Press Release

***Landmark Exhibition of Works by Rembrandt, Vermeer and Other Masters of the Dutch Golden Age Opens at Louvre Abu Dhabi on 14 February***

*Largest Showing to Date in the Gulf Region of Works by Dutch 17th-Century Masters Marks 350th Anniversary of Rembrandt’s Death*

**Abu Dhabi, 12 February 2019:** Louvre Abu Dhabi will present ***Rembrandt, Vermeer and the Dutch Golden Age: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection and the Musée du Louvre***, from 14 February through 18 May 2019. It constitutes the largest exhibition of Dutch Masters from the 17th century held in the Gulf region to date. This extraordinary assemblage of 95 paintings, drawings, and objects—including more than 20 works from across Rembrandt van Rijn’s career and by his workshop—surveys Rembrandt’s artistic journey in 17th-century Leiden and Amsterdam, as well as his relationships with rivals and peers including Jan Lievens, Ferdinand Bol, Carel Fabritius, Gerrit Dou, Frans van Mieris, Frans Hals and Johannes Vermeer.

Among the many highlights in the exhibitionare two works by Vermeer—*The Lacemaker* (Musée du Louvre) and *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* (The Leiden Collection)— that were painted on canvas cut from the same bolt. In the exhibition, these have been hung side by side for what is thought to be the first time in 300 years. Also of special note are: the first display at Louvre Abu Dhabi of the museum’s most recent acquisition, Rembrandt’s oil sketch *Head of a Young Man, with Clasped Hands: Study of the Figure of Christ*, ca. 1648-56*;* and the first-ever combined display of Rembrandt’s *Bust of a Bearded Old Man* (The Leiden Collection) with the special carrying case commissioned for it by a previous owner of the painting, Andrew W. Mellon, the eminent early 20th-century financier and philanthropist.

The exhibition is organized by Louvre Abu Dhabi, The Leiden Collection, the Musée du Louvre and Agence France-Muséums.

The Dutch Golden Age was a brief period during the 17th century when the Dutch Republic, newly independent from the Spanish Crown, established itself as a world leader in trade, science, and the arts, and was regarded as the most prosperous state in Europe. Worldwide trade, driven by the Dutch East India Company and Dutch West India Company, gave the Netherlands (the coastal region of northwest Europe) an important advantage throughout Europe and the world. Rembrandt and Vermeer established themselves at the forefront of a new artistic movement characterized by a deep interest in humanity and daily life.

In this context, the exhibition explores the evolution of Rembrandt’s career starting in his native Leiden where he created his early famed series of allegorical paintings of the Senses. These works demonstrate the artist’s youthful ingenuity and experimentation with expression, composition and colour. Paintings created later in Amsterdam are also on display, including sensitively rendered portraits, the renowned *Self-Portrait with Shaded Eyes,* and *Minerva in Her Study*, his monumental history painting of the goddess (both from The Leiden Collection). These works are displayed alongside paintings by other masters from Rembrandt’s artistic circle, illustrating the influence that this remarkable group of artists had on each other’s work.

The exhibition is drawn primarily from The Leiden Collection, one of the largest and most significant private collections of artworks from the Dutch Golden Age, interspersed with masterpieces from the Musée du Louvre’s exceptional Dutch collection. Loans from the Rijksmuseum and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France complete the presentation.

Highlights from The Leiden Collection include: Johannes Vermeer’s *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* (ca. 1670-72); Rembrandt’s *Self-Portrait with Shaded Eyes* (1634); Gerrit Dou’s *Scholar Interrupted at His Writing* (ca. 1635); Jan Lievens’ *Boy in a Cape and Turban (Portrait of Prince Rupert of the Palatinate)* (ca. 1631); and Rembrandt’s *Young Lion Resting* (ca. 1638-42).

Among the highlights from the Musée du Louvre’s collections are: Johannes Vermeer’s *The Lacemaker* (1669-70); Gerrit Dou’s *Self-Portrait with Palette in a Niche* (ca. 1660-65); Ferdinand Bol’s *Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well* (ca. 1645-46), a gift from the family of Thomas S. Kaplan and Daphne Recanati Kaplan in 2017; and an engraved nautilus shell (ca. 1660-80).

The exhibition also features a very rare and beautifully crafted 17th-century ship model from the Rijksmuseum. It is the first time such an object has traveled to the United Arab Emirates.

