

# 'New museology': Behind the theory, the facts.

*A case study of the Louvre Abu Dhabi and its implications for international relations & cultural policy.*

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# Introduction

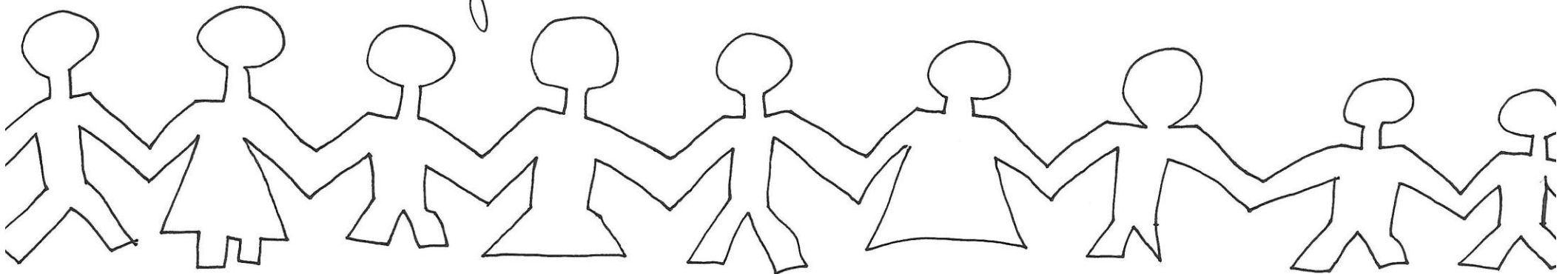
*Key concepts & theories*

- New museology
- Universal museums
- Cosmopolitanism

New Museology + Cosmopolitanism

=

"Universal Museums" discourse  
coming from Western institutions  
to justify the novelty in their  
management.



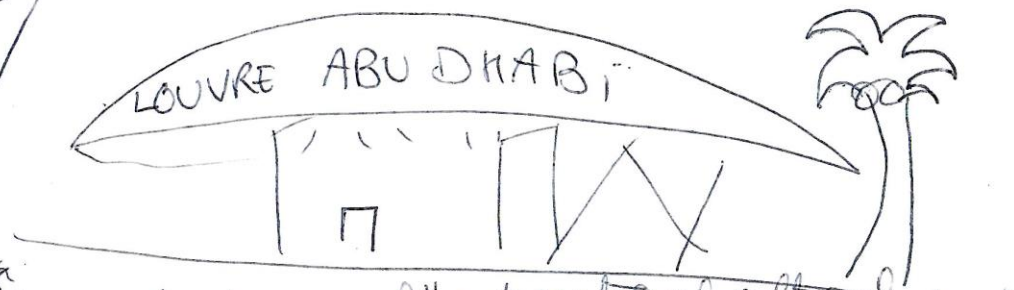
# NEW MUSEOLOGY

BEFORE  
"Western museums"



- living fossils
- Educators of the public
- founded by the state
- collections-based
- ethnocentric narrative
- narratives of class / nation / empire
- Western institutions

AFTER  
"universal museums"



- development of "international cultural franchises"
- external / private fundings
- incorporations of marketing / new managerial aspects
- representing a multicultural society
- new diversity in cultural narratives
- diverse audiences
- changed relationship with communities

neoliberalism  
tourism

populism  
market

post-modernism

# Contextualisation

- Wider Context.
- Global **Terrorism** and its Impact on Museums.
- **Populism and Nationalism.**
- France & U.A.E **Diplomatic Relations.**
- 'Abu Dhabi 2030' & 'Label France'.

