



**EMPOWERING
THE NATION**

ANNUAL REPORT
2025

ABU DHABI MUSIC & ARTS FOUNDATION

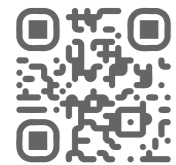
JANUARY - DECEMBER 2025





Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation
P.O. Box 47488, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
T: +971 2 333 6400
E: info@admaf.org
W: www.admaf.org

Follow us:



admafsocial

**ABU DHABI FESTIVAL
FOUNDING HONORARY
PATRON**

H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan
UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

ADMAF PATRON

H.E. Sheikh Nahyan Mubarak Al Nahyan
Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence

**ABU DHABI FESTIVAL
PATRON & ADMAF
HONORARY PATRON**

H.H. Sheikha Shamsa bint Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Nahyan

**ADMAF HONORARY
PATRON**

H.H. Sheikha Sheikha bint Saif Al Nahyan

ADMAF FOUNDER

H.E. Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo

**ADMAF BOARD
OF TRUSTEES**

H.E. Razan Al Mubarak
H.E. Reem Al Shemmari
Sheikha Noor Fahim Al Qasimi
Dr. Karim El Solh
Mohammed Al Otaiba

ADMAF ADVISORS

H.E. Zaki Anwar Nusseibeh
H.E. Khaldoon Al Mubarak
H.E. Dr. Ali bin Tamim
Princess Irina zu Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg
Brian Lott
Salem Brahimi
Mary Corrado
Dr. Frauke Heard-Bey
Mohamed A. L. Kanoo
Raymond Mouracade

**LEGAL COUNSEL/
COMPLIANCE & ETHICS**

Dr. Moustafa Said El Sherbini –
Al Adala Legal Consultants

IN MEMORIAM

Elżbieta Penderecka

Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation mourned the passing of Elżbieta Penderecka, a distinguished Polish cultural leader and cherished friend of Abu Dhabi Festival. She fostered artistic exchange between Poland and the UAE through collaborations with Abu Dhabi Festival and the Ludwig van Beethoven International Festival, which she founded. These included the performance of the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra at the opening evening of the 2010 Abu Dhabi Festival, conducted by the world-renowned composer Krzysztof Penderecki, whose works were presented in the Arab world for the first time; and the participation of the distinguished artist Naseer Shamma, together with 25 oud players from across the Arab world, in the 2008 International Beethoven Festival for the first time in the festival's history.



Pierre Audi

Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation joined the global cultural community in mourning the loss of Pierre Audi. As Artistic Director of Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, a pioneering force in opera and dear friend and partner of Abu Dhabi Festival, he touched artists and audiences across the globe. Abu Dhabi Festival collaborated with him on Festival d'Aix-en-Provence productions including *Kalila wa Dimna* (2016), *The Arab Apocalypse* (2021) based on the works of American-Lebanese visual artist and poet Etel Adnan, and *Mahler's Resurrection* (2022).



Robert Redford

Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation mourned the loss of Oscar-award winning actor and director Robert Redford, whose work spanned film, television and theatre, including *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *The Sting* and *All the President's Men*. A dear friend, ADMAF had the honour of welcoming him to Abu Dhabi for a talk at the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) in 2007, where he and Mrs Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo began a lasting friendship and shared hopes for film to grow in Abu Dhabi. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family.





H.H. SHEIKH ABDULLAH BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN
UAE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
FOUNDING HONORARY PATRON

Year after year, Abu Dhabi Festival reinforces its leading position as a platform that conveys to the world the UAE's message of upholding the values of peace, harmony and diversity and building bridges of cultural communication between different civilisations and people.

As the Festival celebrated Japan as the Country of Honour, we emphasised the depth of bilateral relations and enduring friendship between our two countries, that dates back more than 50 years, and is based on a long history of strategic cooperation at various levels.

The 22nd edition of Abu Dhabi Festival continued its leading role in stimulating cultural dialogue with our international partners and working to raise awareness of the importance of creativity and innovation in the renaissance of countries and the development of societies.

We look forward to more inspiring and innovative new editions as Abu Dhabi Festival continues its pioneering journey and its important role in strengthening the country's position as a unique model of cultural and civilisational diversity.



H.E. SHEIKH NAHYAN AL MUBARAK AL NAHYAN
MINISTER OF TOLERANCE & COEXISTENCE
ADMAF PATRON

It gives me great pleasure to present Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation's (ADMAF) annual report, which documents the activities and programmes delivered throughout 2025. This publication reflects the Foundation's role as a platform for enriching lives, an effective means of artistic and cultural exchange, and an important contributor to ongoing efforts in Abu Dhabi and across the UAE to build positive cultural connections. It also highlights the values of human fraternity that have made Abu Dhabi and the UAE a fertile ground for distinguished artistic and cultural experiences enjoyed by citizens, residents and visitors alike.

In 2025, ADMAF continued to advance its mission of supporting culture, knowledge and the arts, while reinforcing Abu Dhabi's growing status as a leading regional and global hub for these vital human endeavours. This is reflected in the following:

- The 2025 theme, 'Abu Dhabi – A World of Harmony', affirming the Emirate's prominent role in supporting culture and the arts locally and globally.
- A successful Abu Dhabi Festival celebrating Japan as Country of Honour, featuring leading Japanese artists, orchestras and traditional arts groups, alongside ADMAF's participation in Expo Osaka 2025 within the UAE National Pavilion, where its presence was a source of pride.
- Continued engagement with Emirati youth, whose active participation strengthened the Foundation's educational and knowledge-based role in society.
- Ongoing collaboration with strategic partners in pursuit of national objectives and in enhancing the UAE's global cultural presence.

ADMAF takes pride in its commitment to promoting enlightened thought, supporting artistic creativity and enhancing quality of life across Abu Dhabi and the UAE. This mission reflects the vision of H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, to foster a thriving national cultural environment that enriches society, encourages meaningful dialogue between cultures, and supports the nation's continued development and the advancement of its citizens.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all those who contribute to the work of ADMAF and express my pride in their dedicated efforts to advance culture and the arts. I invite readers to explore the Foundation's achievements in 2025, as presented in this report, and I look forward with optimism to the programmes of 2026, marking the Foundation's 30th anniversary and another milestone in its distinguished journey.

May God grant success.



Festival in the Park at Umm Al Emarat Park is Abu Dhabi's first community-led outdoor festival. A stage for artists, performers and community groups, it is a much-loved celebration of cultural expression.

H.H. SHEIKHA SHAMSA BINT HAMDAN BIN MOHAMMED AL NAHYAN

PATRON, ABU DHABI FESTIVAL

Abu Dhabi Festival 2025, held under the theme 'Abu Dhabi – A World of Harmony', was the culmination of more than two decades of continuous work to strengthen the UAE's global presence, embrace creativity, invest in the youth of our nation and community solidarity. It also affirmed the principles of coexistence, understanding and unity that the UAE upholds and works to build bridges of international cooperation and dialogue.

Year after year, the Festival contributes to affirming Abu Dhabi's position as the capital of coexistence and dialogue, serving as a global forum for culture and creativity. It continues to present leading innovators in music and the arts, to inspire its large multicultural audience from all over the world, while also strengthening the Emirati presence and supporting Arab artists in the international arena through the Festival Abroad programme.

We welcomed Japan, the Country of Honour of this year's Abu Dhabi Festival, with all its rich culture and history, as part of the Festival's commitment – since its inception in 2004 – to strengthen the UAE's cultural ties with the world.

The Festival and its 22nd edition embodied our vision to enrich the cultural and creative role of Abu Dhabi and the UAE. May it continue to advance this vision in the years ahead.



H.E. HUDA ALKHAMIS-KANOO

FOUNDER OF ABU DHABI MUSIC & ARTS FOUNDATION

FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF ABU DHABI FESTIVAL

The year 2025 was declared the 'Year of Community' by H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi. His Highness's call to stand 'hand in hand' was an inspiring reminder that the strength of our nation lies in unity and that community and cohesion are our collective responsibility.

This call to togetherness resonated deeply with the spirit of ADMAF. For three decades, we have upheld the steadfast belief that culture is one of the most powerful ways to build community. It is an extraordinary bridge, connecting the individual to the global, and peoples to nations.

In 2025, ADMAF deployed this bridge on a new scale – digging deeper local roots while extending our global reach. We forged new spaces for connection on stages, in classrooms, forums and through partnerships. This annual report documents a year where ADMAF turned the concepts of community, connection and artistic excellence into tangible action, working hand in hand with our valued partners.

Among our proudest achievements was building a corridor of creativity between the UAE and South Korea. We brought our historic partnership with the Seoul Museum of Art to life with *Layered Medium: We Are in Open Circuits* at Manarat Al Saadiyat, bringing 50 years of Korean artistic innovation to our capital, and then the groundbreaking exhibition *Proximities*, taking three generations of art from the UAE to Seoul.

This historic collaboration was one pillar of a broader cultural diplomacy strategy. From celebrating *Music is the Bridge* at the UAE Permanent Mission to the UN in New York to hosting our *Artists in Conversation* series at the magnificent UAE Pavilion Expo 2025 Osaka, our Art @ Embassies initiative gained momentum as an effective crossroads for art and diplomacy. These global exchanges also led to tangible institutional outcomes, including a strategic Memorandum of Understanding with the Manufactures nationales in France, advancing Abu Dhabi's role as a key global partner in the creative industries.

Closer to home, educational and cultural programmes sit at the heart of ADMAF's commitment to the arts and our communities. Building on our MoU with the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge, we expanded our reach into charter schools, providing arts education tools and opportunities to children across the Emirate. This was further solidified in December through a landmark agreement with the Ministry of Education to support the integration of advanced arts and music programmes across UAE schools, positioning ADMAF as an active partner in shaping the future of arts education.

The heartbeat of our year remained Abu Dhabi Festival. Its 22nd edition, held under the theme 'Abu Dhabi – A World of Harmony', honoured over 50 years of friendship with Japan and fulfilled its enduring promise: to bring the world to Abu Dhabi and Abu Dhabi to the world.

Highlights included the Arab world premiere of the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, led by legendary Maestro Yutaka Sado. Through our Abroad programme, we co-produced with Opéra national de Paris – its first collaboration with the Arab world – the world premiere of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, alongside a programme that took the finest Emirati and Arab talents to world stages. This innovative co-production exemplified Abu Dhabi Festival's role as a laboratory and a platform, creating new opportunities for artists and audiences in Abu Dhabi and around the world.

