



**THE  
DEPARTMENT OF  
CULTURE —  
AND  
TOURISM**

ABU DHABI

ANNUAL REPORT 2020  
VOLUME 1



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## FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Cultural expression, in all its forms, is among life's greatest pleasures, and in 2020, its essential role in inspiring, comforting, and engaging us was highlighted and amplified more than ever.

Throughout the last year, our physical access to the great cultural, creative and heritage sites of the world was curtailed; the viability of cultural institutions and the livelihoods of artists and creative sector professionals came under unprecedented threat, even as we sought out culture and creativity as a source of community and personal wellbeing.

It became evident that the inherently innovative nature of the culture and creative industries is their greatest strength. Adaptability, agility, and collaboration are the keys to resilience, and despite interruptions to normal operations spurred by the pandemic, we have seen many successful cultural initiatives, both around the world and here in Abu Dhabi.

The pandemic presented an unexpected call to action for DCT Abu Dhabi, requiring that we reconsider our role in society and develop flexible solutions that place the people and staff of the cultural sector at the heart of our agenda. In reflecting on our strategies and processes, we pioneered new ideas to better serve our audiences and sustainable models for the industry's long-term development in Abu Dhabi. This changing situation has shone new light on the fundamental nature of cultural development as a collective, community endeavour.

DCT Abu Dhabi creates the tangible and intangible infrastructures for that collective progress here in Abu Dhabi, and the agility with which we shifted from working primarily in physical spaces to also encompassing virtual ones is a point of great pride for me, as we continue to place the human experience at the heart of our work.

In 2021 we will witness the landmark 50th anniversary of the United Arab Emirates, a proud occasion which serves to reinforce our sense of shared purpose. As we move forward from this testing period of uncertainty and disruption, I call upon all those residing in the emirate to renew their commitment to and involvement with the work of creation and development.

The culture and creative industries are central drivers of a thriving, diverse and growing economy and society, and they are vital to the emirate's development in the coming decades, as well as our mission to turn Abu Dhabi into a culturally conscious city and a vibrant centre of creativity for the region and beyond.

In what is sure to be a momentous year of recovery and new growth, our ancient heritage, contemporary creativity, and steadfast dedication to all forms of cultural expression must and will be central to the inspirational story of our nation's future.

MOHAMED KHALIFA AL MUBARAK



## FOREWORD FROM THE UNDERSECRETARY

Times of uncertainty have a way of clarifying what is truly important. When we look back on 2020, though the year will be forever marked by the global pandemic which affected nearly every aspect of our lives, we will also remember the reserves of strength and flexibility we showed as a society and as individuals, and know that we emerged more resilient than ever.

Though the culture sector worldwide has been fundamentally disrupted, we have seen inspirational demonstrations of new and creative thinking.

Among DCT Abu Dhabi's greatest attributes is our ability to put people at the heart of innovation, delivering solutions that protect and promote the wellbeing of our employees, our partners, and our community.

It was in this spirit, and in recognition of the role that culture and creativity play in promoting wellbeing in difficult times, that we swiftly took our cultural programmes online. While we are proud of how rapidly we were able to safely reopen our cultural sites, we are equally proud of the success of our new virtual platforms, such as CulturAll, and the inspired digital translation of existing flagship events such as Abu Dhabi Art.

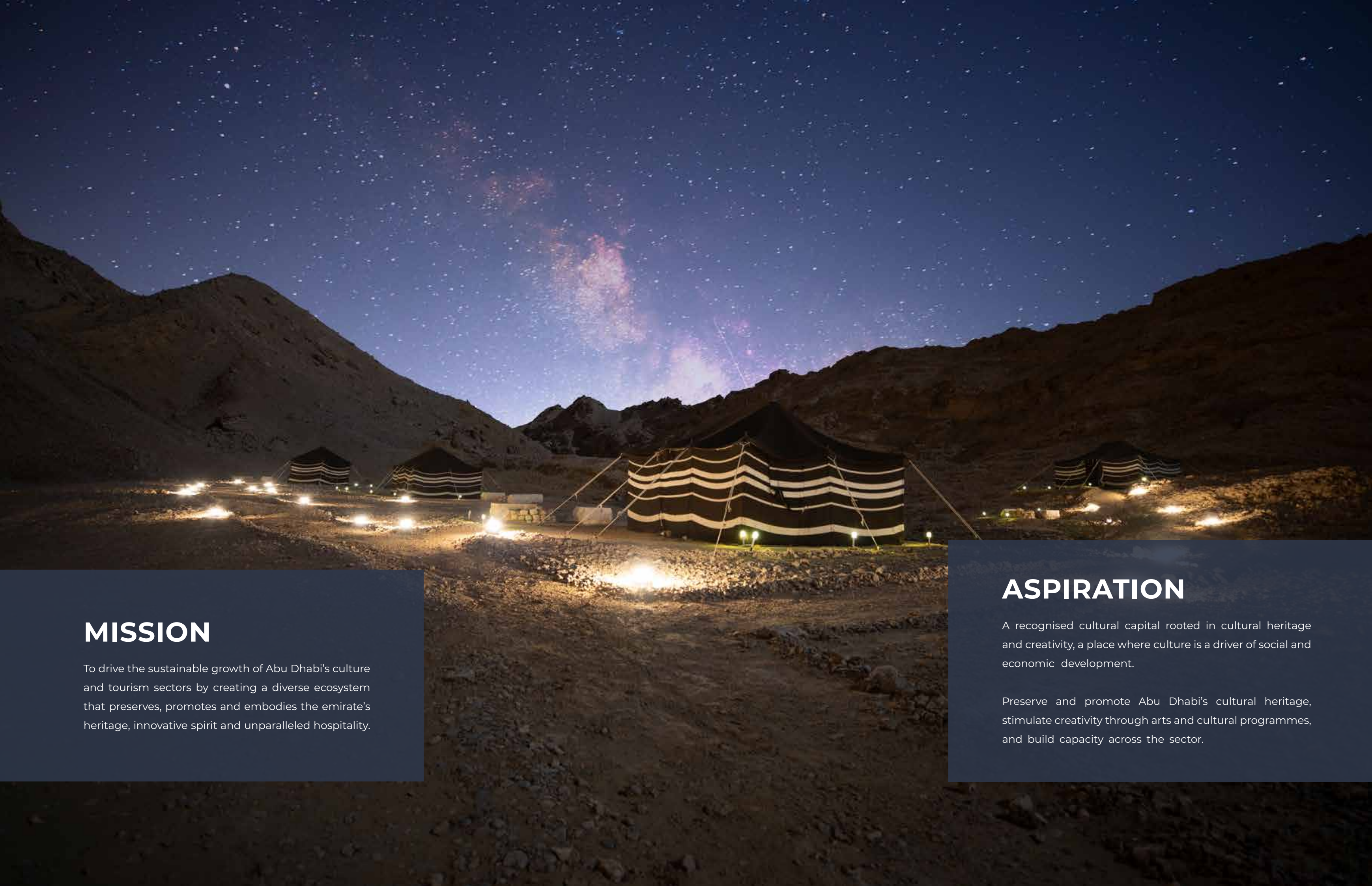
We continued to forge ahead with our cultural strategy, which in recent years has seen the emirate solidify its position as a regional

cultural hub with increasing global influence. Hard work and determination at all levels of the sector saw many achievements, including the opening of Jebel Hafit Desert Park and Berklee Abu Dhabi, and the inscription of two further heritage elements – Aflaj and Camel Races – on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

The culture sector is a key contributor to the social and economic growth of the emirate, and the Department is redoubling its commitment to cultivating Abu Dhabi's culture, arts and heritage offering. Looking ahead to 2021, we anticipate the launch of more than 130 cultural programmes and openings, such as the restored Bait Mohammed bin Khalifa in Al Ain, and progress on high-profile strategic projects like the Zayed National Museum. These continuing efforts are bringing a game-changing quality of art, architecture and living history to our community.

Our mission of preserving Abu Dhabi's unique heritage, developing world-class cultural attractions, and enabling sustained cultural engagement has not wavered. Building on key lessons from 2020, we remain firmly focussed on the future, and will continue to innovate in a manner that both serves our diverse community and attracts ever-larger numbers of visitors, as the emirate opens itself up to the world once again.

SAOOD ABDULAZIZ AL HOSANI



## MISSION

To drive the sustainable growth of Abu Dhabi's culture and tourism sectors by creating a diverse ecosystem that preserves, promotes and embodies the emirate's heritage, innovative spirit and unparalleled hospitality.

## ASPIRATION

A recognised cultural capital rooted in cultural heritage and creativity, a place where culture is a driver of social and economic development.

Preserve and promote Abu Dhabi's cultural heritage, stimulate creativity through arts and cultural programmes, and build capacity across the sector.

CHAPTER

**THE CULTURE  
SECTOR 2020–2024  
STRATEGY**



The end of 2019 marked the close of a strategy aimed at strengthening the foundations and infrastructure of the culture sector of Abu Dhabi, positioning the emirate as an engaging and inclusive cultural centre. The Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi's Culture Sector delivered on several priority areas by highlighting the rich cultural heritage of the United Arab Emirates and bringing the best in art, museums and music to the region. Efforts were made to protect and sustain Abu Dhabi's cultural heritage and preserve the Cultural Sites of Al Ain, inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Outreach activities attracted millions of visitors, while engagement programmes leveraged culture and heritage to engage communities and young people, allowing the creation of policies to build and nurture the sector.

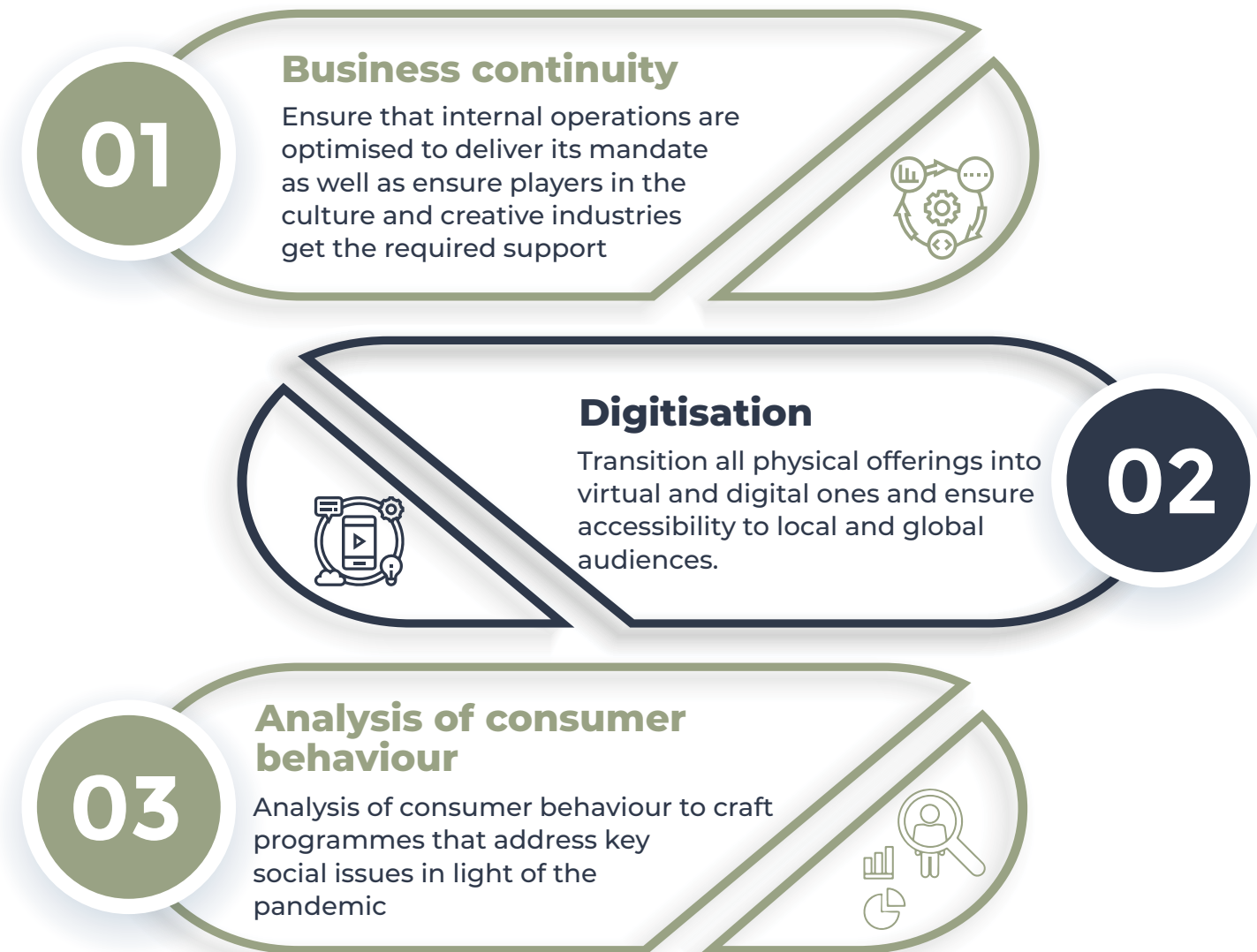
By the end of 2019, strong foundations were set in place with the main successes as follows:

- Preservation and documentation of intangible heritage in a user-friendly way.
- Protection and activation of historic buildings and cultural landscapes.
- Curation of cultural programmes and strong educational outreach.
- World-class cultural sites opened to the public.
- Ratified policies.



To build on these foundations, the Culture Sector introduced a five-year strategy that aims to lead the progression of Abu Dhabi's cultural innovation. This strategy is anchored on three principles:

- Support and enable the industries to inspire and enhance content creation.
- Adopt outcome-focussed measures of success and track social and economic impacts.
- Extend the culture and creative industries' value chain to incorporate distribution, monetisation and enterprise expansion.



The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented global crisis, plunging the world economy into a severe recession. The culture sector is one of the industries most severely affected, with the pandemic shutting down museums, libraries, music programmes, performances, festivals and media segments. The pandemic has hit the entire creative value chain relentlessly — from creation and production to distribution and access — and has considerably weakened artists' and culture practitioners' professional and economic status. Nevertheless, the Abu Dhabi Culture Sector identified three priorities to ensure continuity of the industry and to preserve its ability to deliver its mandate while complying with health and economic challenges.

**The Culture Sector adapted to the disruption caused by the pandemic and focussed on the following key initiatives across the five strategic objectives**

**Support provided through DCT Abu Dhabi's continued operations**

- Provided a global audience with online access to Abu Dhabi's cultural offerings, reinforcing the capital's position in the international cultural scene
- Undertook initiatives with the culture and creative industries through redirecting existing funds
- Ensured continuation of operations and contracts to support income and revenue generation for artists, artisans, freelancers and agencies

**Development of study on providing support to key players in the industry**

- Identified online professional development platforms across several domains
- Identified domains that can benefit from the development of online platforms for content
- Established partnerships with leading global institutions

The Culture Sector also adapted to the disruption caused by the pandemic by focussing on the following key initiatives across five strategic objectives. The remainder of this annual report highlights sector achievements in light of the adaptations made in response to COVID-19 across each of the five strategic objectives.



**PRESERVE AND  
SUSTAIN ABU DHABI'S  
CULTURAL HERITAGE**

CHAPTER

# Unearthing the Past

## Discovery of new Aflaj systems in Hili



Around 20 separate Aflaj have been identified in 50 different locations around Hili, Al Ain, at depths of up to five metres below the modern street level. Mapping these locations has allowed the plotting of these Aflaj courses for a total length of more than three kilometres.

DCT Abu Dhabi carried out detailed investigations, sampling and 3-D documentation, followed by protection and conservation measures. Future access to some of the most significant of these Aflaj has been made possible by building manholes and access shafts.

The construction techniques and the pottery found suggest many of the Aflaj date back to the Iron Age. At least one other falaj in Hili can be clearly dated by its construction technique to the Islamic period's first centuries.

## Excavations at Hili 14



Excavations were conducted at the Iron Age settlement of Hili 14 in the Al Ain Oasis. Part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Al Ain, Hili 14 dates back nearly 3,000 years. The excavations confirmed that the central building of Hili 14 is only one component in a much broader Iron Age landscape.



## Excavations at Marawah



Excavations were conducted at the Neolithic site of MR11 on Marawah Island. These excavations built on the success of previous seasons and expanded on existing knowledge of the coastal Neolithic period.



## Protection of the archaeological sites on Hudayriyat Island



The Hudayriyat Heritage Trail opened to the public on 10 November 2020. DCT Abu Dhabi collaborated with MODON Properties and Mawarid Holdings to ensure the protection of the archaeological sites and to guide their presentation to the public. The archaeological sites provide direct evidence of the activities of pearl fishermen who previously lived on the island.

## Papers on Marawah, Dalma and Hili

To further document the historic environment of Abu Dhabi, research documents and papers on Marawah, Dalma and Hili were published by DCT Abu Dhabi's archaeologists. The international peer-reviewed journals included: Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies, Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy, and Journal of Archaeological Science.

# Conservation of Abu Dhabi's Built Heritage



## Conservation Cycle 2020



BEFORE



AFTER

The Conservation Cycle Plan is a planning model for conservation site works developed by DCT Abu Dhabi for its cultural heritage sites. This enables emergency, holistic, preventive and curative conservation interventions as well as monitoring and maintenance tasks. In 2020, DCT Abu Dhabi covered 40 cultural heritage sites with 222 emergency conservation tasks, 56 curative and preventive tasks and five holistic tasks.

## Dalma mosques - boundary walls



BEFORE



AFTER

The three historic mosques on Dalma Island that were restored in the mid-1990s had boundary walls in poor condition. DCT Abu Dhabi designed and oversaw the construction of new boundary walls that were of better engineering quality, installed efficient rainwater drainage and incorporated sympathetic lighting enhancements. The project was completed in March 2020.

## Eastern Wall of Bin Hadi House



BEFORE



AFTER

The eastern wall of Bin Hadi House has had recurring structural issues. The ground levels on either side of the wall were different and were causing load pressure. An innovative structural solution was developed by DCT Abu Dhabi that involved installing custom-designed metal units to alleviate the weight of backfilling on the lower side of the wall, thus restoring pressure on both sides of the wall.

## Holistic conservation of Saif Al Dhaba House



BEFORE



AFTER

This small earthen house in Qattara Oasis was in poor condition with certain elements at risk of collapse. The conservation campaign focussed on emergency measures to secure the structural stability of the building, curative conservation tasks and preventive conservation interventions, such as introducing drainage and constructing buttresses to support the walls.

## Hili 17 temporary shelter



Hili 17 is an important Iron Age earthen archaeological site. It has suffered from continuous exposure to rain, wind and sun since it was discovered. Due to its importance as a World Heritage Site sub-component, a well-designed temporary shelter has been erected with an adequate drainage system to protect it from further weathering. In addition, sandbags were installed along the walls to provide additional protection.

The temporary shelter will also allow DCT Abu Dhabi to undertake environmental monitoring and testing of the effects of sheltering on the site to inform future conservation strategies.

## Collaboration with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

DCT Abu Dhabi's expertise in the field of conservation has been recognised by the International Council on Monument and Sites (ICOMOS) through their invitation to two key activities:

- Experts meeting to undertake a gap analysis on world heritage in the Arab States, organised by ICOMOS and the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH).
- ICOMOS World Heritage panel member to examine the properties nominated to the 2021 World Heritage List.

## The Modern Heritage Conservation Initiative



The initiative consists of identifying and protecting Abu Dhabi's modern heritage as defined in the Cultural Heritage Law 4/2016, and in developing a specific programme and sustainable policies for the long-term protection, celebration and dissemination of the modern heritage of Abu Dhabi.



# Abu Dhabi's Modern Heritage

Al Manhal Palace was the first modern purpose-built seat of administration and palace initially built for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and thereafter served as the first seat of the first President of the UAE, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan.

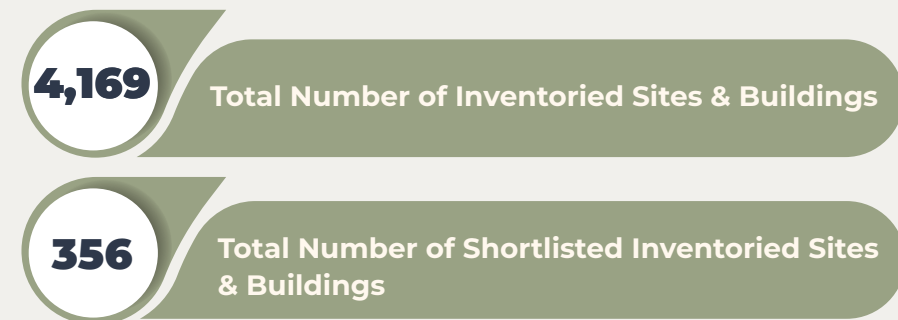
DCT Abu Dhabi completed the full conservation management plan for Al Manhal Palace, a major modern heritage landmark in the heart of Abu Dhabi. The conservation management plan has led to the implementation of immediate conservation measures and is informing the long term strategy for the site's conservation.



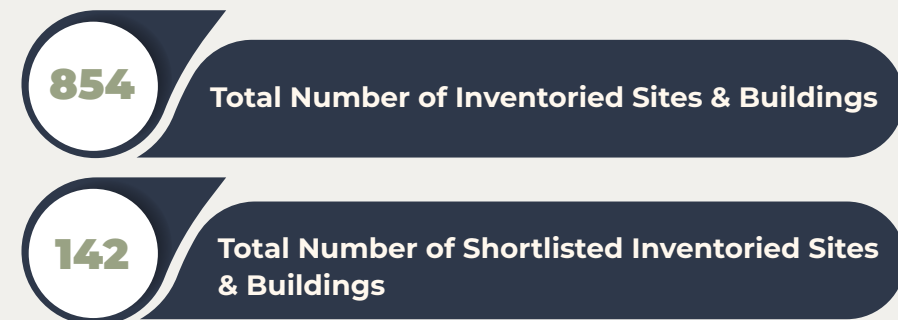
As part of the ongoing Modern Heritage Conservation Initiative, DCT Abu Dhabi continued its documentation efforts to identify, understand and manage the emirate's modern heritage resources. To date, DCT Abu Dhabi has surveyed more than 6,605 sites emirate-wide and has classified them by level of significance and modern heritage potential.

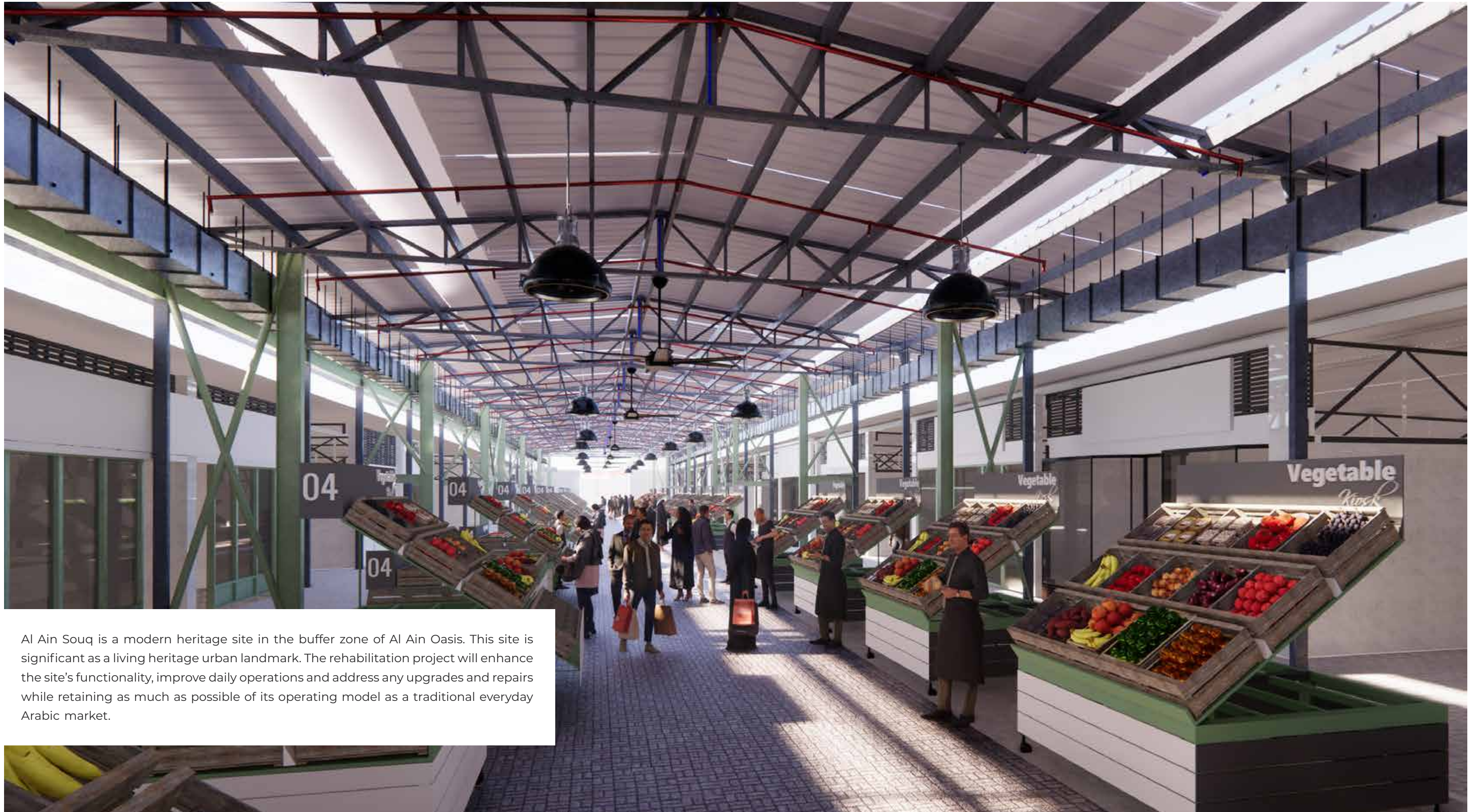
As part of the International Day for Monuments and Sites (18 April), DCT Abu Dhabi launched the first modern heritage social media campaign to introduce the concept of modern heritage, to highlight its significance for the emirate and the United Arab Emirates as a whole, and to foster appreciation of these sites and their cultural values. The initial phase of the campaign included a featured video on all DCT Abu Dhabi platforms and social media channels.

