** (Cartier Paris, 1936) and a **tiara** (Cartier London, 1937). Le Petit Palais – Musée des Beaux-arts de la Ville de Paris is lending an exceptional collection of design sketches by Charles Jacquesau, a pivotal designer to Maison Cartier.



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From left to right

Stepped Merlon, Iran, 10th – 11th century, Stucco, Paris, Musée du Louvre, Department of Islamic Arts, Inv. MAO S. 147

Tiara, Cartier London, 1937, platinum, diamond, aquamarine, Cartier Collection, Inv. HO 12 A37

Tiara, Cartier London, 1937, gold, platinum, diamond, citrine, Cartier Collection, Inv. HO 14 A37

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Lenders to the exhibition include Louvre Abu Dhabi; Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France; Musée du Louvre, Paris, France; Cartier and Cartier Archives; Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, Canada; The al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyah, Kuwait; Al Shindagha Museum, Dubai, UAE; The Al Thani Collection; H.E. Sheikha Nouf Bint Khalifa Al-Thani; Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France; Galerie Ary-Jan, Paris, France; Fabrice Gros, Antwerp, Belgium; Collection of Businesswoman Pansy Ho; Mengdiexuan Collection, Hong Kong; Monaco Princely Palace Collection, Monaco; Musée du quai Branly, Paris, France; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA; Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar; Museum of Islamic Civilization, Sharjah, UAE; Petit Palais – musée des Beaux-arts de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France; The Private Collection of Tina Vidal-Duart; The Royal Collection / Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, USA; in addition to numerous private lenders.

A few feet from the main exhibition galleries, the temporary exhibit features an immersive digital space, where large digital animations show artistic interpretations of the physical assembly of Cartier key pieces and their source of inspiration. Two “infinity rooms” will immerse visitors in animated patterns, offering a captivating 180-degree visual experience within this digital realm. The exhibition scenography and the digital space are designed by the New York-based design studio Diller Scofidio + Renfro. On the museum's façade, projections of artworks and photographs will take visitors on the journey of Jacques Cartier's travels – from Marseille to Agra, Bombay to Muscat, and Dubai to Muharraq.

Alongside *Cartier, Islamic Inspiration and Modern Design* exhibition, Louvre Abu Dhabi will offer a diverse cultural and educational programme, featuring an in-depth talk with the exhibition curators, a documentary film screening followed by a community discussion, guided tours, masterclasses, a family weekend and an activity booklet.

Cartier has been a longstanding supporter of Louvre Abu Dhabi. In 2019, the *10,000 Years of Luxury* exhibition featured iconic pieces on loan from the Cartier Collection. Also, Louvre Abu Dhabi presented *USO, The Perfumed Cloud* (USO = Unidentified Scented Object), an olfactory art installation, created by Maison Cartier's in-house perfumer Mathilde Laurent and Transsolar Klima Engineering. This art installation offered an immersive sensory journey, inviting visitors to climb a spiral staircase to immerse themselves in a cloud of perfume.

The public will get the chance to explore the exhibition through different channels, all available in Arabic, English and French. Visitors can enjoy an audio tour through the exhibition podcast, which will be available on streaming platforms (including Spotify, Anghami, Apple podcast, Google podcast and Deezer), as well as Louvre Abu Dhabi's website and mobile application. A catalogue highlighting the various themes, sections and objects in the exhibition will be available in three languages.

For more information about the exhibition and to book tickets, please visit www.louvreabudhabi.ae or call Louvre Abu Dhabi at +971 600 56 55 66. Entrance to the exhibition is free with the museum's general admission tickets. Admission to the museum is free for children under the age of 18.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

LOUVRE ABU DHABI OPERATING HOURS

Museum: Open: 10 am – 6.30 pm (Tue - Thurs); extended hours: 10 am – 8.30 pm (Fri - Sun); closed on Mondays.

Dome: Open: 10 am – midnight (Tues - Sun) - last entry 11 pm; closed on Mondays

Museum Café: Open: 10 am – 6.30 pm (Tue - Thurs); extended hours: 10 am – 10 pm (Fri – Sun). Closed on Mondays

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Art Lounge: Open: 3 pm – 12 am (last orders 11 pm); closed on Mondays

Fouquet's Abu Dhabi and Marta Bar: Open: 12 pm – 12 am (last orders at 10 pm) (Tue – Thurs, Sun); weekends: 12 pm – 1 am (last orders at 10.30 pm) (Fri – Sat); closed on Mondays

Aptitude Café: Open: 9 am – 10 pm (daily including Mondays)

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

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 19 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.

