**Press Release**

**Louvre Abu Dhabi and Théâtre du Châtelet Present the World Premiere of *Singing Trees* by Acclaimed Digital Artists Umbrellium**

*The immersive installation uses innovative technology to encourage environmental awareness and appreciation*

**Abu Dhabi, 12 February 2020**: Louvre Abu Dhabi and [Théâtre du Châtelet](https://www.chatelet.com/en/home/), with the support of [Bloomberg Philanthropies](https://www.bloomberg.org/?gclid=CjwKCAiA98TxBRBtEiwAVRLquzH1NTopTYVMfnunEhws9OvqhxBJiZfGsDrnn9coxmltN_tzdRr3ghoCnCcQAvD_BwE), are pleased to announce the world premiere of *Singing Trees*, a new interactive installation created by award-winning digital artists from London, [Umbrellium](https://umbrellium.co.uk/), in collaboration with Paris’ Institute for Research and Coordination in Acoustics/Music (IRCAM) and independent producer, Katherine Jewkes. After its premiere at Louvre Abu Dhabi, *Singing Trees* will be presented in cities around the world including in the garden of Paris’ Palais Royal from 10 to 20 September 2020, followed by presentations in London, New York and Paris again for the Olympics in 2024.

Launching in Abu Dhabi on 25 February 2020, *Singing Trees* illuminates the pressing need for environmental awareness in the age of climate change. Combining innovative technology, music and an interactive visitor experience, the installation offers a unique opportunity to engage with, and appreciate, nature. Activating the outdoor landscape of Louvre Abu Dhabi, Umbrellium will give a voice to the palm trees around the museum’s entrance using non-invasive, electronic belts attached to each tree. These belts – designed with the support of sound engineers from the Institute for Research and Coordination in Acoustics/Music (IRCAM) – will enable the trees to sing together as a choir that will change in response to the audiences’ interaction with the work. As visitors move closer to the trees, the choir becomes louder and more in-synch. Visitors are then invited to hug the tree to maximise the volume of the choir.

The trees will sing a combination of songs in English, Arabic and French. In each country that exhibits the installation, new songs will be commissioned for the trees to sing. The featured musical pieces for *Singing Trees* at Louvre Abu Dhabi include Ayyala, a traditional Arabic song that reflects the artistic heritage of the UAE; “Greensleeves”, a traditional English folk song from the late 16th century and the French Medieval choir song “L’Amour de Moy.”

**Manuel Rabaté, Director of Louvre Abu Dhabi** commented, “*Singing Trees* speaks to Louvre Abu Dhabi’s mission to provide an educational and innovative space where visitors can engage in dialogues around the issues that affect us all. Timed to coincide with UAE Innovation Month, the piece explores how technological advances can bring us closer to nature and heighten our understanding of the environment. We are grateful to our partners Théâtre du Châtelet and Bloomberg Philanthropies who made this project possible and look forward to seeing *Singing Trees* travel the world.”

**Ruth Mackenzie, CBE, Artistic Director of Théâtre du Châtelet** said, “With climate change now a part of our everyday lives, this installation physically manifests, with pioneering technology, the urgent need to listen to what nature is telling us and respond with care. Umbrellium have used non-invasive digital technology to give trees a voice and invite the public to listen and interact with them. Built in the city that created the Paris Accord on Climate Change, the Théâtre du Châtelet is an activist theatre. We are proud to be representing the City of Paris and working with Umbrelllium, IRCAM and our partners Louvre Abu Dhabi and Bloomberg Philanthropies to raise awareness around the vital issues impacting our planet.”

“Bloomberg Philanthropies believes in the transformative power of public art and its ability to inspire and engage communities,” said **Jemma Read, Global Head of Corporate Philanthropy, Bloomberg L.P.** “We hope this collaboration with Louvre Abu Dhabi and Théâtre du Châtelet will inspire residents in Abu Dhabi and across the United Arab Emirates to take bolder action to address the climate change.”

