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## PRESS RELEASE

# « PURE COLOURS », A SUCCESS FOR THE CENTRE POMPIDOU IN SAUDI ARABIA

The “Pure Colours” exhibition presented by the Centre Pompidou in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, has just closed. It received **44,113 visitors** in the 41 days it lasted, i.e. an average of 1,075 visitors per day.

Devised and organised as part of the pre-launch phase for the King Abdulaziz Centre for World Culture (Dhahran’s future major cultural centre), in partnership with Saudi Aramco, this thematic exhibition featured **some twenty key 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century works** from the Centre Pompidou collection, and drew on the concept and experience of the mobile Centre Pompidou.

*“This exhibition was a resounding success! Saudi Aramco turned to France and the Centre Pompidou to design a pre-figuration exhibition around the theme of «Pure Colours», especially devised for this great “first”. For this was not only the first time the Saudi public had got to see a modern art exhibition, but this totally new show was also the first presented by a major Western museum in Saudi Arabia,”* said Centre Pompidou President Alain Seban.

Entirely free, this new circuit took viewers on a novel journey through the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century art, with modern masters like Yves Klein, Alexander Calder and Pablo Picasso, and works by great figures of contemporary art, where the art education took the form of a staged tour. The interactive character of the tours and the participation of the art educators recruited on site provided a thoroughly exciting learning experience for the local public, who came in large numbers, eager to see this first exhibition of Western modern and contemporary art. Nearly 5,000 children and teenagers came on school trips, and nearly 40,000 visitors came in the evenings as a family.

The exhibition was part of the Saudi Aramco Cultural Programme called “Ithra Knowledge”. *“Saudi Aramco chose the Centre Pompidou not only for the excellence of its modern and contemporary art collection – one of the world’s top two collections – but also for its very special ability to relate art and society, notably through its expertise in terms of art education and its imaginative circuits, which are designed for a very broad public who do not necessarily know much about art. This was the spirit in which the Centre Pompidou and Saudi Aramco offered the people of Saudi Arabia their first experience of modern and contemporary creation,”* said Alain Seban.

The Saudi Aramco company directors presented the exhibition as the first concrete stage of a long-term partnership with the Centre Pompidou in view of the inauguration of the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, one of the Gulf region’s most original and ambitious cultural facilities projects.



### About "Pure Colours":

"Pure Colours" reflected our knowledge of the nature of light, one of the guiding themes of the exhibition. With the exploration of abstraction in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, colour/light became independent, moving away from draughtsmanship and form. Colour became a "thing in itself" with its expressive capacity, and liberated a completely new and symbolic power of expression.

Visitors entered the exhibition by walking under a large hanging canvas by Claude Viallat. The circuit then opened with Anthony McCall's installation *Line Describing a Cone*, (1973) – an immersive work inviting viewers to comprehend the very nature of the light beam – and the diaphragm designed by Jean Nouvel for the façade of the the Arab Word Institute in Paris, halfway between a mechanical eye and a mashrabiya. František Kupka's work *Newton's Discs* illustrated the renewed interest of painters on the path to abstraction in scientific representations of the light spectrum. Closer to our times, Piotr Kowalski also took inspiration from science for his concave and convex mirrors reflecting cubes of light. The Minimalist movement, introduced with a yellow monochrome by Yves Klein, was further illustrated with works by Donald Judd (a volume of light) and Dan Flavin (a fluorescent tube square representing a spiritual gateway). Masterpieces of modern and contemporary art by Alexander Calder, Olafur Eliasson, André Derain, Pablo Picasso and many others dialogued in this highly original circuit of colours and light, which visitors left by walking through a "Penetrable" by Jesús Rafael Soto: a physical experience of colour.

### List of works:

Curator: Jean-Michel Bouhours

Carla Accardi –	<i>Triplice tenda</i> , 1969-1971
Giovanni Anselmo	<i>Sans titre</i> , 1968 [granite, lettuce, copper wire], 1968
Alexander Calder	<i>Mobile on Two Planes</i> , 1962
André Derain	<i>Le vieil arbre</i> , 1904
Jean Dubuffet	<i>Site agité</i> , 1973
Raoul Dufy	<i>Nature morte au violon : hommage à Bach</i> , 1952
Olafur Eliasson	<i>Your Concentric Welcome</i> , 2004
Dan Flavin	<i>Untitled (to Donna) 5a</i> , 1971
Donald Judd	<i>Untitled</i> , 1965
Yves Klein	<i>M72, Monochrome jaune «violet»</i> , 1957
Piotr Kowalski	<i>Identity no. 2</i> , 1973
Frantisek Kupka	<i>Newton's Discs, Study for Fugue in Two Colours</i> , 1911-1912
Anthony McCall	<i>Line Describing a Cone</i> , 1973
Jean Nouvel, Gilbert Lézénès,	
Pierre Soria,Architecture Studio	<i>Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris</i> , 1981-1987
Claudio Parmiggiani	<i>Pittura pura luce</i> , 1968
Pablo Picasso	<i>Le Rocking-chair</i> , 1943
Jesús Rafael Soto	<i>Blue Penetrable BBL</i> , 1999
Jesús Rafael Soto	<i>Cuadrado tabaco y vibración</i> , 2004
Leopold Survage	<i>Rythme coloré</i> , 1913
Claude Viallat	<i>Hommage à Monet</i> , 1982