**Press Release**



***Reframing Museums* virtual symposium concludes with record attendance and legacy content**

**Abu Dhabi, 07 December 2020:** Recently, Louvre Abu Dhabi and NYU Abu Dhabi saw the conclusion of *Reframing Museums,* the three-day virtual symposium*.* This first co-hosted virtual edition saw over 1,000 participants registered to hear from a diverse group of more than 70 speakers, moderators and facilitators from five continents, all gathered to address the current challenges and opportunities for arts and culture institutions the world over.

With the symposium reaching capacity prior to the launch, **free access to recordings** of the sessions have been made available to the public, on both the [*Reframing Museums* website](https://www.reframingmuseums.ae/events/reframing-museums/event-summary-455700d778874364b13e4f44cbcf0343.aspx?5S,M3,455700d7-7887-4364-b13e-4f44cbcf0343=) and [dedicated YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUx_x8ALpnlZh7d9w8SZJqg/featured).

Louvre Abu Dhabi and NYUAD also **announced the publication of content** from the symposium, by Akkadia Press, which will be available from next summer.

**HE Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi,** said: “In Abu Dhabi and all over the world, this has been a year of physical separation, but happily in many other ways our global society has been brought closer together. We will only succeed in securing our future as a collective – in our shared wisdom, determination, and resilience – all reaffirmed by the many voices who joined us for this virtual symposium. This platform of open debate mirrors the message echoing through the halls of the world’s great museums and educational institutions: we must celebrate universality, and address what it means to truly accept and understand one another.

“This symposium is not a one-time opportunity; arts and culture are at the centre of Abu Dhabi’s agenda, as we continually harness the power of culture to expand minds and hearts. *Reframing Museums* reflects our core values of openness and understanding, and we look forward to hosting further events, which convene global voices for these important conversations of cross-cultural exchange, growing and collaborating to the benefit of us all. We will continue to reach out to audiences around the world by embracing a hybrid physical-online model, and we hope that global circumstances will soon allow us to welcome all of you to Abu Dhabi in-person, to experience Louvre Abu Dhabi and our many other cultural sites.”

**Manuel Rabaté, Director of Louvre Abu Dhabi**, commented: “What is very clear is that museums start with their collections, with the narratives built around them, but museums are nothing without their public. The current crisis has attacked humanity itself, and it is forcing all museums to undertake rapid transformation. We know that museums are fragile, yet throughout these sessions we saw important values—of solidarity, empathy, agility, balance, sustainability, and knowledge—echoed by all participants. In thinking about how we incorporate these values at Louvre Abu Dhabi, we will experiment with polysemy and polyphony. By polysemy, I mean the many meanings and stories each object in a museum collection contains; and by polyphony, I refer to the diversity of voices within those stories. We need to listen to these voices, and amplify them in the stories we tell. Louvre Abu Dhabi is a place for knowledge and research, in collaboration with universities and academia. I see it as a place for learning, for education, for curiosity, and discovery. It is a place for storytelling, for enjoyment, a place for listening and humility. But also— and this is what is most relevant—it is a place for healing and for resilience. I believe museums have a role to play in the after-crisis, and we hope to continue to define this role together, through future co-hosted symposia with NYU Abu Dhabi.”

**Mariët Westermann, Vice Chancellor of New York University Abu Dhabi**, said: “Co-hosting this symposium with our neighbour Louvre Abu Dhabi has been truly extraordinary. We were amazed by the consistently high quality, high interest, the diverse topics of the panels, keynotes, case studies, and the networking sessions, as well as the virtual world cafe. There was a very sound understanding that we don’t want to go back to business as usual, we want to craft a new future for museums. We have together recognised that COVID-19, as awful as it is, presents us with the opportunity to reframe museums and re-engage with communities in a more inclusive, substantial, and empathetic way.”

Points that recurred throughout the roundtables, case studies, and networking session chats among the public included maintaining the museum space as a **civic as well as cultural point of exchange** amidst rising nationalism around the world; forays into the **digital and virtual spaces** for exhibitions and the associated pitfalls and challenges; and the need for **solidarity among institutions** to tackle the current fiscal and health crisis through collective dialogue and inquiry.