Based in London, the group has almost two decades of experience designing and building urban technology products and services for cities across the globe to engage communities and boost innovation. The key members of Umbrellium are Usman Haque, Creative Director; Andrew Caleya Chetty, Chief Strategy Officer; Ling Tan, Senior Designer and Coder and Nitipak Samsen, Senior Creative Technologist.

For *Singing Trees*, Umbrellium collaborated with IRCAM, one of the world’s largest public research centres dedicated to musical expression and scientific research. Members from IRCAM Amplify, a branch of IRCAM, supported on the project, including Manuel Poletti, Sound Creations and Sound Design; Julien Chirol, Musical Arrangements and Production and Martin Antiphon, Sound Engineering.

Sustainability and care for the environment are built into the technology behind *Singing Trees*. The trees are powered by rechargeable, renewable batteries, which will be charged using power drawn from the grid. IRCAM and Umbrellium have specifically designed the belts attached to the trees to use energy-efficient equipment that can easily be recycled and reused for other projects after *Singing Trees* has concluded. Wherever possible, the artists will work with local companies and suppliers to lower travel impact and support the local economy in each country that the installation will be exhibited in.

In addition to *Singing Trees* in February, a full family weekend will plunge visitors in the medieval times, with activations in the Park, under the Dome, film screenings, parades of knights, workshops and much more. Participation is free and the activities will take place between 28 and 29 February from 3 – 6 pm.

**-END-**

**Notes to editors**

Follow Louvre Abu Dhabi on social media: Facebook ([Louvre Abu Dhabi](https://www.facebook.com/LouvreAbuDhabi)), Twitter ([@LouvreAbuDhabi](https://twitter.com/LouvreAbuDhabi)) and Instagram ([@LouvreAbuDhabi](http://instagram.com/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.

**ABOUT THÉÂTRE DU CHÂTELET**

Opened in 1862 as Paris’s largest stage, Théâtre du Châtelet is the largest theatre owned and subsidised by the City of Paris, with a brief to serve all the citizens of Greater Paris. With a history of innovation including the residency of the famous Ballet Russe, the theatre has an international reputation for the quality and audacity of its lyric programme, creations, workshops and activist events. [Chatelet2030.com](https://chatelet2030.com/).

**ABOUT AGENCE FRANCE-MUSÉUMS**

Created in 2007 following the intergovernmental agreement between Abu Dhabi and France, Agence France-Muséums has been for 12 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 in four main fields of activity: the organisation of temporary exhibitions designed with French partner museums for 15 years, the management of loans from French museums for 10 years, consulting missions in the fields of museum management and the training of the museum’s professionals

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 BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES**

Bloomberg Philanthropies invests in 510 cities and 129 countries around the world to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organization focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: Arts, Education, Environment, Government Innovation, and Public Health. Bloomberg Philanthropies encompasses all of Michael R. Bloomberg’s giving, including his foundation and personal philanthropy as well as Bloomberg Associates, a pro bono consultancy that works in cities around the world. For more information, please visit bloomberg.org or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter.

**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 9.6 million guests in 2019, the Louvre is the most visited museum in the world.

Open since 2012, the Islamic Art Department of the Louvre presents more than 3,000 objects, spanning 1,300 years of history and three continents, from Spain to Southeast Asia.

**ABOUT SAADIYAT CULTURAL DISTRICT**

[Saadiyat Cultural District](http://www.saadiyatculturaldistrict.ae/) 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](http://www.saadiyatculturaldistrict.ae/en/saadiyat-cultural-district/zayed-national-museum/), [Louvre Abu Dhabi](http://www.saadiyatculturaldistrict.ae/en/saadiyat-cultural-district/louvre-abu-dhabi/) and [Guggenheim Abu Dhabi](http://www.saadiyatculturaldistrict.ae/en/saadiyat-cultural-district/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.