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LOUVRE ABU DHABI

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NYU | ABU DHABI



ReFRAMING 2020 MUSEUMS

Press Release

Louvre Abu Dhabi and New York University Abu Dhabi announce Reframing Museums, a virtual symposium bringing global thought-leaders together to address the future of museums

16 – 18 November 2020

- *Louvre Abu Dhabi and New York University Abu Dhabi will co-convene a first-of-its-kind, virtual symposium to address new challenges and responsibilities facing museums today*
- *Global scholars, academics, artists, and international museum experts will join young, rising voices to discuss, interrogate, and reimagine the museum of the future, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and calls for racial equity and accountability*
- *The three pillars that traditionally define museums - Collection, Building/Place, and People - will explore necessary revisions and discuss how revisiting these pillars impacts museums' missions, functions, and operating models*
- *The symposium is open to the public. Registration [available here](#)*
- *Reframing Museums will mark the third anniversary of Louvre Abu Dhabi and the tenth anniversary for NYU Abu Dhabi*

Abu Dhabi, 5 October 2020: Louvre Abu Dhabi and New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD), two leading institutions at the heart of Abu Dhabi's Saadiyat Island, will co-convene for the first time a virtual symposium open to the public entitled *Reframing Museums*.

The symposium, taking place from 16 – 18 November 2020, will address the new responsibilities and challenges facing museums today, as well as showcase innovative opportunities. The symposium will harness the collective contributions of global scholars, academics, established and emerging artists, and international museum experts to discuss, interrogate, and reimagine the art museum of the future. Together attendees will examine three institutional pillars that typically define museums: *Collections, Building/Site, and People*. Registration to the virtual symposium, which is open to the public, is live [online](#).

The *Reframing Museums* agenda will be driven by a multiplicity of global voices. Initiated through an industry-wide open call, timely challenges and solutions will be crowdsourced prior to the symposium, amplifying diverse voices in this global discussion.

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On the importance of co-hosting this symposium, **Manuel Rabaté, Director of Louvre Abu Dhabi** commented: "As we mark Louvre Abu Dhabi's third anniversary this November, we acknowledge that now, more than ever, museums are vital in providing comfort, empathy, and understanding to communities during difficult times. Necessary conversations around sustainability, accessibility, education as well as diversity and inclusion, compel museums to question the status-quo and to revisit the cultural canon. These are urgent questions and complex challenges that can only be addressed with inclusive dialogue. Working alongside our partners and neighbors at New York University Abu Dhabi, we will bring together rising and renowned art historians, scholars, curators, and industry experts from across the world to discuss, interrogate, and reimagine the art museum of the future. We invite everyone to be part of this important discussion."

Mariët Westermann, Vice Chancellor of New York University Abu Dhabi said: "NYU Abu Dhabi is delighted to partner with the Louvre Abu Dhabi in hosting a lively symposium probing the present and future of museums. Many of the challenges museums are facing today were problems well before COVID-19, but the pandemic has forced all museum directors, curators, users, and funders to address them head on. Who and what are museums for? How can the museum compete with the virtual resources of the digital age? What is the museum's relevance for people who had little or no say in their creation? How can collections of compromised or uncertain provenance ever play a legitimate role in a museum? Can museums compete with entertainment? Can museums revision what is included in their local or global remit, and find new purpose by healing the exclusions of the past?"

Abu Dhabi is the right place for this global conversation, even in virtual space. In 2010, when NYU Abu Dhabi was on the cusp of opening and the vision for the Louvre Abu Dhabi just taking shape, we hosted Art Museums Here and Now - a symposium that asked what new museums might be in the UAE, and what established museums from around the world would do if they could reimagine themselves from the ground up. Ten years on, we are thrilled to engage dozens of museum leaders, curators, scholars, and artists to ask these questions with a renewed sense of urgency and possibility."

Global luminaries confirmed include HE Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak (Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi), Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi (Sharjah Art Foundation), David Wrisley (NYUAD), Eugene Tan (Singapore Art Museum), Jean-Luc Martinez (Musée du Louvre), Kaywin Feldman (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC), Kwame Anthony Appiah (philosopher, cultural theorist, novelist and professor with NYU and NYU Abu Dhabi), Manal Ataya (Sharjah Museums Authority), Max Hollein (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), Mikhail Piotrovsky (Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg), Peter Magee (Zayed National Museum) and Yang Zhigang (Shanghai Museum). Manuel Rabaté and Mariët Westermann will also engage in an opening and closing discussion on each day of the symposium.