This year brought me the extraordinary honour of my appointment as Advisor to H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs. I hold this responsibility close to my heart and commit to it with humility. It is a reaffirmation of my work and an opportunity to further contribute to the cultural voice of our nation. It is also a powerful statement that culture is a pillar of the UAE's diplomatic vision.

I extend my gratitude to our patrons, Abu Dhabi Festival Founding Honorary Patron, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan; Abu Dhabi Festival Patron H.H. Sheikha Shamsa bint Hamdan Al Nahyan; and ADMAF Patron and Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, H.E. Sheikh Nahyan Mubarak Al Nahyan. My thanks also to our generous sponsors, advisors, partners, the ADMAF team, and all who have contributed to the remarkable success of another historic year.

As you read this report, I hope you see beyond the programmes and figures to the story of ADMAF in 2025 – one of community and connection, built by one concert, one exhibition and one student at a time.



- 18** ADMAF Vision, Mission and Strategic Pillars
- 20** ADMAF Partners
- 24** ADMAF World
- 26** ADMAF Timeline
- 28** Making an Impact
- 32** Abu Dhabi Festival Headline Programme
- 40** Abu Dhabi Festival Abroad
- 48** Abu Dhabi Festival Award
- 50** Visual Arts
- 60** Education & Community
- 66** Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange

Kodo, Japan's internationally acclaimed taiko performing arts ensemble, takes the stage in an Arab world premiere at the Red Theater, The Arts Center at NYU Abu Dhabi.

ADMAF VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGIC PILLARS

VISION

In a progressive nation connected to the world, ADMAF advocates for a global flourishing of arts and culture – where the greatest contemporary works become part of history to build civilisation and drive exchange.

MISSION

ADMAF's mission is a calling to lead creativity from the UAE and its capital, Abu Dhabi. It is a commitment to create, innovate, produce, preserve and present inspiring works of music and art. It is a promise to the youth of the nation to invest in and empower their dreams. It is a pledge to position the capital on the international cultural map as a destination for global art and talent. It is a commitment to elevate the nation's voice on a global stage with international partnerships that bring understanding and beauty to the world.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

1

ABU DHABI AS A GLOBAL BEACON OF ARTS & CULTURE

Abu Dhabi Festival is ADMAF's flagship initiative. Ensuring rich cultural experiences at home and abroad, it strengthens Abu Dhabi's position as a cultural capital through co-productions and co-commissions. The festival of firsts presents the world's greatest artists and performers to the UAE. On the global stage, partnerships with prominent international organisations expand Abu Dhabi's contributions, securing the presence of the city and the nation as a leading voice in international creative conversations.

2

AN INCUBATOR FOR ARTS AND CREATIVITY

As a gateway to knowledge, ADMAF invests in the nation's youth, empowering them to realise their dreams and ambitions. In partnership with academic institutions and through programmes that nurture creative skills and free creative thinking, ADMAF drives innovation, supports artistic growth and rewards excellence. Incubating arts and creativity to foster the development of the UAE's cultural and creative industries.

3

AN ACTIVE FORCE FOR SOCIAL UNITY AND CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

ADMAF engages people of every background and ability in shared experiences to foster cultural expression, forge unity and support the vitality of our society. It forges meaningful partnerships to advance social good and support the health and wellbeing of communities through the transformative power of the arts. It also champions environmental awareness by presenting performances, workshops and commissioned works that address environmental conservation and sustainability.

Conductor Yutaka Sado leads the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra at Emirates Palace Mandarin Oriental, Abu Dhabi.

ADMAF PARTNERS



ADMAF's lead partner, Mubadala, including Chief Communications Officer Brian Lott and his team, toured the landmark exhibition *Layered Medium: We Are in Open Circuits*.



H.E. Bassam Said Freiha, Founder of Bassam Freiha Art Foundation, and H.E. Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo, Founder of ADMAF and Founder and Artistic Director of Abu Dhabi Festival, at the MoU signing ceremony in 2025.



H.E. Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo, Founder of ADMAF and Founder and Artistic Director of Abu Dhabi Festival, and H.E. Sarah Al Amiri, Minister of Education, signed an MoU this year.

Strategic partnership networks comprising international cultural leaders and local educational institutions further the Foundation's work. Global partnerships strengthen work across cultural diplomacy, commissions and international exchange, while nationwide connections with universities and schools grant students and faculty access to unprecedented further education opportunities.

ADMAF's work is also made possible through the forward-thinking support of corporate partnerships. The Foundation is grateful for the ongoing partnerships that play a pivotal role in celebrating cultural excellence, supporting Emirati talent and investing in youth.

STRATEGIC PARTNERS



LEAD PARTNERS



ENERGY PARTNER



EDUCATION PARTNERS



AWARD PARTNER



FOUNDATION PARTNER



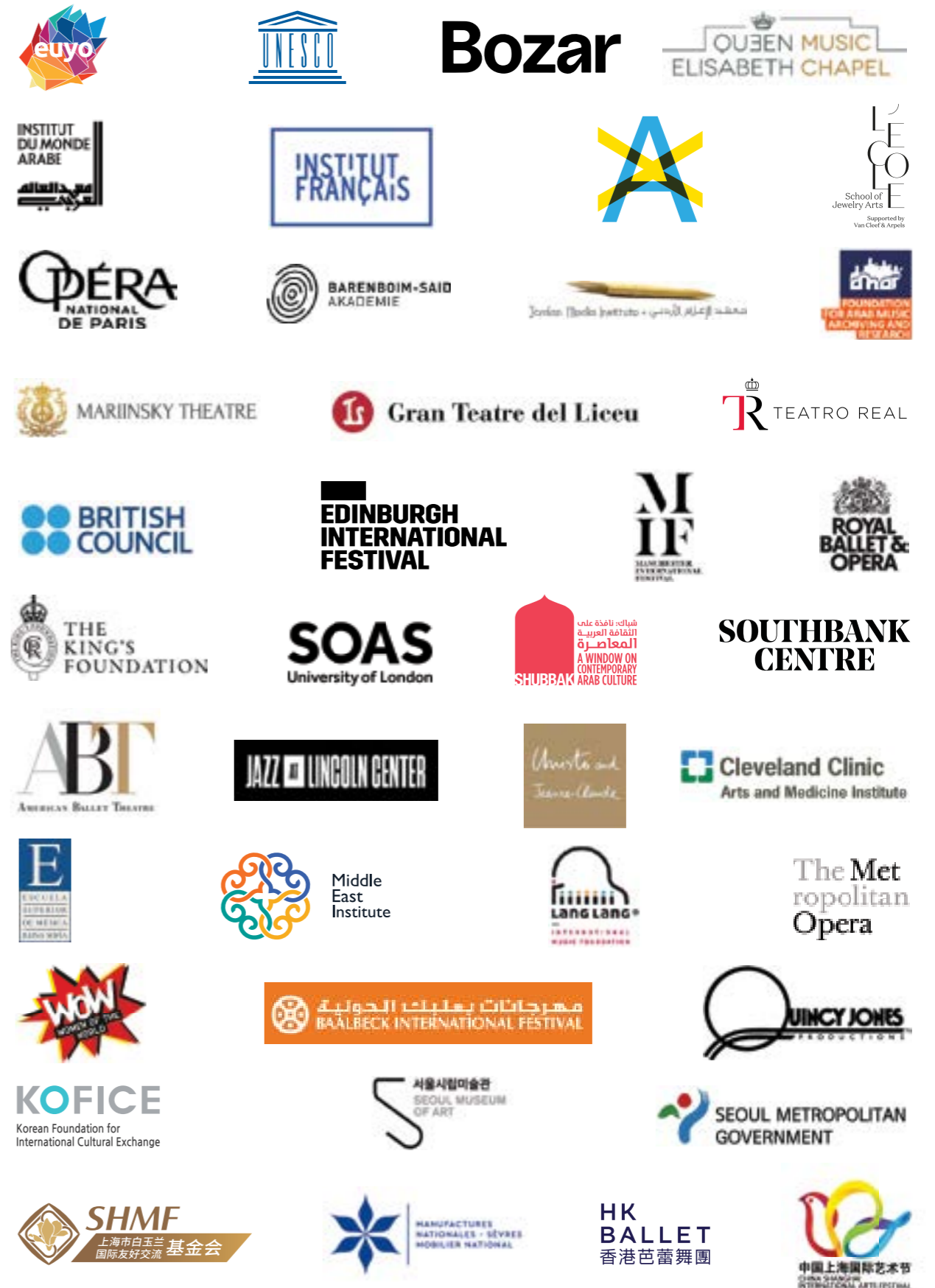
NATIONAL STRATEGIC CULTURAL PARTNERS

ADMAF works in partnership with educational and cultural institutions across the UAE. These partnerships provide students and faculty with bespoke access to ADMAF initiatives, as well as financial assistance for arts and cultural projects that support studies, nurture academic performance and develop professional skills.



INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC CULTURAL PARTNERS

ADMAF's global network aims to generate long-term benefits for the UAE's creative and cultural industries.



FEBRUARY



JANUARY



ADMAF signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the China Shanghai International Arts Festival, marking a historic first for the Arab world, paving the way for collaboration on new commissions, co-productions and cultural exchange programmes.

Abu Dhabi Festival and the Opéra national de Paris present the world premiere of a new production of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the Opéra Bastille, directed by Lebanese-Canadian Wajdi Mouawad, marking the first co-production between the prestigious French opera house and a cultural institution from the Arab world.

MARCH



Renowned Inshaad master Sheikh Mahmoud El Tohamy presents a digital premiere as part of the Abu Dhabi Festival Spiritual Music Series, performing a moving programme of sacred chanting that blends classical Arabic poetry with devotional melodies in celebration of Ramadan.

DECEMBER



H.E. Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo is appointed Advisor to His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

NOVEMBER



Art @ Embassies travels to the US with the *Music is the Bridge* panel discussions – held in partnership with the UAE Embassy in Washington, D.C. and the UAE Permanent Mission to the UN in New York – bringing together artists and cultural leaders to explore the role of the arts and music in connecting people across boundaries.