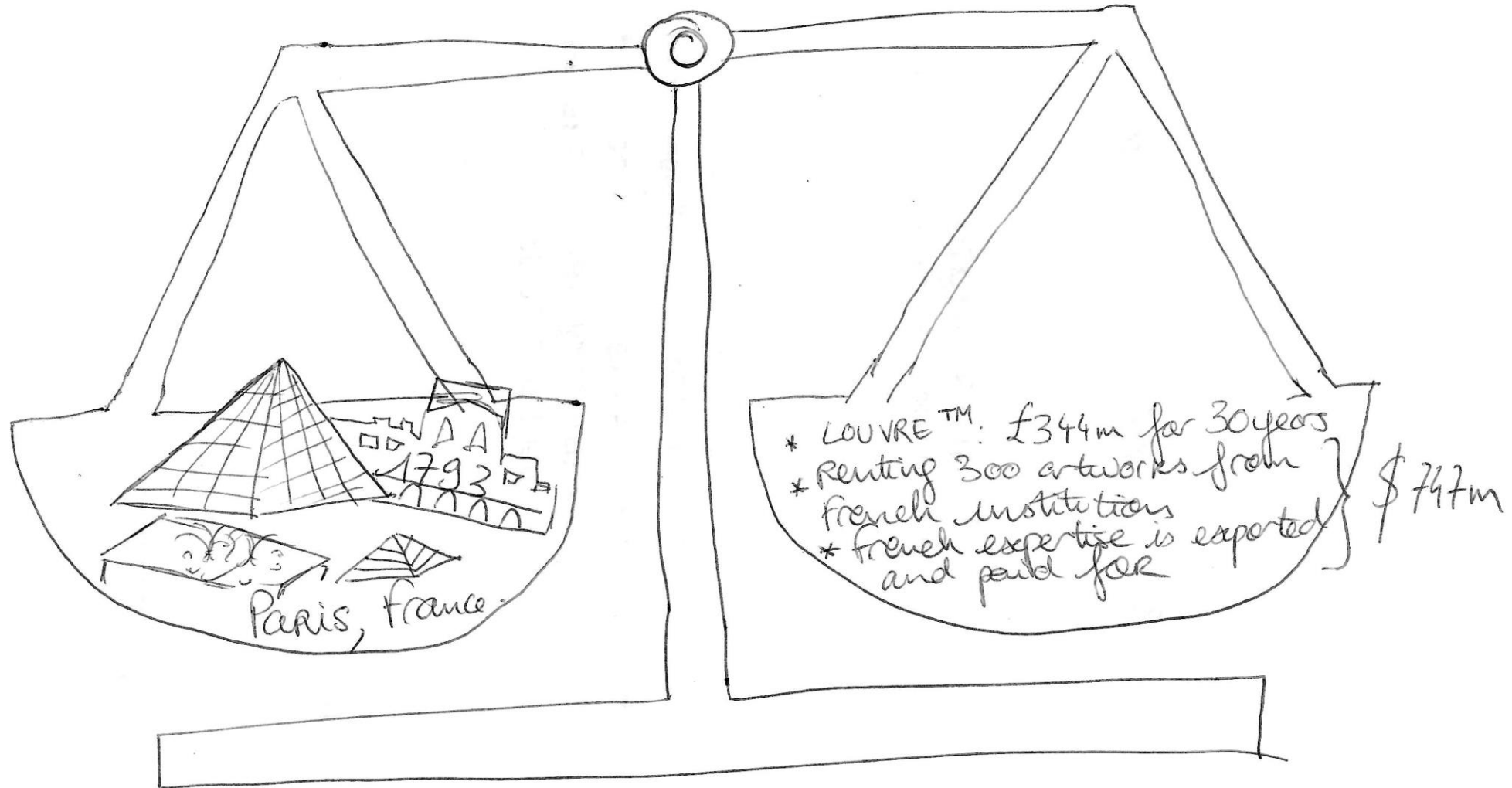


# Presentation of the Case Study.

- Louvre Abu Dhabi was born from an agreement made in **2007**.
- Borrowing the name of the Louvre (brand) for **£334m** for a period of **30 years** and over **300 artworks** each year.
- Budget of **£44m a year**, a French team of **curators and experts** is responsible for **acquisitions** and building a **collection**.
- Louvre is pocketing a record **£1bn** in fees.



THE WEIGHT OF THE LOUVRE





# Presentation of the stakeholders.


- French political authorities
- UAE political authorities: mainly the Ruling Al Nahyan family of Abu Dhabi.
- French museum experts.
- UAE museum experts.