## Abu Dhabi Region – Modern Heritage Field Survey Statistics 2020



## Al Ain Region – Modern Heritage Field Survey Statistics 2020





Al Ain Souq is a modern heritage site in the buffer zone of Al Ain Oasis. This site is significant as a living heritage urban landmark. The rehabilitation project will enhance the site's functionality, improve daily operations and address any upgrades and repairs while retaining as much as possible of its operating model as a traditional everyday Arabic market.



## Developing policies to support the protection of cultural heritage and sustainable development.

DCT Abu Dhabi's Culture Sector continues to create an integrated system of policies to support the conservation of heritage and the advancement of Abu Dhabi's culture and creative sector. In 2020, new policies and guidelines were developed, including:



### Historic Environment Documentation Initiative

Done in collaboration with the Carleton University Immersive Media Studio (CIMS), the initiative aims to establish standardised and methodical documentation and recording policies and procedures for the Historic Environment. In 2020, DCT Abu Dhabi prepared the policies, guidelines, standards, workflows and procedures for each type of cultural heritage site and by activity, and also undertook internal capacity building and training in the most advanced techniques.

### Policy and Guidelines for Wood-Destroying Organisms in Historic Buildings

In 2020, the Policy and Guidelines for Wood-Destroying Organisms in Historic Buildings was finalised, covering technical aspects of inspection and treatment, as well as roles and responsibilities.

### Maintenance Policy for DCT-Activated Cultural Heritage Sites

DCT Abu Dhabi developed a policy document to define processes to harmonise the roles, responsibilities, and courses of actions across the departments involved in the maintenance of and enhancements to cultural heritage sites.

### Policy on Public Register of Immovable Heritage

The policy lays out the procedures to register heritage sites on a public register, and covers the requirements for modern heritage. The policy will lead to the development of a management system for heritage, and provide an interface for the general public and for property owners.

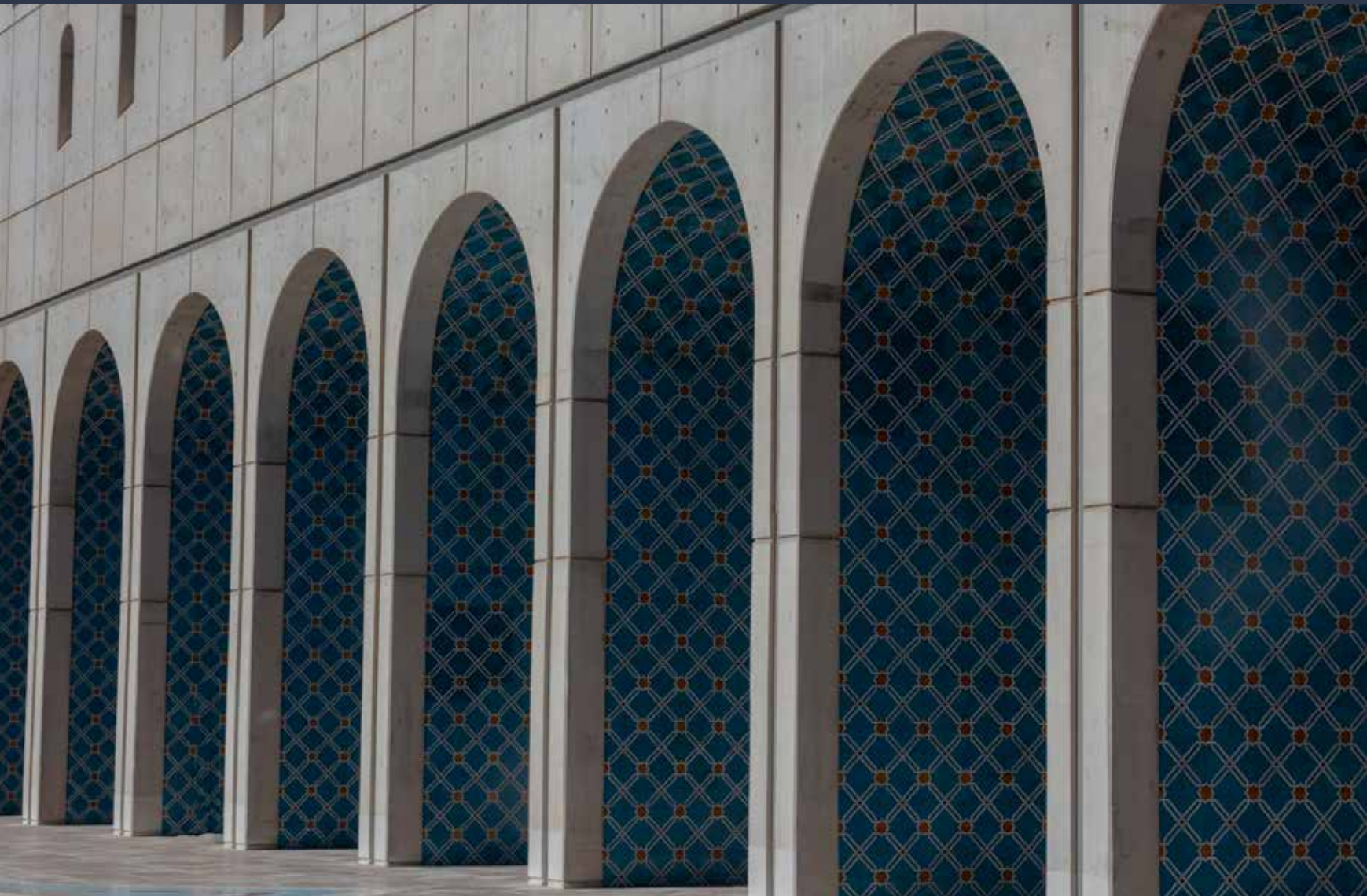
### Guidelines for the Design of Shelters for Archaeological Sites

DCT Abu Dhabi established guidelines for the design and construction of temporary, semi-permanent and permanent shelters on archaeological sites in Abu Dhabi. These will ensure that the design of shelters are compatible and sensitive to the context, and function as effective protective measures.

### Guidelines for Conducting Structural Assessments on Modern Heritage Buildings

The aim was to develop guidelines which specify to contractors and consultants how to conduct structural assessments for Modern Heritage buildings to justify permit requests for demolishing heritage assets. These guidelines also take into consideration the use of the building in addition to outlining requirements as per the designated modern heritage grade.

# Site Management Plan for the World Heritage Site of Al Ain

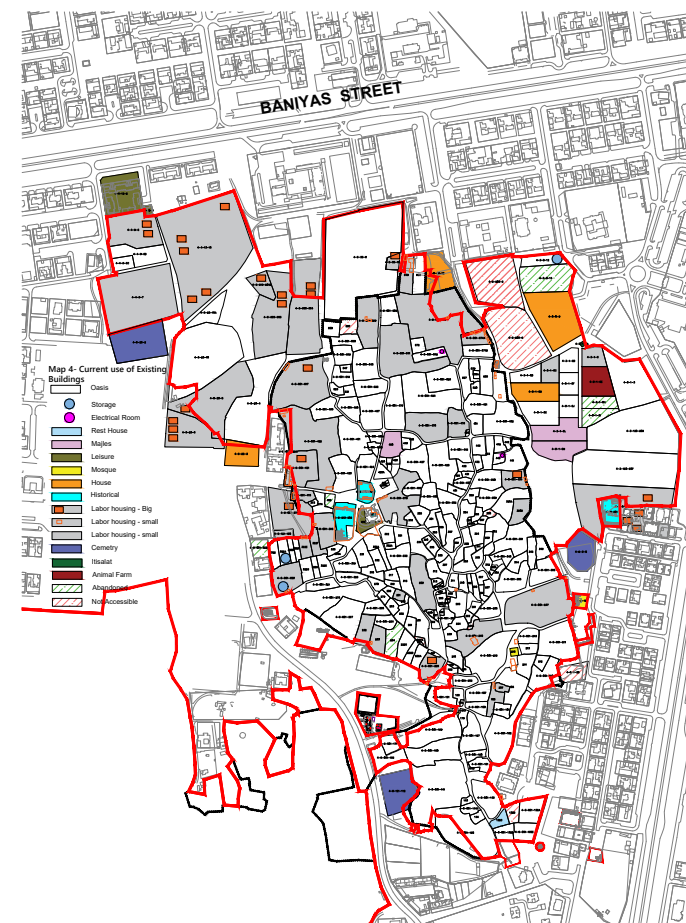


## World Heritage Site's boundaries marking



In cooperation with Al Ain Municipality, the World Heritage Site's boundaries marking initiative for the Cultural Sites of Al Ain was launched and conducted in 2020, in compliance with the UNESCO World Heritage Committee recommendations.

## Al Ain oases core zone survey in cooperation with Al Ain Municipality



The Al Ain oases survey was conducted in cooperation with the Aflaj Section in Al Ain Municipality. The survey gathered important information and data, which will contribute to better management of oases components of the Cultural Sites of Al Ain.

# The Collections of Abu Dhabi



DCT Abu Dhabi manages a collection of artworks and cultural objects in alignment with established policies and regulations. Policies have been put in place to regulate the development, acquisition, storage, registration and preservation of DCT Abu Dhabi's collections, following the Cultural Heritage Law 4/2016.



Number of new records on collections management system  
**18,860**

Number of objects conserved  
**861**

A systematic assessment was carried out to compare the DCT Abu Dhabi functions against international best practice, which allowed the development of an improved emergency plan, introduction of an integrated pest management policy, and collections storage systems, supported by the following policies:



- DCT Abu Dhabi Collections Valuation Policy.
- DCT Abu Dhabi Collections Audit Policy.
- DCT Abu Dhabi Collections Pest Control Policy.

# The Intangible Cultural Heritage of Abu Dhabi



In a bid to continue the preservation of the United Arab Emirates' intangible cultural heritage, DCT Abu Dhabi has accelerated its efforts to document and digitise elements in the national register for dissemination to the public. This practice ensures that the intangible heritage elements are safeguarded and highlighted on all levels. The documentation work has been done in accordance with UNESCO's criteria in safeguarding guidelines and standards.

**950 intangible cultural heritage elements documented.**

**67 elements documented.**

**150 elements digitised.**

## Aflaj and Camel Racing

### Aflaj and camel races included on UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

The inscription of 'Camel racing' and 'Aflaj' on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and the submission of four new files for UNESCO nominations (Harees, Arabic Calligraphy, Camel Hidda and Falconry) highlight the significance of intangible cultural heritage elements. They raise community awareness of the importance of heritage, strengthen its role in building national identity and social cohesion, and emphasise the need to safeguard heritage and pass it on to future generations.

### Camel racing - a social practice and a celebratory heritage

The plans and measures for the safeguarding of practices associated with camel racing in the United Arab Emirates and the Sultanate of Oman were developed through community-based participation and the support of government institutions. The inscription contributes to safeguarding this social activity and increases awareness, thus aiding in its preservation.

Plans were identified to support the inscription and its status, starting with supporting camel races, developing race tracks and training racing camels. These will be complemented by a knowledge and research-based plan to document, disseminate and promote the element through various interpretation tools.

The camel race is considered an important element of cultural heritage in many countries. It is one of the heritage sports that Gulf societies have known since ancient times. Its importance and continuity in Bedouin society is connected to the prominent role of camels in the desert environment; it is a fundamental aspect of their nomadic lifestyle and a source of inspiration and creativity in poetry and singing.



### Aflaj - a traditional irrigation network system

Safeguarding measures were launched as part of a comprehensive project to protect the oases of palm trees and Aflaj as an important part of the heritage of the United Arab Emirates. This project has been under discussion since 2013 with extensive community participation, including farmers, farm owners, experts and other heritage stakeholders. These discussions concluded that the project objectives should go beyond the maintenance and sustainability of Aflaj, to link the community with them as an important element of its heritage, and to achieve integration between the reality of Aflaj and its traditional nature.

The inscription of the Aflaj heritage on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage will contribute to highlighting the significance of intangible cultural heritage at a social level, by raising community awareness of the importance of heritage and strengthening its role in building national identity and social cohesion. It will also contribute to building national capacity and competencies in the management of these elements.



**Safeguarding the shared heritage of the GCC through the 8th Heritage and Oral History Conference**

Titled 'History of Pandemics in the Arabian Peninsula', the eighth GCC Heritage and Oral History Conference took place virtually and was livestreamed on YouTube on 22 September 2020. The annual conference, which aims to safeguard the shared heritage of the GCC region, brings together experts and scholars who have played a major role in researching, documenting and preserving its history. With its very timely theme, this year's event shed light on the experience of the United Arab Emirates and its GCC neighbours in overcoming the social, economic and psychological challenges of historical pandemics. The 2020 conference attracted a diverse group of academics, researchers and scholars from GCC universities and associations involved in the fields of oral heritage, medical care, history and social sciences. The conference was viewed by almost 4,000 people from across the region.



CHAPTER

**INCREASE  
PARTICIPATION IN,  
AND AWARENESS AND  
UNDERSTANDING OF  
CULTURAL HERITAGE  
AND THE ARTS**

## Jebel Hafit Desert Park



The opening of Jebel Hafit Desert Park in 2020 offered visitors a new cultural landscape as part of the World Heritage Site of Al Ain. Occupying a nine-kilometre stretch at the base of Jebel Hafit, visitors are given access to Jebel Hafit Desert Park's natural surroundings and fascinating archaeological and historical remains, which offer exceptional testimony to the development of successive prehistoric cultures from the Neolithic Period to the Iron Age.

The site includes camping areas with dome, bubble and traditional tents to accommodate overnight visitors, and offers a range of activities such as biking, hiking, horse riding, camel riding and guided tours. In 2011, UNESCO recognised the Jebel Hafit Desert Park area as being a vital component of the World Heritage Site of Al Ain, the United Arab Emirates' first World Heritage Site.

**The site has attracted 13,312 visitors to date.**







In 2020 DCT Abu Dhabi opened the first Middle East centre of Berklee College of Music, the pre-eminent institute of contemporary music and the performing arts. Berklee Abu Dhabi offers world-class educational experiences through workshops, masterclasses, courses, ensembles and labs, all led by world-renowned artists and instructors. It also hosts live performances from students, alumni and global artists. Berklee Abu Dhabi aims to:

- **Train and develop student skills in performing arts and creative entrepreneurship.**
- **Discover and support talented individuals in the performing arts industry.**
- **Provide opportunity and education for performers, entrepreneurs, producers and art enthusiasts.**
- **Attract talent to Abu Dhabi and contribute to the organic development of its cultural scene.**



Highlights of the Berklee Abu Dhabi 2020 programme included:

- “MISHWAR”: A Musical Journey featured a voyage across cultural, linguistic and artistic borders, as faculty alumni and guest artists brought together musical traditions and innovations. The performance featured Steve Vai, Mayssa Karaa, Shor Police, Annette Philip, Stephen Webber and Robert Gould.
- With mass gathering events postponed in the UAE because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Berklee Abu Dhabi hosted the first drive-in concert in Abu Dhabi, with music fans celebrating World Music Day from their own cars.
- Unplugged but Connected: Berklee Abu Dhabi produced and presented a weekly video series featuring remote collaborations between the four Berklee campuses in Boston, Valencia, New York and Abu Dhabi. Berklee students, alumni and faculty came together from across the globe, with performances spanning genres across Middle Eastern music, Pop, Rock, Jazz and R&B. The videos have garnered more than 1.3 million views on social media so far.
- Berklee Ignite: The Berklee Ignite programmes focussed on developing young people in performing arts. Youth Theatre programmes offered Devised Theatre I and II for different age groups, giving young people a voice during this pandemic.
- Living Room Sessions: This informal musical performance combined classroom lessons from the previous week’s Middle Eastern Fusion Ensemble and String Orchestra courses taught by Naseem Altarash, with a live musical improvisation opportunity for the enrolled students. Professional violinist and Berklee Abu Dhabi Technology Manager Yarub Smarait joined Naseem on cello and Berklee Valencia faculty member Firas Hassan on percussion for a beautiful one-of-a-kind performance attended by the centre’s nascent, burgeoning performing arts community.



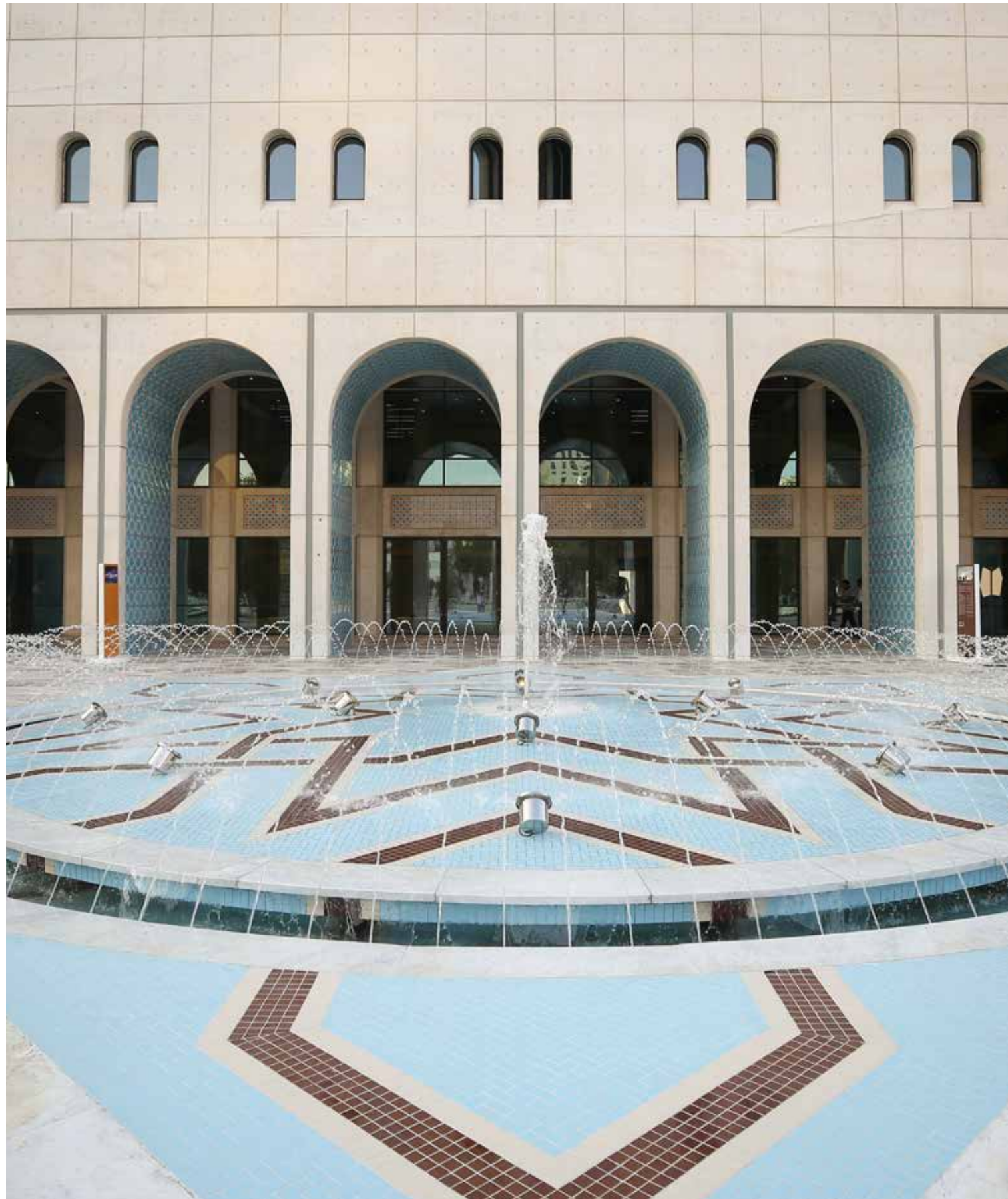
With the events of 2020 resulting in a three-month closure and restrictions on international tourists after reopening, Qasr Al Hosn maintained continuity of access to the public through virtual 360 degree tours, Instagram live guides and pre-recorded tours. Most group tours were arranged for students in national and international schools or for governmental entities.

- In 2020, a total of 260,554 visitors were welcomed at Qasr Al Hosn, including virtual and on-site visitors.
- 1,379 on-site and guided virtual tours were successfully conducted.

In addition to the tours, Qasr Al Hosn launched several programmes and exhibitions including:

- 'Weekends at Al Hosn': A recurring event which brought members of the community together, supported the urban treasures programme and highlighted the rich intangible heritage practices and performances of Abu Dhabi.
- 'Qasr Al Hosn Through Young Eyes': A partially virtual programme that fell under the 'Battle of the Arts' competition programme, resulting in several artworks being showcased in an exhibition at Qasr Al Hosn.
- 'Fashion Through the Years': An exhibition which showcased the development of fashion trends, garments and jewellery as well as displaying artefacts from members of Abu Dhabi's community from the 1940s to 1980s.
- Expansion of the digital presence of House of Artisans, where handicraft tutorial videos and PDF instructions for craft-inspired DIYs were posted online to engage the public throughout the pandemic.
- A Ramadan cooking series where videos and recipes of traditional Emirati dishes were shared on social media.
- 'Meet the Artisan' videos which introduced the public to artisans and makers to hear their stories and learn more about their crafts.
- A collaboration with Zayed University students where House of Artisans hosted a series of talks that introduced students to handicrafts, demonstrating working with handicraft materials, providing design tips and offering virtual weaving workshops.





In the first two months of 2020, Cultural Foundation’s Performing Arts programme presented eight successful live performances, with sold-out concerts by Arab superstars such as Eidha Al Menhali and Assala, Emirati and family theatre shows such as Tom Gates, and a two-night line-up of alternative Arab music bands entitled ‘Haysa’.

The Foundation also successfully shifted to online programmes in May 2020 to continue to support artists and the culture sector locally and regionally. This included expanding outreach and harnessing new audiences regionally and internationally through world-class online performances from some of the region’s and the world’s leading artists.