APRIL



Organised by ADMAF in partnership with the Embassy of Japan in the UAE, Festival in the Park returns as one of Abu Dhabi's largest community outdoor festivals, bringing families and audiences of all ages together for a vibrant programme of performances, workshops and cultural experiences celebrating Japanese art and culture.

OCTOBER



As part of ADMAF's Young Filmmakers' Circle in partnership with Institut français des Émirats arabes unis, Emirati filmmaker Sarra Alshehhi begins a three-month residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris.

MAY



H.E. Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence and Patron of ADMAF; H.E. Noura bint Mohammed Al Kaabi, Minister of State; H.E. Sheikh Salem bin Khalid Al Qassimi, Minister of Culture; Ms. Chae-Sook Ma, Deputy Mayor for Cultural Affairs, Seoul Metropolitan Government; and H.E. Yoo Jeh Seung, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, inaugurate *Layered Medium: We Are in Open Circuits* at Manarat Al Saadiyat, the first major outcome of ADMAF's partnership with the Seoul Museum of Art, introducing contemporary Korean art to Abu Dhabi audiences.

AUGUST – SEPTEMBER



At Expo 2025 Osaka, Emirati artist Moza Almatrooshi leads workshops at the UAE Pavilion, while Gulf Capital – ADMAF Creativity Award 2024 winner Dana Al Katheeri gives a special UAE Day piano performance. Presented by ADMAF in collaboration with the UAE Pavilion, the Guest Artist Programme supports UAE artists abroad.

JUNE



Co-produced by Abu Dhabi Festival and the Peace and Prosperity Trust, a gala concert at Kensington Palace brings together Emirati and international artists for the world premiere of *Ruins of Time*, commissioned by ADMAF from Emirati composer Ihab Darwish, with performances by Fatima Al Hashimi and Ahmed Al Hosani.

JULY



ADMAF and France's Manufactures nationales sign a landmark Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen artistic and cultural dialogue through collaboration, innovation and educational initiatives, supporting emerging talent, advancing expertise among established artists and preserving and evolving heritage crafts.

MAKING AN IMPACT

ADMAF REPORT

 **ROI**
ADVERTISING VALUE
EQUIVALENCY-BASED **480%**

 **AUDIENCE** **90.8K**

 **ARTISTS ENGAGED** **1,000** BENEFITED THROUGH **22** PROGRAMMES

 **EMIRATI ARTISTS** **300**

 LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL **MOU SIGNINGS** **9**

 **EDUCATIONAL EVENTS** **110+**

 LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL **TALKS** **18**

- WE CREATE** ► INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTIONS **9**
- WE LAUNCH** ► WORLD PREMIERES **5**
- WE INSPIRE** ► YOUNG MINDS INSPIRED **9K**
- WE CONNECT** ► INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS **16**
- WE EXPORT** ► ARTISTS ABROAD **650**

ABU DHABI FESTIVAL HEADLINE PROGRAMME

 **ARTISTS ENGAGED** **350**

 **AUDIENCE** **16K**

 **SOCIAL MEDIA REACH** **2.7M**

 **VIEWS** **2.4M**

 **ENGAGEMENTS** **50.5K**

 **PR VALUE** **₹ 16.1M**

 **EDUCATIONAL EVENTS** **50+**

 **ABU DHABI FESTIVAL AWARDS** **5**

ABU DHABI FESTIVAL ABROAD

 **ROI**
ADVERTISING VALUE EQUIVALENCY-BASED **1,456%**

 **AUDIENCE** **58K**

 **EMIRATI BENEFICIARIES** **6**

 **ARTISTS** **650**

 **INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS** **16**

 **PERFORMANCES & EXHIBITIONS** **15**

 **INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES** **6**

 **TRAINING & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT** **330** DAYS

 **SOCIAL MEDIA REACH** **5.15M**

 **PR VALUE** **₹ 48.81M**

ADMAF MARKETING

Our marketing plays an important role in highlighting the significance of ADMAF's activities and developing audiences for them.

Key statistics showcasing ADMAF's milestones and achievements in 2025.

 **VIDEO VIEWS** **18.4M**

 **INTERACTIONS** **353K**

 **TOTAL REACH** **11M**

 **SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS** **13.9M**

 **PIECES OF COVERAGE** **1,750**

 **PR ADVERTISING VALUE EQUIVALENCY** **₹ 25.57M**

 **PR VALUE** **₹ 89.48M**

FOUNDING HONORARY PATRON
H.H. SHEIKH ABDULLAH BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN
UAE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

PATRON
H.H. SHEIKHA SHAMSA BINT HAMDAN BIN MOHAMMED
AL NAHYAN

The 22nd edition of Abu Dhabi Festival returned under the inspiring theme 'Abu Dhabi – A World of Harmony', marking 50 years of cultural exchange between the UAE and Japan, our 2025 Country of Honour.

Bringing together exceptional global talents, the Festival celebrated Japan's rich artistic heritage through a spectacular lineup of performances, including symphonic masterpieces and the powerful rhythms of traditional Japanese drumming.

Connecting the world to Abu Dhabi and Abu Dhabi to the world, 2025's spectacular edition brought beauty and joy to audiences at home and abroad through innovative new productions, commissions and world premieres. The Festival's extraordinary 22nd edition was where creative excellence was celebrated, ideas were born and dreams were realised.

“Abu Dhabi Festival, now 21 years old, is a jewel for the capital of the United Arab Emirates. In 2024 it snared the talents of South Korean pianist Yunchan Lim and the Labèque Sisters. Thanks to Founder and Artistic Director H.E. Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo, the Festival has a cosmopolitan approach. Its forays over recent years have extended to performances and collaborations across the globe, including the Opéra national de Paris.”

— **Classical Voice North America**

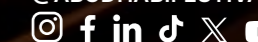
ABU DHABI FESTIVAL '25

ABU DHABI - A WORLD OF HARMONY

FOLLOW US



@ABUDHABIFESTIVAL



The phenomenally thrilling talent, pianist Yunchan Lim performs JS Bach's *Goldberg Variations* at Abu Dhabi Festival 2025.



ORCHESTRA

NEW JAPAN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Presented by Abu Dhabi Festival
Yutaka Sado (conductor) | Kyohei Sorita (piano) | Jonathan Tetelman (tenor)
Emirates Palace Mandarin Oriental
Arab world premiere

7 February



PERFORMING ARTS

KODO

Presented by Abu Dhabi Festival
The Red Theater, The Arts Center
NYU Abu Dhabi
Arab world premiere

8 - 9 April



ORCHESTRA

NEW JAPAN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Presented by Abu Dhabi Festival
Yutaka Sado (conductor) | Kyohei Sorita (piano)
Emirates Palace Mandarin Oriental
Arab world premiere

8 February



PIANO

YUNCHAN LIM

Presented by Abu Dhabi Festival
The Red Theater, The Arts Center
NYU Abu Dhabi
Arab world premiere

11 April

"Yunchan Lim plays the best Goldberg Variations at the Abu Dhabi Festival. The South Korean pianist causes a sensation in his debut in the Arab world with an admirable 'Bach' in an edition dedicated to the challenge of Eurocentric paradigms in classical music by East Asian artists."
— El Pais (Spain)



MARIMBA

KUNIKO KATO

Presented by Abu Dhabi Festival
The Blue Hall, The Arts Center
NYU Abu Dhabi
Arab world premiere

14 April



ORCHESTRA

KOREAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF ARTS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Presented by Abu Dhabi Festival
Chi-Yong Chung (conductor) | Jaewon Wee (violin) | Sang Hyeok Park (cello)
The Red Theater, The Arts Center
NYU Abu Dhabi
Arab world premiere

18 April



ENERGY PARTNER

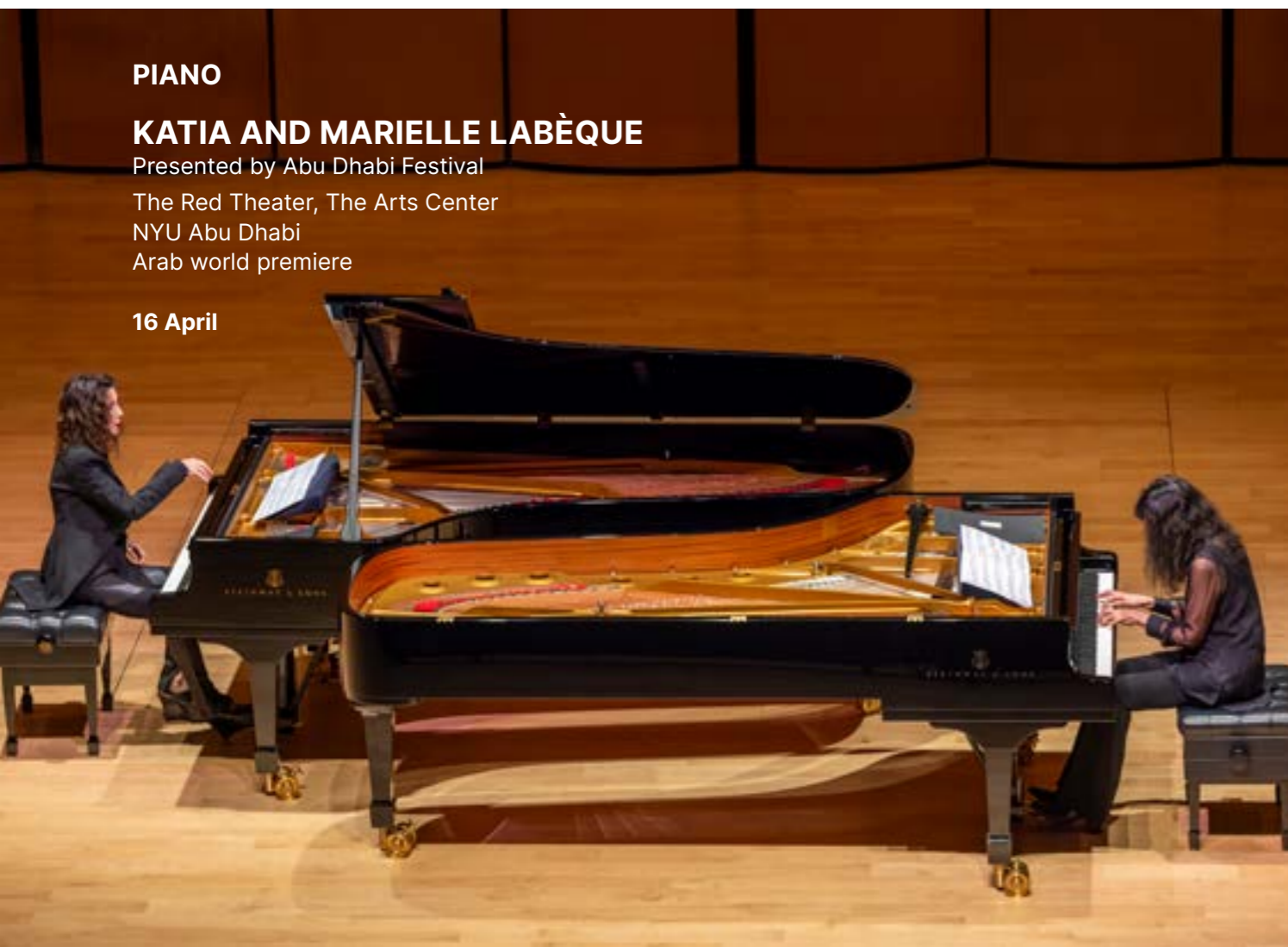


PIANO

KATIA AND MARIELLE LABÈQUE

Presented by Abu Dhabi Festival
The Red Theater, The Arts Center
NYU Abu Dhabi
Arab world premiere

