

Press Release

Rembrandt, Vermeer & the Dutch Golden Age
Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection and the Musée du Louvre
exhibition will open at Louvre Abu Dhabi on 14 February 2019

- *The exhibition features 95 artworks and objects including 15 paintings by Rembrandt van Rijn*
- *The exhibition will also include paintings and drawings by Rembrandt's contemporaries in the Netherlands, as well as several small paintings by 17th-century fine painters, some of which were later owned by King Louis XVI of France*
- *Johannes Vermeer's The Lacemaker (Musée du Louvre) and Young Woman Seated at a Virginal (The Leiden Collection), painted on canvas cut from the same bolt, will hang next to each other for the first time in 300 years at Louvre Abu Dhabi*

Abu Dhabi, 16 January 2019: Louvre Abu Dhabi's first 2019 international exhibition, *Rembrandt, Vermeer & the Dutch Golden Age: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection and the Musée du Louvre*, will bring together paintings and drawings by Dutch masters Rembrandt van Rijn, Johannes Vermeer and their contemporaries. Opening on 14 February 2019, the exhibition will survey Rembrandt's artistic journey in Leiden and Amsterdam and his relationships with rivals and peers, including Johannes Vermeer, Jan Lievens, Ferdinand Bol, Carel Fabritius, Gerrit Dou, Frans van Mieris and Frans Hals.

During the Golden Age, the Dutch Republic established itself as a world leader in trade, science, and the arts. Set against this backdrop of cultural exchange, exploration and discovery, the show will explore the artistic traditions that flourished in Leiden and the wider Netherlands in this period, including the development of a new school of artists, called the *fijnschilders* (fine painters), best known for their exquisitely rendered scenes of daily life.

The exhibition will feature 22 paintings and drawings from across Rembrandt's career and his workshop – from his early famed series of allegorical paintings of the senses, which demonstrate the artist's youthful ingenuity and experimentation with expressions, composition and colour during his Leiden days, to later works created in Amsterdam, including sensitively-rendered portraits, a renowned self-portrait, *Self-Portrait with Shaded Eyes* and *Minerva in Her Study* (both from The Leiden Collection), his monumental history painting of the goddess Minerva. These works are displayed alongside paintings by other masters from Rembrandt's artistic circle, demonstrating the influence that this remarkable group of artists had on each other's work.

On this extraordinary occasion, Johannes Vermeer's *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* (The Leiden Collection) and *The Lacemaker* (Musée du Louvre), two paintings on canvas cut from the same bolt, will hang beside one another for the first time in 300 years at Louvre Abu Dhabi.

95 artworks, including paintings, drawings and objects, primarily drawn from The Leiden Collection, one of the largest and most significant private collections of artworks from the Dutch Golden Age, highlighted with the Musée du Louvre exceptional collections. Loans from the Rijksmuseum and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France will complete the presentation. On view until 18 May 2019, the exhibition is curated by 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 seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish art.

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: *“As Louvre Abu Dhabi’s first international exhibition of the year and part of our 2018-19 cultural season ‘A World of Exchanges’, the exhibition ‘Rembrandt, Vermeer & the Dutch Golden Age: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection and the Musée du Louvre’ underscores the connections between artists that, no doubt, made this period “golden”. This is the very first time a blockbuster exhibition of the Dutch masters comes to the UAE and it is extremely special that two Vermeer paintings from the same piece of canvas are hung next to each other for the first time in 300 years. I would like to thank our partners, the Musée du Louvre and The Leiden Collection, for making it possible.”*

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, travelling 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.”*

Lara Yeager-Crasselt, Curator of The Leiden Collection, New York, commented: *“Rembrandt, Vermeer & the Dutch Golden Age’ traces two main narratives – 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). When brought together with important selections from the Musée du Louvre’s collection, these works offer a distinctive glimpse into the dynamics of artistic exchange that shaped the art of the Dutch Golden Age, while enabling visitors to follow Rembrandt from his early career in Leiden through his ultimate flourishing in Amsterdam, where he stimulated artistic innovations among his pupils and peers.”*

Highlights from the Musée du Louvre’s collection include: 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), gifted from The Leiden Collection in 2017; and an engraved nautilus shell (ca. 1660-80). Notable works of art 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 van Rijn’s *Young Lion Resting* (ca. 1638-42). The exhibition also includes a very rare and beautifully-crafted 17th century ship model from the Rijksmuseum. It is the first time such an object will travel to the UAE.

Blaise Ducos, Chief Curator of Dutch and Flemish paintings at the Musée du Louvre, declared: *“During the 17th century, exceptional economic, social and political circumstances enabled one country, The Republic of the United Provinces, to become the world’s leading economic power. The Dutch were living in what they considered a ‘Golden Age’. In this context, major artistic figures like Rembrandt or Vermeer flourished. Through the confrontation of masterpieces from the Musée du Louvre and The Leiden Collection, this exhibition tells this extraordinary story. This show does not intend to provide a panorama of Dutch painting in the 17th century, but by mentioning different glimpses, first and foremost through Leiden’s sight; it refers to the culture of artistic exchange within which Vermeer worked.”*

The exhibition will unfold throughout six sections:

1. At the Heart of the Dutch Golden Age;
2. Extraordinary Beginnings: Rembrandt van Rijn in Leiden;
3. The Center of the Golden Age: Rembrandt van Rijn in Amsterdam (*this section includes a special cabinet of prints and drawings*);
4. Fine Painting in Leiden: Gerrit Dou, Frans van Mieris, and their Contemporaries;
5. Picturing Everyday life in the Dutch Republic;
6. Historical Lessons and Tales of Morality.

Thomas 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.”*

Alongside the exhibition, Louvre Abu Dhabi will announce a rich cultural programme featuring film screenings curated by Emirati artist Hind Mezaina, a pop-up costumed performance in the museum galleries as well as talks and workshops, including a lecture given on opening day by The Leiden Collection and Musée du Louvre curators.

The exhibition runs from 14 February to 18 May 2019.

Entrance to the exhibition is free with the museum ticket. Children under 13 enter the museum free. Visitors can tour the exhibition through a multimedia guide that is available in Arabic, English, and French.

For more information on the exhibition or ticket bookings, please visit www.louvreabudhabi.ae or call Louvre Abu Dhabi at +971 600 56 55 66.

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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.

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 on Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi, is devoted to culture and the arts. An ambitious cultural undertaking for the 21st century, 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, Louvre Abu Dhabi and 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 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 the 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.