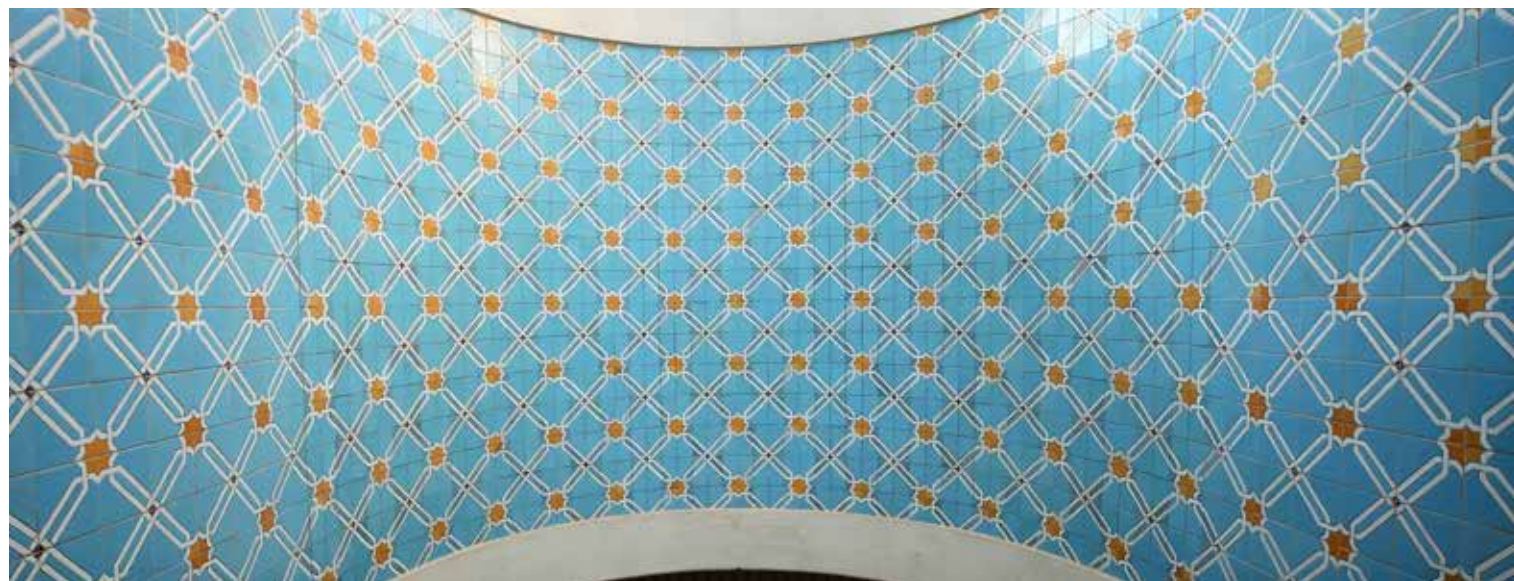
Total number of online views

 **357,228**



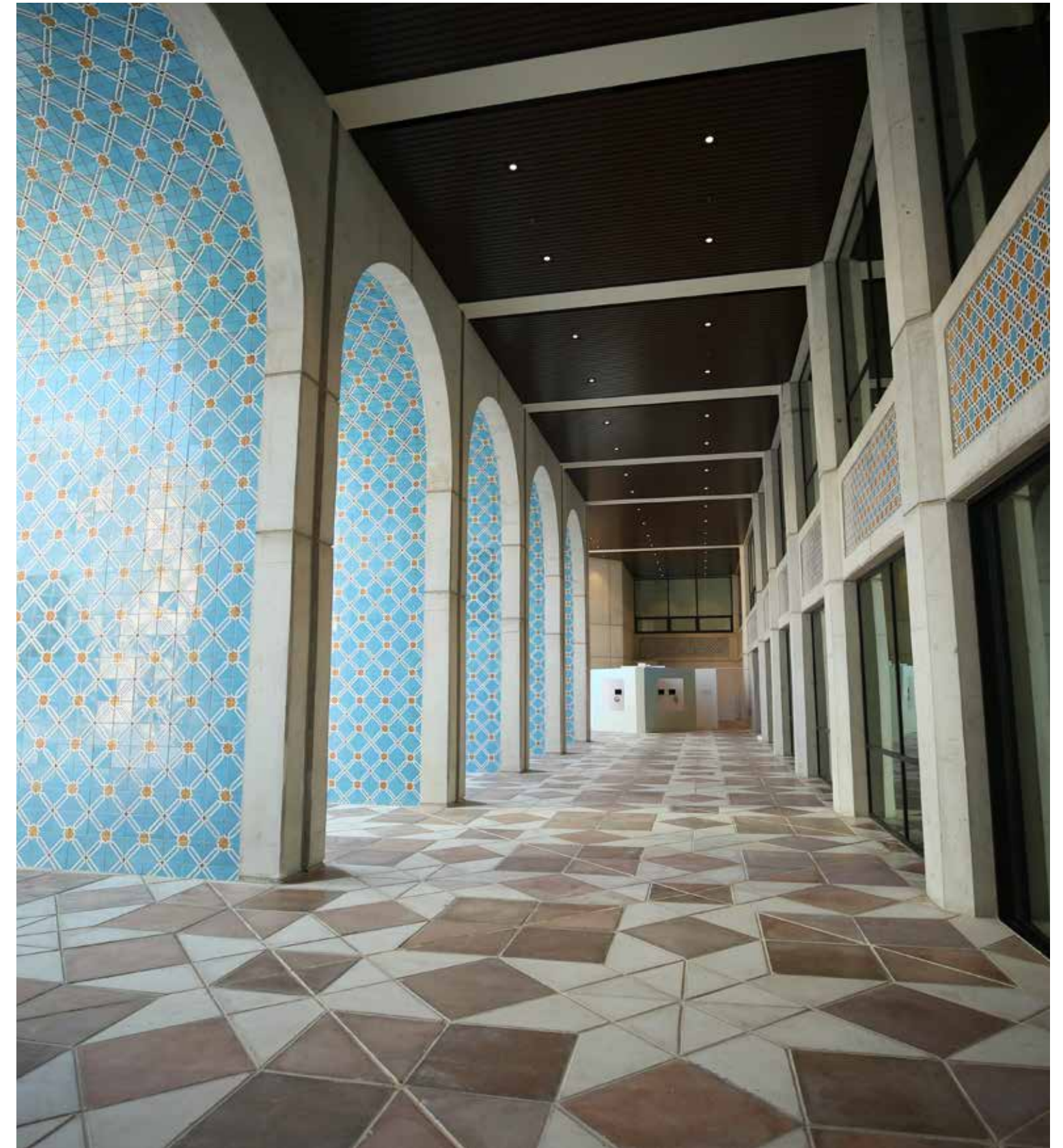
Throughout the year, Cultural Foundation delivered several exhibitions in both physical and digital formats, presenting a total of five originally curated exhibitions in 2020, all designed in-house. Showcasing mostly United Arab Emirates-based artists, the exhibitions were installed in the halls of Cultural Foundation and presented virtually to expand the audience reach, achieving more than 90,000 visitors.

- **The Red Palace:** A solo show of works by the Saudi artist Sultan bin Fahad, this exhibition took inspiration from the historical 20th century 'Red Palace' and its role within Saudi Arabia's key historical and political events of that era.
- **Common Ground:** A community exhibition featuring 18 commissioned United Arab Emirates-based artists. Inspired by 'The Red Palace' exhibition, it reflected on the common ground between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in a contemporary manner that spoke to the younger generation.
- **Abdulrahim Salim: Between Chaos and Serenity:** A survey of sculptor and painter Abdulrahim Salim's major paintings, examining his recurring narratives and the breadth of his artistic expression. Divided into six chapters, the exhibition explored Salim's investigation of dualistic subjects and their inner conflict or struggle, oscillating between the figurative and the abstract.
- **Maheerah:** Featuring 35 United Arab Emirates-based figurative and multimedia artists, this exhibition commissioned new artworks to celebrate Abdulrahim Salim's oeuvre and influence with a reinterpretation of one of his recurring themes around his muse, the titular 'Maheerah'.
- **Wonder Writers:** Abu Dhabi Children's Library produced the exhibition 'Wonder Writers' which presented a collection of short stories by students from the 12 Aldar Academies in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain — outputs of an Arabic creative writing competition held in 2019 and 2020.
- Cultural Foundation also delivered online masterclasses with established artists using the Microsoft Teams platform. These workshops were a way to continue to extend support to the community of artists and the public.
- Al Marsam Al Hor and Bait Al Khatt resumed live workshops in their premises from September onwards while maintaining strict guidelines and safety measures.



In 2020, 137,926 visitors were welcomed to Cultural Foundation, excluding virtual tours and workshop visitors. The Foundation successfully conducted 1,459 on-site and virtual guided tours.

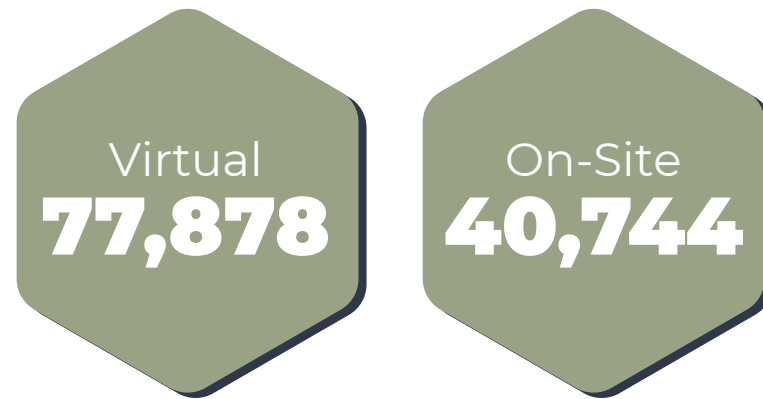
Since the launch of guided virtual tours in July 2020, 2,285 virtual visitors have been welcomed at Cultural Foundation via Microsoft Teams and Zoom.



## Manarat Al Saadiyat

Manarat Al Saadiyat transformed its approach to keep the community in the United Arab Emirates engaged with its virtual exhibitions and programmes.

**118,622 visitors joined Manarat Al Saadiyat's programmes either virtually or on-site in 2020, and 373 tours were given.**



## Contact High: A Visual History of Hip-Hop



Manarat Al Saadiyat, in collaboration with Sole DXB, presented the photography exhibition 'Contact High: A Visual History of Hip-Hop', the first time the exhibition has been shown outside of the United States of America. 'Contact High' took visitors through four decades of photography, albums, magazine covers and memorabilia that document hip-hop culture. Curated for Abu Dhabi, this iteration of the exhibition featured more than 200 images by over 60 photographers, including Janette Beckman, Gordon Parks, Barron Claiborne and Jorje Peniche. Photographs were displayed alongside original contact sheets, capturing different sides of hip-hop artists that are rarely seen by the public.

## Celestial: A Journey Through Space and Time



Manarat Al Saadiyat, in collaboration with Nikon Middle East, organised the exhibition 'Celestial: A Journey Through Space and Time', featuring artworks by the United Arab Emirates-based astro-photographer Samy Olabi. The exhibition highlighted Olabi's creative process, allowing viewers to immerse themselves in the depths of the desert and explore the night sky through the eyes of the artist.

## The New Normal



The Photography Studio at Manarat Al Saadiyat organised the exhibition 'The New Normal' to highlight social engagement while in quarantine at the height of the global COVID-19 pandemic. A panel of judges chose 29 participants through a three-month Instagram photography and videography competition in association with ADgrammers, an art community group initiated by young people in Abu Dhabi. The exhibition also featured the young Emirati photographer Noora Al Neyadi's documentary series titled 'Through Their Eyes'. Al Neyadi spent three weeks documenting the stories and portraits of 148 frontline heroes at COVID-19 centres in Al Ain and Abu Dhabi.

## Ramadan Arcade Virtual Poetry Videos: Virtual Poetry Performance

Manarat Al Saadiyat collaborated with poet Dana Dajani to produce three short videos that included poetry, music, and singing performances in celebration of the Holy Month of Ramadan. The videos were released on Manarat Al Saadiyat's social media platforms from 21-23 May 2020. As part of the Ramadan Arcade programme, Manarat Al Saadiyat developed a Carom application for board game lovers to participate and compete against each other.



## CineMAS: The Alternative Film Fest

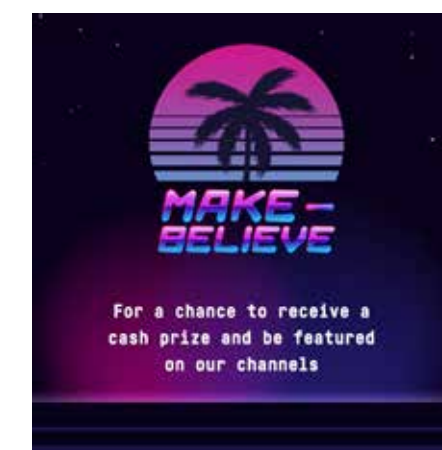


Manarat Al Saadiyat brought the film community together through the virtual CineMAS programme, with four films attracting 771 viewers. The films explored different genres and were followed by conversations on the film industry.

- Martin Margiela: In His Own Words directed by Reiner Holzemer, followed by a talk, 'En Vogue: The Fashion Biopic', with Farfetch stylist Ossama Shabi.
- Cunningham directed by Alla Kovgan, followed by the talk 'Portraying Movement on Screen', with Robert Swinston.
- One More Jump directed by Emanuele Gerosa, followed by the talk 'Docs Jump Barriers'.
- El Father Plays Himself directed by Mo Scarpelli, followed by the talk 'A Female Gaze on Masculinity'.

## MAS MASH Tourgane Online Performance

Manarat Al Saadiyat hosted a live virtual performance on its YouTube channel with Tareq Tourgane and family, the co-founders of Spacetoan. The artists sang a selection of famous and favourite Spacetoan theme songs and the event attracted 7,070 virtual visitors. Following the performance, Mohamed Ghaithe moderated a panel to answer audience questions. Two avid fan groups joined the session and performed in front of the Tourgane family to show their support.



© Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi / Photo Hufton+Crow

## Al Ain Cultural Sites

Al Ain's cultural offering was transformed into virtual experiences while finding ways to make physical visits safe and accessible to all, via QR codes, virtual tours and programmes, and workshops to engage the community.



## Al Ain Cultural Sites



**295,869**

Total number of visitors across all sites



**95,579**

Virtual visitors



**200,290**

On-Site visitors

## Qasr Al Muwajji



- 'Emirati Dagger': The programme introduced the significance and symbolism associated with the traditional Emirati dagger and the different techniques and materials used in making one. It showcased the dagger of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, which was on display.
- 'A Lens on History': A programme that supported the preservation of historical sites through photography.
- Al Barzah: A winter seating area in the courtyard which allows visitors to not only enjoy the view of the historic building, but also learn about the concept of the Majlis and its importance as part of the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.



## Al Jahili Fort



- 'Skills of the Fifties in Al Jahili Fort': In collaboration with Abu Dhabi Police, this live show demonstrated the skills of police dogs in security and hunting. The programme also highlighted the significance of Al Jahili Fort as a symbol of power in the 1950s, and included educational workshops for families and visitors.
- Al Ain Film Festival: Al Jahili Fort hosted the opening and closing of the second edition of Al Ain Film Festival in the presence of His Highness Sheikh Saeed Bin Tahnoon. The festival provided opportunities for professional filmmakers and students to present their films through a unique platform that allowed the exchange of experiences and knowledge.
- 'Let's Revive Our Heritage Together': In collaboration with the education team, the programme provided insights into the United Arab Emirates' UNESCO-inscribed intangible heritage elements and supported the dissemination of Abu Dhabi's cultural heritage.





## Al Ain Palace Museum



- 'My Heritage, My Responsibility': This exhibition addressed the cultural heritage of the United Arab Emirates, with a special focus on wedding traditions like zihab (dowry) and miksar (the day before wedding party). It included performing arts, education workshops, a souq, Emirati cuisine, a kids' zone and entertainment activities.
- 'Soughaty' and 'Mandous' highlighted daily traditions in the lives of women and men.



## Al Ain Oasis



- 'Agriculture Practices at the Oasis': The workshops raised awareness of the living culture at the oasis by educating visitors about local plants and the falaj irrigation system, and the different roles of community members in safeguarding these resources. The programme aimed to help preserve this aspect of Emirati cultural heritage so that it can be passed on to future generations.
- 'Weekends at the Oasis': The programme consisted of different cultural activities and programmes designed to promote the site and highlight the UNESCO recognition of Al Ain Oasis as one of the Cultural Sites of Al Ain, inscribed on the World Heritage List.
- 'Handicrafts at the Oasis': The programme aimed to highlight the different traditional handicrafts derived from the natural resources of the oasis environment.





- Microphone – Gulf Cinema Map: The virtual session 'Map of Gulf Cinema' looked at the current state of Gulf cinema from the perspective of filmmakers, and discussed ideas to create a better future for cinema in the region. The session had 242 views.
- Microphone – Camera and Microphone in Front of COVID-19: This session centred around a group of innovators in the media and how they faced the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during the National Disinfection Programme.
- Microphone – World Audio-Visual Heritage Day: A virtual session synchronised with World Audio-Visual Heritage Day (27 October 2020) featured discussions with a group of specialists in this field. It was broadcast on the Abu Dhabi Culture platform with 116 views.





Despite many challenges in 2020, Zayed National Museum continued the successful implementation of its pre-opening phase. Its vision of celebrating Emirati identity by being the authority on the history and culture of the United Arab Emirates continues to shape its activities and goals. Attention focussed on revising and updating gallery designs to ensure that, when it opens, the museum will celebrate the life and achievements of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Founding Father of the UAE, and the United Arab Emirates' history and culture.

International loans were also an important focus for 2020, as loans to major overseas institutions provide an opportunity to further Zayed National Museum's goal of being a globally engaged museum. The museum's acquisition strategy in 2020 focussed on acquiring artworks which position the rich history of the United Arab Emirates in a broader regional and inter-regional context.

A major part of Zayed National Museum's pre-opening phase has been to engage the public with its goals and narrative. As the museum tells the story of the people of the United Arab Emirates, it has an active programme of donations from the public that reflect Emirati culture and traditions. Each donation is contextualised by an oral history from the owner which describes the object and its significance.

One of the highlights of 2020 was the donation of two silver bracelets that were given to Ayesha Ali Al Deraai by her grandmother Sultana Saif Salem Al Deraai. They were part of Sultana's bridal shower gifts, or zehba. The two bracelets are of a style commonly found in Oman and the United Arab Emirates — particularly the Al Ain Region — throughout the 20th century CE. The style is called hajulah, which translates as “hollow silver bracelets”. These objects will be displayed in the People and Heritage: Desert, Mountain and Oasis gallery. Within this gallery there is an exhibit illustrating the importance of female adornment, including the type of jewellery worn by a bride. An oral history of the donated bracelets is provided by Abdulla, Ayesha's brother, which contextualises these objects and will offer a personal narrative of the importance of such pieces of jewellery to visitors when the museum opens.

During its pre-opening phase, Zayed National Museum is also focussing on documenting the rich archaeological heritage of the emirate of Abu Dhabi. Documentation of artefacts during 2020 was carried out in collaboration with the Historic Environment Department. Hundreds of archaeological artefacts that have been excavated in the past 20 years were catalogued, drawn and photographed so that knowledge of them could be broadcast to the public in both exhibition displays and publications.

The History at Home programme set out to engage the youth of the United Arab Emirates with the country's rich history. This online interactive learning environment was launched by Zayed National Museum in June 2020 and provides multi-media content on the history of the United Arab Emirates from its earliest times until today. The website features items from the museum's collection and contains short videos, online quizzes and a points system with rewards, including free tickets to Louvre Abu Dhabi and Qasr Al Hosn.

Zayed National Museum also participated in the Reframing Museums symposium that was organised by Louvre Abu Dhabi and New York University Abu Dhabi from 16–18 November 2020. The symposium brought together global scholars, academics, artists and international museum experts to examine how the pandemic affected the future of museums and their conceptualisation. The event was well attended with 1,000 participants registered — including 70 members of the press — from around 65 countries.

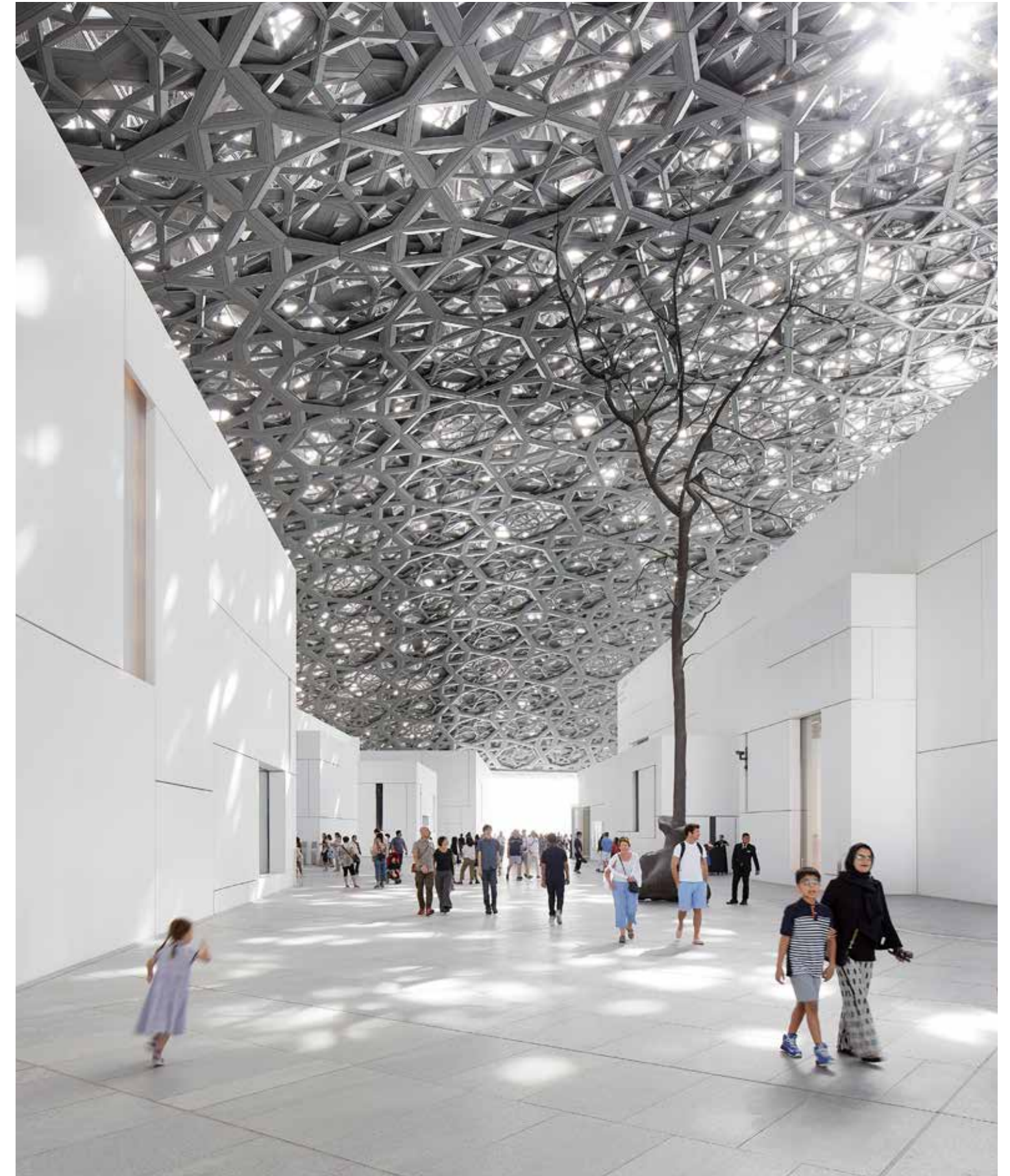




Louvre Abu Dhabi is a museum that tells stories of cultural connections. The museum's objective is to explore cross-cultural themes through stories of human creativity that transcend civilisations, geography and time. The permanent collection, together with important artworks on loan from prestigious partners, form an art historical narrative spanning the Paleolithic era to the contemporary. Anchored in the United Arab Emirates and enriched by the diversity of its surroundings, Louvre Abu Dhabi aims to further new perspectives on global art history and tell tales of exchange and commonality throughout history.

Designed by the world-renowned architect Jean Nouvel, Louvre Abu Dhabi has been built as a 'museum city' on the sea, with its contrasting series of 55 white buildings, including 23 galleries, a temporary exhibition space, a Children's Museum, a 200-seat auditorium, a restaurant, a café and boutique. The iconic dome creates a rain of light effect and a unique and inclusive space. As visitors journey from pre-history to the present day, they discover what connects us and all humankind.

Since opening in 2017, Louvre Abu Dhabi has welcomed more than two million visitors from around the world who have come to enjoy the museum's rich cross-cultural collection, international exhibitions and a range of inclusive programmes and platforms for people of all ages and backgrounds.



© Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi / Photo Hufton+Crow

## The Galleries



Louvre Abu Dhabi staff working in the permanent galleries during the autumn artwork rotation of 2020.