16 April

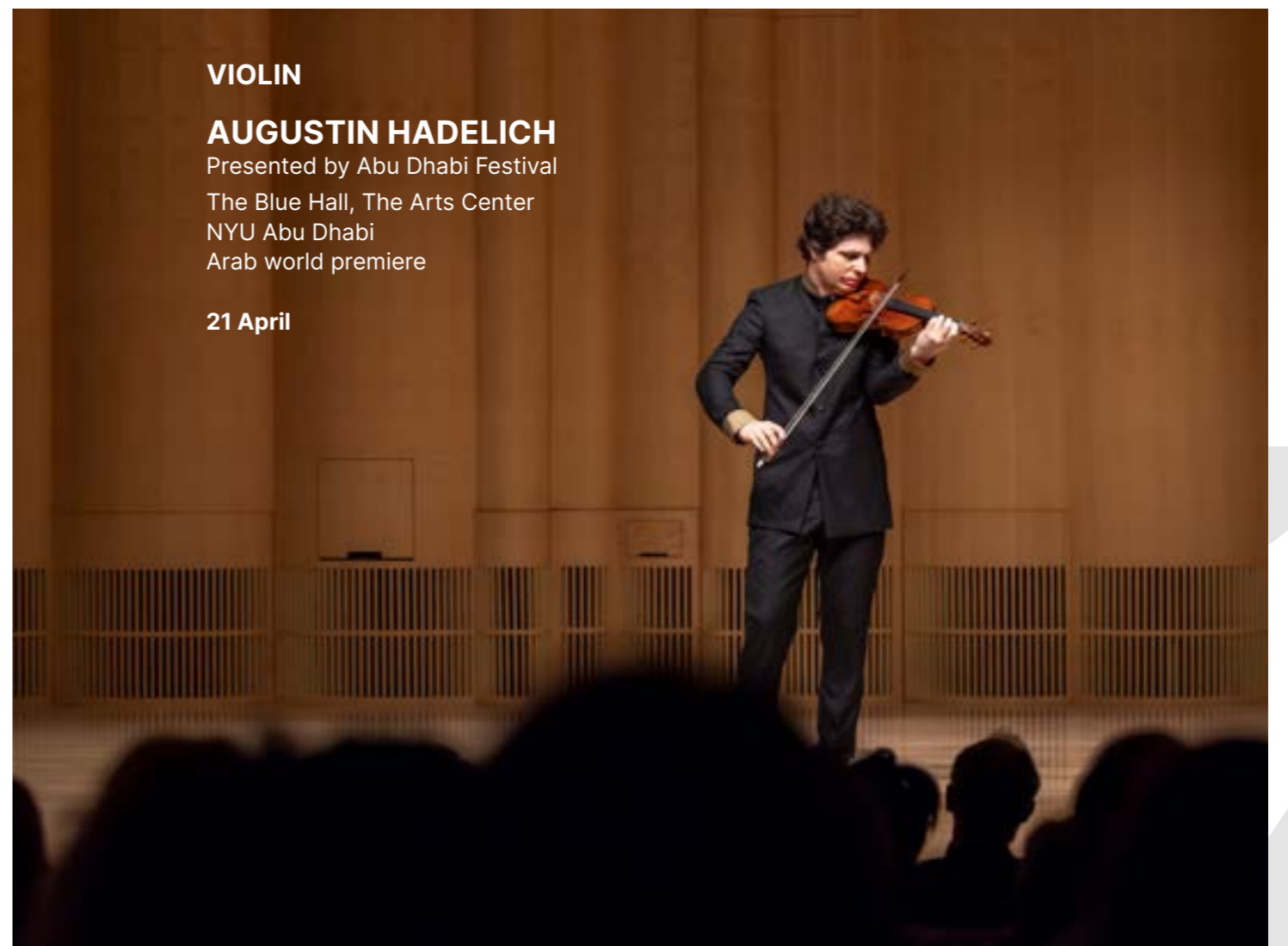


VIOLIN

AUGUSTIN HADELICH

Presented by Abu Dhabi Festival
The Blue Hall, The Arts Center
NYU Abu Dhabi
Arab world premiere

21 April



BALLET

ALL-STAR BALLET GALA

Presented by Abu Dhabi Festival
The Red Theater, The Arts Center
NYU Abu Dhabi
Arab world premiere

22 April



TRUMPET

RILEY MULHERKAR

The Black Box, The Arts Center
NYU Abu Dhabi
Arab world premiere

29 April



CLASSICAL MUSIC

YAMEN SAADI (VIOLIN) | SARA FERRÁNDEZ (VIOLA)
KIAN SOLTANI (CELLO) | PABLO FERRÁNDEZ (CELLO)

Presented by Abu Dhabi Festival
The Red Theater, The Arts Center
NYU Abu Dhabi
Arab world premiere

26 April



“With more than two decades of history, the Festival - already well established in the region - continues to strengthen its presence on the international stage. It aspires to stand alongside leading institutions such as the Opéra Garnier in Paris, while reinforcing national efforts in the arts to position the United Arab Emirates as a global cultural capital.”

— Folha de S.Paulo (Brazil)

ABU DHABI FESTIVAL ABROAD

WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE A LASTING IMPRESSION BEYOND THE UAE

Abu Dhabi Festival has forged enduring partnerships with leading global organisations and entities, creating a conducive environment for cross-cultural dialogue and exchange.

Throughout 2025, the Festival continued its contribution to advancing Abu Dhabi's position as a global hub for creativity and culture by co-commissioning, co-producing and supporting artists and their performances abroad.

“ This multidisciplinary event (Abu Dhabi Festival), which attracts 20,000 attendees each year from around 50 countries, serves as a major driver of tourism appeal, generating €61.6m in economic impact according to the Nielsen Institute, and acts as a powerful soft power instrument with global reach through its co-productions. ”

— **Les Echos**

ABU DHABI FESTIVAL '25

ABU DHABI - A WORLD OF HARMONY

Pictures at an Exhibition: The Paintings of Bob Peak, conducted by Ransom Wilson with the Redlands Symphony Orchestra, was presented at the Fireworks Finale of the 102nd Redlands Bowl Summer Music Festival on 15 August in California, as part of the Abu Dhabi Festival Abroad programme.

CONCERT

A TRIBUTE TO OUM KALTHOUM

FARAJ ABYAD

Co-produced by Abu Dhabi Festival
NYPL Lincoln Center Plaza

8 January



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CONCERT

FARAJ ABYAD

Co-commissioned by Abu Dhabi Festival
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

15 May



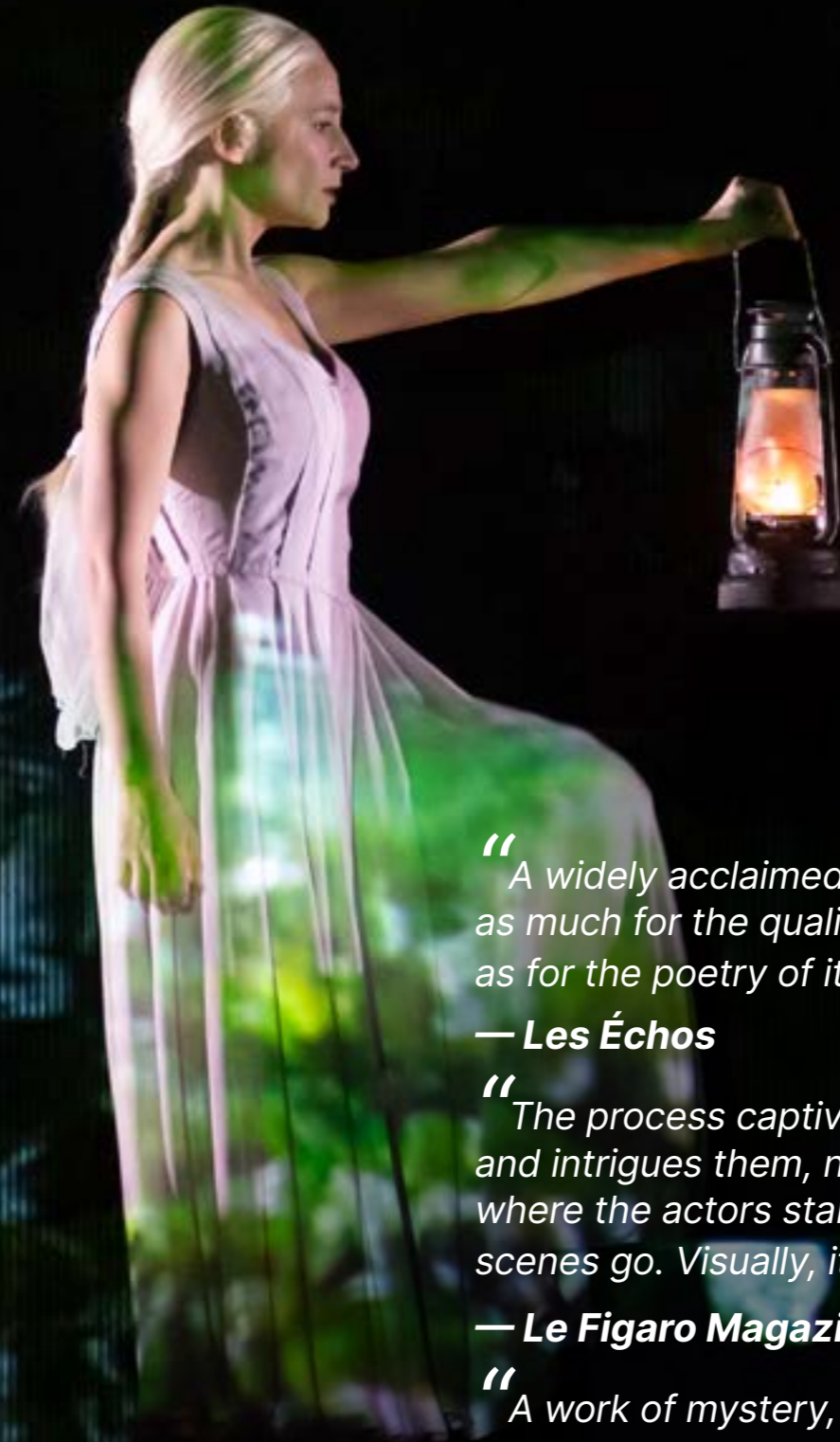
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OPERA

PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE

Co-produced by Abu Dhabi Festival
Opéra national de Paris
Directed by Wajdi Mouawad
Opéra Bastille, Paris

28 February - 27 March



FRANCE

“A widely acclaimed version, praised as much for the quality of its performers as for the poetry of its staging.”

— Les Échos

“The process captivates the audience and intrigues them, never quite certain where the actors stand or how deep the scenes go. Visually, it is superb.”

— Le Figaro Magazine

“A work of mystery, poetry, and the supernatural.”

— La Croix

CONCERT

CONCERT AT KENSINGTON PALACE WITH EMIRATI ARTISTS

Co-produced by Abu Dhabi Festival in collaboration with the Peace and Prosperity Trust
Featuring Ihab Darwish, Fatima Al Hashimi and Ahmed Al Housani
Kensington Palace, London

6 June

UNITED KINGDOM



ORCHESTRA

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION: THE PAINTINGS OF BOB PEAK

Co-produced by Abu Dhabi Festival and Robert Townson
Featuring Emirati composer Ihab Darwish
Redlands Bowl Summer Music Festival

15 August

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



OPERA

BORIS GODUNOV BY MODEST MUSSORGSKY

Co-produced by Abu Dhabi Festival, Opéra de Lyon,
La Monnaie de Brussels and Staatsoper Hannover
Opéra de Lyon

13 October - 25 October

FRANCE



“The vision presented by the Opéra de Lyon has many strengths, striking a chord with a captivated audience.”

— Le Figaro

CONCERT

**FARAJ ABYAD – ALBUM RELEASE CONCERT:
THE SUN OF MY EXISTENCE**

Presented by Abu Dhabi Festival

The Peter Jay Sharp Theatre at Symphony Space, New York

11 November



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ORCHESTRA

REINA SOFÍA SCHOOL ORCHESTRA

Presented by Reina Sofia School of Music in collaboration with Abu Dhabi Festival

Featuring Emirati cellist Elham Al Marzooqi

Carnegie Hall, New York

13 November



“A classical concert that pushed beyond the constraints of classicism, culminating in a zarzuela that delighted an enraptured audience, who rose to their feet for five minutes of sustained applause in a packed Stern Auditorium.”

— El Mundo

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CONCERT

UN CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

Presented by Abu Dhabi Festival

Carnegie Hall, New York

18 December



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ABU DHABI FESTIVAL AWARD

Inaugurated in 2012 and presented in association with Chopard, the prestigious Abu Dhabi Festival Award is annually bestowed upon individuals for outstanding lifetime contributions to arts and culture.

The coveted accolade has become the benchmark of cultural excellence, recognising master artists from around the world for their laudable work fostering cultural diplomacy and dialogue.

PRESENTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH *Chopard*



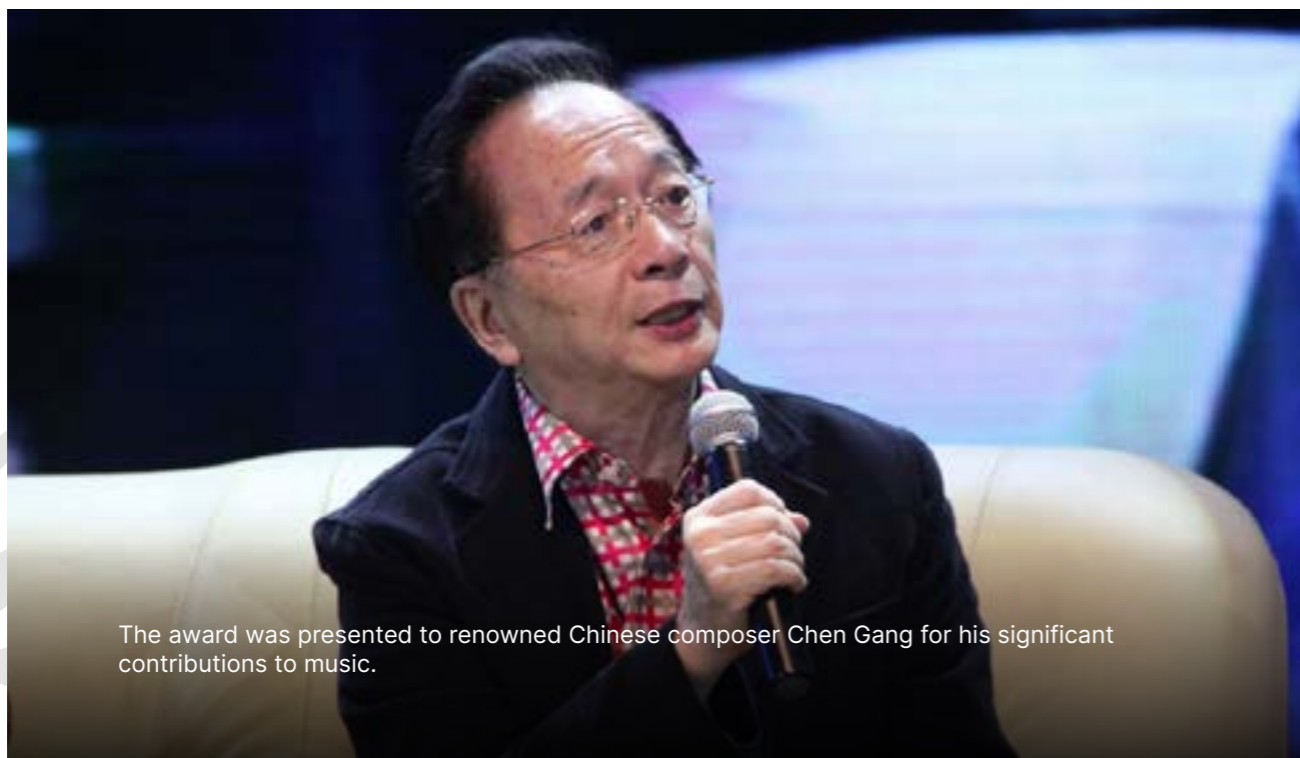
Japan's commissioner for Cultural Affairs and world-renowned composer and producer Shunichi Tokura was honoured for his immense contributions to the global music scene.



Abu Dhabi Festival honoured visionary architect Riken Yamamoto for his groundbreaking contributions to architecture, sustainability and community regeneration.



The prestigious award was posthumously awarded to the late poet, playwright and thinker Mansour Rahbani in recognition of his enduring influence and his contribution to Lebanese musical theatre and song through the works of the Rahbani Brothers.



The award was presented to renowned Chinese composer Chen Gang for his significant contributions to music.



South Korean contemporary artist Lee Bul was recognised for her profound impact on contemporary visual art and her influential role in shaping artistic discourse regionally and globally.

VISUAL ARTS

In 2025, ADMAF continued to celebrate the dynamic visual arts landscape in the UAE, showcasing the transformative power of creativity in shaping cultural dialogue. Through innovative exhibitions, collaborations and cultural programmes ADMAF empowers emerging and established artists to thrive, further strengthening the region's position as a hub for artistic excellence, creativity and innovation.



The National Multiple Sclerosis Society presented *Evident Presence: A Community of Care*, 2025, at ADMAF's Community Partners exhibition 'Mutual Systems', at Abu Dhabi Art 2025.

ADMAF X SEMA HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP

The institutional partnership between ADMAF and the Seoul Museum of Art (SeMA) is underpinned by a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in May 2024. These collaborative projects between two institutions aimed to foster transnational discourse connecting Korea and the United Arab Emirates, and to deepen cultural understanding through the active exchange of artists, key collections and curatorial visions.

"Inside Manarat Al Saadiyat, the island's coolest art space, the mind-bending exhibition Layered Medium: We Are in Open Circuits is a full-on conceptual voyage through Korea's artistic evolution, told by the very creators who pushed the boundaries of what art can be."

— **Scene Traveller**



LAYERED MEDIUM: WE ARE IN OPEN CIRCUITS

16 May – 30 June

The first major outcome of this significant partnership was *Layered Medium: We Are in Open Circuits*, a milestone exhibition which introduced contemporary Korean art in Abu Dhabi, presented at Manarat Al Saadiyat in Spring 2025.



"Asserts a new model of cross-cultural curatorial practice that transcends traditional geographic or institutional power centres."

— **STIRworld**

"Goes beyond one-directional soft-power branding to establish a reciprocal platform for intercultural dialogue."

— **Observer**



18K
VISITORS

48
ARTWORKS

29
ARTISTS

142.4M
PR REACH

10K+
SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

₹9.5M
PR VALUE

5.1M
AD REACH

LAYERED DIALOGUES PUBLIC PROGRAMME

The pivotal exhibition was accompanied by a series of inspiring panel discussions as part of the wider public programme.



SESSION 1

LAYERED MEDIUM: WE ARE IN OPEN CIRCUITS

The curatorial discussion brought together co-curators Kyung-hwan Yeo and Maya El Khalil in conversation with participating artists Byungjun Kwon and Goen Choi.