ABOUT MUSÉE DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS

Conceived as a source of inspiration for artists and craftsmen, the Musée des Arts décoratifs tells the story of the art of the useful, from the ordinary to the extraordinary, in conjunction with the fine and industrial arts. Its collections have been built up since the mid-19th century around decorative arts, mainly from the West. They include national benchmark collections of fine art, design, jewelry, toys, advertising, and graphic design. The museum also houses the national fashion and textile collection, one of the most important in the world. The world-renowned Art Deco collection and an exceptional Art Nouveau collection complete its holdings. The museum also boasts the oldest collection of non-Western, Asian and Middle Eastern art in France. Drawings, photographs and the world's largest collection of wallpaper are also part of the collection.

With more than a million works, the collection reveals styles and lifestyles from the Middle Ages to the present day, with 6,000 works on display on 7 floors and some 20 period rooms or reconstructions of rooms. It offers an open, non-hierarchical view of art history up to the most contemporary creations.

ABOUT MUSÉE DU LOUVRE

Formerly a royal palace, the Louvre became a national museum in 1793, during the French Revolution. Its collections, divided among nine departments, encompass over eight millennia of world history. The 33,000 works of art on public display in the museum bring different cultures together, breaking the barriers of time and space and ensuring the Louvre is home to all kinds of artistic creation. Even before the Revolution, many artists had their workshops in the Louvre, and today it continues to welcome the greatest contemporary creators, thereby bringing its collections alive, boosting their contemporary relevance, and opening the museum ever wider to the world.

ABOUT THE CARTIER COLLECTION

The Cartier Collection contains more than 3,000 of the most outstanding pieces created by Cartier throughout its history. This rigorously curated collection, fully documented by Cartier archives, includes high jewellery, timepieces and precious objects dating from as early as the 1860s until as late as the 2000s.

The Cartier Collection has captured the attention of museums worldwide: the first major exhibition was presented in 1989 at the Petit Palais in Paris, which marked the start of a unique adventure. Some of the most prestigious museums and institutions worldwide have welcomed Cartier exhibitions including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the British Museum, the Grand Palais in Paris the Palace Museum in Beijing, the National Gallery of Australia and most recently the Museo Jumex in Mexico and the Hong Kong Palace Museum in Hong Kong.

To date, 39 exhibitions in 30 cities have collectively welcomed more than 5 million visitors. Created in 1983, the Cartier Collection celebrates its 40th anniversary this year.

ABOUT FRANCE MUSÉUMS

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Following the intergovernmental agreement between France and the Emirates of Abu Dhabi signed in 2007, France Muséums, a cultural consulting and engineering agency, was created to work towards the creation of Louvre Abu Dhabi and support the project in all its dimensions (strategic, scientific, cultural, building, human resources).

Since the opening of the UAE museum in 2017, France Muséums continues to support Louvre Abu Dhabi in four main fields of activity: the management and coordination of loans from French museums for the permanent galleries of the museum, the organisation and production of international exhibitions, capacity building and training of teams and a wide range of consultancy and auditing assignments in all areas of museum management.

France Muséums mobilises its teams based in Paris and Abu Dhabi and a network of 17 major French cultural institutions and museum partners : Musée du Louvre, Centre Pompidou, Etablissement public des 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), Musée d'Archéologie nationale – Saint-Germain en Laye, OPPIC (Opérateur du patrimoine et des projets immobiliers de la culture), Institut National du Patrimoine and Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France (C2RMF).

<https://francemuseums.com/>

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 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 THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND TOURISM – ABU DHABI

The Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi) drives the sustainable growth of Abu Dhabi's culture and tourism sectors and its creative industries, fuels economic progress and helps achieve Abu Dhabi's wider global ambitions. By working in partnership with the organisations that define the emirate's position as a leading international destination, DCT Abu Dhabi strives to unite the ecosystem around a shared vision of the emirate's potential, coordinate effort and investment, deliver innovative solutions, and use the best tools, policies and systems to support the culture and tourism industries.

DCT Abu Dhabi's vision is defined by the emirate's people, heritage and landscape. We work to enhance Abu Dhabi's status as a place of authenticity, innovation, and unparalleled experiences, represented by its living traditions of hospitality, pioneering initiatives and creative thought.