

## Abu Dhabi to Host Comité Colbert for Series of Initiatives Celebrating French Luxury in the 21st Century

*Flânerie Colbert Abu Dhabi will take place from November 12 to December 14 and will see activations at Louvre Abu Dhabi, the House of Artisans, The Galleria Al Maryah Island and at Abu Dhabi Art*

*Historically inaugural event, with the support of the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi, will promote cross-cultural dialogue between France and the UAE*

**Abu Dhabi, 7 October 2019** – Abu Dhabi is set to host the Comité Colbert, a grouping of 84 French luxury houses and 16 cultural institutions, as it presents *Flânerie Colbert Abu Dhabi, French Luxury in the 21st Century*, a unique series of initiatives in multiple locations across the emirate that will explore 21<sup>st</sup> century French luxury as well as French culture and its burgeoning dialogue with Emirati culture.

Comité Colbert was started in 1954 by 15 prominent visionaries seeking to parlay French style into economic strength and international influence for France. Today, the Colbert membership of 84 French luxury houses and 16 cultural institutions works to create a business environment conducive to the collective and individual growth of French brands.

Taking place from November 12 to December 14, 2019, the series of special events, with the support of the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), will take place at the House of Artisans at the Al Hosn site, at The Galleria Maryah Island, at the annual Abu Dhabi Art fair, and at Louvre Abu Dhabi, where the events will also echo the themes of the *10,000 Years of Luxury* exhibition, which will be presented from October 30 until February 15, 2020 at the museum by the MAD, an associate member of the Comité Colbert.

The dedicated components of *Flânerie Colbert Abu Dhabi* will see the Louvre Abu Dhabi exhibition complemented by cross-cultural craft demonstrations, workshops and talks at House of Artisans from November 12 to 28, activations throughout The Galleria Al Maryah Island, which will highlight the combined creativity of teams of French luxury houses, from November 12 to December 14, and also talks on French luxury and contemporary art by speakers from prestigious French luxury houses and cultural institutions at Abu Dhabi Art, which will run on November 20 and 23.

*“Flânerie Colbert Abu Dhabi represents the first time the combined French luxury brands have collaborated on such an endeavour, and as such this is a seminal moment for the emirate and for the region,”* said HE Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of DCT Abu Dhabi. *“The building of cultural bridges is a fundamental aspect of DCT Abu Dhabi’s mandate, as we reflect the openness of wider Emirati society, and its enthusiasm for embracing other cultures, and for sharing Emirati culture with the world. In this respect, Flânerie Colbert will bring together artisan skills, contemporary creation and the very best of both Emirati and French cultures.”*

*“I am glad to give my patronage to the Flânerie Colbert Abu Dhabi, which celebrates the close relationship between France and the United Arab Emirates,”* said the French Minister of Culture, Franck Riester. *“The French luxury sector combines intangible heritage and creativity. The cultural*

dialogue developed by the Comité Colbert through this series of events around excellence skills and Contemporary Art will definitely contribute to strengthen the bonds between our countries.”

## Louvre Abu Dhabi

For another ground-breaking exhibition in the Middle East, *10,000 Years of Luxury* will, for the first time in the region, explore the history of luxury. Featuring 350 extraordinary objects from the fields of fashion, jewellery, art, furniture and design, the show will look at the various ways luxury has been interpreted by diverse cultures throughout history – from extravagant offerings to the divine, to golden furniture fit for royalty and the iconic couture of fashion houses and virtuoso objects of luxury houses, such as Christian Dior, Chanel, Cartier and Hermes.

The exhibition will show how different cultures have defined luxury and the impact of such excess on the evolution of society, as a way to undermine or underline the status quo. The show will explore the prominent role of women in defining luxury, the ebb and flow between excess and moderation as well as notions of what elevates an object to the realm of ‘the precious’ – be it time, craftsmanship or rarity.

## House of Artisans

The House of Artisans programme will feature French and Emirati artisans engaging in a conversation about their respective crafts – including Al Sadu, Bisht, Calligraphy, Gahwa, Khoos, Talli or Khanjar-making on the Emirati side and, on the French side, embroidery, gastronomy, silversmithing and leather goods.

Christian Dior will divulge the secrets that go into making the iconic Lady Dior handbag. In their conversation with a practitioner of Talli handicraft, Guerlain's "table ladies" will shed light on the art of sealing and finishing fragrance bottles. Puiforcat will present the silversmith's planishing technique in counterpoint to the fabrication of a traditional Khanjar dagger by an Emirati artisan. In other dialogues with Emirati artisans, Hermès will focus on master leather, saddle-making skills, Hôtel le Bristol on chocolate-making and Louis Vuitton on painting techniques and Van Cleef & Arpels on its Mystery set. Demonstrations and master classes will also be given by two embroiderers from Lesage (Chanel) and by expert Sadu weavers.