The opening day’s panel on *New business models beyond tourism and the blockbuster show* saw frank exchanges around what may have been **previously taboo revenue streams**, looking at museums as brands with licensing potential. Day two’s panel, *Voices of authority: expertise, participation and inclusion in the museum of tomorrow* was a **meaningful and authentic** **session** that saw calls for **shattering insular thinking**, for Western institutions to look to the Global South for the way forward. On the final day’s programme, the last roundtable of the day discussed whether **traditional academic qualifications** for becoming a museum curator were sufficient, or even necessary, to succeed in that role.

Keynote speeches addressed a variety of topics, from the origins of the museum itself to the scientific and historic movements that influenced their physical spaces today; a history of how we’ve come to see art and museums as national projects, to what it looks like now, in the present, to be building from the ground-up a museum of the future with foundations built on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The three-day symposium saw HE Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi, open the symposium with a welcome keynote, with opening remarks following from Mariët Westermann, Vice Chancellor of NYUAD, and Manuel Rabaté, Director of Louvre Abu Dhabi. A further six keynote speeches were delivered, by HE Noura Al Kaabi, UAE Minister of Culture and Youth; Kwame Anthony Appiah, Professor of Philosophy and Law at NYU and NYUAD; Jean-Luc Martinez, President and Director, Musée du Louvre, Paris; historian and philosopher Krzysztof Pomian; Sandra Jackson-Dumont, Director of the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art; and Emirati poet and film director Nujoom Al Ghanem.

All sessions have been recorded and are available to view via the [Reframing Museums YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUx_x8ALpnlZh7d9w8SZJqg). Currently, replay videos are available in English; Arabic and French-language videos are forthcoming.

**END**

**Notes to editors**

Follow Louvre Abu Dhabi on social media: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram #LouvreAbuDhabi

Follow NYU Abu Dhabi on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @NYUAbuDhabi

**Symposium curatorial committee**: Anaïs Aguerre (Founder and Director, Culture Connect), Maya Allison (Executive Director of the NYUAD Art Galleries, and the Chief Curator at NYU Abu Dhabi), Noëmi Daucé (Curator, Musée du Louvre), Reindert Falkenburg (Special Academic Advisor; Visiting Professor of Early Modern Art and Culture, NYU Abu Dhabi), Salwa Mikdadi (Associate Professor Practice of Art History, NYU Abu Dhabi), Souraya Noujaim (Scientific, Curatorial and Collections Management Director, Louvre Abu Dhabi), Alia Saeed Alshamsi (Acting Cultural Programming Manager, Louvre Abu Dhabi), and Robert Parthesius (Program Head, Heritage Studies; Associate Professor, NYU Abu Dhabi)

