

Paris, April 22, 2025

Press Release

**VILLA HEGRA ESTABLISHES A PARTNERSHIP WITH MOBILIER NATIONAL IN THE FIELDS OF CRAFTSMANSHIP AND DESIGN**

Villa Hegra, the first Saudi-French cultural institution based in AIUla, and the Mobilier national, an emblematic institution for contemporary creation and the promotion of French decorative arts, join forces to foster exchanges in the fields of artisanal know-how and design between Saudi Arabia and France.

Following Villa Medici, Villa Albertine, Casa de Velázquez, Villa Kujoyama, and Villa Swagatam, the Manufactures nationales increase their action on the global promotion of craftsmanship with Villa Hegra.

This collaboration will unfold through three major initiatives: inviting a Saudi creative to a residency between Paris and AIUla, displaying a selection of design pieces from Mobilier national's collections at Villa Hegra's temporary building, and furnishing the café of Villa Hegra's temporary space.

**A Saudi artist invited for an inspiration residency at the heart of the Manufactures nationales, in France, followed by a stay at Villa Hegra in AIUla**

A Saudi artist will soon be welcomed for a residency within the Manufactures nationales to explore the specificities of artisanal craftsmanship. This immersion will provide the artist with a deep dive into the French artisanal tradition, discovering unique techniques preserved and promoted by the Mobilier National and the Cité de la Céramique – Sèvres & Limoges.

Following this reflection phase, the artist will join Villa Hegra in AIUla for a residency framed by the institution's cultural program, which is under the artistic direction of Basmah Felemban and Gaël Charbau.

This initiative echoes the residency of designer Paul Emilieu Marchesseau, founder of Emilieu Studio and lecturer in scenography and spatial design at the Camondo School in Paris. Marchesseau was welcomed by Villa Hegra in AIUla to co-create with local artisans a range of modular and sustainable furniture designed for the institution's future workshop spaces.

**The Mobilier National brings exceptional pieces to Villa Hegra**

At the heart of its temporary building, set to open to the public in 2025 in AIUla, Villa Hegra will host artist residencies, creative spaces for cultural initiatives, an exhibition hall, the region's first indoor cinema, and first performance art studio.

The Villa will also feature a café, furnished with elements from the OSAKA collection, a collaboration between designer Jean-Baptiste Fastrez, the Mobilier national, and Villa Noailles, and produced by Tectona. These design pieces embody the boldness and precision of French artisanal craftsmanship.

Additionally, the Mobilier National will loan three contemporary design pieces from its collections to decorate areas of the building.

According to Hervé Lemoine, President of the Manufactures nationales - Sèvres & Mobilier national: "This partnership continues the Mobilier National's rich tradition of collaboration with cultural Villas, bringing French artisanal excellence to creative spaces around the world." On that note, Feriel Fodil, CEO of Villa Hegra, adds: "This long-term collaboration also strengthens Villa Hegra's primary mission: to promote artistic cooperation between Saudi Arabia and France, while celebrating their respective artisanal heritages."

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## About Villa Hegra

Born from the friendship between Saudi Arabia and France, Villa Hegra is an institution dedicated to intercultural cooperation, located in AIUla.

Supporting contemporary creation in visual arts, design, film, and performing arts, Villa Hegra aims to be a space open to creativity, education, and exchange. By fostering dialogue between the AIUla community and international audiences, Villa Hegra creates opportunities for artistic expression while contributing to the region's cultural development.

Since 2023, Villa Hegra has launched its off-site programming in AIUla, becoming part of the region's cultural landscape through a series of inclusive initiatives. In 2025, Villa Hegra will open its temporary venue in central AIUla. This venue will become the beating heart of its artistic and cultural programming, offering a space for gathering, dialogue, and creation for both artists and the public.

Villa Hegra's founding entities are the Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU) and the French Agency for AIUla Development (Afalula).

## About the Mobilier National

Since the 17th century, Mobilier national has been dedicated to preserving its unique collections. As a key heritage institution, it also plays a major role in fostering contemporary creation and French decorative arts.

## About the Manufactures nationales

Founded on January 1, 2025, the Manufactures nationales bring together the Mobilier National and the Cité de la Céramique – Sèvres & Limoges. This globally unique entity encompasses over 53 artisan trades, combining heritage with contemporary creation. Its work revolves around six key areas: training, research, creation, support for the crafts sector, heritage promotion, and international outreach. With nine manufacturing sites and creative workshops, two museums, and seven restoration studios across France, the Manufactures nationales stand as a vital force for innovation and transmission in the world of artisan craftsmanship.