A series of film screening and talks proposed by French luxury houses will enrich this experience with artisans.

Talks about French savoir-faire will also take place at the House of Artisans, which will feature experts including Vincent Cochet, Chief Curator, Château de Fontainebleau, and Amel Chabbi, Conservation Manager in the Historic Environment Department, DCT Abu Dhabi, who will discuss the restoration of the Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Theatre, on November 13, and Hubert Barrère, Artistic Director, Lesage (Chanel), Embroidery, who will present a talk about savoir-faire and creativity on November 14.

There will also be a talk by Valerie Sandoz, Secretary General, Comité Colbert, who will discuss transmission of savoir-faire, an asset of French luxury, on November 16 and Alexandre Boquel, CEO, Vermont (Christian Dior), Embroidery, who will discuss savoir-faire for Haute Couture, on November

19. Hélène Huret, the Communication Director, Bernardaud, Porcelain, will discuss an emblematic savoir-faire in Limoges, on November 21 and Catherine Pégard, President, Château, Musée et

Domaine de Versailles, will present a talk about savoir-faire on November 22. Finally, Thierry Sarmant, Chief Curator, Mobilier National, Gobelins, will talk about savoir-faire in historical products on November 24.

“This series of events marks the first time anywhere such a collaboration has been presented to the public,” said HE Saif Saeed Ghobash, Undersecretary of DCT Abu Dhabi. “This shows once more the commitment of DCT Abu Dhabi to position the emirate as a trailblazer in terms of globally significant events. Bringing together the elite French luxury brands, experts and institutions, and combining them with such an iconic representation of Abu Dhabi’s own respect for history, innovation, artistic endeavour and craftsmanship as Al Hosn and its skilled artisans is the perfect expression of DCT Abu Dhabi’s commitment to cross-cultural dialogue.”

## **The Galleria Al Maryah Island**

Meanwhile, at The Galleria Al Maryah Island, 26 Colbert houses will create exceptional window displays, in-store scenographies and events at members' shops, inspired by themes from the Louvre Abu Dhabi exhibition. This part of the Flânerie Colbert programme reflects the highly original nature of French luxury's collective approach. For this project, Colbert members working in different business sectors are teaming up to represent their shared values and French style.

Visitors will be able to watch as the curtain lifts courtesy of Boucheron, Ercuis and the Château de Fontainebleau; discover the precious tale devised by Cartier and Flammarion Beaux Livres; and admire the garden of the senses created by Bernardaud, Christofle and Guerlain. Louis Vuitton, Hôtel Le Bristol, Christofle and Robert Haviland & C.Parlon will collectively celebrate French Art de Vivre. Baccarat, Christian Dior and Christian Dior Parfums will be honouring 70 years of close collaboration in creating exquisite objects of desire. Van Cleef & Arpels, Chloé and Sèvres-Cité de la Céramique will be lifting the veil on house secrets around the theme of colours. Further surprises have been concocted by Celine; a five-house group consisting of Hermès, Parfums Hermès, John Lobb, Puiforcat and Saint Louis who will propose a scenography conceived by a duo of contemporary artists; and Chanel with the Hôtel Ritz Paris and La Monnaie de Paris will express the spirit of French Art de Vivre.

Daniel Parry, Managing Director of Gulf Related comments, “On behalf of The Galleria Al Maryah Island, I would like to thank DCT and Comité Colbert for bringing this prestigious event to Abu Dhabi in celebration of French craftsmanship and culture. The Galleria Luxury Collection features the largest selection of luxury French brands in the capital, and we are honoured to have been chosen as the retail destination to host Comité Colbert.

“The Galleria Luxury Collection is delighted to have a number of our brands included in this event including Louis Vuitton, Cartier, Van Cleef Arpels, Celine and Boucheron. In addition, we are excited to soon welcome two additional French luxury houses, Chanel and Givenchy.

“The Galleria has built a reputation for delivering incredible events for the Abu Dhabi community such as New Year’s Eve and Chinese New Year and Comité Colbert is no exception. The Galleria, including the expansion, has been designed with the community in mind, bringing together the best entertainment, retail, and dining all under one roof. When the Comité Colbert event opens on

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November 12 with an exciting mix of in-store activations and public exhibitions, we invite everyone to come and experience a taste of the inimitable French culture and luxury at The Galleria.”

## Abu Dhabi Art

Abu Dhabi Art will be enhanced for its 2019 edition by a series of talks by prominent specialists proposed by the Comité Colbert to explore how French luxury has become a major actor on the Contemporary Art scene.

The Colbert members will be taking part in the conference programme at the annual fair on November 20 and 23. They will show the role French luxury plays in the world of contemporary art, how French luxury houses collaborate with artists and how heritage relates to creativity.

