

Press Release

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Louvre Abu Dhabi Unveils New Exhibition Showcasing the Legacy of the Mamluks

The GCC's first show devoted to Mamluks, featuring over 270 works from international collections.



Image credit: © Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi. Photos: Daryll Borja/Seeing Things

Abu Dhabi, UAE, 17 September 2025: Louvre Abu Dhabi unveils a major new exhibition, *Mamluks: Legacy of an Empire*, which delves into the rich heritage of the Mamluk Sultanate, a powerful dynasty that ruled a vast expanse of territory encompassing the most significant Islamic holy sites for over two and a half centuries (1250–1517). Showcasing the rich productions of the remarkable Mamluk society, the exhibition brings together over 270 exceptional artworks from 34 prestigious museums and cultural institutions in 13 countries, including objects of art, glasswork, metalwork, ceramics, textiles, coinage, manuscripts and other items.

Organised by Louvre Abu Dhabi in partnership with Musée du Louvre and France Muséums, with the support of LG Electronics Gulf as sponsor and Abu Dhabi Media Network as media partner, this exhibition is the first on the subject of the Mamluk Sultanate to be showcased in the GCC region. It is open to the public from 17 September 2025 to 25 January 2026.

Mamluks: Legacy of an Empire is curated by Dr. Souraya Noujaim, Director of the Department of Islamic Art at Musée du Louvre (General Curator) and Dr. Carine Juvin, Curator for the Medieval Near East Collection, Department of Islamic Art, at Musée du Louvre (Scientific Curator), with the support of Fakhera Alkindi, Senior Curatorial Assistant at Louvre Abu Dhabi.

Manuel Rabaté, Director of Louvre Abu Dhabi, said: "We are proud to present *Mamluks: Legacy of an Empire*, which celebrates the cultural and artistic achievements of one of the Islamic world's most influential dynasties. This exhibition delves into the interactions of the Mamluk Sultanate with Asia, Africa and Europe, revealing how interconnected the world was at that time, and how remarkably aligned in spirit it was with the cosmopolitan nature of contemporary Abu Dhabi. We are grateful for our partners, lenders and sponsors, whose collaboration helped us bring history to life and deepen cultural connections across borders."

The exhibition was first presented at the Musée du Louvre in Paris in spring 2025, as the first major European showcase dedicated to the Mamluk Sultanate. Within the exceptional collection of the Musée du Louvre's Department of Islamic Art, which showcases the diversity of artistic production across the Islamic world from the 7th century to the early 20th century, the group of Mamluk artworks ranks among the finest in the world. Now presented for audiences in the UAE and the GCC, the exhibition's curatorial direction highlights the region's historical and cultural connections to the Mamluk world, with an expanded selection of artworks from regional collections on view exclusively in Abu Dhabi, alongside a few displayed in both Abu Dhabi and Paris.

Laurence des Cars, President-Director of the Musée du Louvre, Paris, said: "The exhibition *Mamluks: Legacy of an Empire* at Louvre Abu Dhabi is a remarkable testament to the strength and vitality of the partnership between our two institutions. I am very pleased that, on this occasion, several masterpieces from the Louvre are presented alongside outstanding loans from around the world. The dialogues established between these works will, I hope, allow Louvre Abu Dhabi's visitors to fully appreciate the richness of this culture's

artistic and intellectual diversity, which shaped the Near East from the mid-13th to the early 16th century."

The exhibition curators Dr. Souraya Noujaim and Dr. Carine Juvin said: "This exhibition offers a unique opportunity to present, for the first time in both Europe and the Middle East, the remarkable history of the Mamluk sultans and their cultural and artistic achievements, brought together through exceptional international loans. We are especially pleased to highlight themes from recent research into Mamluk society, including the role of women, religious minorities, and the empire's extensive diplomatic and trade networks spanning Asia, Africa and Europe. We also felt it was essential to convey the power and sophistication of Mamluk art, a form of artistic expression that remains strikingly modern."

Dr. Guilhem André, Director for Scientific, Curatorial and Collections Management at Louvre Abu Dhabi, said: "Thanks to Louvre Abu Dhabi's close relationship with the Musée du Louvre, and given the size and quality of its collections, along with the extensive research on this period carried out in France since the nineteenth century, the framework for this exhibition quickly took shape. Both museums worked closely on the project, and several masterpieces of Mamluk art from Louvre Abu Dhabi's collection are among the works displayed at both venues of this touring exhibition."

The exhibition unfolds across seven thematic sections exploring the structure and influence of the Mamluk dynasty. Highlights of the works on loan from Musée du Louvre include a *Key to the Kaaba, bearing the name of Sultan Faraj* (r. 1399 – 1412); a *Helmet bearing the name of Sultan Barsbay* (r. 1422 – 1438); and a Venetian School painting titled "*Venetian Diplomatic Mission Received by the Governor of Damascus*" (1511). Another notable loan is the *Basin known as the Baptistry of Saint Louis* (c. 1330 – 1340), a masterpiece of engraved and inlaid metalwork that, over the centuries, has become a symbolic object of French royalty and history. This remarkable piece is being presented in the region for the very first time.