FRENCH  
bureaucrats:

 Sarkozy... Hollande... and now Macron

 Jean Francois Chernier  
("AFM")

 Jean-Luc Martinez  
(Louvre)

 Jean Nouvel  
(architect)

 Manuel Rebate  
(Louvre Abu Dhabi)


THEY  
ARE  
WHITE  
MIDDLE/  
UPPER  
CLASS  
MALES  
ONLY

UAE / Abu Dhabi:



Al Nahyan:  
Royal family

♀ ! Hissa Al  
Dhahiri (museum  
expert / Louvre Abu Dhabi)

 Mohammed al  
Musrarak (chair  
of TCA)

↓  
Abu Dhabi Tourism  
& Culture Authority

'New Museology' as a justification for the Louvre Abu Dhabi.

- A new chronological display and museographic approach.
- Bridge between Middle East & Europe.
- Protect & conserve the 'global patrimony'.
- Educate people.
- Understand other audiences outside Western institutions.

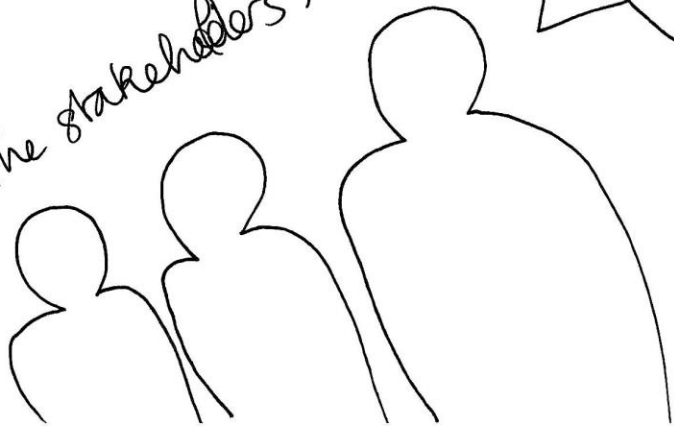


WE WILL :

- \* build a new kind of display because we want to be a universal museum
- \* build a cultural bridge between Europe & Middle East
- \* protect the artefacts from destruction (because we are the only ones able to do it)
- \* educate people (because we are cool)
- \* understand (at least... try) local and new audiences.

So... GO TO HELL HATERS !!!

The stakeholders involved



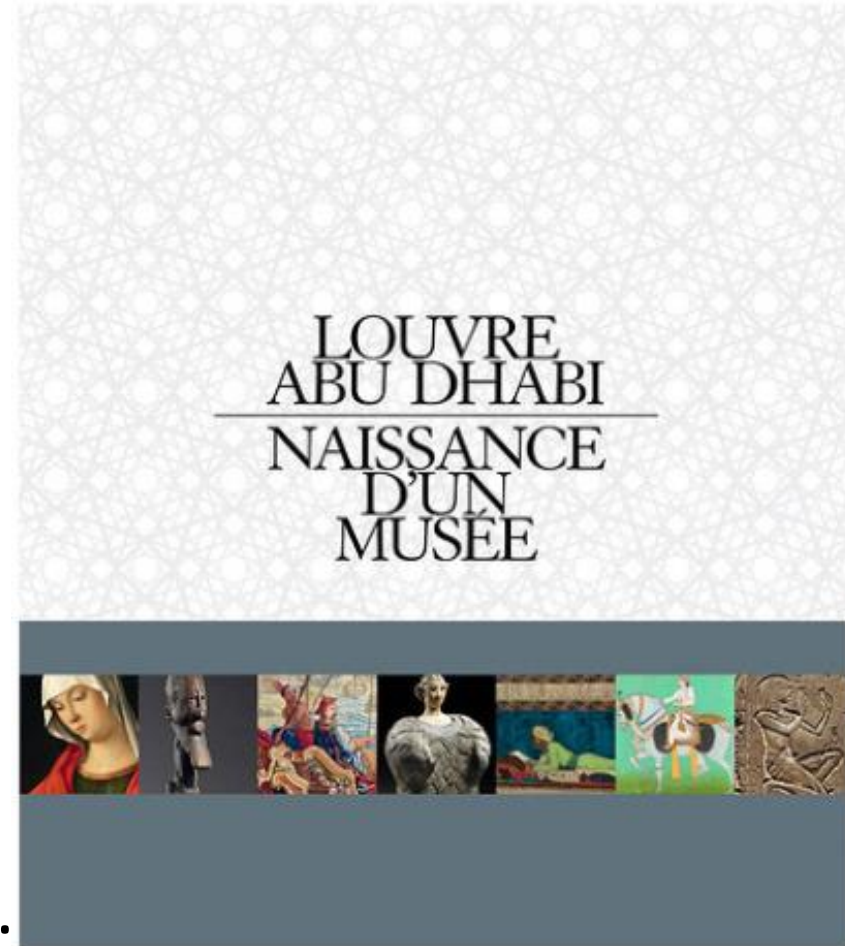
# Controversies & major issues at stake.