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**HE Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism—Abu Dhabi,** commented: “The very inception and early success of Louvre Abu Dhabi was founded on our close friendship with France and our multi-layered partnerships with global museums and art institutions. In 2019, the UAE is celebrating the Year of Tolerance, which is testament to our long-standing tradition of nurturing a culture of openness and exchange. The exhibition *Rembrandt, Vermeer & the Dutch Golden Age* illustrates not only the importance of cross-border cultural collaborations, but also how artistic creativity has always been at the heart of great historic moments.”

**Manuel Rabaté, Director of Louvre Abu Dhabi,** stated: *Rembrandt, Vermeer & the Dutch Golden Age: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection and the Musée du Louvre* marks Louvre Abu Dhabi’sfirst international exhibition of the year, and we are delighted to showcase our newly acquired work by Rembrandt, *Head of a Young Man, with Clasped Hands: Study of the Figure of Christ* as part of the presentation. Both the exhibition and the accompanying cultural programme highlight Louvre Abu Dhabi’s commitment to bringing key moments in art and history to a new global audience, and further cement the museum’s mission to become a centre for cultural exchange. I would like to express our immense gratitude to our partners, the Musée du Louvre and The Leiden Collection, for their constant support and cooperation around this exhibition.”

**Jean-Luc Martinez, President-Director of the Musée du Louvre,** shared: “The great diversity of audiences, from the Emirates, Europe and the Indian sub-continent, and the wonder we observe on these visitors’ faces validate Louvre Abu Dhabi’s commitment to provide a global survey of the universal history of art. With its fifth exhibition, *Rembrandt, Vermeer & the Dutch Golden Age: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection and the Musée du Louvre*, Louvre Abu Dhabi presents the finest works from the magnificent Leiden Collection alongside masterpieces from the Dutch collections of the Musée du Louvre, including Vermeer’s *The Lacemaker*. Assembled by Thomas S. Kaplan and his spouse Daphne Recanati Kaplan, The Leiden Collection is utterly unique: it has toured the world, traveling from Paris to Abu Dhabi via Shanghai and St. Petersburg. In Abu Dhabi, visitors will be able to contemplate many works by Rembrandt and his artistic circle, numerous incredible examples of ‘fine painting’ by the Leiden School, as well as two Vermeers, enabling visitors to grasp the contribution of Dutch culture to the history of European and international painting.”

**Thomas S. Kaplan, Founder of The Leiden Collection,** observed: “My family considers Louvre Abu Dhabi to represent the single most important cultural initiative of our generation—and this exhibition of treasures from the Dutch Golden Age to be our greatest ‘passion project’. By bringing The Leiden Collection to Abu Dhabi in collaboration with the Musée du Louvre, we gratefully honour our deep relationship with France as well as our profound partnership with the Emirates, the shared values of which extend from wildlife conservation to preserving endangered cultural heritage. We also pay homage to the genius of Rembrandt and Vermeer, whose transcendent influence and illuminating insights continue to inspire artists and the public across the globe and right up to the present time. More than any other painter’s legacy, we believe Rembrandt’s ability to touch the soul represents a uniquely fitting expression of this visionary Franco-Emirati project seeking to promote tolerance and the common civilization of mankind.”

**Blaise Ducos, Chief Curator of Dutch and Flemish Paintings at the Musée du Louvre,** declared: “One sometimes hears that the Old Masters are no longer in fashion, that they represent the past, and that our time is in need of something new. Yet, this insinuates that our present has no roots—a statement that disregards any idea of historic continuity. Seventeenth-century Holland is, in many ways, a pioneer of our world: Rembrandt, like Vermeer, continues to be the living source of a vibrant creativity.”

**Lara Yeager-Crasselt, Curator of The Leiden Collection, New York,** commented: “*Rembrandt, Vermeer & the Dutch Golden Age* traces Rembrandt’s development as an artist, as seen through The Leiden Collection’s 15 works by the artist, and the development of genre painting in 17th-century Holland as shown through The Leiden Collection’s extraordinary depth of works by the *fijnschilders* (fine painters). The dialogue among these works offers a distinctive glimpse into the dynamics of artistic exchange that shaped the art of the Dutch Golden Age.”

**Credits**

The curators of *Rembrandt, Vermeer & the Dutch Golden Age* are Blaise Ducos, Chief Curator of Dutch and Flemish Paintings at the Musée du Louvre, and Lara Yeager-Crasselt, Curator of The Leiden Collection and a specialist in 17th-century Dutch and Flemish art.

