



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Appoints Inaugural Museum Director

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates – 4 August 2026: The Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi today announced the appointment of Dr. Valerie Hillings as the inaugural Director of Guggenheim Abu Dhabi.

Guggenheim Abu Dhabi is a cornerstone of Saadiyat Cultural District, one of the world's greatest concentrations of cultural institutions. Alongside Louvre Abu Dhabi, Zayed National Museum, Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi and teamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi, it affirms Abu Dhabi's cultural vision.

As Director, Dr. Hillings will bring this vision to life leading the museum's strategic direction, overseeing its inaugural exhibitions and programmes, and establishing an institution that is rooted in Abu Dhabi and connected to the world, one that connects cultures, inspires people and celebrates art from the 1960s to the present.

Dr. Hillings brings deep familiarity with Guggenheim Abu Dhabi to the role. From 2009 to 2018, she served as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation's Curator and Associate Director of Curatorial Affairs, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Project, working closely with the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi on the collection strategy and acquisitions, pre-opening programming and the Frank Gehry-designed building. Earlier, she spent five years on the Guggenheim's curatorial staff in New York.

Since 2018, Dr. Hillings has served as Director of the North Carolina Museum of Art, where she led the reimagination of its permanent collection galleries, added some 400 works to the collection and oversaw a doubling of annual attendance to 1.2 million visitors. She holds a PhD and MA in Art History and Archaeology from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, and an AB in Art History from Duke University, with a specialisation in modern and contemporary art.

Dr. Valerie Hillings said: "I am honoured to return to Abu Dhabi to complete the once-in-a-lifetime journey of founding and opening Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, a museum developed in the United Arab Emirates by colleagues from both the region and around the world. I look forward to welcoming local and global audiences to the magnificent Frank Gehry-designed building and inviting them to explore points of interconnection and unique stories through the lens of art from the 1960s to our time."

Through Guggenheim Abu Dhabi's collection, exhibitions, commissions, research and public programmes, the museum will foster dialogue across cultures and generations while reinforcing Abu Dhabi's role as a global centre for artistic innovation, creative production and cultural exchange. Housing 30 galleries across 11,600 square metres of interior exhibition space, alongside 23,000





square metres of outdoor exhibition areas, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi will provide one of the world's most significant platforms for modern and contemporary art upon its opening.

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NOTE TO EDITORS

GUGGENHEIM ABU DHABI IS NOW LIVE on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [TikTok](#), [X](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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www.guggenheimabudhabi.ae

ABOUT GUGGENHEIM ABU DHABI

Guggenheim Abu Dhabi is a museum of modern and contemporary art that connects cultures, inspires people, and celebrates art from the 1960s to the present shining a light on artists from around the world. The museum will offer new perspectives on modern and contemporary art from an Abu Dhabi lens through its collection, commissions, research, exhibitions, and multilingual programme.

Aiming to reflect a transcultural approach, the museum moves beyond chronology and geography to highlight artistic lineages, networks and exchanges. The collection spans a wide range of artistic media, including painting, sculpture, installation, photography, moving image, and new media.

Guggenheim Abu Dhabi places the visitor at the centre of a journey of encounter and exchange with modern and contemporary art. Visitors will be able to navigate their own path of discovery through the museum's galleries of interconnected time periods, geographies, and themes.

Guggenheim Abu Dhabi is the result of a visionary collaboration between the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

Located in the heart of Saadiyat Cultural District, overlooking the sea and designed by acclaimed architect Frank Gehry, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi is an iconic landmark inspired by the architectural forms of the Gulf region. The museum has a total of 11,600 square metres spread across 30 galleries, in addition to 23,000 square metres of exterior exhibition spaces in the cones and terraces surrounding the building.

ABOUT DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND TOURISM – ABU DHABI

The Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi drives the sustainable growth of Abu Dhabi's culture and tourism sectors, fuels economic progress and helps achieve Abu Dhabi's wider global ambitions. By working in partnership with the organisations that define the Emirate's position as a leading international destination, Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi strives to unite the ecosystem around a shared vision of the Emirate's potential, coordinate effort and investment, deliver innovative solutions, and use the best tools, policies and systems to support the culture and tourism industries.

Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi's vision is defined by the Emirate's people, heritage and landscape. We work to enhance Abu Dhabi's status as a place of authenticity, innovation, and unparalleled experiences, represented by its living traditions of hospitality, pioneering initiatives and creative thought.





For more information about the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi and the destination, please visit: dctabudhabi.ae and visitabudhabi.ae and abudhabiculture.ae

ABOUT THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM FOUNDATION

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation was established in 1937 and is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of modern and contemporary art through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. Committed to innovation, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation collects, preserves, and interprets modern and contemporary art, and explores ideas across cultures through dynamic curatorial and educational initiatives and collaborations. With its constellation of architecturally and culturally distinct museums, exhibitions, publications, and digital platforms, the foundation engages both local and global audiences. The international constellation of museums includes the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao; and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. To learn more about the museum and the Guggenheim's activities around the world, visit guggenheim.org.

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