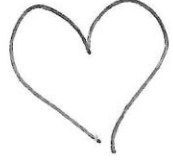
(I)

Critics from the French intelligentsia.  
Complaints from the Sheik Sultan.  
Working conditions.  
Censorships issues & 'cultural clash'.

(II)

A new soft power.  
The reproduction of Western imperialism.  
Audience: a universal or exclusive museum?  
A museum education, but for the privileged ones.

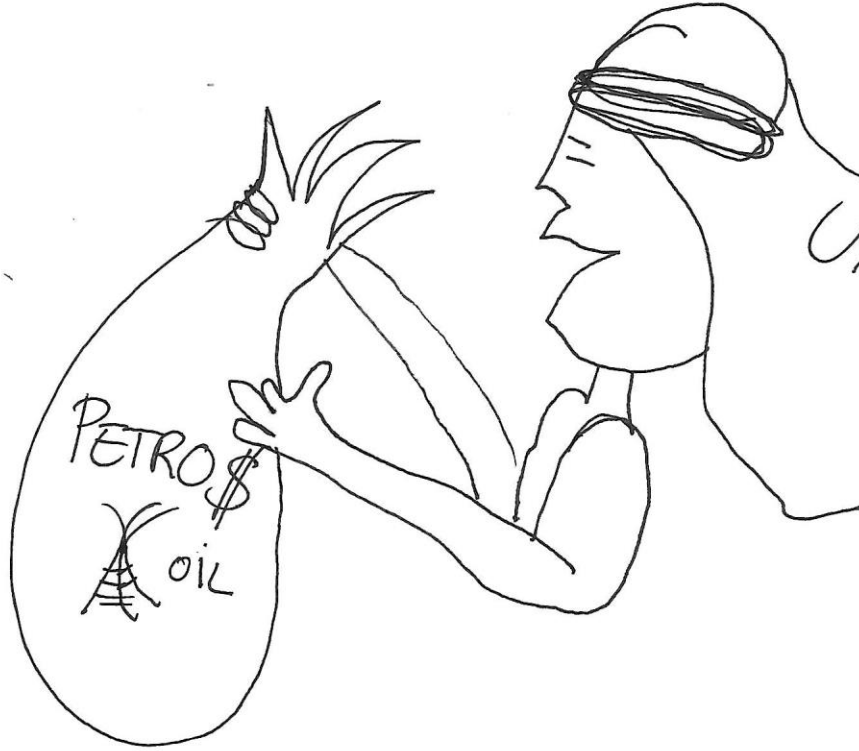




France & United Arab Emirates  
a special relationship



French  
politician/  
bureaucrat



UAE Representative

# Conclusion

- **Constant interaction** between **the cultural, political and social aspects** of the Louvre Abu Dhabi.
- Need for a **transdisciplinary approach** for Museum Studies.
- **Grounded theory**: impossible?
- Louvre Abu Dhabi **specificity**.
- Too early for a **survey-based approach**: we must wait for the opening (November 2017), while being aware of the issues developed earlier.

# Selective Bibliography

(see PDF online for an extensive bibliography)

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