SESSION 2

EXHIBITION DESIGN AS MEDIUM

Designers Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin, co-founders of the design studio Formafantasma, joined co-curators Kyung-hwan Yeo and Maya El Khalil to discuss how exhibition design shapes the viewer's encounter with art.



SESSION 4

BODY AS MEDIUM INTERFACES: SKIN/SCREEN

In collaboration with the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI), the panel discussion brought together Professor Elizabeth Churchill of MBZUAI, and writer Dana Dawud, moderated by writer and editor Saira Ansari, to explore how interfaces – from skin to canvas to screen – mediate sensory experiences and shape our relation to the world.



SESSION 6

SPACE AS MEDIUM – IN/VISIBLE CITY

Presented in collaboration with the Korean Cultural Center in the UAE, the session featured artist Minouk Lim and architect Wael Al Awar of Wai Wai, moderated by Salem AlSuwaidi of SWALIF, to explore the visible and hidden infrastructures that shape urban life and social relations.

SESSION 5

SOCIETY AS MEDIUM – OBJECTS AS ANCHORS: MATERIAL, NARRATIVE AND MEMORY

Presented in collaboration with the Korean Cultural Center in the UAE, the panel discussion brought together artists Sojung Jun and Rand Abdul Jabbar, moderated by Tina Sherwell of NYU Abu Dhabi, to explore how objects anchor memory, identity and narrative across time and place.

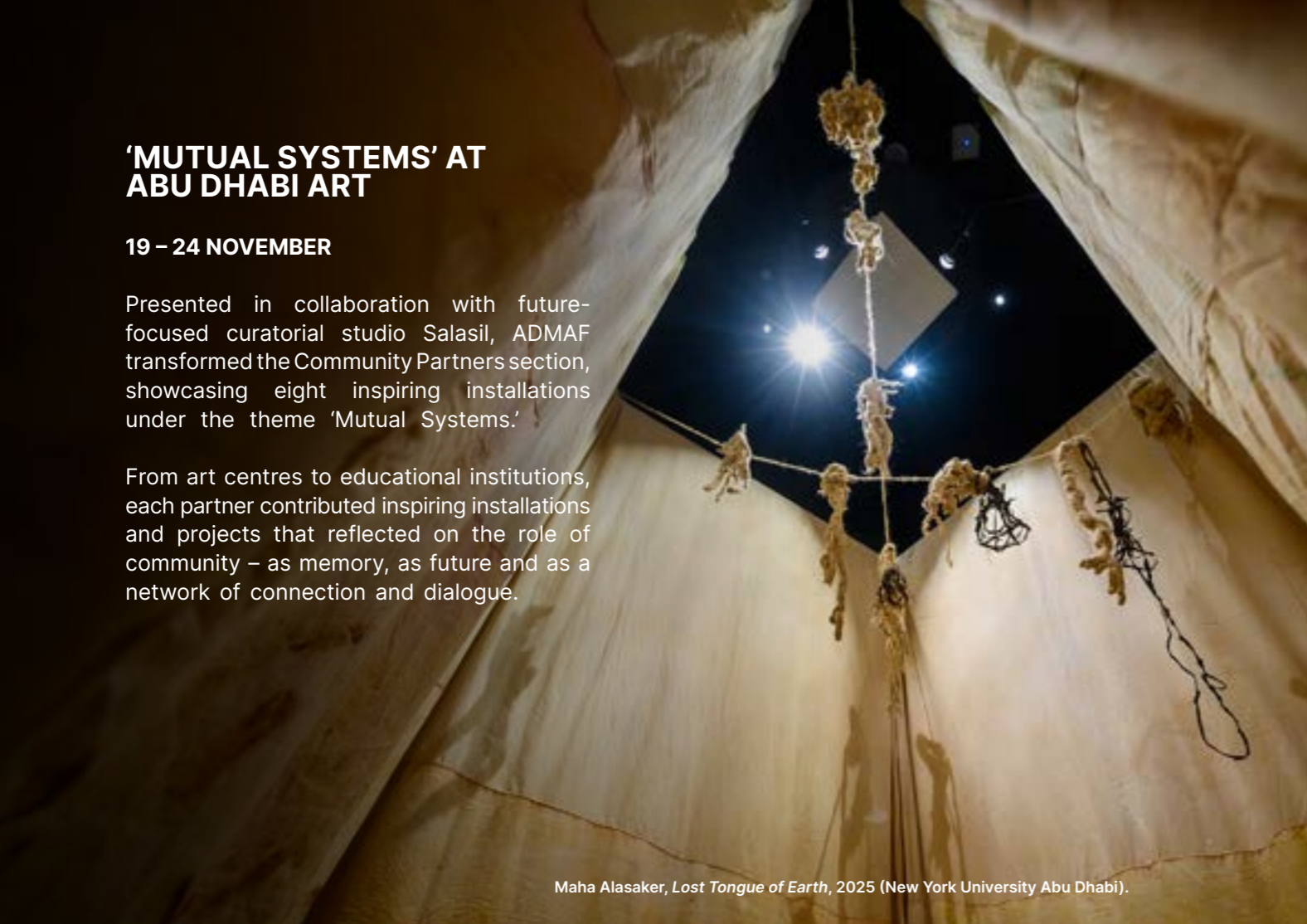


'MUTUAL SYSTEMS' AT ABU DHABI ART

19 – 24 NOVEMBER

Presented in collaboration with future-focused curatorial studio Salasil, ADMAF transformed the Community Partners section, showcasing eight inspiring installations under the theme 'Mutual Systems.'

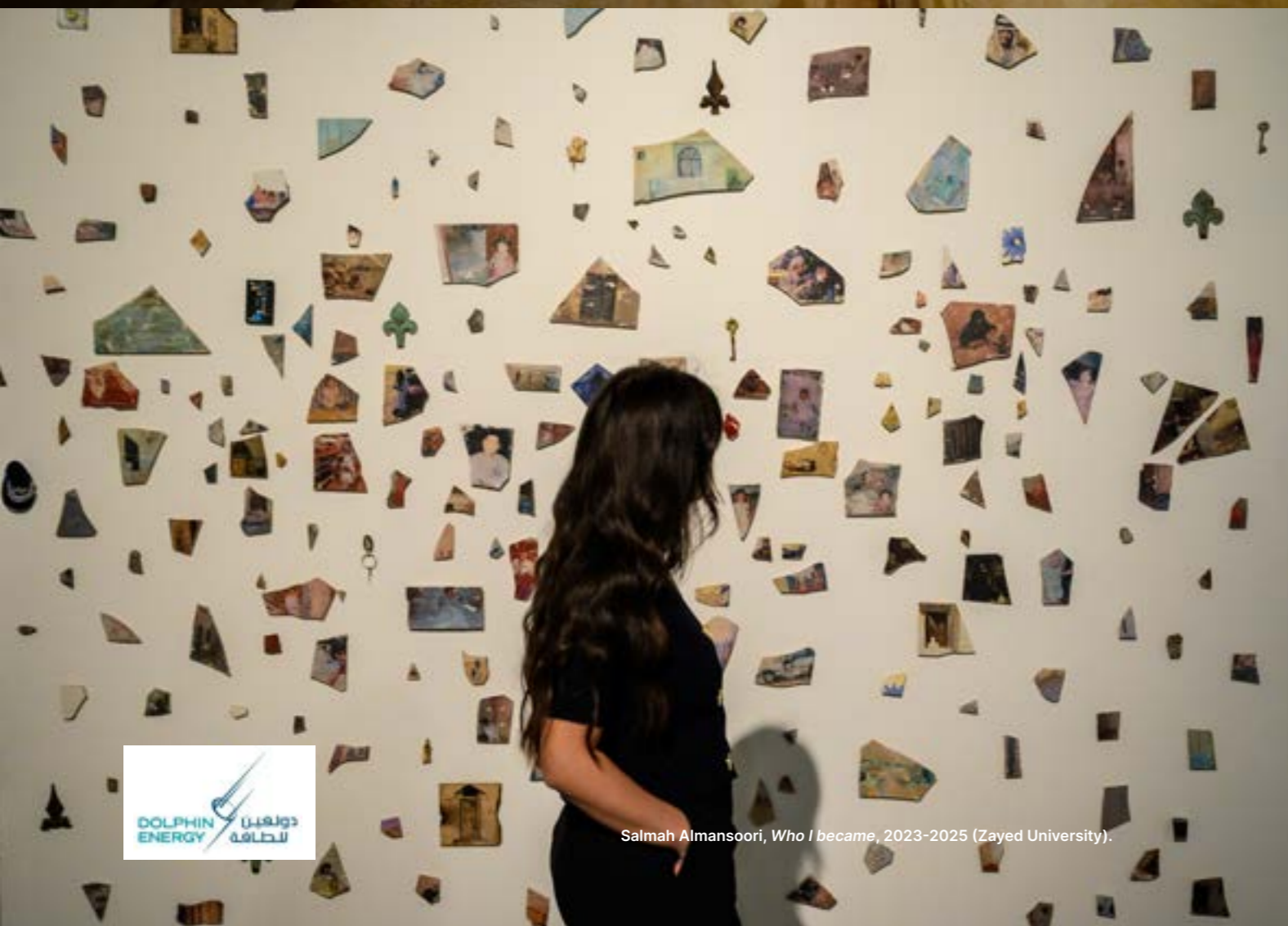
From art centres to educational institutions, each partner contributed inspiring installations and projects that reflected on the role of community – as memory, as future and as a network of connection and dialogue.



Maha Alasaker, *Lost Tongue of Earth*, 2025 (New York University Abu Dhabi).



Moustafa Zakaria, *Mihrab*, 2025 (House of Artisans).



Salmah Almansoori, *Who I became*, 2023-2025 (Zayed University).



RIWAQ AL FIKR - ADMAF TALKS

CHRISTO AND JEANNE-CLAUDE IN THE UAE: FRIENDSHIP AND LEGACY

Presented in partnership with New York University Abu Dhabi, the accompanying panel discussion brought together Ingrid Jochheim, private collector of Christo's work; Vladimir Yavachef, Christo's Director of Operations; Emily Doherty, Director of the Christo and Jeanne-Claude Award and Fabio Piano, Interim Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of NYU Abu Dhabi, as moderator. Together, they explored Christo and Jeanne-Claude's forty-year connection with the UAE, offering an intimate glimpse into Christo's life, ideas and enduring global legacy, including the Christo and Jeanne-Claude Award, which continues to inspire future generations of artists.