**Full participant list**: HE Noura Al Kaabi (Minister of Culture and Youth, Cabinet of the United Arab Emirates, UAE), HE Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak (Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi, UAE), HE Saood Al Hosani (Acting Undersecretary, Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi , UAE), Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi (Sharjah Art Foundation), Mariët Westermann (Vice Chancellor, NYU Abu Dhabi, UAE), Manuel Rabaté (Director, Louvre Abu Dhabi, UAE), Antonia Carver (Director, Art Jameel, Saudi Arabia/UAE), A. Ege Yildirim (Urban Planner Specialising in Heritage Conservation and Management, Turkey), Adriano Pedrosa (Artistic Director, Museu de arte de São Paulo, Brazil), Amareswar Galla (Professor of Inclusive Cultural Leadership & Founding Director, International Centre for Inclusive Cultural Leadership, | Dean of Faculty Development and Leadership, Anant National University, Ahmedabad, India), Andrew McClellan (Professor of Art History, Tufts University, USA), Anna Lowe (Co-founder, Smartify, UK), Caroline Autret (Head of Department of Archaeology and History of Art, La Sorbonne Abu Dhabi, UAE), Chris Dercon (President, Rmn-Grand Palais, France), Clare Davies (Assistant Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA), Dacher Keltner (Professor of Psychology, University of California, Berkeley, USA), David Wrisley (Associate Professor of Digital Humanities, NYUAD, UAE), Didier Fusillier (President, La Villette, France), Elif M. Gökçiǧdem (Founder, Empathy Building Through Museums, USA/Turkey), Emily Kasriel (Head of Editorial Partnerships and Special Projects, BBC World Service, UK), Eugene Tan (Director, National Gallery of Singapore and Singapore Art Museum, Singapore), Fiammetta Rocco (Senior Editor and Culture Correspondent, The Economist and 1843, UK), Françoise Benhamou (Professor, Sorbonne-Paris Nord University, France), Frédéric Jousset (Founder of Art Explora and Webhelp, owner of Beaux Arts Magazine, France), Gene Kogan (Artist and programmer, USA), Guilhem André (Chief curator for Asian and Medieval Arts, Louvre Abu Dhabi, UAE), Hamady Bocoum (Director General, Museum of Black Civilizations, Senegal), Helen Chatterjee (Professor of Biology, UCL, UK), Hervé Barbaret (Director General, Agence France-Muséums, France), Hilary Knight (Director of Digital, Tate, UK), Jean-Luc Martinez (President and Director, Musée du Louvre, France), Jessica Morgan (Director, Dia Art Foundation, USA), Kavita Singh (Professor at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India), Kaywin Feldman (Director, National Gallery of Art, USA), Krzysztof Pomian (Historian and philosopher, France), Kwame Anthony Appiah (Professor of Philosophy and Law, New York University (NYU) and NYU Abu Dhabi, UAE & USA), Lāth Carlson (Executive Director, The Museum of the Future, UAE), Laurence Des Cars (President, Musée d’Orsay and Musée de l'Orangerie, France), Manal Ataya (Director General, Sharjah Museums Authority, UAE), Manuel Borja-Villel (Director, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Spain), Maral Jule Bedoyan (Education and Learning Resources Manager, Louvre Abu Dhabi, UAE), Max Hollein (Director, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA), Maya Allison (Executive Director, NYUAD Art Gallery, UAE), Michael Govan (CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, USA), Mikhail Piotrovsky (Director, The State Hermitage Museum, Russia) Mina Al-Oraibi (Editor in Chief, The National newspaper, UAE), Nora Razian (Head of Exhibitions, Jameel Arts Centre, UAE), Nujoom Al Ghanem (Poet and Film Director, UAE), Olivier Mauco (President, Game in Society, France), Peter Gorgels (Manager Digital Productions, Rijksmuseum, The Netherlands), Peter Keller (Director General of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), Austria/France), Peter Magee (Director, Zayed National Museum, UAE), Reem Fadda (Director, Cultural Foundation, UAE), Rose-Marie Mousseaux (Chief Curator for Early Modern Art, Louvre Abu Dhabi, UAE), Rose-Marie Mousseaux (Chief Curator for Early Modern Art, Louvre Abu Dhabi, UAE), Salah M. Hassan (Director of The Africa Institute and Goldwin Smith Professor of African and African Diaspora Art History and Visual Culture, Cornell University, USA), Sandra Jackson Dumont (Director and CEO, The Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, USA), Sara Bin Safwan (Curator, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, UAE), Sophie Makariou (President, Musée Guimet, France), Souraya Noujaim (Scientific, Curatorial and Collections Management Director, Louvre Abu Dhabi, UAE), Thelma Golden (Director and Chief Curator, The Studio Museum in Harlem, USA), Tim Jones (Culture Mile Manager, City of London Corporation, UK), Tom Crow (Rosalie Solow Professor of Modern Art, NYU, USA), Yang Zhigang (Director, Shanghai Museum, China), and Zeina Arida (Director, Sursock Museum, Lebanon).

**About Louvre Abu Dhabi**

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 calibre to re-open following the closure of cultural sites due to COVID-19 in the Gulf.

**About NYU 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 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 NYU Abu Dhabi, Louvre Abu Dhabi, the exhibition centre Manarat Al Saadiyat, and Berklee Abu Dhabi Center.

***Reframing Museums* Media Partners**

   