Louvre Abu Dhabi's curatorial strategy is to tell stories of cultural connections – a form of empathetic viewing that we need now more than ever. These connections are expressed through the juxtaposition of works across cultures, geographies, and time. As part of the museum's third annual rotation of artworks in the galleries concluding in November 2020, masterpieces on loan from Musée d'Orsay include: Edgar Degas' *The Bellelli Family* (1858-1869); Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *Railway bridge in Chatou* (1881); Vincent Van Gogh's *The Caravans, a bohemian camp* (1888); Claude Monet's *Haystacks, end of summer* (1891); Eugène Louis Gillot's *The Arrival of the "La Fayette" in New York* (early 20th century); Osman Hamdi Bey's *Old Man before Children's Tombs* (1903); and Pierre Bonnard's *Southern setting, Le Cannel* (1928). Alongside these, the museum installed maps and precious 14th-18th century manuscripts loaned by Bibliothèque nationale de France. The manuscripts from Syria, France, Egypt, India and Iran of sacred and scientific texts include scriptures from the foundations of the three Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

A total of 119 new acquisitions including sets of paintings, photos, and prints joined Louvre Abu Dhabi's growing permanent collection in 2020. Those installed in the galleries included artefacts in the earlier chapters of the museum's chronological timeline of human creativity. The Sumerian Statue of a Female Worshipper (3rd century Mesopotamia) adds to the discourse on religious beliefs in the museum's introductory gallery and is displayed alongside the Egyptian Statue of a Kneeling Man (ca. 4th-7th century Egypt). A Jain sculpture of a Standing Jina (11th century India) is a new addition to the museum's gallery exploring Asian trade routes, and the exceptional new Feline-shaped Incense Burner (11th century Central Asia) stands head to head with Louvre Abu Dhabi's renowned Lion-shaped aquamanile (13th century Northern Germany).

A number of new acquisitions were also hung in the later chapters of the museum's path, including *The Adoration of the Magi* by Pieter Coecke van Aelst (ca. 1523), a biblical portrait of Saint Joseph by Spanish painter Jusepe de Ribera, also called *Lo Spagnoletto* (before 1647), a series of *Eight Paintings of Foreign Dignitaries* by an anonymous artist (18th century China), as well as Marc Chagall's exquisite *Between Darkness and Night* (1938-43).

Existing loans from regional partners were renewed for the coming year and the expansion of regional cooperation remains a priority for Louvre Abu Dhabi. In the museum's third year, the regional partners included: Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi; Dubai Municipality; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi; Zayed National Museum; the Department of Antiquities and Museums of Ras Al Khaimah; the Department of Antiquities of Jordan; the National Museum of Oman; and the Ministry of Tourism of Saudi Arabia.

## Museum Visitors



HE Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Member of Abu Dhabi Executive Council and Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi, is joined by Dr. Souraya Noujaim, Scientific, Curatorial & Collections Management Director of Louvre Abu Dhabi and Manuel Rabaté, Director of Louvre Abu Dhabi, during a visit to the main galleries to view new artworks.

Despite its closure this spring, the museum reopened in June under the premise of being a "mindful museum", working hard to keep its visitors safe and to offer them a comforting and relevant experience in difficult times. The visitor ticketing experience and capacity flow had to be fully revisited to adapt to the safety measures taken, following an in-depth analysis of capacity modelling conducted through Predictive People Movement Simulator software, which resulted in the museum adopting a ticketing timeslot approach among other measures.

In July, Louvre Abu Dhabi partnered with VPS Healthcare, stationing nurses at the museum to oversee the thermal screening areas and support risk mitigation of COVID-19 by conducting regular audits to ensure that the museum was in compliance with the recommended safety measures and guidelines. Louvre Abu Dhabi received the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi's Go Safe Certification for demonstrating the highest level of health and safety standards. Furthermore, in line with wellness initiatives across Abu Dhabi, Louvre Abu Dhabi adopted Wellness Ambassadors alongside its own health and safety programme that was pioneered by Etihad Airways.

New offers for free admission to the museum were extended to the pandemic's frontline workers, school teachers, taxi drivers, and under 18-year-olds, with additional discount offers to partners and government employees. Outreach to local audiences through new onsite activities continued to be paired with digital initiatives. In addition to its Art Club and Teachers Pass membership, the museum also launched a Youth Pass in September to cultivate loyalty and grow its younger community.

Since January 2020, Louvre Abu Dhabi has received numerous official visits from heads of state and ministers representing countries including the USA, France, Japan, Greece, Mexico, Belgium, Fiji, Slovenia, South Korea, Luxembourg and Spain. The museum also welcomed celebrities, who came to experience the museum's iconic architecture and impressive global collection. Additionally, the museum also participated in 13 physical and virtual conferences attracting participants from all around the globe.

## Exhibitions: *Furusiyya: The Art of Chivalry between East and West*

 DATE  
19 FEBRUARY – 18 OCTOBER 2020



HH Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Member of Abu Dhabi Executive Council and Chairman of Abu Dhabi Executive Office, is joined by HE Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Member of Abu Dhabi Executive Council and Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi, and HE Saif Saeed Ghobash, Director General of Abu Dhabi Executive Office, to visit Louvre Abu Dhabi's exhibition *Furusiyya: The Art of Chivalry between East and West*.

Hamad Almansoori - Abu Dhabi Media Office

This unique exhibition explored the ancient roots of chivalry through over 130 rare artworks from the 10th to the beginning of the 16th centuries, including spectacular arms, armour and rare manuscripts. Major artworks were borrowed from a variety of international lenders such as Chester Beatty Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Furusiyya Art Foundation.

The exhibition was organised by Louvre Abu Dhabi, Musée de Cluny – Musée national du Moyen Âge and Agence France Muséums. It was curated by Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, Director, Musée de Cluny – Musée national du Moyen Âge; Carine Juvin, Curator, Department of Islamic Art, Musée du Louvre; and Michel Huynh, Head Curator, Musée de Cluny – Musée national du Moyen Âge. As the pandemic shut the museum's doors for 100 days in the spring, the exhibition was extended until October 2020, and attracted a total of 32,000 visitors and almost 176,243 virtual visits.

### Loaning the Collection

Louvre Abu Dhabi's loan of The Collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece (16th century Flanders) to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York represented a major step in the international recognition of the collection. This piece was part of the exhibition *The Last Knight* organised at The Metropolitan Museum of Art between October 2019 and January 2020.

Another loan from Louvre Abu Dhabi's collection included the Samovar by Joseph Hoffman (1904 – 1905) to Musée des Arts Décoratifs' *Luxes* exhibition in Paris. The artwork was also presented in Louvre Abu Dhabi's *10,000 Years of Luxury* exhibition in 2019/20.



Collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece; Collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece Flanders (today Northern France, Belgium and the Netherlands), 1500-1600  
2.7 x 118.0 cm  
gold and enamel

© Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi / Photo Thierry Ollivier

## "Reframing Museums" Symposium

 DATE  
16-18 NOVEMBER 2020

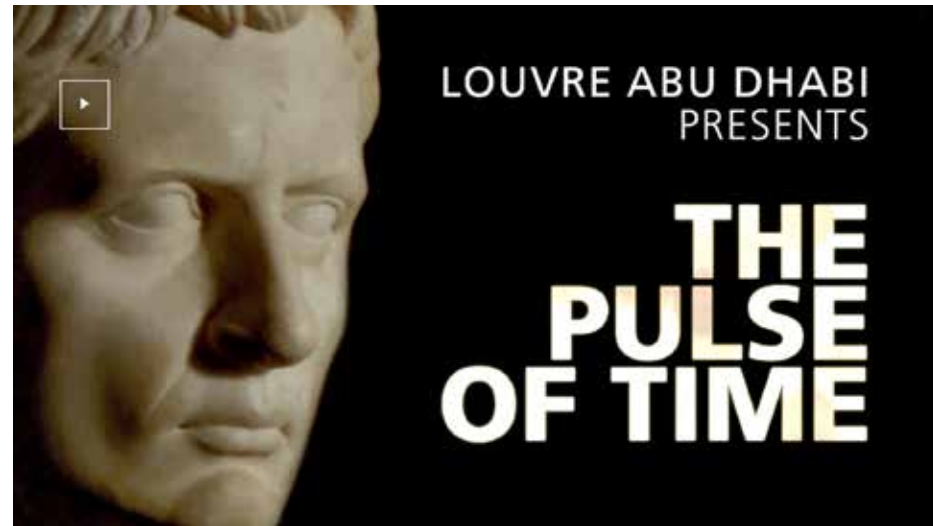


Original promotional material for Reframing Museums

Co-convened with Saadiyat Island neighbouring institution New York University Abu Dhabi from 16-18 November 2020, the virtual symposium, Reframing Museums, came at a time when the future of museums as well as arts and culture institutions around the world are being reexamined. The symposium harnessed the collective contributions of global scholars, academics, artists, and international museum experts who discussed, interrogated, and reimagined the art museum of the future. Registration of 1,000 participants (including 70 press) was oversubscribed and featured representation from approximately 65 countries.

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. Opening remarks followed from Mariët Westermann, Vice Chancellor of New York University Abu Dhabi, 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 New York University and New York University Abu Dhabi; 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.

## Digital Engagement and Audience Outreach



*The Pulse of Time*  
An original production by Louvre Abu Dhabi.  
2020  
Film Duration: 40 min.

© Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi

- The Pulse of Time, an original short film by Louvre Abu Dhabi celebrating its third anniversary on 11 November. The film explored the history of human creativity through more than 200 artworks, revealing stories of cultural connections from pre-history to contemporary times. It was narrated by well-known figures in three languages: Arabic, by Emirati producer, TV presenter and actor Saoud Al Kaabi, known for his role in the Emirati film *City of Life* (2009); English, by British actor, screenwriter, and film director Charles Dance, known for playing Tywin Lannister in HBO's *Game of Thrones* (2011); and French, by French-Swiss actress Irène Jacob, known for her role in *Three Colours: Red* (1994).
- WE ARE NOT ALONE, an audio-visual podcast by Soundwalk Collective set thousands of years in the future and exploring the museum's architecture.
- A collaboration with music streaming service, Anghami, to curate playlists inspired by the museum's collection.
- A 360-degree virtual exhibition tour of *Furusiyya: The Art of Chivalry between East and West*.
- A webinar, Art for Health & Wellbeing, on 22 October as part of the museum's push to be a 'Mindful Museum'.
- New, tailored activities for seniors, students, families and People of Determination, such as:
  1. A series for senior Emiratis that brought objects from the collection to life over Zoom
  2. YouthSpeak, a quarterly engagement series for school children from the United Arab Emirates and France to correspond through virtual conversations about the museum's universal narrative and collection
  3. Activities for children and families, including an eight-week summer programme of community art challenges that engaged over 24,000 participants online, and a "Make and Play" series which saw more than 17,000 downloads.

The museum met the challenges presented by the global pandemic with agility and heightened creativity, continuing to bring its collection and its programmes online. In 2020, the majority of artworks from the collection were digitised and made available for audiences around the world to discover. In response to the temporary physical closure of the museum galleries this spring, and a refocus to engage with existing and additional audiences, 22 new digital projects and platforms were launched in 2020, including:

## Research and Conservation



Dr. Elsa Bourguignon studies *Funerary Portrait of a Man with a Cup* as part of Louvre Abu Dhabi's participation in a global research project with the J. Paul Getty Museum and 47 other institutions to investigate Romano-Egyptian funerary portraits, considered to be some of the most spectacular artworks from the ancient world.

© Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi / Photo Augustine Paredes / Seeing Things

Louvre Abu Dhabi houses a research centre and a state-of-the-art conservation centre, with the latter dedicated to the conservation, study and analysis of the artworks in the museum's collection.

In addition to the ongoing conservation, restoration and research of the collection, Louvre Abu Dhabi participated in the APPEAR (Ancient Panel Paintings: Examination, Analysis and Research) project, a global research project with the J. Paul Getty Museum and 47 other institutions to investigate Romano-Egyptian funerary portraits, considered to be some of the most spectacular artworks from the ancient world. APPEAR (which began in 2019 and has continued throughout 2020) speaks to Louvre Abu Dhabi's larger mission to be a platform for experimentation, and to offer significant academic insights into the artworks that have defined humanity.

Louvre Abu Dhabi launched five ongoing research projects in 2020, including the Bil Arabi initiative, a trilingual thesaurus of art history in English, Arabic and French that can be used as a reference tool for students and academics.



## Fouquet's in Abu Dhabi



Courtesy Fouquet's

Fouquet's, one of Paris' most iconic restaurants, made its Middle Eastern debut at Louvre Abu Dhabi in February 2020. A symbol of French hospitality, the classic Parisian brasserie has found the perfect home at the art museum on Abu Dhabi's Saadiyat Island. Marta Bar, an intimate speakeasy-style bar, is just above the restaurant.

## Launch of 'A Mindful Museum' Campaign

DATE  
19 JULY 2020



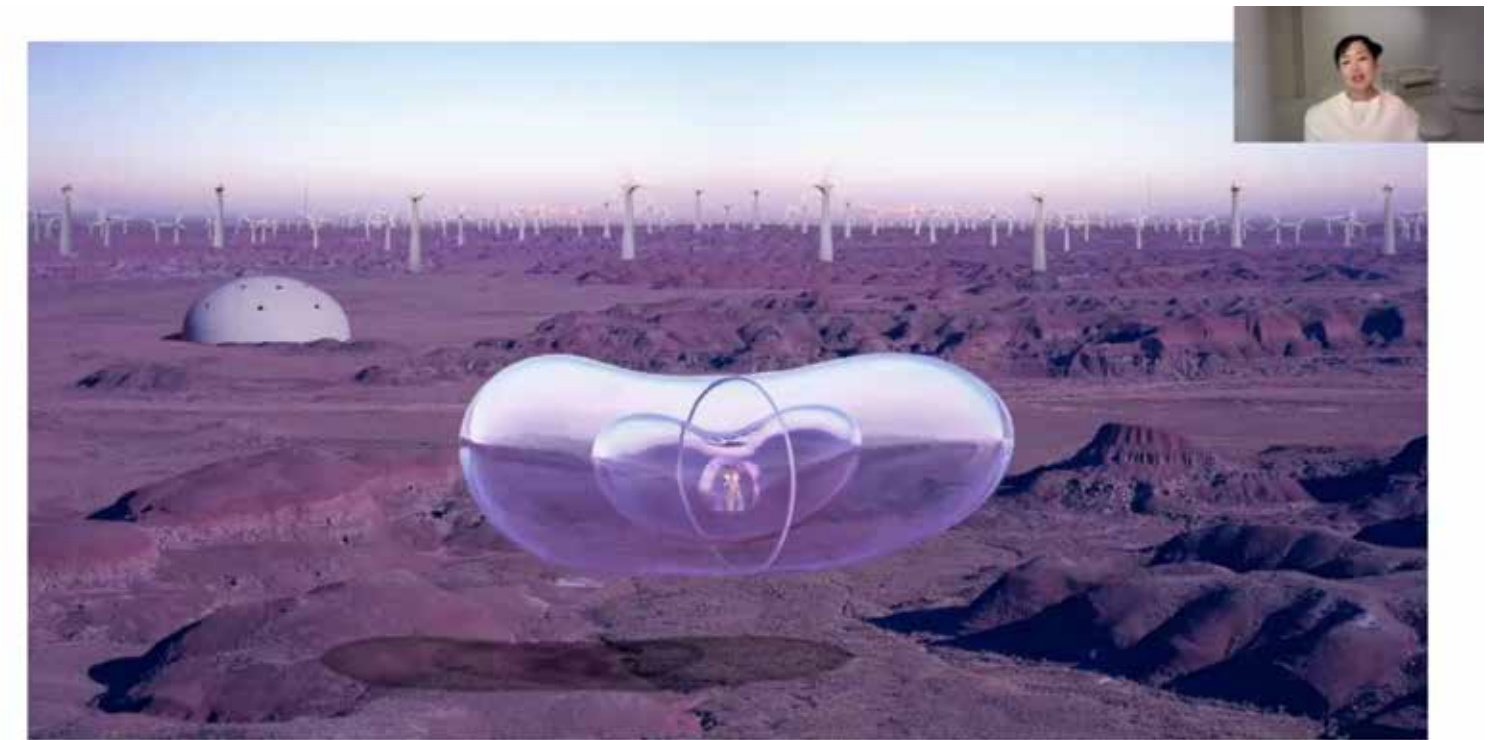
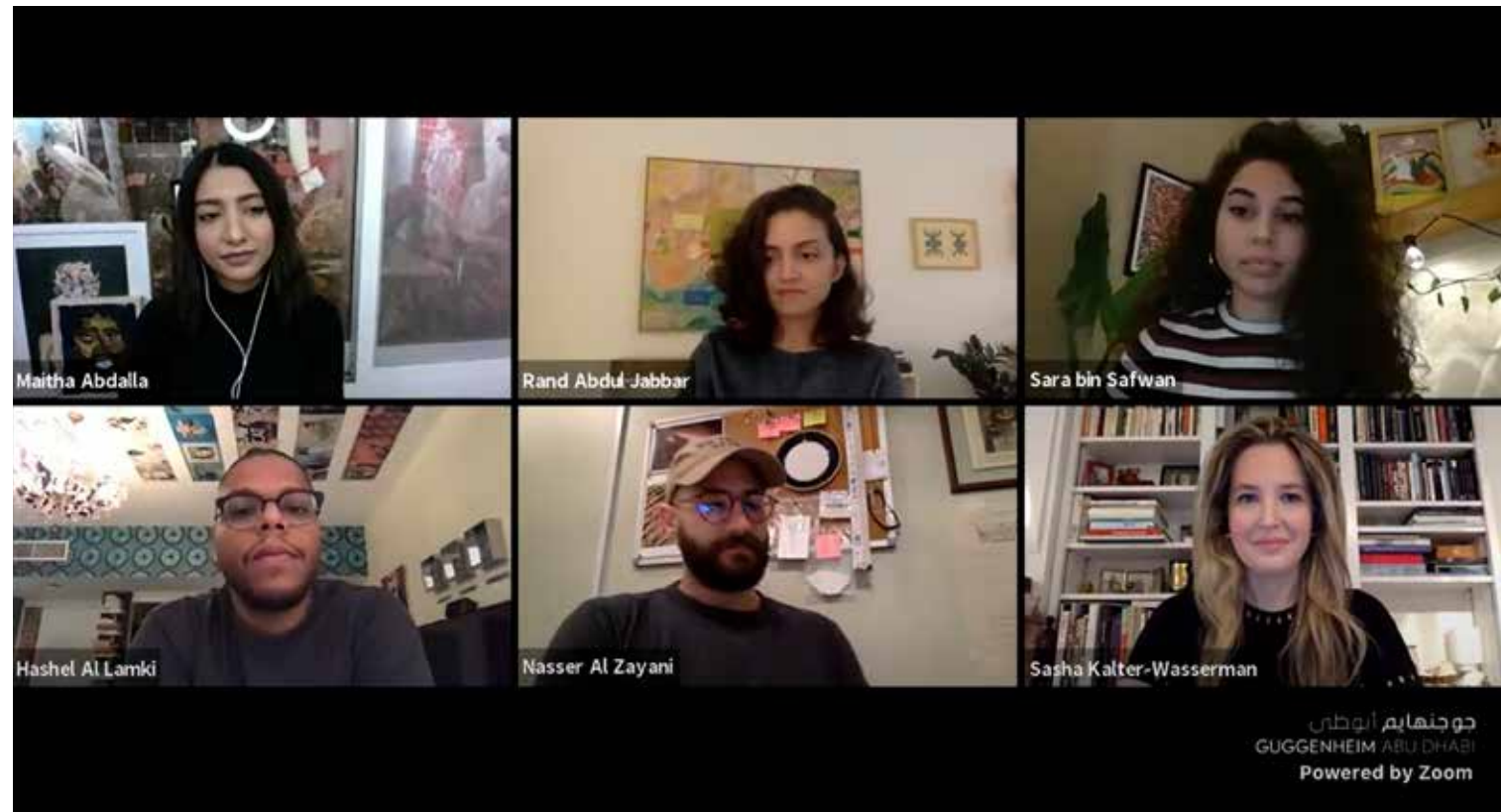
Louvre Abu Dhabi reopens to the public with new Mindful Museum programme in place for visitors.

© Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi / Photo Teody Garcia - Gulf Colour

With the aim of promoting the museum as it reopened as an open, safe and social space, Louvre Abu Dhabi launched its promotional campaign 'A Mindful Museum'.

The marketing campaign focused on repositioning Louvre Abu Dhabi as 'A Mindful Museum', and was launched on Louvre Abu Dhabi's website along with a social media campaign, 'Talking Artworks'.

Messaging focused on three main themes - A Mindful Museum 'For Culture', 'For Community' and 'For One Another' - and is currently displayed on signage within the museum and along various visitor touch points, including the website and the Louvre Abu Dhabi app.



Mariko Mori, *Entropy of Love*, 1996. Glass with photo interlayer, five panels, 305 x 121.9 x 2cm each; 305 x 610 x 2 cm overall, edition 1/3. Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. © Mariko Mori

Guggenheim Abu Dhabi has been developing its collection, promoting it through public engagement programmes and collaborating with international institutions to present the permanent collection globally.

Acquisitions in 2020 include 108 artworks by 49 artists from 20 countries, with an expanded focus on North African Modernism, as well as a large number of works by Emirati artists and famous works by global artists.

In 2020, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi public programmes focussed on the current needs, shifting its focus to support local artists through the 'In the Studio' pilot programme which presented the artists Hashel Al Lamki, Maitha Abdalla, Nasser Al Zayani and Rand Abdul Jabbar.

Additionally, the museum presented 'Waiting for the Future', a series of virtual events that fostered connection and reflection through conversations with Guggenheim Abu Dhabi collection artists Mariko Mori and Y.Z. Kami. The series offered a unique insight into how artists employ the spiritual in their practice and how their work conveys notions of oneness and transcendence through visual art, film and performance.

## Content Creation and Interpretation

DCT Abu Dhabi's Culture Sector developed alternative means of content creation, production and dissemination. New ways of interpreting Abu Dhabi's cultural heritage, focused on the end-user, were made available to the public via digital platforms. For example, the Emirati Traditional Games and Lullabies in the World of Islam publications were reinterpreted in the context of social media platforms. These publications and digital projects reveal the commonality of cultural heritage practices.

The Culture Sector continued to document, sustain and preserve Abu Dhabi's cultural heritage by publishing specialist titles. Two research books on *Aflaj* and *Al-Sadu* were translated into English to reach a wider audience, and were also produced as epub (e-publications), giving readers more options in accessing this information.

### Glossaries and Emirati dialectology

Cultural glossaries in English and Arabic were created to preserve the Emirati dialectology, with sections covering terminologies for traditional arts and crafts, performances, practices, sites and other aspects of cultural heritage. The Arabic glossary was further developed to standardise cultural practice translation terms as well as art movements. These glossaries will be made available online to researchers, authors and translators from 2021 onwards.

### Research

Various research documents by Emirati and United Arab Emirates-based authors were produced in 2020. DCT Abu Dhabi published essays on contemporary art and intangible cultural heritage by staff researchers and curators such as Mouza Al Nuaimi, Aysha Khamis Al Dhaheri, Mufleha Al Hajeri and Ayesha Al Hmeiri.

The Culture Sector continues to engage with authors from different fields to commission original content on the cultural heritage of the United Arab Emirates. Commissioned external authors and researchers in 2020 included Ali Al Abdan, Moayyad Al Shaibani, Abdul Halim Yasin and Najat Al Kaabi.



## Engagement through interpretation



The importance of cultural resources is revealed through interpretive and educational programming that engages individuals and communities and aims to foster a love for learning. Cultural education can also help to instil inclusivity and cross-cultural understanding; values critical in increasingly diverse cities and communities.

DCT Abu Dhabi delivers cultural education and outreach programmes across cultural sites and community-based educational spaces. Tangible and intangible heritage and visual and performing arts programmes are all supported by interpretation and educational materials that strive to create awareness among different segments of society, notably young people and students. Educational activities and resources provide educators and families with tools that inform about art and heritage, spurring creativity and inspiring individuals to be proud of their heritage and identity and to celebrate cultural diversity.

DCT Abu Dhabi supports its exhibitions, museums and cultural and heritage events by creating a range of interpretive collateral for visitors as well as creating and delivering tour guide content and training sessions.