SUPPORT FOR UAE ARTISTS ABROAD AT EXPO 2025 OSAKA

ADMAF and the UAE Pavilion's cultural programme at Expo 2025 Osaka welcomed visitors from around the world into a space of dialogue and discovery, sharing the UAE's artistic voice and showcasing Abu Dhabi's cultural vision on the global stage.



GUEST ARTIST PROGRAMME

ADMAF and the UAE Pavilion jointly presented captivating cultural initiatives throughout Expo 2025 Osaka.

In April, a cross-cultural calligraphy performance took place at the Pavilion, featuring master calligraphers Mohamed Mandi from the UAE and Juichi Yoshikawa from Japan. Together, they produced a monumental artwork blending Arabic and Japanese calligraphy, an inspiring testament to the harmony of two artistic traditions. In August, ADMAF and NYU Abu Dhabi's Christo and Jeanne-Claude Award 2024 winners, Sara Farha and Khaled Shalkha – who created the winning project Datecrete Bee Hotel, integrating innovative material science with ecological awareness – led a series of innovation-focused workshops, promoting creative exchange and artistic experimentation.

Another highlight is the 'Guest Artists Takeover', a rolling residency in which four Emirati artists Asma Al Remeithi, Aisha (Yoshi) Al Ali, Sarah Al Mehairi and Moza Almatrooshi transformed the Pavilion's creative space into a living studio, each for a dedicated week over the course of the Expo. Through interactive workshops and live demonstrations, the artists engage with international audiences, offering insight into their practices while reflecting on broader cultural narratives that shape contemporary Emirati identity.



ADMAF ART COLLECTION

Since its inception, ADMAF has worked closely with artists and institutions across the UAE's visual arts sector, cultivating a collection that reflects the diversity of contemporary Emirati and Arab artistic expression.

Comprising both acquisitions and donations, the ADMAF Art Collection emphasises Emirati artistic practice and highlights creative expression from across the Arab world. Through displays in its offices, as well as exhibitions and loans, ADMAF promotes the achievements of each artist – engaging, educating and informing the public about the region's art scene.

In 2025, the artwork *Autobiography* (03-07) by Ebtisam Abdulaziz was loaned to Hayy Jameel Jeddah for its *Redrawing the Boundaries* exhibition. The exhibition, curated by Dr. Aisha Stoby, explored the evolution of modern art in the Gulf region.



Ebtisam Abdulaziz, *Autobiography* (03-07).

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

Nurturing the artistic potential of youth and fostering creativity in the UAE.

Supporting the next generation of cultural leaders, ADMAF prioritises accessibility for all with a diverse range of programmes that embed creativity at the heart of the nation for wellbeing, development and cultural excellence.



Festival in the Park returned to Umm Al Emarat Park as part of Abu Dhabi Festival 2025, celebrating its Country of Honour: Japan.

Under the guidance and support of His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chairman of the Education, Human Development and Community Development Council, we enriched school curricula in 2025 by 100% through introducing powerful music and arts programmes, nurturing a generation defined by creativity, excellence and progressive thinking.

9K
PARTICIPANTS
50
SCHOOLS & UNIVERSITIES IN ABU DHABI AND AL AIN

**YOUNG MEDIA LEADERS
JANUARY**

In collaboration with IMI Media Academy, ADMAF delivers a six-session training programme for 22 students, complemented by work experience at Abu Dhabi Festival. Led by industry experts and guest speakers, it builds practical skills in podcasting, journalism, AI in media and news reporting, providing hands-on experience and insight into the evolving media landscape.



**RIWAQ AL FIKR – RIKEN YAMOMOTO
FEBRUARY**

In partnership with The Institute at NYU Abu Dhabi, ADMAF hosts Pritzker Prize laureate Riken Yamamoto for a talk on architecture's role in shaping communities. The programme sits alongside a wider series of talks, including sessions on AI and human creativity, intercultural exchange between the UAE and Japan and tributes to leading figures in music and the arts.

**RIWAQ AL ADAB WAL KITAB – CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL DAYS
MARCH**

ADMAF presents the 10th edition of *Riwaq Al Adab Wal Kitab* at the 34th Abu Dhabi International Book Fair, launching 12 publications featuring 40 writers from the UAE and Arab world. In March, a poetry recital marks World Poetry Day, while the programme also includes International Mother Language Day and Arabic Language Day.



**FESTIVAL IN THE PARK & FESTIVAL EDUCATION OUTREACH
APRIL**

Organised by ADMAF in partnership with the Embassy of Japan in the UAE, Festival in the Park returns to Umm Al Emarat Park as one of Abu Dhabi's largest community outdoor festivals, celebrating Japanese art and culture.

Festival-related education programming extends this engagement through open rehearsals, masterclasses, back to school, youth matinée, my first concert, and Emiratis & friends on stage.

**NURTURING PEOPLE OF DETERMINATION
MAY**

At Abu Dhabi University, the 9th Art for Autism Competition sees students of determination present their artworks, with winners announced during a live awards ceremony.

In collaboration with Apple, an in-store talk at the Apple Store, Galleria Mall, brings together Stories of Inclusion participants Noura Al Blooki and Fatma Al Jassim.



**LAYERED MEDIUM: WE ARE IN OPEN CIRCUITS
MAY-JUNE**

A cohort of 48 interns join *Layered Medium: We Are in Open Circuits*, gaining hands-on experience within one of the region's most significant contemporary art exhibitions.

48
INTERNS
420+
STUDENT VISITS
46
TOURS
16
SCHOOLS & UNIVERSITIES

6
ADMAF AWARDS
3
SUPPORT SCHEMES
6
TALKS
12
PUBLICATIONS
3
MOU SIGNINGS

**MUSIC IN HOSPITALS
JULY**

ADMAF presents four performances across Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, Tawam Hospital and Salma Rehabilitation Hospital, bringing live music to patients, medical staff and families. Featuring Emirati musicians including Dr. Noura Al Mazrouei, Shamsa Aljasmí and students from the British School of Khubairat (BSAK), the programme reflects ADMAF's commitment to using the therapeutic power of music in healthcare settings.



**GUEST ARTIST PROGRAMME AT EXPO 2025 OSAKA
AUGUST**

At Expo 2025 Osaka, Gulf Capital – ADMAF Creativity Award 2024 winner Dana Al Katheeri gives a special UAE Day piano performance, while the Christo and Jeanne-Claude Award 2024 winners, Sara Farha and Khaled Shalkha, lead a series of innovation-focused workshops at the UAE Pavilion.

"The journey has been transformative because it changed everything. It shaped who I am as an artist and as a person."

— Dana Al Katheeri

**ADMAF INSPIRATION RESIDENCY FOR CRAFTSMANSHIP
SEPTEMBER**

As the winner of the first edition, Emirati graphic designer and artist Sara Alkhayyal is immersed in French craftsmanship at Manufactures nationales - Sèvres & Mobilier national, working alongside master artisans in wool dyeing, cabinetmaking, tapestry, restoration and textile creation.

"My first residency was one to remember for life. I got to see so much and learn first-hand from the best of the best.... This residency was so much more than I could have expected – even months later, I look back and realise how much it gave me."

— Sara Alkhayyal



**YOUNG FILMMAKERS' CIRCLE
OCTOBER**

As part of ADMAF's Young Filmmakers' Circle in partnership with Institut français des Émirats arabes unis, Emirati filmmaker Sarra Alshehhi begins a three-month residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, building on a year of international opportunities for participants including Ahmad Alariqi and Meera Al Jasasi.

"I was in an environment surrounded by art, inspiration and artists, and I was able to visit exhibitions and museums that inspired me for other projects. It may begin with one specific goal, but it opens up to more goals and even bigger ambitions."

— Sarra Alshehhi

**UAE THEATRE CIRCLE
NOVEMBER**

Emirati theatre practitioner Reem Al Menhali delivers a series of workshops on making an adapted play with high school students, culminating in a performed reading. Earlier in the year, *The Jungle Book* by Shakespeare 4 Kidz is staged across two public and charter schools, engaging 1,600 students through an interactive musical production.



**ADMAF AND MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SIGN LANDMARK MOU
DECEMBER**

ADMAF signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Education, marking a shared commitment to advancing arts and music education as a core component of student development in the UAE.

Empowering emerging artists and celebrating outstanding creativity among the nation's youth.

ADMAF celebrates exceptional creativity by students and recent graduates across art disciplines, providing a platform to showcase talent and gain recognition. By investing in their professional development, ADMAF aims to empower young artists and cultivate a vibrant and thriving cultural landscape.

GULF CAPITAL – ADMAF CREATIVITY AWARD



Emirati actress Budoor Yousif Alnowais was the 2025 award winner for her play *Shaghaf*, a dramatic work on identity and belonging.



GULF CAPITAL – ADMAF VISUAL ARTS AWARD



Filmmaker Abdulrahman Al Madani received the coveted award in 2025 for his film *Oug*, a short drama exploring family expectations and parenthood.



TOTALENERGIES SUSTAINABILITY DESIGN AWARD



The 2025 award was given to architecture student Roudha Alzaabi for her climate-responsive museum project *Desert Crystal*.

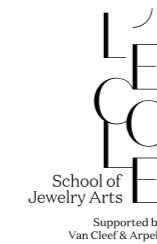


ADMAF JEWELRY DESIGN AWARD

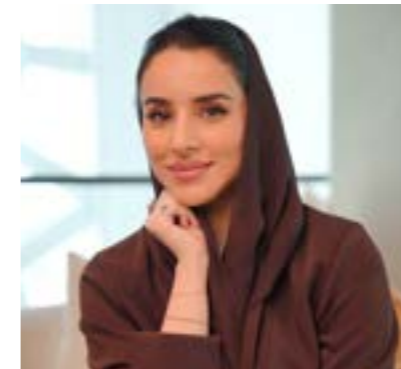
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH L'ÉCOLE, SCHOOL OF JEWELRY ARTS
SUPPORTED BY VAN CLEEF & ARPELS



Emirati designer Sara Al Noori won the fifth edition of the award with her project, *Mureyyah Abaya Clip*, winning praise for her design honouring the UAE's rich heritage. In addition to the production of the winning design, she participated in workshops at L'ÉCOLE campus in Dubai Design District and L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts in Paris.