The Hermès and Cartier Contemporary Art foundations as well as French cultural institutions – the Centre Pompidou, Mobilier National and Château de Versailles – and luxury houses like Bernardaud and Christian Dior Couture will be contributing.

November 20 will see a talk featuring Grazia Quaroni from Fondation Cartier pour l’Art Contemporain, Juliette Singer from Louvre Abu Dhabi, Alexandre Boquel from Christian Dior Couture, Hélène Huret from Bernardaud and Marion Laporte from Centre Pompidou, whilst a talk on November 23 will feature Annick de Chaunac and Guillaume Désanges from the Fondation d’Entreprise Hermès, Catherine Pégard from Château, Musée et Domaine National de Versailles and Thierry Sarmant from Mobilier National, Manufacture des Gobelins.

*“As a collective body representing French luxury, Comité Colbert makes a point of entering into dialogue with the cultures of countries in which it holds events. The Flânerie Colbert Abu Dhabi programme is emblematic of this approach, unique in the world,”* said Elisabeth Ponsolle des Portes, President and CEO of Comité Colbert. *“The different aspects of the Flânerie Colbert Abu Dhabi reflect the personality of French luxury – a combination of intangible craft heritage with creativity – and resonate harmoniously with Emirati culture.”*

*Flânerie Colbert Abu Dhabi* will be inaugurated on November 12, with a large delegation of Presidents and CEOs of Colbert houses travelling to Abu Dhabi to attend the opening. The General Assembly of the Comité Colbert will also be held during *Flânerie Colbert Abu Dhabi*, which will take place at Sorbonne Abu Dhabi, which is also an associate member of the Comité Colbert.

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### **About the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi**

The Department of Culture and Tourism conserves and promotes the heritage and culture of Abu Dhabi emirate and leverages them in the development of a world-class, sustainable destination of distinction, which enriches the lives of visitors and residents alike. The organization manages the emirate’s tourism sector and markets the destination internationally through a wide range of activities aimed at attracting visitors and investment.

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Its policies, plans and programs relate to the preservation of heritage and culture, including protecting archaeological and historical sites and to developing museums, including Zayed National Museum, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, and the Louvre Abu Dhabi. DCT - Abu Dhabi supports intellectual and artistic activities and cultural events to nurture a rich cultural environment and honour the emirate's heritage. A key role is to create synergy in the destination's development through close co-ordination with its wide-ranging stakeholder base.

## **About The Galleria Al Maryah Island**

The Galleria Al Maryah Island is Abu Dhabi's super-regional mall in the heart of the city. With over 400 stores, including 300 of the world's most popular brands, 100 food and beverage options and an abundance of entertainment catering to all ages, The Galleria has something for everyone. First opened in 2013 as a luxury and fine-dining destination with brands such as Louis Vuitton, Cartier, Gucci and Zuma, on 4 September 2019 it will dramatically expand its offering when 250 new stores such as Zara, H&M and Debenhams open alongside family favourites such as The Cheesecake Factory, PF Chang's and Paul Café. Combined with world-class entertainment venues including a 21-

screen VOX Cinema with IMAX, a flagship Xtreme Zone and urban parks catering to family activities, this incredible offering sets The Galleria apart as the most exciting retail, culinary, entertainment and lifestyle hub in the Middle East. Abu Dhabi is our city; The Galleria is your mall.

For more information about The Galleria Al Maryah Island, please visit [www.thegalleria.ae](http://www.thegalleria.ae) or join us on social media @TheGalleriaUAE, #AtTheGalleria

## **About Al Maryah Island**

Al Maryah Island is Abu Dhabi's business and lifestyle destination. It is designated as Abu Dhabi's International Finance Center and is an international financial free zone that offers businesses the ideal landscape to invest, grow and thrive. This unique 114-hectare cosmopolitan is home to Abu Dhabi Global Market, the award-winning IFC and governing authority of Al Maryah Island. Features include retail and dining offerings, premium hospitality and world-class healthcare with Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi. Al Maryah Island is surrounded by a striking waterfront promenade, which hosts some of Abu Dhabi's most exciting events. The combination of offerings sets this destination as a business-friendly place with a progressive ecosystem that fosters innovative thinking and collaboration. Whether a UAE resident, a visitor from the GCC or abroad, an investor or business partner, Al Maryah is a place to experience the city at its most dynamic, offering a truly exceptional experience.

## **About Gulf Related**

Gulf Related is a regional real estate development company focused on retail, residential, and mixed-use real estate developments in the GCC. Gulf Related represents a joint venture between Gulf Capital, one of the GCC's leading alternative asset management firms, and Related Companies, one of the largest private real estate development and investment firms in the world, headquartered in New York City.