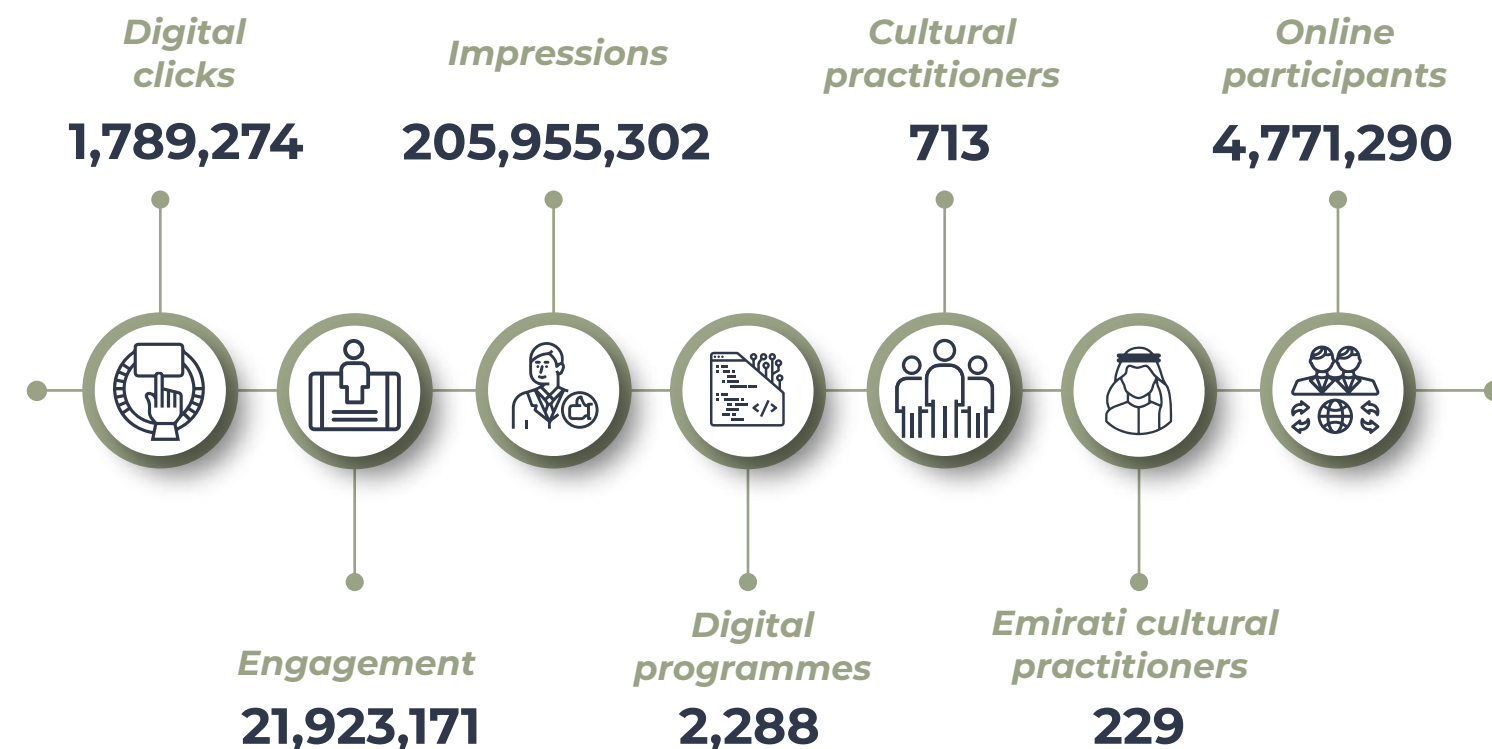
Educator Resource Guides are designed for teachers to enable them to use proposed exhibitions, museums and other DCT Abu Dhabi sites throughout the emirate as teaching tools in their K-12 classrooms. Activity Guides, Exploratory Guides and Sketchbook Guides are designed to present information to visitors in a fun and engaging way. These printed guides are available across DCT Abu Dhabi sites, events and festivals. DCT Abu Dhabi provides comprehensive tour manuals and training sessions for Visitor Experience Specialists, tour guides and volunteers to engage visitors in innovative ways while delivering on-site tours.



The Educator Resource on the Cultural Sites of Al Ain, an are inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List has been adopted by the Ministry of Education for integration into the 11th grade Social Studies Curriculum across all public and private schools in the United Arab Emirates that follow the Ministry of Education curriculum. The resource defines the historical sites from the Neolithic Period in Jebel Hafit to the Iron Age findings in the Oases Areas, and aims to enhance students' knowledge of their cultural history and heritage and teach them methods to safeguard it

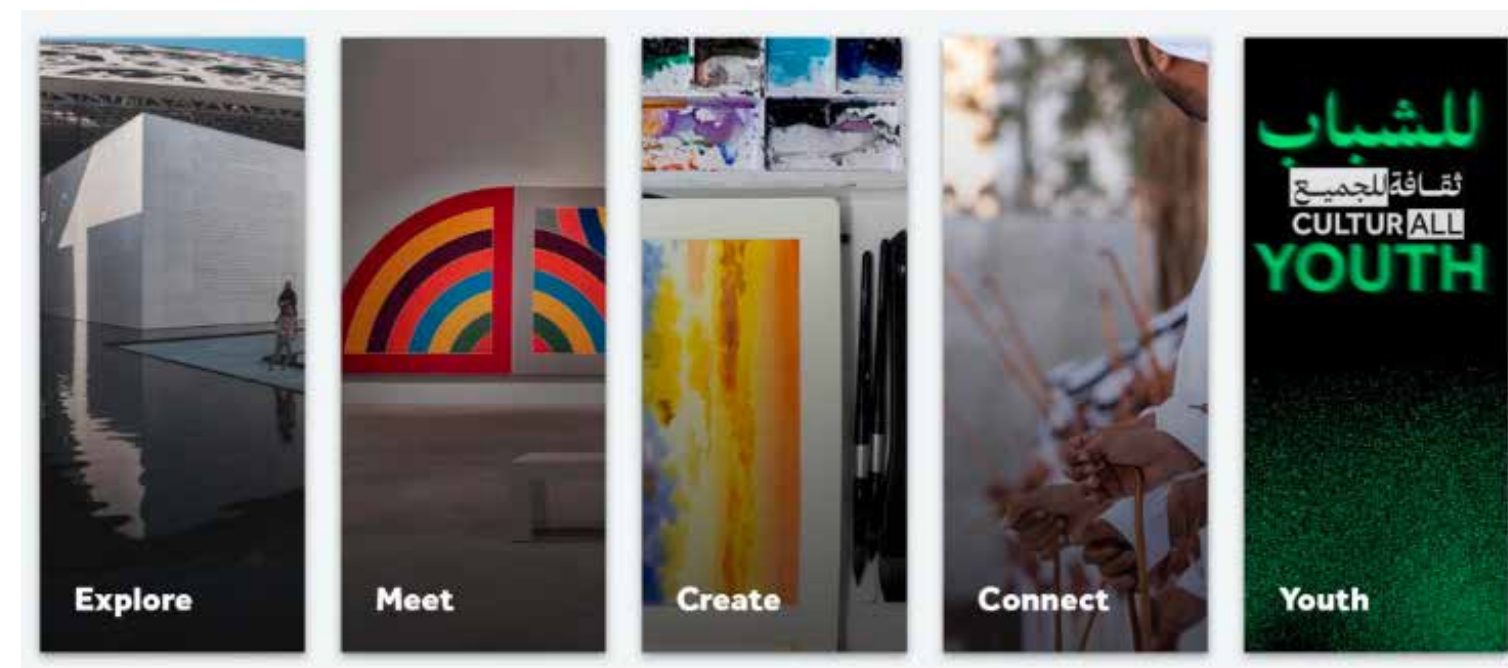
- **Educators' Guide to Liwa Oasis.**
- **Educators' Guide to Intangible Heritage.**
- **Exploratory Guide of Qattara Archaeological Basement.**
- **A series of 20 Exploratory Guides on Classical Western and Arab musicians.**
- **Al-Taghrooda Activity Guide.**
- **Al-Razfa Activity Guide.**

# ثقافة للجميع CULTUR ALL



CulturAll is a digital initiative launched in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Its main aim is to provide global audiences with access to the best of culture and heritage in Abu Dhabi. CulturAll includes a range of online cultural resources, content and programmes easily accessible via social media channels and a multimedia website, enabling people from all over the world to explore, meet, create and connect.

- **#CulturAllExplore:** Abu Dhabi's various cultural sites, initiatives, exhibitions and performances can be discovered via shared video footage, recordings and virtual tools.
- **#CulturAllMeet:** Cultural specialists in Abu Dhabi speak about their ideas, concepts and creativity. Curators, artists, artisans, historians, performers, collectors, architects, gallerists and even objects and paintings interact with the audience.
- **#CulturAllCreate:** Creative and artistic guidelines, demos, tutorials, instructions and masterclasses are presented to the audience as they learn about Abu Dhabi's art and heritage.
- **#CulturAllConnect:** Digital workshops, masterclasses and lessons offer ways for people to experience heritage and art and to participate in education programmes.



CHAPTER

**STIMULATE CREATIVITY  
AS A DRIVER FOR  
EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL CHANGE**

## Music Programmes

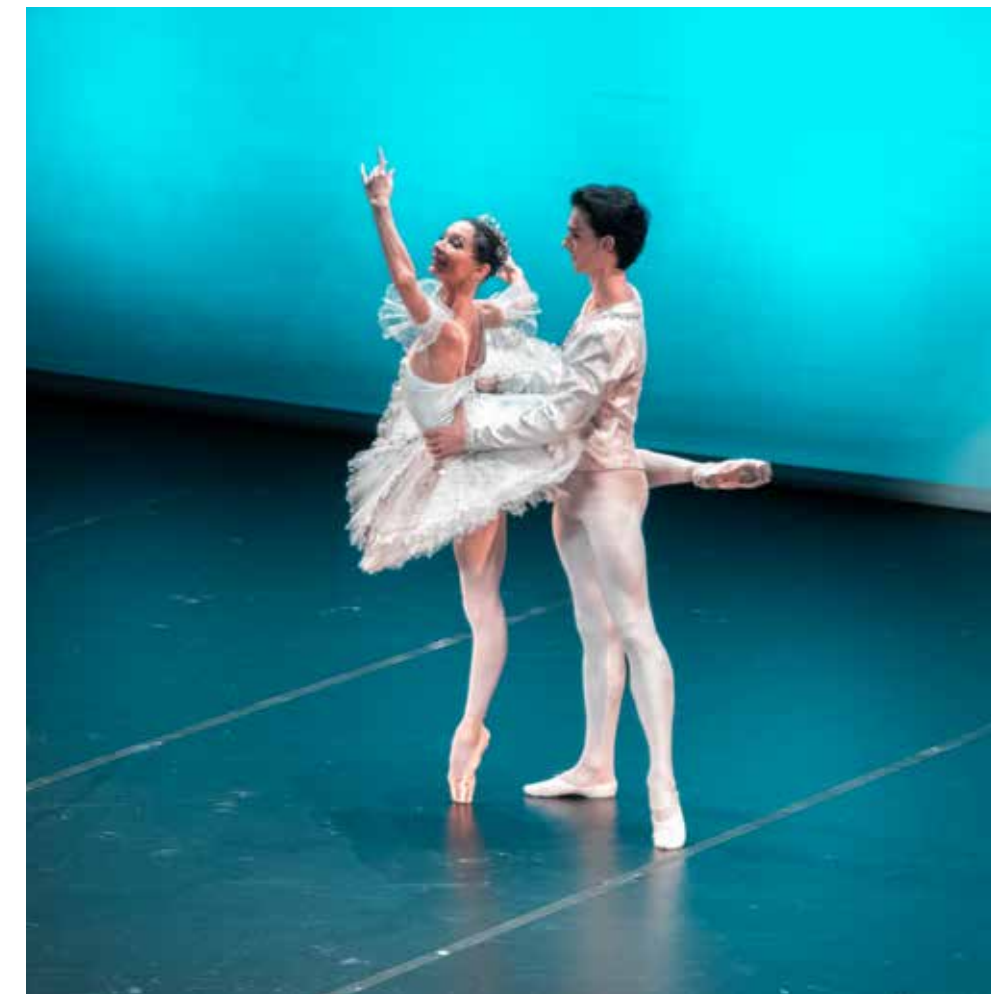
### Abu Dhabi Classics

Abu Dhabi Classics presented its ninth season in January and February 2020. The programme included performances by the **Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, Lise de la Salle, Bolshoi Ballet, David Fray and Friends, Sanaa Nabil, Majida El Roumi** and more. The concerts were attended by more than 7,000 people, and the outreach activities by more than 1,500 students.



A notable highlight of the 2020 Abu Dhabi Classics was the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra's performance on 5 February 2020 at the Emirates Palace, featuring one of the most famous pieces of classical music ever written, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. The performance also featured the 'Ode to Joy' with words from a poem by Friedrich Schiller that still represent the values of humanity, tolerance and friendship today.

More than 100 musicians and 70 singers performed at the Middle East premiere of Symphony No. 9, in a sold-out performance that was also attended by His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, United Arab Emirates Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.



## Sounds of the UAE: National Day Concerts



Leading Emirati performers returned to the stage on 2 and 3 December 2020 to celebrate National Day and the spirit of the United Arab Emirates. On the first evening, famous musicians such as Faisal Al Saari teamed up with rising star Ahmed Al Hosani and musicians from Bait Al Oud to perform an innovative programme of Emirati music on the outdoor stage at Al Jahili Fort in Al Ain, under strict social distancing and hygiene regulations.

With this event, the DCT Abu Dhabi music programme was able to support both local artists and companies and at the same time support the creative practice of musicians. The event also revealed the talent of Ahmed Al Hosani, who will be at the centre of the Sounds of the UAE programme in 2021.

On the second evening, Sounds of the UAE brought together two musicians from Bait Al Oud who have already started their solo careers: Najma Al Khor and Tariq Al Menhali, who both learned singing at Bait Al Oud and are now internationally recognised performers. They were joined by Emirati star singer Faisal Al Jasim.

The event offered a unique sonic mix inspired by the rich musical traditions of the United Arab Emirates. This project paid tribute to the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Founding Father of the United Arab Emirates, and was one of the most ambitious of 2020. It aimed to prove that even in these difficult times the vibrant musical heritage of the country is still alive.



Faisal Al Saari



Najma Al Khor



Ahmed Al Hosani



Faisal Al Jasim



Tareq Al Menhali



## Visits from Bait Al Oud I-VII



In 2020, the Bait Al Oud Concert Series shifted to an online format and offered regular concerts featuring Bait Al Oud and guest musicians. Visits from Bait Al Oud themes included a 'Tribute to Classical Arabic Singing,' 'The New Qanoon,' 'A History of the Oud' as well as crossover concerts with 'Music from Mozart'. In total, seven online concerts were delivered, with highlights including:

- A Naseer Shamma performance streamed live from Bait Al Oud on 15 April 2020. Shamma, considered one of the best oud players in the world, performed compositions he wrote especially for this concert during the pandemic. As of the week ending 24 April 2020, the event had 11,000 views.
- The 'Bait Al Oud VII: From Spain' concert, held on 19 August 2020, showcasing Hispanic and Arabic fusion. Oud legend Naseer Shamma gathered Bait Al Oud musicians and took the audience on a musical journey across continents, to Latin America, in a spirit of cross-cultural understanding and coexistence.

## Culture Summit 2020



In collaboration with global cultural organisations, DCT Abu Dhabi delivered a special Culture Summit Abu Dhabi live stream experience that was broadcast on YouTube on 9 April 2020. The session titled 'Alone Together: Culture and Resilience' was chaired by His Excellency Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, DCT Abu Dhabi Chairman. It featured distinguished participants including Ernesto Ottone Ramírez (UNESCO), Alexandra Munroe (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation), Rebecca Lyons (Royal Academy of Arts), Melanie Noronha (The Economist) and Marisa Henderson (UNCTAD).



In total, the session attracted more than

**33,000 views**





Exhibition view of works by artist Afra Al Dhaheri commissioned by Abu Dhabi Art in November 2020 as part of Beyond: Emerging Artists



Michelangelo Pistoletto  
Smartphone -coppia a colazione, 2018  
150 x 250 x 2 cm (h x w x d)  
silkscreen on super mirror stainless steel

Courtesy of Giorgio Persano and the artist  
Exhibited as part of the Modern & Contemporary online booths for Abu Dhabi Art 2020

Abu Dhabi Art is a year-round visual arts programme that culminates in an annual art fair held each November. Because of the pandemic, the 2020 edition of the fair took place predominantly in a virtual format, from 19–26 November. The virtual fair enabled the public to safely enjoy and acquire art, provided artists with a platform to present their work and generated AED 10 million in sales for participating galleries.

Press coverage to the value of AED 45 million was achieved by Abu Dhabi Art in 2020 and visitors from 139 countries were virtually engaged. In November an exhibition also opened of commissioned works by three emerging United Arab Emirates artists, Afra Al Dhaheri, Afra Al Suwaidi and Hind Mezaina. This was on show at Manarat Al Saadiyat from 18 November to 31 December 2020 as part of Abu Dhabi Art's annual programme 'Beyond: Emerging Artists'. The 2020 commissions were created with the support of curator Maya El Khalil who mentored the artists from September 2020 until completion of the works in November. Up to 1,244 visitors came to Manarat Al Saadiyat during this period and the works were also viewed by online visitors to the Abu Dhabi Art website and through virtual tours.

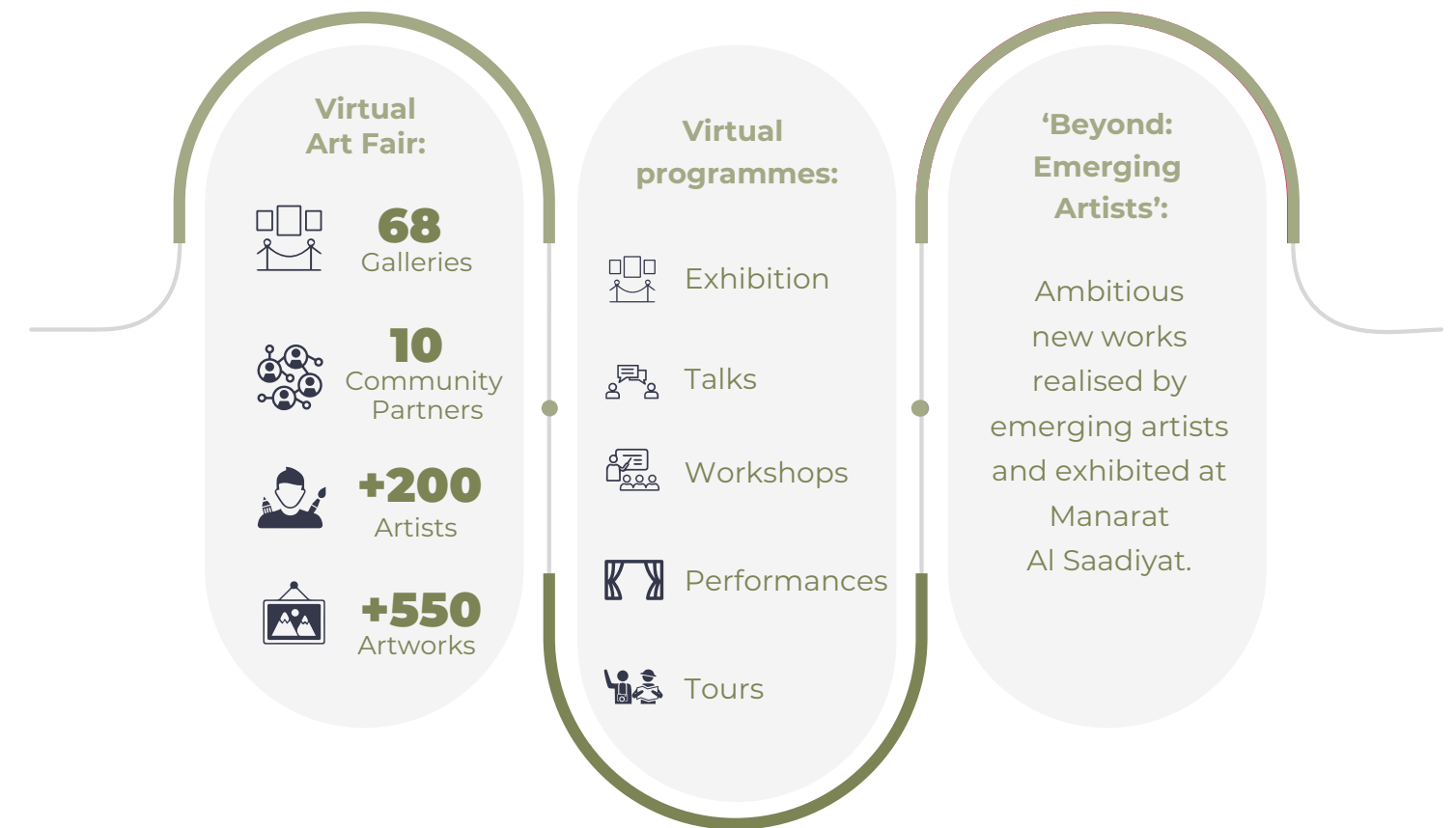


Ouattara Watts  
To A. Rimbaud, 2019  
218.5 x 160 x 4 cm (h x w x d)  
Mixed Media on Canvas

Courtesy of Galerie Cécile Fakhoury and the artist  
Exhibited as part of The Day After, a curated gallery section exhibited online for Abu Dhabi Art 2020



### The annual art fair transformed into a predominantly online platform, adapting to the pandemic:



## Commissions and Residencies



### Cultural Foundation

As a central hub for the creative and cultural community of Abu Dhabi, Cultural Foundation commissioned more than 80 United Arab Emirates-based artists for exhibitions and performances in 2020. The Foundation ended the year by launching an open call to support the creative industry in the United Arab Emirates and the region. It also spearheaded the commissioning of performances and presentations by young United Arab Emirates-based talent, including artists Noor Al Mazrouei, Fafa and Ghalia, as opening acts to main performances.

The Cultural Foundation Art Residency programme was also delivered in 2020. During the year the programme received 13 artists based in the United Arab Emirates in its studios and supported them virtually through an advanced curatorial support programme of critiques and studio visits.

### Art Space

In collaboration with Aldar, Art Space provides artists with exhibition and retail spaces in Yas Mall, the World Trade Centre Mall and Al Jimi Mall, enabling them to promote their work and reach a wider audience. Since its launch in November 2020, Art Space has attracted 22,000 visitors, with featured artists including:

- **Azza Al Qubaisi**
- **Diaa Allam**
- **Abdelrahim Salim**
- **Simrin Mehra**
- **Afra Alsuwaidi**

## ArtWorks

A Teaching Artist Residency Programme, ArtWorks was established in 2013 to develop a cadre of teaching artists who can practise and work in museums, arts centres and schools. The programme team works closely with universities to identify recent graduates with strong skills in the arts who have an interest in teaching. The aim of the residency is to provide United Arab Emirates-based emerging artists with internship opportunities, mentorship and potential employment. ArtWorks takes place in the Art Studio at Manarat Al Saadiyat where artists work alongside a group of experienced arts educators and have access to a large network of creators and artists. As part of the residency, selected artists have the unique opportunity to set up dedicated, fully equipped studio spaces in a vibrant arts community hub. In 2020, the residency programme presented an exhibition at Manarat Al Saadiyat featuring a selection of work by current and former Artists in Residence. The featured artists were:

- **Amal Rushdi**
- **Ari Pugh**
- **Azita Lashgari**
- **Hanneke Reinaldi**
- **Salma Al Banna**
- **Zainab Al Hammadi**



## Youth Engagement and Participation



### Digitisation of Abu Dhabi Children's Library

In 2020, Cultural Foundation transformed the Abu Dhabi Children's Library into a digital library (e-library) including 500,000 resources by Scholastic, and more than 400 Arabic and English e-books, with 111,181 views. The e-library offered high quality and free-to-all services, and access to educational materials directly on the library's website. It also presented an ongoing programme of online workshops for children and families:



Total number of online live programmes

**389**

(including school programmes)



Total number of attendees/participants

**9,087**

### Cultural education courses

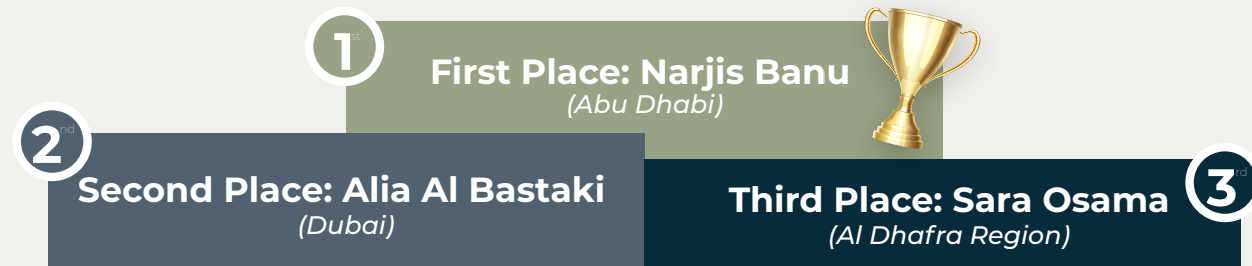
2020 saw DCT Abu Dhabi launch an online platform to disseminate cultural education courses to participants throughout the emirate and beyond, introducing audiences to the transformative power of the arts through a series of virtual creative classes. As conducting in-person sessions was not feasible because of the pandemic, teachers were trained to virtually deliver interactive visual and performing arts courses for all ages. Arts education programmes from Manarat Al Saadiyat's Art Studio, Cultural Foundation's Al Marsam Al Hor and Bait Al Khatt, Al Qattara Arts Centre and Bait Al Oud offered participants the opportunity to explore their creativity at home through painting, mixed media, storytelling through art, embroidery, pottery, Arabic calligraphy, voice lessons, music theory, lessons in piano, the oud, rebabah and more.