The discussions, themed around three institutional pillars, *Collections*, *Building/Site*, and *People*, will be explored through roundtables and the presentation of case studies. The *Collections* pillar will address the current move from collection building to collection sharing, including the shift of focus from acquisition to storytelling, the exchange and collaboration between museums in light of the pandemic, and the reinvention of copy culture in the digital

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age. Roundtables around *Building/Site* will focus on whether the physical spaces of a museum serve the current context and how new civic roles that museums are being asked to fill, can or should transform the museum space. The third discussion pillar—*People*—will center around the question “whose museum?”, including issues of ownership, inclusion, and new civic roles of museums that reflect the peoples, histories, and realities of the diverse communities they serve. With the notion of ownership and expertise being called into question, how can museums stay relevant in our rapidly changing world?

Louvre Abu Dhabi and NYU Abu Dhabi are both exploring and implementing new models for the future - the museum through its innovative curation, programmes, and platforms, and the University through its multidisciplinary research and education of undergraduate and graduate students as well as its support of young and emerging artists. *Reframing Museums* will mark the third anniversary of Louvre Abu Dhabi as well as the tenth anniversary for NYU Abu Dhabi and its seminal symposium “Art Museums Here and Now”.

For more information on the symposium and registration, please visit the symposium [website](#). The event is free and open to the public.

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Notes to editors

Registration for *Reframing Museums* is live, free, and open to the public [here](#) through November 15th.

Daily symposium programming runs November 16-17 from 11am – 8:30pm GST; November 18 from 2:30pm – 6:00pm.

Dedicated symposium hashtag: #ReframingMuseums

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

Follow NYU Abu Dhabi on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) @NYUAbuDhabi

About Louvre Abu Dhabi

The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday, by reserved ticketing, from 10:00am – 6:30pm with last entry at 5:30pm; from November 2, the museum will be open 7 days a week.

Louvre Abu Dhabi is a young, experimental, and mindful museum of the 21st century, reflected through its approach to collecting, programming, and engaging with visitors. The museum’s unique curatorial vision facilitates openness, accessibility, and interconnectivity, inviting its diverse audiences to break down barriers and identify cultural connections.

With events like the symposium, Louvre Abu Dhabi explores crucial institutional discussions, convening cultural leaders from around the world to debate current issues and add to the discourse on the role of museums today.

Louvre Abu Dhabi was among the first museums of its caliber to re-open following the closure of cultural sites due to COVID-19 in the Gulf.

The museum has received the Abu Dhabi government issued “Go Safe” certification for the highest health and safety standards.

About New York University Abu Dhabi

A leading research university with a fully integrated liberal arts and science college, NYU Abu Dhabi prepares students from the UAE and around the globe for the challenges and opportunities of our interconnected world. NYU Abu Dhabi represents a transformative shift in higher education, where intellectual and creative endeavours of academia are shaped and examined through international, multicultural perspectives.

The Arts and Humanities department will soon offer the first-of-its-kind in the region, full-time, studio-intensive Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Art and Media - an interdisciplinary degree program.

The NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery - the region’s only university gallery of scholarly and experimental museum exhibitions - The Arts Center at NYU Abu Dhabi, and The NYU Abu Dhabi Institute, bring rigorous and vibrant programming to the Abu Dhabi, adding to the dynamic cultural fabric of the city and creating frameworks for exchange and cross-cultural dialogue and experience.

Through high-caliber arts and culture events like this symposium, along with intellectual discourse, academic programming, student volunteering, and faculty engagement with local institutions, NYU Abu Dhabi is helping to transform the rich intellectual and cultural fabric of Abu Dhabi.

This symposium coincides with the University’s tenth anniversary and is spearheaded by Vice Chancellor Mariët Westermann, a historian of Netherlandish Art as well as Professor of Arts and Humanities at NYU Abu Dhabi, who returned to the University in 2019 to lead NYU Abu Dhabi into its second decade.

About Abu Dhabi and Saadiyat Island

In its unwavering support of cultural institutions, the government of Abu Dhabi continues to value its arts and culture institutions as vital to the community.

With an ongoing commitment to creating a global destination for researchers, entrepreneurs, and renowned artists, Abu Dhabi’s cultural institutions, as well as the Emirate itself, are uniquely situated to host these important discussions.

The government of the UAE continues its commitment to supporting the development and livelihoods of young, Emirati artistic talent. Recently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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implemented an Art in Embassies scheme that saw the government acquire AED 1.5m in art from local galleries for the benefit of its embassies around the world.

Saadiyat Island, a world class leisure, residential, educational, business, and growing cultural hub, already houses New York University Abu Dhabi, Louvre Abu Dhabi, the exhibition centre Manarat Al Saadiyat, and Berklee Abu Dhabi Center.