**Related Publications**

The catalogue *Rembrandt, Vermeer and the Dutch Golden Age: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection and the Musée du Louvre* has been published in conjunction with the exhibition. The 192-page publication was edited by Blaise Ducos and Lara Yeager-Crasselt, the exhibition’s curators, and it includes texts about the exhibition’s narrative and content, as well as colour images of all 95 works of art on display. Published by Saqi Books, London, it is available in three separate editions—English, French and Arabic—in the museum’s book shop and online at [publications@louvreabudhabi.ae](mailto:publications@louvreabudhabi.ae).

Price: AED 150.00 / € 35.00 / £30.00 / $40.00

*The Little Rembrandt*

In late February, also in conjunction with the exhibition, a publication for children on the life and art of Rembrandt will be published in collaboration with Kate Art Editions. It will be available in three separate editions—English, French and Arabic—in the museum’s book shop and online at [publications@louvreabudhabi.ae](mailto:publications@louvreabudhabi.ae). 32 pages.

Price: AED 49

**Public Programme**

A rich programme of events will be held in conjunction with the exhibition at Louvre Abu Dhabi, enabling visitors to further explore and engage with the works on display, as well as with the lives and times of Rembrandt, Vermeer and their contemporaries. The programme launches on 14 February with an onstage discussion about artistic exchange in the Dutch Golden Age by the exhibition’s curators, Blaise Ducos of the Musée du Louvre and Lara Yeager-Crasselt of The Leiden Collection. Events offered during the run of the exhibition include guided gallery tours, a live pop-up performance at the museum, film screenings curated by Emirati artist Hind Mezzaina, and workshops for children and families. For a complete listing of these events, visit louvreabudhabi.ae.

Multimedia guides are available for use by visitors to the exhibition in Arabic, English, and French. On the tour of *Rembrandt, Vermeer & the Dutch Golden Age*, the exhibition’s curators—Lara Yeager-Crasselt and Blaise Ducos—share their insights into the masterpieces on view. Visitors can rent the guides at the museum for use during their visits, or they can download the tour onto their own devices through the Louvre Abu Dhabi App (available in the Apple Store and on Google Play).

The exhibition will be on view at Louvre Abu Dhabi from 14 February through 18 May 2019. Entrance to the exhibition is free with general museum admission tickets. Admission to the museum is free for children under the age of 13. For more information about the exhibition and to book tickets, please visit louvreabudhabi.ae or call Louvre Abu Dhabi at +971 600 56 55 66.

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

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**Notes to editors:**

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**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.

In 2019—the declared Year of Tolerance in the United Arab Emirates—Louvre Abu Dhabi will continue to be a hub for all cultures and a symbol of openness, hope, tolerance and inclusivity in the Arab world.

**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 10.2 million guests in 2018, the Louvre is the most visited museum in the world.

**ABOUT THE LEIDEN COLLECTION**

The Leiden Collection, founded in 2003 by American collectors Dr. Thomas S. Kaplan and his wife, Daphne Recanati Kaplan, comprises some 250 paintings and drawings and represents one of the largest and most important assemblages of 17th-century Dutch paintings in private hands.

The Collection is named after Rembrandt’s native city in honor of the master’s greatness and focuses on the works of Rembrandt and his followers, illuminating the personalities and themes that shaped the Golden Age over five generations. The Collection is the most comprehensive representation of the Leiden artists known as *fijnschilders* (“fine manner painters”), who concentrated on painting portraits, tronies (character studies), genre scenes, and history paintings.

**ABOUT AGENCE FRANCE-MUSÉUMS**

Created in 2007 following the intergovernmental agreement between Abu Dhabi and France, Agence France-Muséums has been for 10 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 organization 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 with the training of the museum’s professionals, the coordination of loans from French museums for 10 years and the organisation of temporary exhibitions for 15 years.

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 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 architecture, 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 – Abu Dhabi](http://tcaabudhabi.ae/) 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 that enriches the lives of visitors and residents alike.  The Department 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 programmes relate to the preservation of heritage and culture, including protecting archaeological and historical sites and to developing museums, including Louvre Abu Dhabi, the Zayed National Museum and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi.  The Department of Culture and Tourism supports intellectual and artistic activities and cultural events to nurture a rich cultural environment and honour the emirate’s heritage.  A key role played by the Department is to create synergy in the destination’s development through close co-ordination with its wide-ranging stakeholder base.