### Battle of the Arts

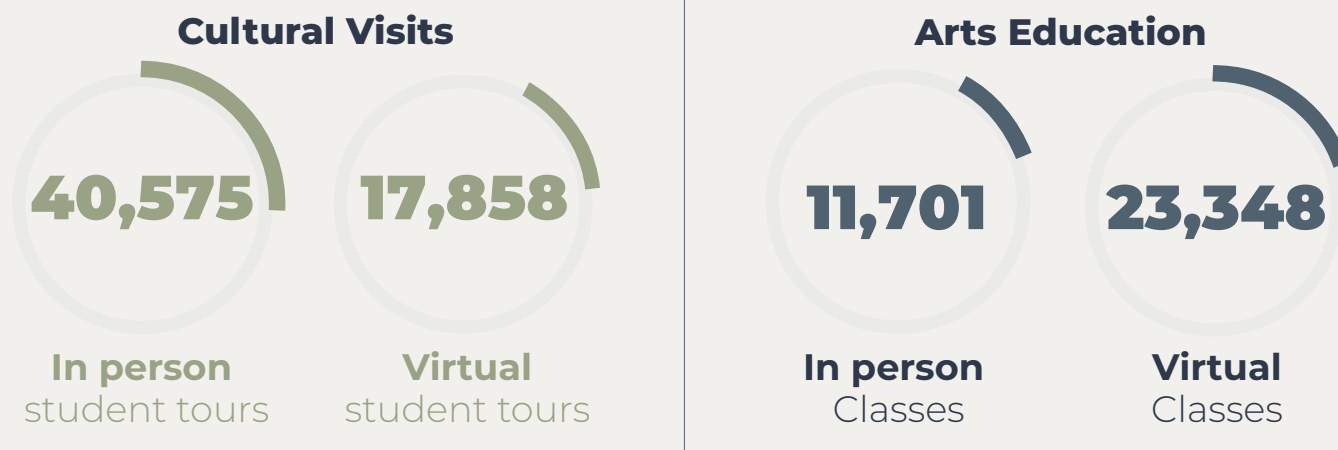
A nationwide arts competition launched in 2020, 'Battle of the Arts' aimed to empower youth and young adults to discover their creative abilities and develop their artistic skills. The initiative was organised by DCT Abu Dhabi in cooperation with cultural and educational institutions, including the Department of Education and Knowledge and Aldar Academies. 'Battle of the Arts' featured 10 online competitions in the following fields: Painting, Photography, Graphic Design, Arabic Calligraphy, Theatre, Music and Voice.



**'Battle of the Arts' winners:**



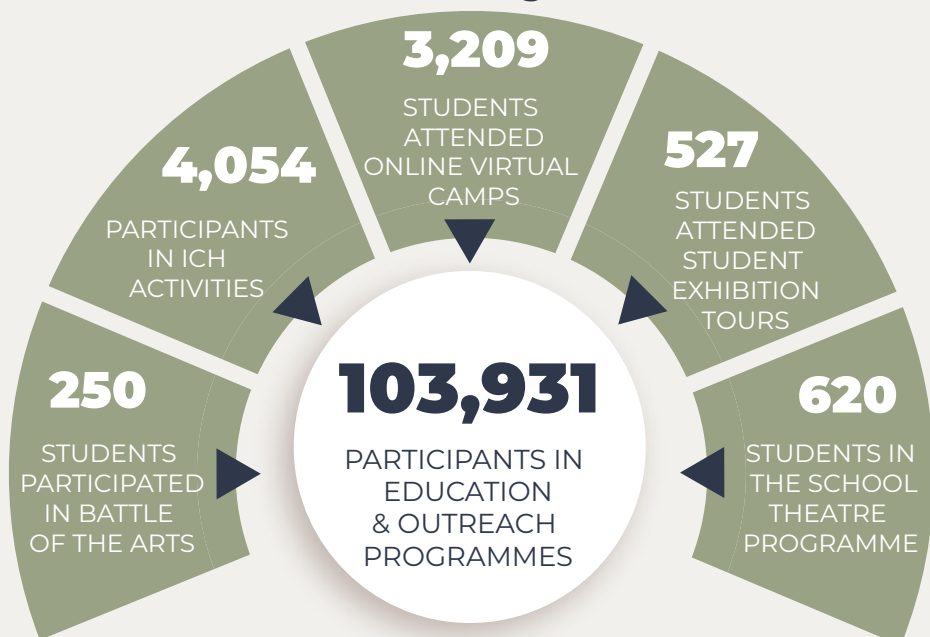
The competition received more than **260 submissions** & **over 500 votes** from the public.



**Capacity Building**



**Outreach Programme**

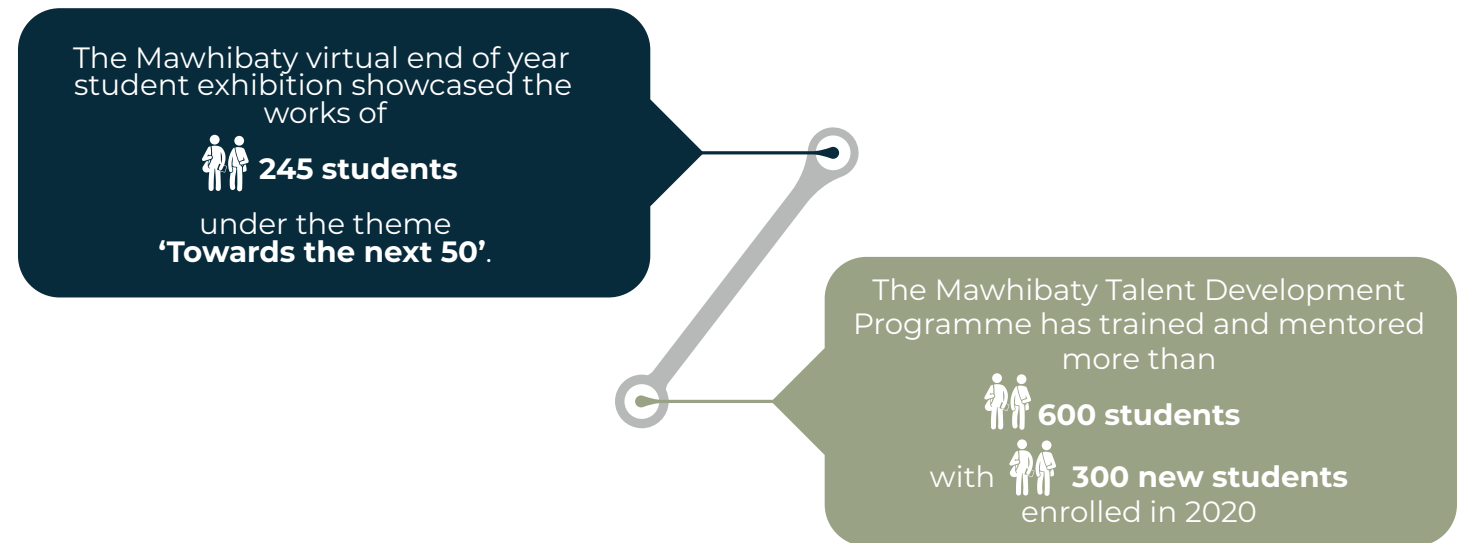


**Mawhibaty Talent Development Programme**



As part of its core mission to develop the artistic capital of Abu Dhabi, DCT Abu Dhabi collaborated with the Department of Education and Knowledge to launch Mawhibaty, a talent development programme to identify and nurture the artistic development of gifted and talented K-12 students in a wide range of visual and performing arts disciplines. Now in its fourth year, the programme continues to grow and support students in their pursuit of academic success in the arts by ensuring accessibility to year-round dynamic arts enrichment programmes, classes and individual mentorship with practising artists and performers.

In July 2020, the Mawhibaty programme launched a new platform, Mawhibaty From Home, to migrate to distance learning in line with COVID-19 restrictions. The platform also published workshops and educational materials and allowed students to continue their classes online. To facilitate the students' learning journey and to avoid interruptions to instruction, the programme delivered more than 200 art kits and keyboards to students' homes. The students of the Mawhibaty programme participated in virtual masterclasses and training with Cultural Foundation as well as Louvre Abu Dhabi.



## Arabic Language Centre



The Arabic Language Centre has been established with a vision of ensuring that the Arabic language plays a leading part in the fields of education, culture and creativity.

Four strategic objectives have been set for the Arabic Language Centre at local and global levels, and nine programmes were developed to reach these goals.

The first objective is growing the passion for, adoption of and proficiency in the Arabic language locally, through modernising methods of teaching the Arabic language, interactive educational platforms and content, and the 'We Will Speak Arabic' programme.

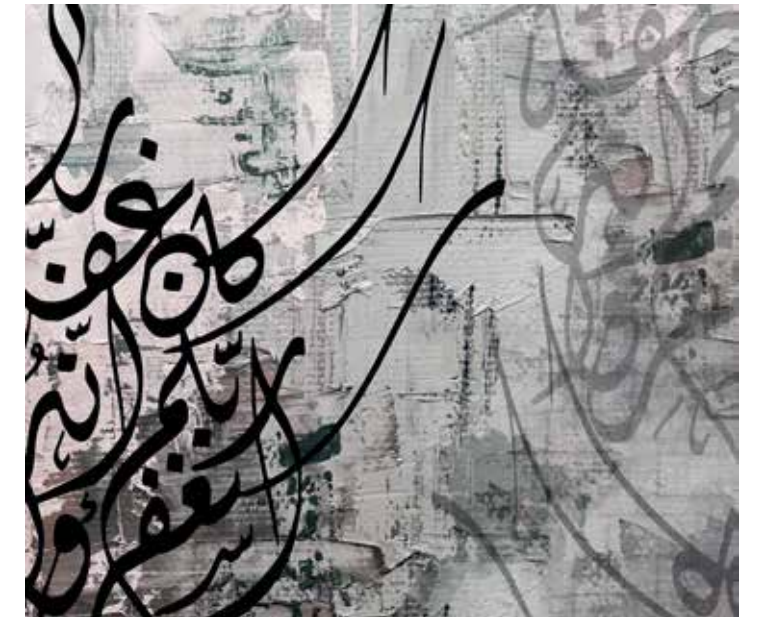
The Centre aims to promote Arabic language education, proficiency, and adoption by public and private institutions in the UAE through two standardised competence exams:

- **The Global Arabic Language Proficiency Exam 'CIMA' for non-native speakers, in collaboration with Institut du Monde Arabe in France**
- **Advanced Arabic language exam for professionals who require a mastery level of Arabic.**

The second objective is the promotion of the Arabic language globally as a language of knowledge, culture and creativity. The Zayed Poetry Encyclopaedia aims to disseminate the poetry of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan through publishing, literary analysis, digital resources and poetry competitions. The encyclopaedia will inspire academics, historians, artists and others to create content based on his life and leadership, thus enriching the country's culture and heritage with creative output.

The 'Arabic on the World Stage Programme' will collaborate with prominent international organisations in non-Arabic speaking countries to promote the adoption of Arabic and maintain linguistic diversity on a global scale, in addition to offering Arabic language education in non-Arab countries, in order to promote its learning and extend the reach of Arab culture.

The Centre's third objective is to enable Arabic language content and technologies creation and promotion. It will offer annual grants through 'The Arab Content & Talent Expansion Fund' to support a sustainable Arabic language presence within the digital and technological ecosystem. In addition, the 'Arabic Book Programme' will support Arabic language authorship, translation and publishing as well as the dissemination of Arabic language content through multiple platforms, including book fairs, conferences and specialised libraries.



The strategy for the Arabic Language Centre targets three main categories of learners:

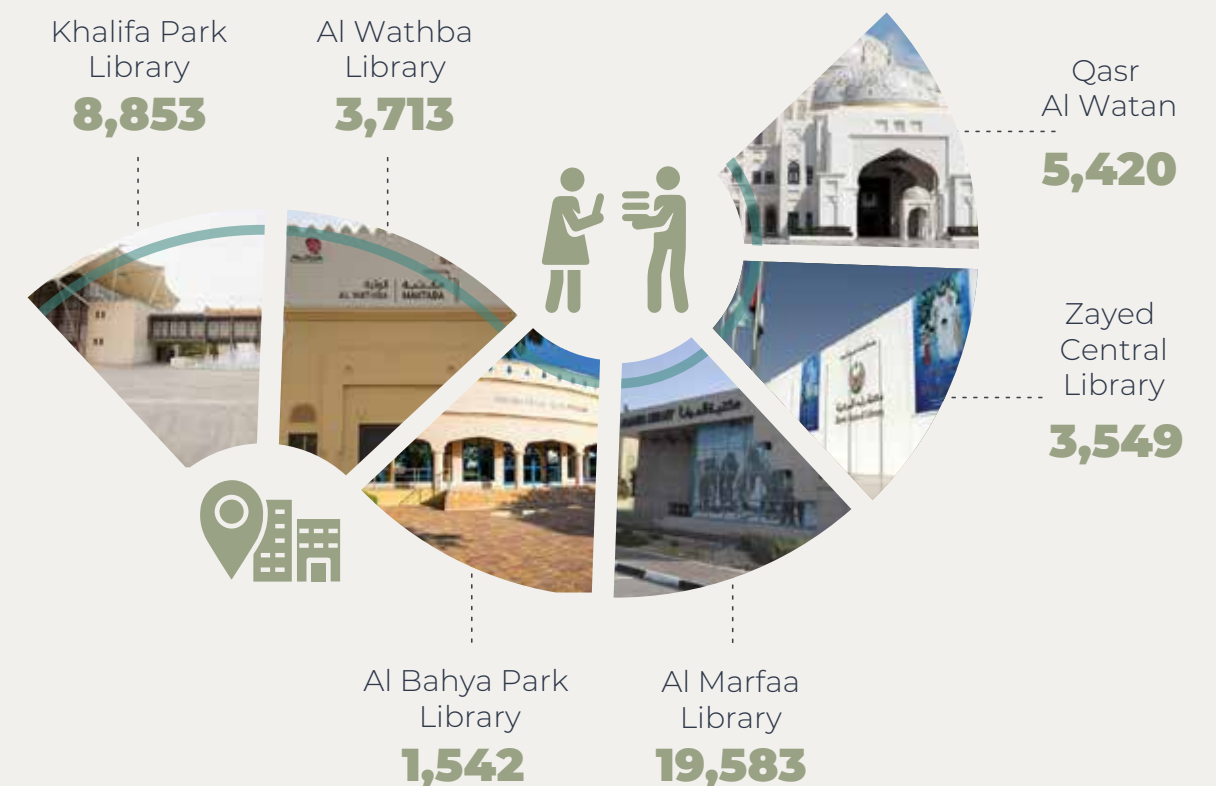
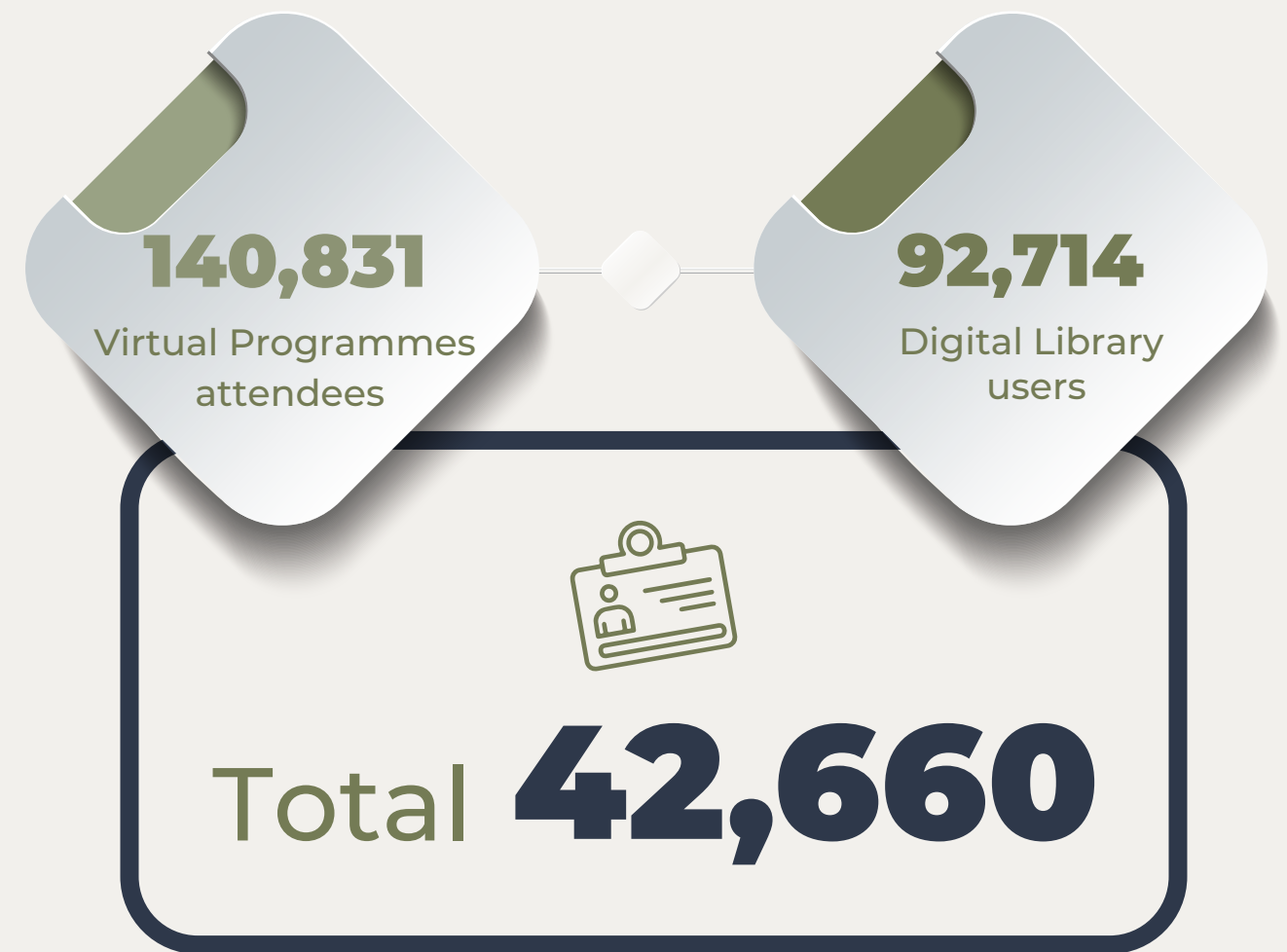
- **Children, students, adolescents and young adults**
- **Arabic language scholars and academics**
- **Creative, talented, and innovative individuals.**

The secondary targets of the strategy will be people around the world interested in the Arabic language and culture and non-Arabic speakers in the United Arab Emirates.



The Library Department (Library Management) is responsible for its offering of library services across the emirate of Abu Dhabi. The libraries work as community centres providing services to all community members. The Library Department offers each segment of its audience purposefully designed programmes. Its patrons range from babies to children, school students, university students, teenagers and adults, senior citizens, People of Determination and researchers.

The programmes span various themes such as reading, literature, science and innovation, professional development for teachers and librarians, and upskilling. The libraries offer the traditional library role in the form of circulating books and other materials, performing reference and research services, and providing spaces for reading, study, research and community-led programmes, as well as free wi-fi. The Library Department has a library internet portal with a wide range of electronic resources in the form of digital and audio books, videos, journals, articles, proceedings, theses, and other materials. The Department acquires, conserves and circulates a collection of print books ranging across all subjects of human knowledge. Its main focus is the United Arab Emirates and the region, offering a selection of general-interest print books covering in-demand topics and genres such as children’s literature, fiction, law, UAE history, and more. The Department has a manuscripts research function and offers a digital archive of manuscripts and other antiquarian resources.





## Kalima

Through exhibitions, events and translation-related projects, the Kalima Project works towards the goals of reviving translation in the Arab world and supporting the growth of Abu Dhabi's active cultural ecosystem to contribute to its role in the regional and international cultural landscape. In addition, it lays the foundation for a comprehensive scientific emergence in the Arab world, encompassing all aspects of human knowledge, where the book is the centrepiece.



## Esdarat



The Esdarat Programme is responsible for publishing historical, intellectual and literary books on Arab culture and history, with a special focus on the history of the United Arab Emirates. The project also publishes children's books, translations of travel literature and the memoirs of orientalist travellers in the Arab region.

### Translated Books

52

#### Book Categories

General Knowledge

6

Philosophy & Psychology

1

Natural and Exact Sciences

6

Arts, Games and Sports

3

Literature

17

History, Geography, Biography

3

Children and Young People

16

200

Recommendations  
of titles  
for translation

30

Foreign  
copyrights  
negotiated  
for Kalima

7

No. of  
languages  
translated

6

No. of Arabic  
books translated  
into other  
languages

#### Esdarat Published Books

35

#### Book Categories

General Knowledge

1

Philosophy and Psychology

2

Social Sciences

1

Literature

23

Arts, Games and Sports

3

History, Geography, Biography

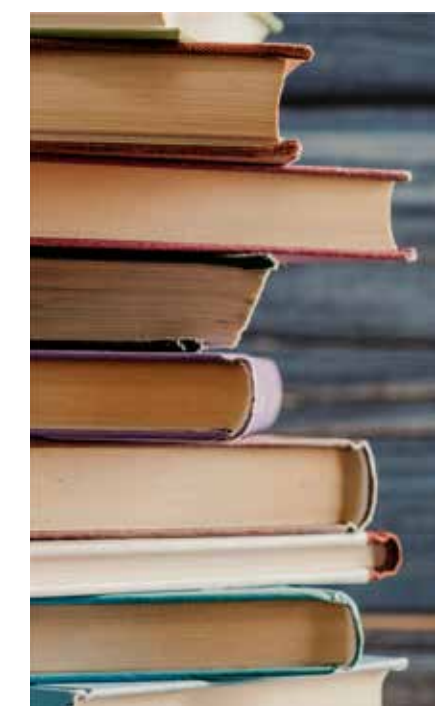
1

Children and Young People

2

Orientalist Pioneers

2

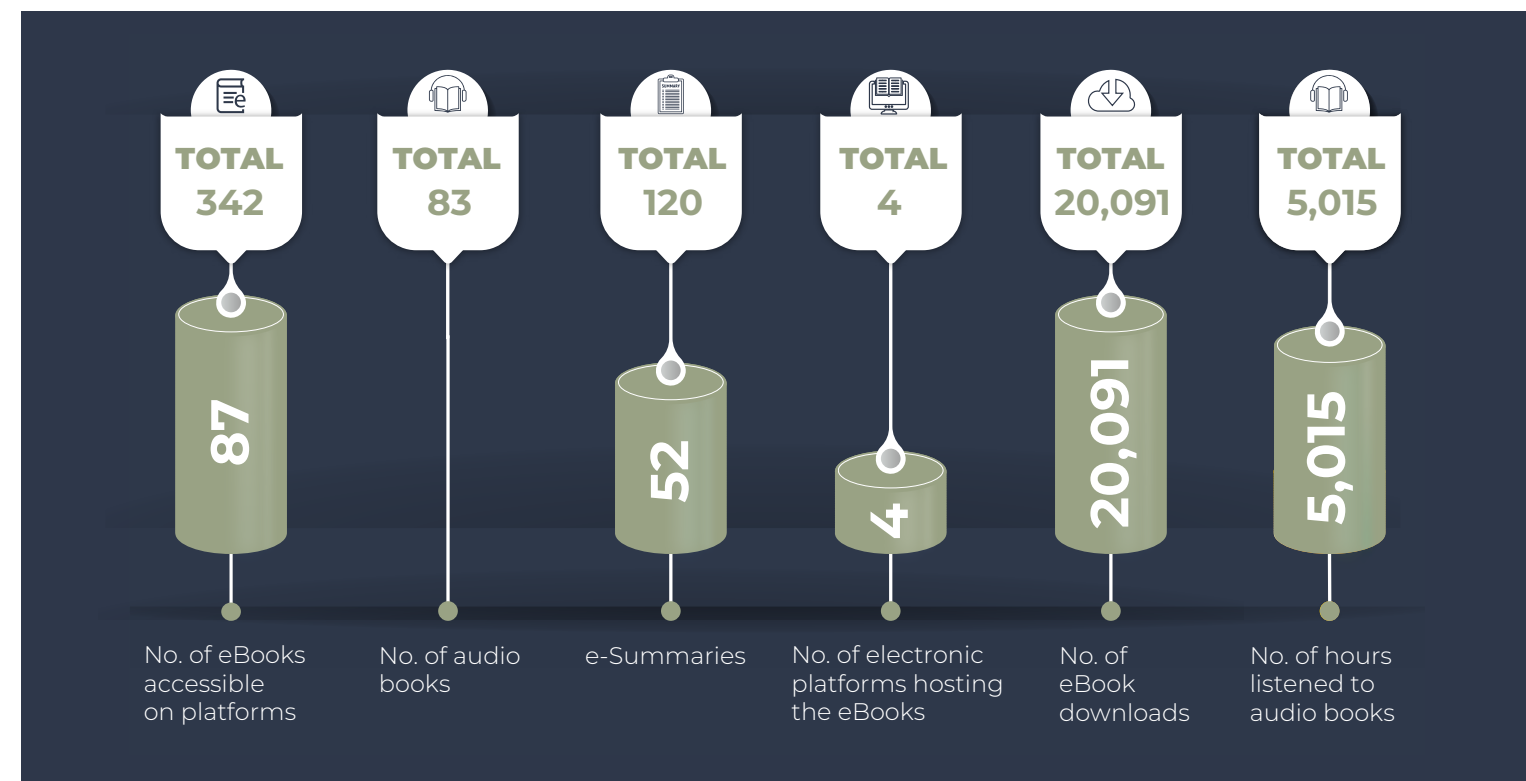


## E-Publications



To reach the widest possible reading audience, particularly with the younger generations, DCT Abu Dhabi has been escalating its work to publish books in digital formats, including eBooks and audio books.

