**PRESS RELEASE:**

For press materials, please click [here](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/hjclcpudfpy4e4bcjm4bw/AD3ZEce5LZV_aa3wRCO2Tiw?rlkey=5r5pfg05v8wr4rrlpswrj8su5&st=1ght1933&dl=0).

**Louvre Abu Dhabi Announces the Winning Scholars of its Inaugural Fellowships and Grants Programme**

*Five scholars have been selected from 173 global submissions*

*The first cohort exemplifies the programme’s core mission: to bring together diverse thinkers whose research resonates with Louvre Abu Dhabi’s vision of inclusivity and cross-cultural dialogue*



*(from left to right): Hamid Keshmirshekan, Mizuho Ikeda, Rhomaillessa Talhaoui, Helena Barranha and Suhaila Almansoori*

**Abu Dhabi, UAE – 08 September 2025:** Louvre Abu Dhabi has revealed the first cohort of scholars selected for its newly launched Fellowships and Grants Programme. This landmark initiative is designed to advance original research in the fields of art history, museum studies, archaeology, heritage science, and conservation.Following a highly competitive global call that garnered 173 submissions from around the world, five scholars were selected, representing academic institutions from diverse cultural and geographic contexts.

Launched to encourage critical inquiry and foster international academic collaboration, the programme offers scholars unprecedented access to the museum’s state-of-the-art research infrastructure. This includes its Resource Centre, Conservation Centre, and the Scientific Laboratory, the first of its kind in the Gulf region. Each fellow will work closely with Louvre Abu Dhabi’s collections, displays, and research resources to produce original research that reimagines how stories of art, culture, and history are told, particularly by incorporating perspectives from diverse cultural contexts, including those of the Global South.

The research programme is anchored around three thematic pillars:

* Global history of museums and collections
* Circulation of styles, images, and texts
* Precious materials and routes of exchange

The inaugural cohort exemplifies the programme’s core mission to bring together diverse thinkers whose research resonates with Louvre Abu Dhabi’s vision of inclusivity and cross-cultural dialogue.

**The Inaugural Fellows**

**Hamid Keshmirshekan (UK): Short-term fellow winner**  
Project title: *De-centring the Canon: Louvre Abu Dhabi and the Challenge to Eurocentric Art History*  
Senior Scholar at Columbia University and former senior teaching fellow at SOAS, Keshmirshekan examines how Louvre Abu Dhabi integrates Middle Eastern modern and contemporary artists within its global narrative. His project explores curatorial strategies that challenge Eurocentric canons and open space for alternative art histories.

**Helena Barranha (Portugal): Short-term fellow winner**  
Project title: *The Multiple Images of a Cosmopolitan Museum: Mapping the Visual Representations and Architectural Reinterpretations of Louvre Abu Dhabi*  
Professor at Instituto Superior Técnico, University of Lisbon and researcher at the Institute of Art History, NOVA FCSH, Barranha’s project explores how the museum’s architecture embodies cultural convergence and is reimagined by the public, particularly through social media. It also considers how digital tools, including AI, are reshaping the perception of iconic museum spaces.

**Mizuho Ikeda (Japan/UK): Long-term fellow winner**  
Project title: *Universal Museums and Religious Diversity: A Comparative Analysis of Exhibition Practices at Louvre Abu Dhabi and Museums in Asia*  
A Research Associate at the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies and Teaching Fellow at SOAS, University of London, Ikeda investigates how Hindu and Buddhist artworks are displayed at Louvre Abu Dhabi. The project considers curatorial strategies and visitor engagement in relation to exhibiting sacred art in a global, multi-faith context.

**Rhomaillessa Talhaoui (Morocco/France): Short-term fellow winner**  
Project title: *The Transimperial Circulation of Early Pictures of Mecca (1880–1920)*  
A graduate of Université Paris Cité, Talhaouistudies the circulation and reinterpretation of early photographs of Mecca across colonial, religious, and commercial networks. The project highlights the role of local photographers and challenges Western-centric readings of early photography in the region.

**Suhaila Almansoori (UAE): Short-term fellow winner**  
Project title: *Pre-Islamic Christian Heritage in the United Arab Emirates: An Evaluation of the Sīnīya Island Archaeological Site*  
Almansoori is a UAE-based historian and cultural heritage professional holding a BA in History and Archaeology (minor in Film Studies) from UAE University. She is currently pursuing her master’s degree in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage at Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi. Her archaeological fieldwork includes participation in excavations at Al Sulaimi, Al Ain Region, with a particular focus on pre-Islamic Christian heritage, notably the 6th–7th-century Christian monastery discovered at Sīnīya Island in Umm Al Quwain. Her current research investigates a unique palm frond basket coated with bitumen, uncovered during the 2025 excavation season.

The programme offers short- and long-term fellowships to the winning scholars, with the award of AED 85,000 for the short-term fellows (three months) and AED 245,000 for the long-term fellows (nine months) for their research projects.

Together, their research reflects Louvre Abu Dhabi’s commitment to advancing inclusive, cross-cultural scholarship and reshaping how art and history are understood around the world.

Later this year, the programme will launch its second call for proposals and expand to support collaborative research projects between Louvre Abu Dhabi and international partners, further reinforcing the museum’s role as a hub for critical scholarship and cross-border academic exchange.

**ENDS**

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**Louvre Abu Dhabi’s operating hours**

Museum: Open: 10 am – 6.30 pm (Tuesday – Thursday); extended hours: 10 am – 8.30 pm (Friday - Sunday); closed on Monday.

Dome: Open: 10 am – midnight (Tuesday - Sunday) - last entry 11 pm; closed on Monday.

Museum Café: Open: 10 am – 7 pm (Tuesday - Thursday); extended hours: 10 am – 9 pm (Friday – Sunday). Closed on Monday.

Art Lounge: Open: 3 pm – 12 am (last order 11 pm); closed on Monday and during summer.

Fouquet’s Abu Dhabi and Marta Bar: Open: 12 pm – 12 am (last orders at 10 pm) (Tuesday – Thursday, Sunday); weekends: 12 pm – 1 am (last order at 10.30 pm) (Friday – Saturday); closed on Monday.

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

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

For more information on Louvre Abu Dhabi’s acquisitions policies and principles, visit our website.

**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, programmeming and Children’s Museum are inclusive platforms that connect communities and offer enjoyment for all.

**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.

**ABOUT SAADIYAT CULTURAL DISTRICT**

Built as a beacon of cultural exchange and inspiration, Saadiyat Cultural District is a unique collection of cultural institutions and experiences in the heart of Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates.

The District is a global platform, emanating from a rich cultural heritage, celebrating traditions, and advancing equitable culture. It is an embodiment of empowerment, showcasing museums, collections, and narratives that celebrate the region’s heritage while promoting a diverse global cultural landscape.  Together, the District’s seven museums and institutions, housed in innovative architectural spaces,  tell a compelling story of our land, its connections with the region, and its historical exchange with the world from the perspective of Abu Dhabi and the global south.

Saadiyat Cultural District’s overall narrative will create an unparalleled global public sphere. where people can come together, openly exchange opinions, and build a common understanding. Saadiyat Cultural District is a testament to Abu Dhabi’s belief in the power of creativity and innovation, qualities that build on the profound vision of our founding father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, and it is driven by a heartfelt responsibility to future generations of all nations.

More than a cultural destination, Saadiyat Cultural District is envisaged as an engine of opportunity, growth, and innovation coupled with an impact-focused mission to champion creativity, build capacity, and deliver future opportunity locally, regionally, and worldwide.