DOLCE&GABBANA X ADMAF DESIGN AWARD



Maitha Alansari, an Emirati fashion designer, won the prestigious award for her design *A Journey Woven in Fragments*, a couture cape blending Emirati heritage and Italian artistry. She also received a six-month paid internship at Dolce&Gabbana's headquarters in Milan.

DOLCE & GABBANA

THE CHRISTO AND JEANNE-CLAUDE AWARD

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF HER HIGHNESS
SHEIKHA SHAMSA BINT HAMDAN AL NAHYAN



UAE-based Indian artist and graphic designer Hannan Arshad won the 13th edition of the award for her interactive brick installation *Safekeeping Stories*. The public work of art drew on building techniques from Mughal-era India.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude

جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي

NYU ABU DHABI

DIPLMACY AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

BUILDING BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN CULTURES AND NATIONS
THROUGH MUSIC AND THE ARTS.



South Korea's First Lady Kim Hea Kyung shakes hands with Founder of ADMAF and Founder and Artistic Director of Abu Dhabi Festival, H.E. Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS



In December 2025, H.E. Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo was appointed Advisor to His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

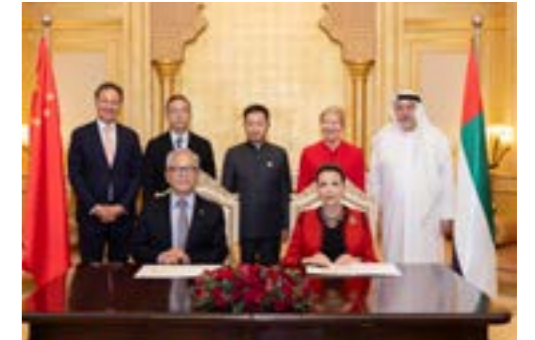


H.E. Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo was also appointed to the board of directors of the Royal Theatre of Rabat in May 2025 by H.M. King Mohammed VI of Morocco.

MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

CHINA SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

In January, ADMAF signed an MoU with China Shanghai International Arts Festival to boost cultural cooperation and understanding between the UAE and China, marking four decades of diplomatic relations between the two nations.



ARAB FUND FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

ADMAF and the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture signed an MoU in April. With this agreement, the two institutions forged a strategic partnership dedicated to advancing artistic excellence across the Arab region.

THE SULTAN BIN ALI AL OWAIS CULTURAL FOUNDATION

In a major step towards strengthening Arab intellectual and cultural exchange, ADMAF and the Sultan Bin Ali Al Owais Cultural Foundation signed an MoU during the 2025 Abu Dhabi International Book Fair in May.



SHANGHAI MAGNOLIA FOUNDATION

In July, ADMAF signed an MoU with Shanghai Magnolia Foundation to further strengthen cultural cooperation between Abu Dhabi and Shanghai.

MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

MANUFACTURES NATIONALES – SÈVRES & MOBILIER NATIONAL

ADMAF and Manufactures nationales – Sèvres & Mobilier national – operating under France's Ministry of Culture – signed an MoU, in the presence of France's Minister of Culture Rachida Dati, in July to foster deeper artistic and cultural dialogue through joint collaboration, innovation and educational initiatives.



HONG KONG BALLET

Abu Dhabi Festival signed a landmark MoU with Hong Kong Ballet in October to bring exceptional artistry to audiences from Hong Kong to Abu Dhabi and beyond.

MIRAL

In November ADMAF signed a landmark MoU with Miral, Abu Dhabi's leading leisure, tourism and lifestyle company, to advance well-being, togetherness and imagination while creating opportunities for the nation's youth.



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

In December, ADMAF signed a pivotal MoU with the Ministry of Education, marking a shared commitment to advancing arts and music education as a core component of student development in the UAE.

BASSAM FREIHA ART FOUNDATION

ADMAF and Bassam Freiha Art Foundation signed an MoU in December, marking a new chapter between two kindred cultural institutions of Abu Dhabi – shaping new cultural paths, empowering the youth and enriching the artistic soul of the nation.



ART @ EMBASSIES

Advancing cultural diplomacy through intercultural dialogue, Art @ Embassies nurtures conversation, builds bridges between nations through art and offers insight into UAE artistic expression while creating opportunities for cultural exchange.

LONDON

In partnership with the UAE Embassy in the UK, a panel discussion titled *The Music in Me: Past, Present, Future*, moderated by filmmaker Noor Kanoo, brought together Emirati artists Fatima Al Hashimi, Ahmed Al Hosani and Ihab Darwish to explore heritage, identity and innovation while highlighting the role of artists as cultural ambassadors.



OSAKA

Presented in partnership with the UAE Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka, the *Artists in Conversation* talk brought together Emirati artists Shaikha Al Ketbi and Sarah Al Mehairi with Chiaki Soma, art producer and associate professor at Tokyo University of the Arts, to explore materiality, memory and place, marking over 50 years of UAE-Japan relations.

NEW YORK

Abu Dhabi Festival, in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of the UAE to the UN, presented *Music is the Bridge* in New York in November. The special cultural diplomacy conversation, featuring Emirati cellist Elham Al Marzooqi, composer Faraj Abyad, clarinetist Kinan Azmeh and moderated by filmmaker Noor Kanoo, explored their artistic journeys and the role of music in transcending boundaries to connect people.



"Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation and Abu Dhabi Festival believed in me early, planned ahead and stood by me as an Emirati artist."

— Elham Al Marzooqi, Emirati cellist



WASHINGTON

Presented in collaboration with the UAE Embassy in Washington, a session titled *Music is the Bridge* brought together Emirati artists Elham Al Marzooqi and Faraj Abyad with Kate Seelye, VP for Arts & Culture of the Middle East Institute, to explore their journeys and discuss the role of music in bringing people together and transcending boundaries.

SEOUL

Art @ Embassies returned to Seoul with *The Art That Bonds*, a panel discussion held in collaboration with the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in the Republic of Korea, bringing together Emirati artist Moza Almatrooshi and curator Maya El Khalil, to explore how artistic practice and curatorial frameworks foster dialogue and intercultural understanding.



ADVANCING CULTURAL DIPLOMACY WORLDWIDE

Throughout 2025, H.E. Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo led a dynamic programme of international visits that strengthened ADMAF's global cultural network and deepened strategic partnerships across key cultural capitals.

During January, February and October, her engagements in France centred on Abu Dhabi Festival's co-productions of *Pelléas et Mélisande* at Opéra national de Paris alongside engagements with Manufactures nationales, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain and LA Dance Project.

In June, H.E. travelled to the UK for the gala concert at Kensington Palace, in collaboration with the Peace and Prosperity Trust, as well as a special Arts @ Embassies talk in partnership with UAE Embassy in the UK.

July included visits to Singapore and Shanghai, focusing on developing future collaborations in the visual and performing arts, engaging with the National Gallery of Singapore, Shanghai Municipality, Shanghai Power Station of Art and Shanghai Dance Theatre. In Japan, H.E. visited the UAE Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka for the Arts @ Embassies panel discussion, which brought together Emirati and Japanese artists – part of a series of ADMAF arts activities.

A landmark visit to the United States followed in November where high-level engagements with Lincoln Center, the Juilliard School of Music and the Middle East Institute explored opportunities for collaboration across education, performance and cultural exchange.

In December, H.E. engaged with senior Korean leadership in Seoul, including First Lady Kim Hea Kyung, ministers and cultural figures, during the inauguration of *Proximities*, the largest presentation of UAE contemporary art in Korea to date, while in Bahrain she delivered the 'Life and Legacy Lecture', reflecting on how her dedication has empowered communities through arts, culture and education.



H.E. Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo, Founder of ADMAF and Founder and Artistic Director of Abu Dhabi Festival, with Dr Mariko Silver, President and CEO of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.



H.E. Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo, Founder of ADMAF and Founder and Artistic Director of Abu Dhabi Festival, and H.E. Hua Yuan, Secretary General of the Shanghai Municipal Government.



Left to right: UAE Minister of Culture, H.E. Sheikh Salem bin Khalid Al Qassimi; Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Chae Hwi-young; South Korea's First Lady Kim Hea Kyung; Founder of ADMAF and Founder and Artistic Director of Abu Dhabi Festival, H.E. Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo.



Left to right: Rajai F. Khouri, Founder of the Peace and Prosperity Trust; Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester; H.E. Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo, Founder of ADMAF and Founder and Artistic Director of Abu Dhabi Festival; Birgitte, Duchess of Gloucester.

ADMAF TEAM

Michel El Gemayel Executive Director
Dr Toufic Maatouk Deputy Executive Director

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Lisa Ball-Lechgar Director of Cultural Affairs & Business Development
Nour El Hakim Executive
Elina Skudra Executive
Mohammad Lari Executive

VISUAL ARTS

Arianna Grosso Senior Manager
Hye Young Kim Executive

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY

Robin Solomon Executive Manager
Sarah Jizzini Manager
Reem Hamdan Executive

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Jean-Pierre Roupheal Head of Marketing and Communications
Karam Hoar Senior Manager
David Suaza Manager
Afshan Ahmed PR Consultant
Sameh Kaawach Content Manager
Tawfik Alsayed Graphic Designer
Tara Thorpe Editor (English)
Suleikha Omar Editor (English)
Luc Briand Business Development and Sponsorship Executive
Maryam Deeb Marketing Executive
Neha Gupta Social Media Executive
Bachar Kaawach Executive
Divyashree Shukla Marketing Specialist

PRODUCTION

Ahmed Nabelsi Executive Manager
Juliet Brown Executive Manager
Zeina Jomaa Production Manager
Grace Monera Assistant Production Manager
Christine Carillo Senior Executive
Mohamed Al Abd Events Executive
Alrose Tugadi Production Coordinator

ADMINISTRATION

Hanan Wahba Manager
ALADALA Legal Consultancy Bureau L.L.C

FOUNDER'S OFFICE

Souad El Berjaoui Manager
Juliana Habib Assistant
Jacqueline Bibares Coordinator

FINANCE

Hesham Azad Chief Financial Officer
Amr Arafa Chief Financial Officer
Nart Ali Senior Manager
Shahul Hameed Manager
Bernafrances Rivera Accountant