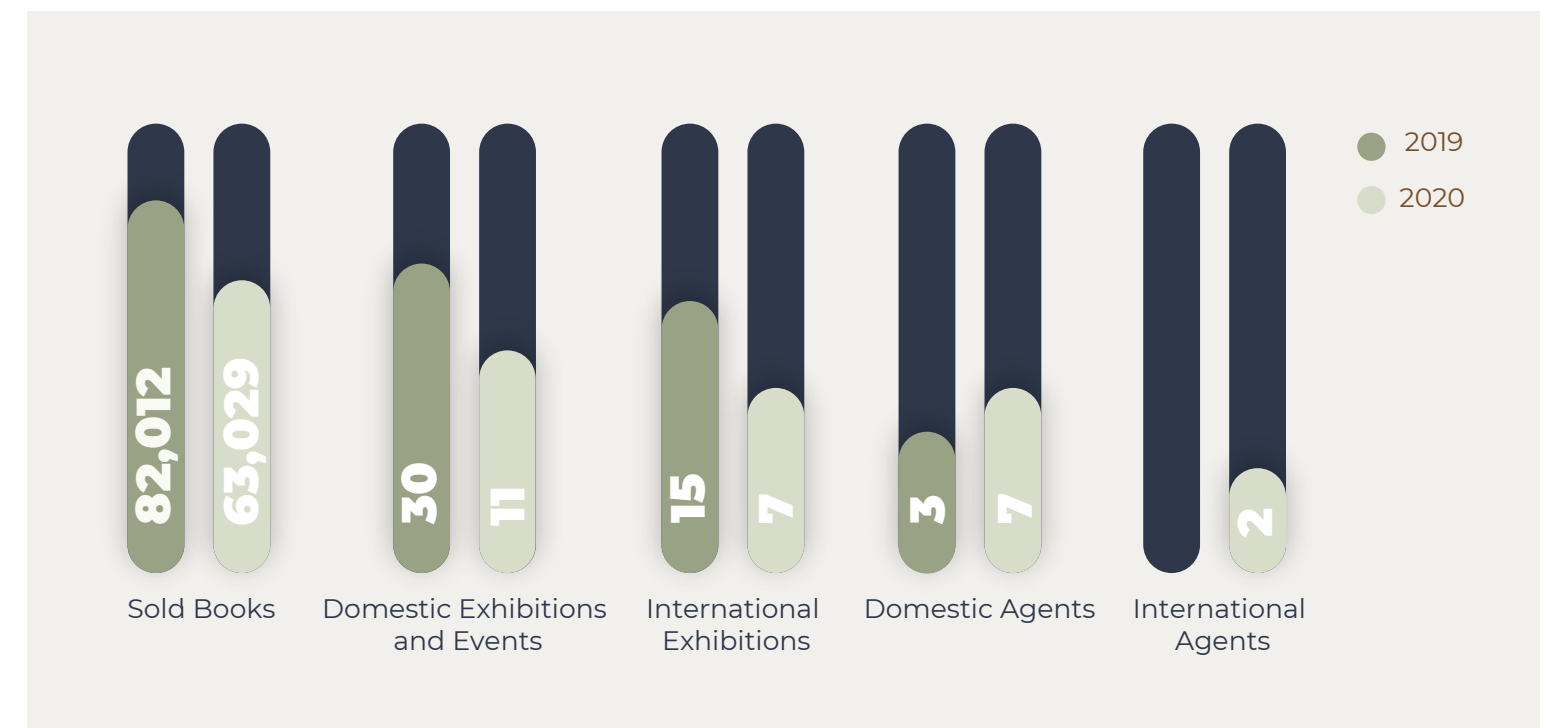
1. **eBook:** A conversion of a book from its traditional paper format to an electronic one. It is produced, published and read on electronic devices, and it is divided into two categories: eBooks that are offset by a paper book, and eBooks without a corresponding printed book
2. **An audio book** is a recording of a text that is being read. It may be a reading of the book in its entirety, or it may be a summary of the book or its most important ideas



## Distribution



The Distribution Section promotes and markets the publications of the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi. It deals with literary agents inside and outside the country, participates in local and international exhibitions, and organises book fairs and interacts with the public through the Department's points of sale, call centres and online sales platforms. It is essentially the link between the publisher and the public.



## Poetry Encyclopaedia

The Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi is continuing with initiatives to enhance the cultural scene in the UAE capital and consolidate its position as a shining beacon of culture and literature in the Arab region and the world.

The Poetry Encyclopaedia was published by DCT Abu Dhabi's Dar Al Kutub (National Library) and exemplifies these efforts. The Encyclopaedia is a valuable literary and cultural triumph, and a significant achievement in terms of its size and duration.

The project has been running for over 20 years. It was originally conceived in 1995 and the first issue was published in 1998. In March 2016, it was revamped and relaunched in its new format.

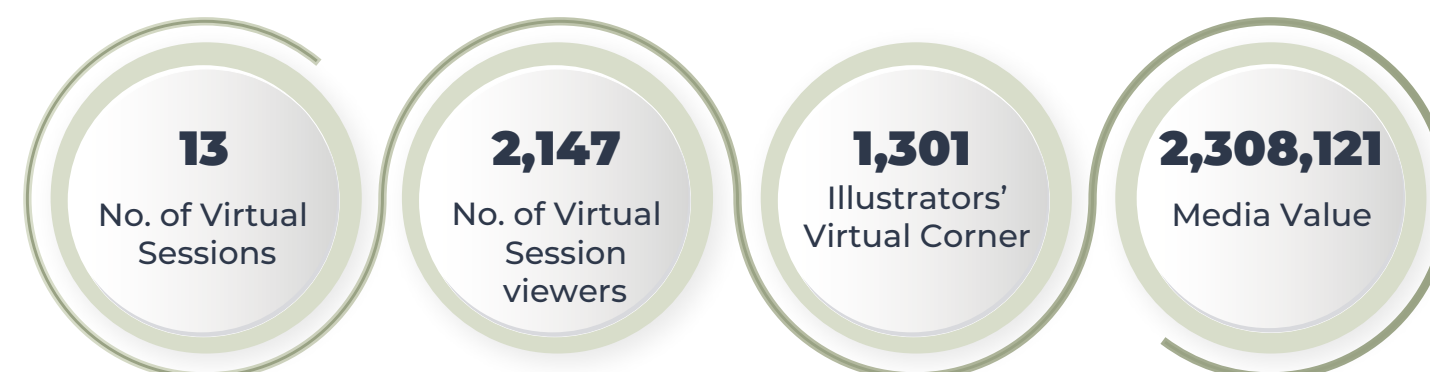


## Exhibitions and Programmes

### Abu Dhabi International Book Fair



The Library Department aims to position Abu Dhabi International Book Fair as a leading global platform that brings together readers, writers, intellectuals, journalists and cultural institutions to explore the latest contributions to knowledge and literature, in a manner that supports the publishing industry and connects local and Arab publishers to global networks. The programme includes two community book fairs, held in Al Ain and Al Dhafra cities, that cultivate cultural life in both regions through a rich agenda of events encouraging reading and supporting the arts.





The Sheikh Zayed Book Award commemorates the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Founding Father of the United Arab Emirates and former Ruler of Abu Dhabi, and his pioneering role in promoting national unity and development. The Award, and its associated accolades, are presented annually to outstanding writers, intellectuals, and publishers, as well as young talent, whose writing and translation in humanities objectively enriches Arab intellectual, cultural, literary and social life. The Sheikh Zayed Book Award is an independent cultural initiative administered by the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi.



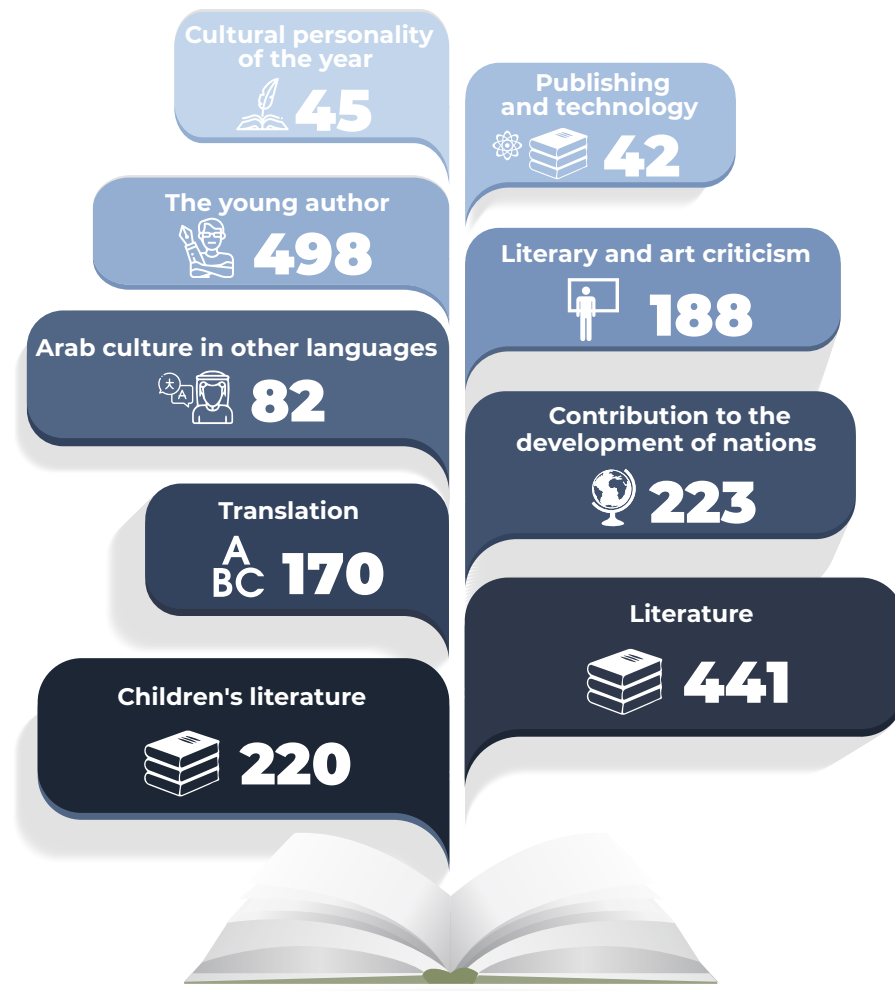
# SHEIKH ZAYED BOOK AWARD



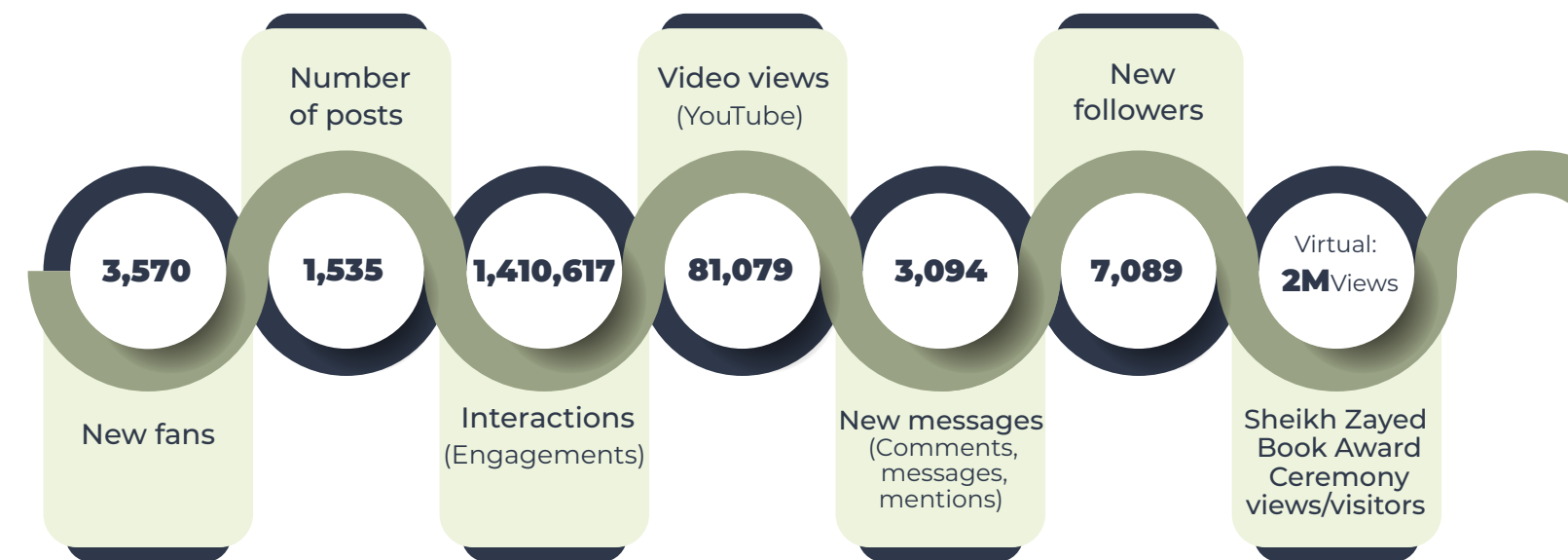
# NOMINATIONS BY NATIONALITY



# AWARD CATEGORIES (NUMBER OF NOMINATIONS PER CATEGORY)



# SOCIAL MEDIA



CHAPTER

**BUILD AND ENABLE  
CAPACITY IN ABU DHABI'S  
CULTURE SECTOR**

## CultureSTATS-AD

In 2020, DCT Abu Dhabi continued to develop the work necessary to establish a comprehensive culture statistics system in Abu Dhabi. This will directly contribute to decision-making and policy development to build and enable capacity in Abu Dhabi's culture sector, while delivering economic growth and diversification.

CultureSTATS-AD is an Abu Dhabi initiative that will allow the Culture Sector to gather cultural data and statistics to analyse, support and inform decision-making processes across the different cultural domains and to produce internationally recognisable and comparable cultural statistics in the emirate of Abu Dhabi. This is done by structuring pre-existing cultural data and exploring new approaches to data collection and analysis that will allow an understanding of how to enhance the impact of culture and cultural assets on the social and economic growth of Abu Dhabi, as well as how to discover, analyse and support the cultural phenomena that make Abu Dhabi unique.



To do this, CultureSTATS-AD has adopted an interdisciplinary perspective that requires strong research expertise and permanent collaboration among social scientists, economists, urban planners, data scientists and geographers (expert groups).

### THE IMPACT:

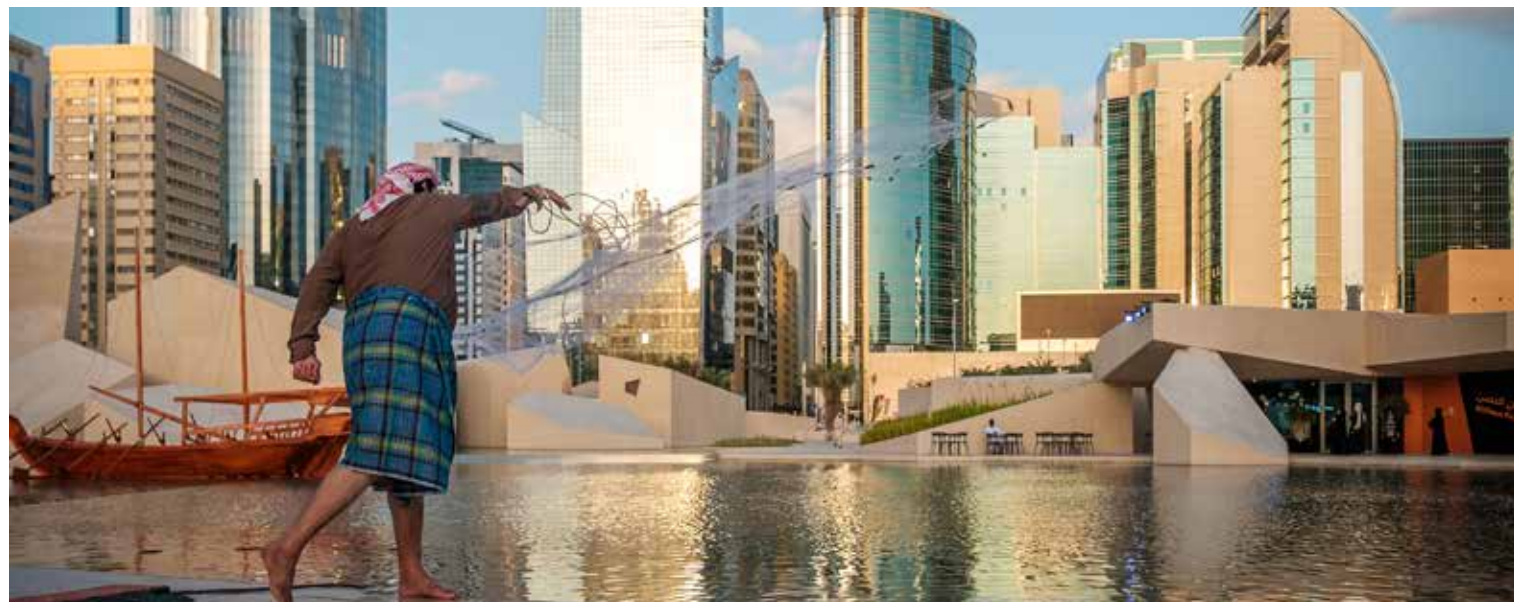
- First description of the culture sector in Abu Dhabi, its economic and employment characteristics — a written report presenting the major results and conclusions and supported by interactive infographic tools.
- Online glossaries of statistical definitions and indicators in English and Arabic — a first in the MENA region and in the Arabic speaking world. The evolving DCT Abu Dhabi online glossary system will be progressively completed and enriched in future years. Initial conversations with Eurostat were held to ensure full integration with their system, with DCT Abu Dhabi being responsible for the Arabic content.
- Establishment of a governance model of the programme, including stakeholders and partnerships.
- Online — internal to DCT Abu Dhabi — mapping of fundamental sources of the culture data.
- An original geographical/spatial mapping of the cultural sector, supported by a digital platform and system.
- A first edition of the General Culture Population Survey: a detailed and thorough study on cultural behaviour in Abu Dhabi.

## Strategic Partnerships



DCT Abu Dhabi's Culture Sector supports the development of relations with external organisations in accordance with its Culture Sector Strategy. This is done by:

- Conceiving, supporting and managing the development of partnerships and other forms of collaboration — at local, regional, federal and international level — with key organisations and networks needed to advance the Culture Sector's overarching strategy and cultural development in the emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- Implementing partner and stakeholder initiatives aiming to increase efficiency and effectiveness across DCT Abu Dhabi's Culture Sector activities.
- Developing knowledge across all Culture Sector relationships and ensuring proper and regular feedback and reporting.



In 2020, several partnerships were ongoing including:

- **Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation (ADMAF)** — to jointly collaborate in the development of programmes and activities in the creative fields.
- **Abu Dhabi Businesswomen Council** — to identify, promote and engage women in culture and creative opportunities and activities.
- **Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge** — to increase the cultural and heritage related content in formal educational curricula at all levels of education.
- **The International Academic Forum (IAFOR)** — aiming to generate and disseminate Abu Dhabi-specific knowledge on cultural practices and the culture and creative industries, while engaging with a network of top culture and social experts and academics.

DCT Abu Dhabi's Culture Sector continues to secure its active participation and involvement in several international membership-based organisations such as:

- **World Culture Cities Forum (WCCF)** — a network of policy makers in 38 key cities that share research, intelligence and explore the vital role of culture in their future prosperity.
- **International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA)** — the most relevant global culture policy organisation advocating for the importance of arts and culture in the development of cities, regions and countries.

## Capacity Building

### Capacity building for teachers and teaching artists



Throughout the year, various capacity building programmes and activities take place for teachers in both private and public schools. In 2020, despite challenges to school administrators and teachers across the world, DCT Abu Dhabi delivered a series of virtual masterclasses on painting techniques to 240 art teachers from the Ministry of Education. Also, in collaboration with Bait Al Oud, more than 400 music teachers participated in online professional development workshops.



## Outreach Programmes



Outreach programmes ensured accessibility to cultural programmes for university students.

Highlights included:

- Collaboration with Zayed University to develop a Minor degree in Cultural Heritage, with a focus on traditional United Arab Emirates handicrafts.
- 750 students from Higher Colleges of Technology attended an Abu Dhabi Classics outreach programme with Majida El Roumi.
- DCT Abu Dhabi supported research for a scientific paper on tourism and heritage with the United Arab Emirates University.
- Virtual tours for university students to Qasr Al Hosn, Qasr Al Muwajji and House of Artisans, including online handicraft workshops.

## Community Engagement

Building trusting relationships with vulnerable people in marginalised communities requires ongoing predictable and sustained efforts. Finding creative ways to enable the connection of such communities to DCT Abu Dhabi programmes is a major source of pride for the Department.

### People of Determination

Resilient staff continued to offer workshops and training sessions to nurture and develop the skills of People of Determination, and concerted efforts to reach out to regular participants were made throughout the year.

The online environment proved to be a great tool for supporting individual challenges and will become a permanent feature of DCT Abu Dhabi's work with People of Determination.



### Juvenile Care Centre Arts Education Programme

In its fourth year, the Juvenile Care Centre Arts Education Programme develops activities that nurture teenagers' skills to help give them a deeper and more meaningful view of the world around them. Activities include writing workshops, art therapy, psychotherapy and performance. The recently launched 'Workshops With an Artist' programme invites artists to work with young people to create collaborative artworks that explore themes, materials and concepts of relevance or importance to them. The programme has also been extended to help juveniles who have left the facility to transition back into society by helping them to find volunteering opportunities, internships and jobs. Government entities including DCT Abu Dhabi, as well as other private enterprises, have taken the initiative to offer participants of this programme internships and volunteer work. To date, approximately 100 young people have taken part in the programme.