Six artworks from Louvre Abu Dhabi's collection are showcased including a *Juz' Amma, thirtieth section of the Holy Quran* (second half of the 13th century), a rare *Carpet decorated with three medallions* produced in Egypt (second half of the 15th century), and a pharmaceutical or perfumes *Albarelllo with coat of arms decoration* (15th century).

Other notable loans include a *Certificate of pilgrimage (Hajj) delivered to Maymuna, daughter of Muhammad al-Zardili* (1433) from the British Library; an *Incense burner bearing the name of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun* (c. 1330 – 1341) from the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha; and a *Mosque Lamp bearing the name of Emir Qawsun* (c. 1330-1335) from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

With the support of LG Electronics Gulf, the exhibition integrates digital storytelling and multimedia elements. Five interactive screens, spread throughout the exhibition, invite visitors to delve deeper into the stories behind the artworks, enriching their experience through immersive sound and visuals.

Cultural and Educational Programme

A rich cultural and educational programme will accompany *Mamluks: Legacy of an Empire*, offering a diverse array of events. Between September and November, three talks exploring different aspects of the Mamluk era will take place: a public conversation with the exhibition's curators on September 16, a lecture on Mamluk architecture on November 19, and a talk focusing on a prominent historical figure who lived during the Mamluk period. In addition, a film related to the Mamluks history will be screened during the exhibition.

The museum will also host a variety of educational activities for adults, families and youth. Highlights include a specially designed children's path wall labels for students and children, enabling them to discover the exhibition through questions and fun facts. The museum's ongoing programmes, such as *Drawing at the Museum* and *Book an Easel*, will feature sessions dedicated to the Mamluks, alongside specially curated guided tours.

A recorded podcast on the exhibition will be available via Louvre Abu Dhabi's website and mobile application, allowing the public to explore its themes from anywhere. The *Mamluks: Legacy of an Empire* exhibition catalogue is available in Arabic, English and French at the museum boutique. Edited by the exhibition's scientific curator, Dr. Carine Juvin, the catalogue features contributions from leading international specialists and serves as an accessible reference on the art and culture of the Mamluk Sultanate.

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.

-Ends-

NOTES TO EDITORS

Louvre Abu Dhabi is open Tuesday – Sunday from 10 am – 6:30 pm; closed on Mondays. Pre-purchased tickets are required to visit the museum. E-tickets can be reserved via the museum's [website](#).

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, programming and Children's Museum are inclusive platforms that connect communities and offer enjoyment for all.

ABOUT MUSÉE DU LOUVRE

Open to all since 1793, the Musée du Louvre was the first museum to open to the general public in France. Born of the French Revolution and heir to the great royal collections, this former palace of the kings of France has always lived and evolved alongside national – and global – history.

Today, the Louvre is one of the leading players on the international museum scene, with its 30,000 works of art displayed across 70,000 square metres, including masterpieces like the Mona Lisa, the Winged Victory of Samothrace, the Seated Scribe and the Venus de Milo. It holds collections that tell a history of the world that has always been built on exchanges and connections, spanning from antiquity to the 19th century, from Asia to the Americas. The Louvre is a museum with a universal mission, a place where cultures and civilisations come together, where past and present interact. It is the place where all kinds of arts and all forms of expression manifest in today's world – a place to better grasp the very aspirations of humanity.

ABOUT LG ELECTRONICS INC.

LG Electronics is a global innovator in technology and consumer electronics with a presence in almost every country and an international workforce of more than 75,000. LG's four Companies – Home Appliance Solution, Media Entertainment Solution, Vehicle Solution and Eco Solution – combined for global revenue of over KRW 88 trillion in 2024. LG is a leading manufacturer of consumer and commercial products ranging from TVs, home appliances, air solutions, monitors, automotive components and solutions, and its premium LG SIGNATURE and intelligent LG ThinQ brands are familiar names world over. Visit www.LGnewsroom.com for the latest news.

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

Home to Louvre Abu Dhabi, Berklee Abu Dhabi, Manarat Al Saadiyat, teamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi, Abrahamic Family House and the soon-to-open Zayed National Museum, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi, Saadiyat Cultural District is one of the greatest concentrations of cultural institutions. Saadiyat Cultural 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 supports the region's heritage while promoting a diverse global cultural landscape. Saadiyat Cultural District is a testament to Abu Dhabi's commitment to preserving heritage while embracing a forward-looking vision. The District invites the world to engage with diverse cultures, fostering dialogue exchange, and offers a global cultural space that supports the region and the global South.