CHAPTER

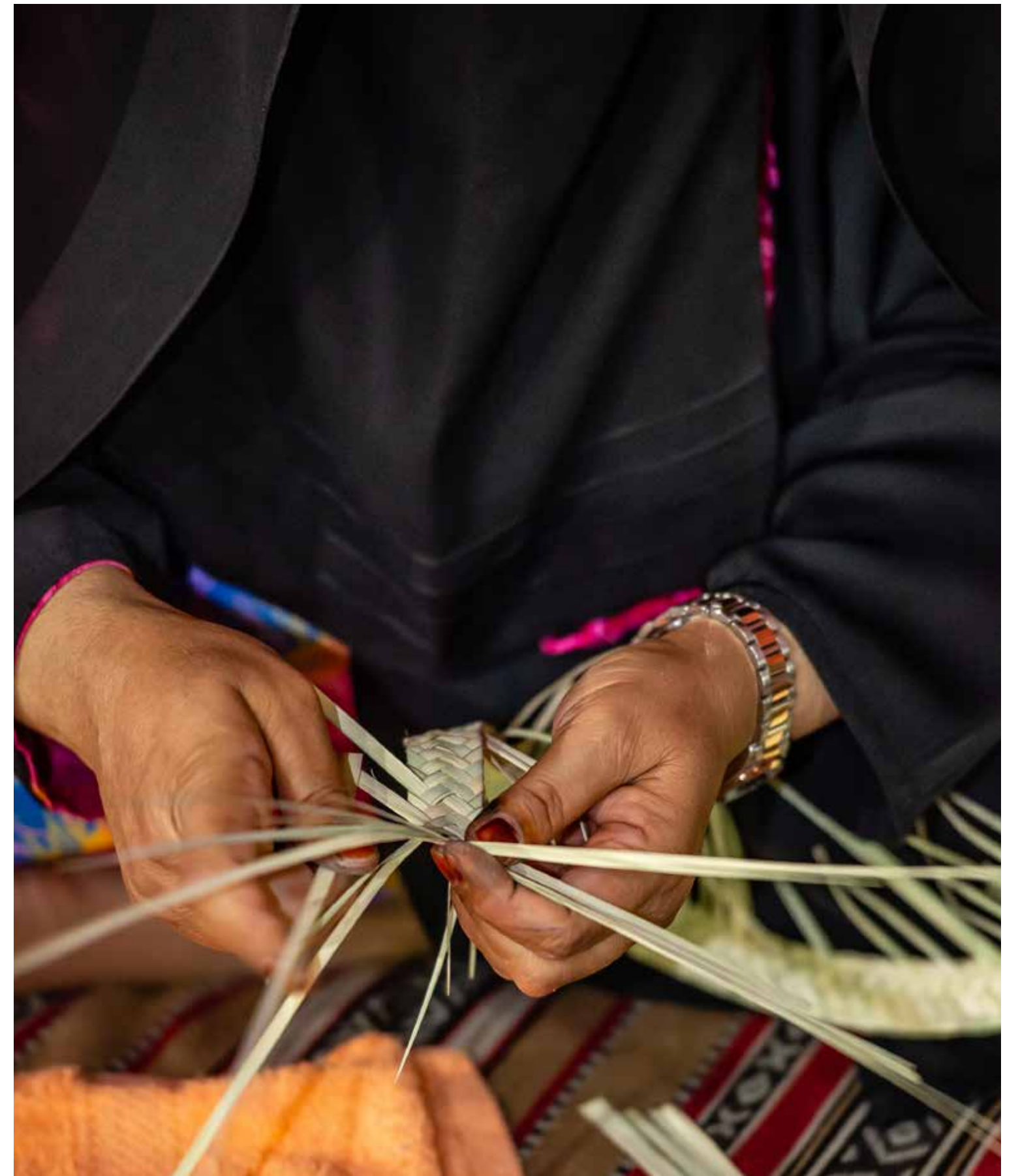
CONTRIBUTE TO  
ECONOMIC GROWTH AND  
DIVERSIFICATION

## Handicrafts sector: Abu Dhabi Crafts

DCT Abu Dhabi launched the Abu Dhabi Crafts initiative to provide a platform for Abu Dhabi's living national treasures, its handicrafts artisans, to showcase and sell their wares to people all over the world in a thriving handicraft retail sector.

2020 focussed on setting the foundations of this handicraft retail sector starting with the creation of a registry of artisans and licensing system called the Abu Dhabi Register of Artisans. This registry now consists of more than 110 artisans and is expected to continue to grow to at least 2,000 over the next five years.

The programme also aims to train artisans to master their crafts. In 2020, a training curriculum and grading system was developed for three subjects: Al-Sadu, Khoos and Traditional Perfume. To help prepare artisans to sell their products in the digital age, DCT Abu Dhabi partnered with Google's Maharat and launched a pilot training programme in which more than 50 artisans received training in digital skills. This programme will be expanded to include more artisans as well as more subjects that are pertinent to the artisans' success.

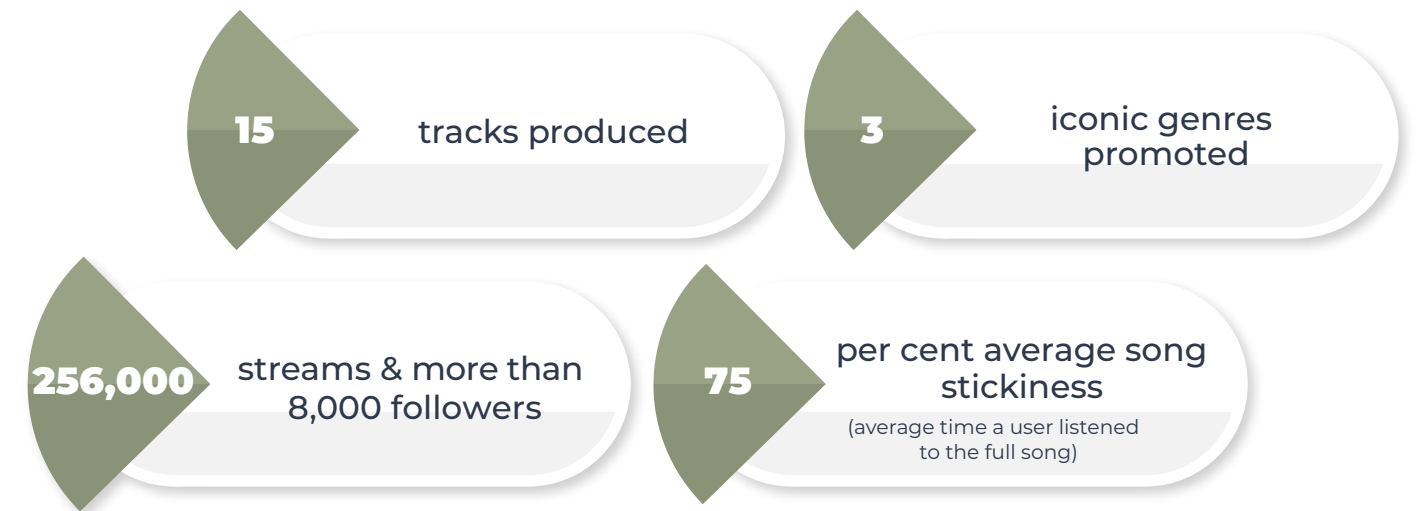


## Music sector: Sounds of the UAE

This initiative aims to digitise, produce and promote traditional Emirati music and disseminate it to the world. DCT Abu Dhabi partnered with the region's leading music streaming platform, Anghami, to allow traditional Emirati performing arts such as Al-Azi, Al-Ayyala, Al-Razfa and Al-Shalla access to local, regional and international audiences. The specific brand 'Sounds of the UAE' was created for this initiative, which will continue to digitise, produce and promote Emirati intangible cultural heritage.



# أمم إماراتية SOUNDS OF THE UAE



CHAPTER

**THE WAY FORWARD  
FOR 2021**

## Opening of Bait Mohammed bin Khalifa



Bait Mohammed bin Khalifa, a component of the World Heritage Site of Al Ain, is a historic house built in 1958 for the late Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Nahyan (1909–1979), the father-in-law of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Founding Father of the United Arab Emirates. Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Nahyan was the grandfather of the current President of the United Arab Emirates, HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Bait Mohammed bin Khalifa is one of the few remaining examples of Emirati architecture from the 1950s, providing insight into the changing building traditions and the urban development of Al Ain during the transition to modernity.

The 2021 opening of Bait Mohammed bin Khalifa follows an extensive conservation programme carried out by the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi, in which the historic home was repaired, restored and rehabilitated into a vibrant community centre. The House has been adapted to include multiple spaces for hire by the public and offers an onsite branch of the local Notes Café chain, as well as arts education classes in the RFLCT Creative Arts Centre. A permanent exhibition has been curated to shed light on the history of the House and how it has witnessed the transformation of Al Ain from the 1950s to the present day.

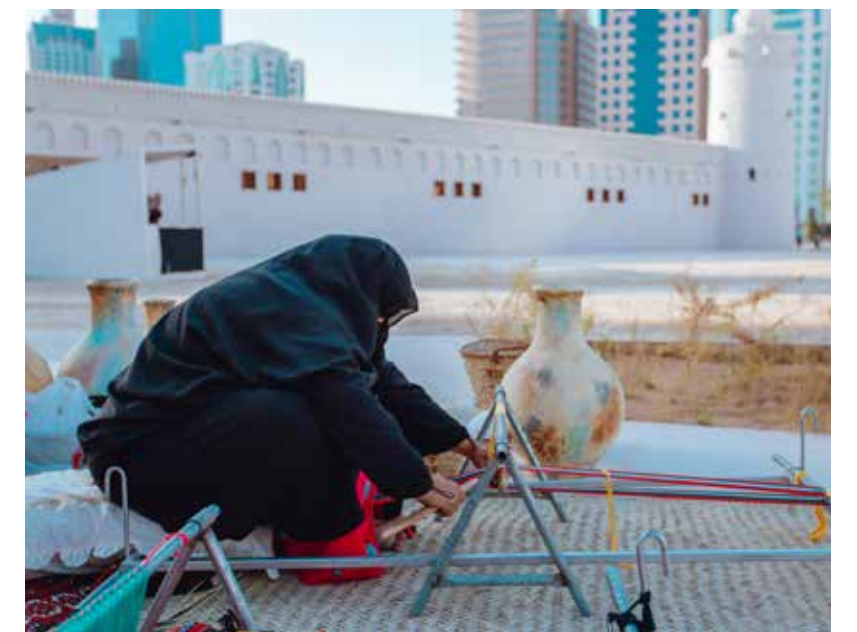
## Opening of Redesigned House of Artisans



Located at the historic Al Hosn site, alongside Qasr Al Hosn and Cultural Foundation, House of Artisans plays a pioneering role in the protection and preservation of traditional heritage and craftsmanship and actively provides support to artisans carrying on these traditions. With its coordinated efforts to protect and bring the traditional Emirati crafts of the past to the heart of contemporary culture, House of Artisans seeks to increase general awareness of heritage arts and practices and encourages the learning of skills related to these crafts through workshops and courses, allowing knowledge and techniques to be safeguarded for future generations.



The redesigned House of Artisans comprises several sections, including traditional craft pavilions, contemporary craft islands, as well as the Universe of Crafts wall. In the summer of 2020, the Universe of Crafts cultural campaign was launched to collect traditional Emirati handicrafts and personal artefacts — and the stories behind them — from the public. The Universe of Crafts wall consists of sections for weaving, culinary innovation, sea crafts, pottery and adornments and aromas. Objects include woven baskets and mats, spice mixtures from different families across the United Arab Emirates and aromatic concoctions from Emirati perfume-makers.





The culture and creative industries are now major drivers of economies around the globe and are widely recognised as a positive force for societies and economic development. The transformation of cultural development and the cultural economy brings opportunities for the culture sector, including driving down the costs of creating and distributing cultural products. Paradoxically, many practitioners in the culture and creative industries are less secure in their work. A key issue identified by numerous participants at Culture Summit Abu Dhabi 2019 was securing financial support in the face of rapid societal and economic change.

Inspired by these discussions, and in line with UNESCO's 2021 'International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development', this year Culture Summit addressed the theme of 'The Cultural Economy and the Economy of Culture', examining opportunities to renew the sector in a post-COVID environment, debating mechanisms to grow the cultural and creative industries to benefit countries globally, and developing viable and sustainable economic models for culture.

Culture Summit 2021 partners include UNESCO, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation, The Economist Events, Google, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Design Museum London, Abu Dhabi Cultural Foundation, Louvre Abu Dhabi, Berklee Abu Dhabi and Institut Français.



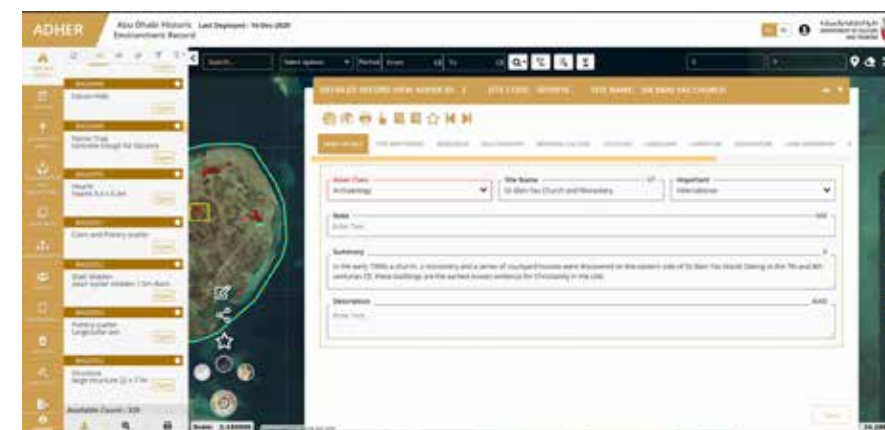
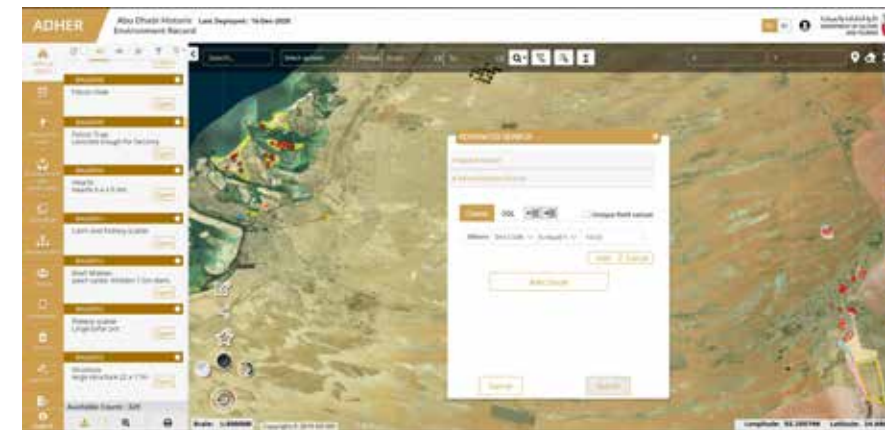
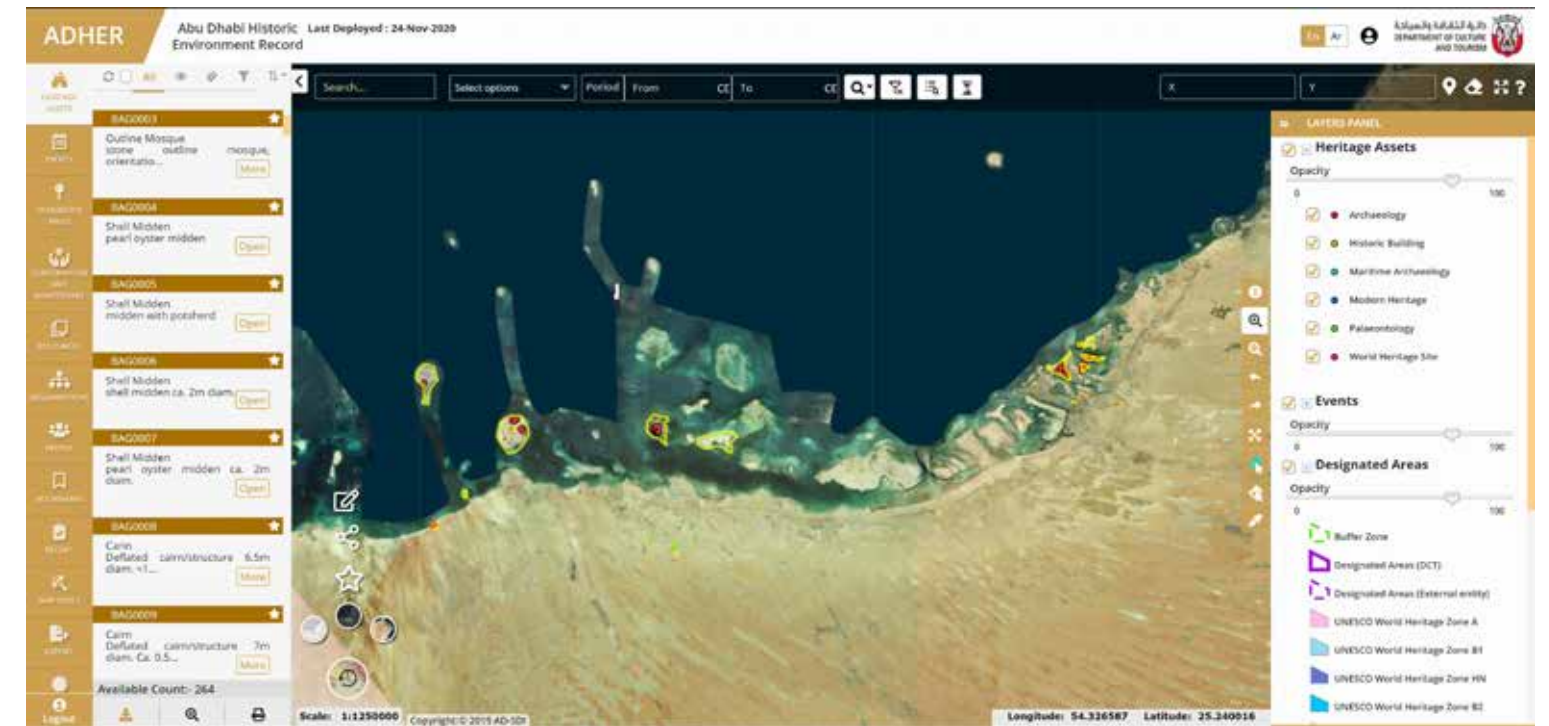


## Artisans Digital Training



A digital skills training programme, Maharat Min Google, is being provided to upskill artisans in arts and crafts on digital literacy. The training, designed mainly for women and young people, focusses on digital presence, social media, e-commerce and digital marketing. The programme roll-out began in December 2020 and will further develop the digital training programmes, in partnership with Google.

## Abu Dhabi Historic Environment Record



The launch of the Abu Dhabi Historic Environment Record (ADHER) provides an important source of information on the emirate's archaeology, built heritage and history. The system was set up to preserve and sustain Abu Dhabi's cultural heritage, documenting immovable heritage to ensure informed management, preservation and future public accessibility. The system consolidates cultural heritage information in one centralised geospatial database platform that details all cultural heritage, work including assets, events, protected areas and resources covering archaeological sites, heritage buildings, cultural landscapes, images, maps, conservation work, surveys, archaeological excavations and geophysical surveys. The system improves the management of planning applications through better access to heritage data and integration with the No Objection Certification (NOC). It also facilitates the management of cultural heritage, and supports research and publications on the cultural heritage of the United Arab Emirates.

## Abu Dhabi Art



Abu Dhabi Art expands beyond the notion of a traditional art fair in placing emphasis on a diverse public engagement programme, including art installations and exhibitions, talks and events, that take place in different locations throughout the year. The culmination of this year-long programme is the Abu Dhabi Art event in November, which provides an important sales platform for participating galleries while also offering these galleries an opportunity to showcase ambitious installations and site-specific works by their artists to a wide audience. Abu Dhabi Art's year-round programme explores art from numerous vantage points while targeting different segments of the community. It includes a Talks programme, which presents a series of stimulating cultural discussions featuring renowned art professionals on a diverse range of cultural topics; a Performances programme, with site-specific performances commissioned in different locations throughout the city, or experienced through the virtual platform; the Beyond gallery section, a platform for commissioned installations; and a Public Art initiative, involving collaboration with corporate partners to bring commissioned projects to different locations in Abu Dhabi.

## Gahwa Championships



To celebrate the heritage of Gahwa (Arabic coffee), a much-cherished aspect of Emirati and Arab culture, the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi created the unique 'Gahwa Championships' event. Building on the success of its Bait Al Gahwa initiative, which aims to document and protect Gahwa as an essential element of Emirati culture, DCT Abu Dhabi's Gahwa Championships aims to raise awareness of this vital aspect of regional heritage and to preserve the skills and traditions that have been passed down through generations. The Championships consist of five different categories, all designed to test the knowledge and practice of participants in areas such as the heritage of Gahwa, bean selection and roasting, and Gahwa preparation and service.

Gahwa has always been integral to Arab hospitality and remains a central part of Arab culture. The coffee is a symbolic act of generosity, with its preparation and service marked by elaborate traditions and practices. Reflecting the cultural importance of this beverage, in 2015 the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar had Arabic coffee inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

## Relaunch of Festivals

### Traditional Handicrafts Festival

The Traditional Handicrafts Festival promotes the heritage crafts of the United Arab Emirates, helping to support the industry and preserve these invaluable facets of Emirati identity. The Festival takes place each year under a specific theme in Al Qattara Heritage Souq, Al Ain. The event hosts a series of traditional cultural activities and workshops to introduce the public to these art forms, with the participation of artisans and crafts professionals from across the United Arab Emirates as well as educational institutions and government and civil organisations involved in heritage protection. In addition to the general promotion of traditional crafts, the festival works closely with families operating in the industry, providing support and helping them to adapt to the demands of the modern consumer market. The Festival aims to increase the income of participating families and practitioners through marketing efforts, while encouraging them to innovate with their products and business models.



### Al Hosn Festival

Al Hosn Festival is a cultural experience that reflects and reimagines Abu Dhabi's heritage, bringing together historic traditions, contemporary culture, and newly emerging artistic perspectives across the landscape of the Al Hosn site. Over eight days, this multidimensional experience presents a new perspective on culture in Abu Dhabi. Presenting art, design, cuisine and performances alongside traditional crafts, Al Hosn Festival celebrates the lineages of inspiration that link all of Abu Dhabi's creative communities. The first event of its kind in the region, Al Hosn Festival is a space for cultural conversations to begin and a platform for new artistic possibilities.



## Key targets for 2021

### Preserve and sustain Abu Dhabi's cultural heritage

In 2021 DCT Abu Dhabi aims to certify Abu Dhabi-based artisans working in traditional crafts and practices on the newly created Abu Dhabi Register of Artisans, providing them with greater exposure for their business, training opportunities and other support.



### Increase awareness of, participation in and understanding of cultural heritage and the arts

In 2021, the Culture Sector will launch its new marketing and communications strategy, with a focus on digital outreach and public relations. Goals set include increasing the number of followers across all social media channels by 10 per cent, as well as achieving two million digital clicks across all Culture Sector websites and 200 million impressions across all Culture Sector channels.



### Stimulate creativity as a driver for education and social change

DCT Abu Dhabi aims to deliver world-class cultural programmes and platforms across the emirate to disseminate art and heritage knowledge. Initiatives will support cultural practitioners through programming, residencies and commissions. In addition, DCT Abu Dhabi will deliver on-site and online education and outreach initiatives to support museums, historic sites and cultural programmes in engaging students and visitors. The coming year will also see the continued implementation of the Talent Development Programme, a youth-oriented cultural education initiative, as it seeks to identify and nurture the artistic development of further gifted and talented students.



### Build and enable capacity in Abu Dhabi's culture sector

In 2021, the CultureSTATS-AD Programme will further develop the Cultural Activities Baseline delivered in 2020. The data collection and research will focus on specific cultural sub-sectors — Performing Arts has been selected as a priority for 2021 — as well as cultural employment and other economic contributions. In parallel, the Social Participation and Cultural Consumption (SPCCB) module will be implemented to understand the existing demand for culture and the patterns of cultural engagement, as well as to explore the potential for further audience development. The advancement of the geographic information system mapping of cultural assets and the Register of Cultural Organisations and Professionals (ROCOP) will also continue.



### Contribute to economic growth and diversification

With the knowledge that the cultural and creative industries are key drivers of economic growth in the emirate, in 2021 further cultural initiatives and activities will be implemented to generate revenue and economic outcomes. These will include building on the launch of the Abu Dhabi Crafts platform. Artisans will receive training and licences and the programme will provide promotional opportunities for the artisans and their products. It will also integrate an e-commerce platform to inform and sustain these crafts, to sell functional and contemporary traditional products hand-made by the artisans.



