

NYU ABU DHABI
INSTITUTE

2025 2026

YEAR IN REVIEW



INSTITUTE

<u>LETTER OF WELCOME</u>	2
<u>PUBLIC PROGRAMS</u>	6
<u>CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS</u>	56
<u>PROUD OF UAE - RESEARCH STORIES</u>	76

YEAR IN REVIEW 2025-26

LETTER OF WELCOME

Dear Friends of the NYUAD Institute,

Earlier this year, Nobel Laureate Abhijit Banerjee came to Abu Dhabi to revisit the ideas of *Poor Economics*, the landmark book he and Esther Duflo published fifteen years ago. In conversation with Professor of Creative Writing, Tishani Doshi, he said something that surprised the room: that he deeply respects politicians, because unlike academics, they have to act in the world and live with the consequences. It was a powerful moment of candor from one of the world's most prominent economists. Here was a man whose academic research shaped global development policy — pausing to honor those who must make decisions often without the possibility of sustained research.

As I thought more about his words, I found myself returning to what the NYUAD Institute is, and what we aspire to be. We are, by design, a space of reflection. Whether here on our Saadiyat Island campus, at 19 Washington Square North in New York, or through those following our programs globally, the Institute creates room to think — to slow down, examine evidence, consider consequences — before the moment of action arrives. But as Muslim scholars of the past knew well, there is a deep relationship between knowledge (*'ilm*) and action (*'amal*), proposing that knowledge alone is not sufficient; one must act upon what one knows.

Over the past year, our public programs ranged widely across the questions that matter most to our region and the world. We heard from Nobel Peace Laureate Ouided Bouchamaoui on women and leadership in diplomacy — a conversation about how those who negotiate in the world's hardest spaces find their footing. We explored the ethics and risks of artificial intelligence, the planetary challenge of infinite growth on a finite earth, and the urgencies of clean water.



A two-part celebration of African theater connected literary translation to the living life of the stage. In New York, we examined what it means to preserve and transmit the records communities build their identities upon, and reflected on what sport tells us about governance and belonging.

Our academic conferences followed the same expansive spirit. We brought together leading researchers to address some of the most consequential questions in science and society: new frontiers in drug discovery and living therapeutics; breakthroughs in neuroimaging and cardiovascular research; the deep histories of oceanic exchange connecting the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean worlds; and the relationship between economic transformation and its long aftermath. Our conference *The Future Is Not a Grave* convened artists and scholars from across the MENA region to imagine otherwise, treating creative vision as a form of rigorous inquiry. And as political violence reshapes the landscape of our world, we dedicated serious scholarly attention to understanding its causes and trajectories. These efforts were only possible through meaningful partnerships. We are deeply grateful for our collaborations with Abu Dhabi institutions — including the Louvre Abu Dhabi and the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority — as well as the US Embassy Abu Dhabi, whose support brings our work into conversation with the broader world of diplomacy and public life.

I return now to Professor Banerjee's remark, because I think it contains a challenge we should not too quickly resolve. The consoling reading is this: those who think and those who act need each other, and spaces like ours serve the former so that the latter may govern more wisely.

But I believe he was saying something more important. A researcher who generates knowledge has not yet done the most difficult thing. The difficult thing is to stand before a constituency, weigh competing interests, and act under uncertainty — without the option of revision. This does not diminish what happens in spaces like ours. But it does place a demand on us. The Islamic scholars who understood *'ilm wa- 'amal* as a unity were not saying that knowledge and action are equal — they were saying that knowledge unaccompanied by action is incomplete. I think Professor Banerjee was saying something similar. Our reflection earns its keep only when it is eventually offered back to the world — when the ideas we examine here become, in some measure, the grounds on which decisions are made, policies are shaped, and lives are changed. That is a high standard. But it is the one by which we should be willing to be measured.

Sincerely,
Maurice



Maurice A. Pomerantz
Executive Director, NYUAD Institute

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

YEAR IN REVIEW 2025-26

TOTAL ATTENDEES

2336

SPEAKERS

38

COUNTRIES

23

PROGRAMS

22

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

SEPTEMBER

- 9 Stem Cells: From Basic Science to Clinical Advances
- 15 OPEC+ and Global Oil Markets: What to Expect This Winter?
- 16 To the Edge of the Earth: The First Emirati Scientific Mission to Antarctica
- 17 "Side Effects May Include...": How We Can Make Medicine Better
- 22 A Celebration of African Theaters | African Theaters Now: A Conversation
- 29 A Celebration of African Theaters | From Page to Stage

OCTOBER

- 1 Varenka By Miriam Leeds
- 9 Curating a Digital Heritage Method for the Preservation of Arabian Rock Art (Petroglyphs)
- 15 When Cities Get Hotter: From New York to Abu Dhabi
- 20 Leonardo da Vinci's Salvator Mundi, Lost and Found: Some Observations 20 Years Later
- 27 Soulful Innovation: How Ikigai Inspires the Future of Making
- 29 Pressure Cooker curated by Azza Aboualam

NOVEMBER

- 3 Women and Leadership in Diplomacy
- 5 Defining the Future of Health Care
- 5 Who Has The Right to the City?
- 11 Devānāmpiya
- 12 Folding the World: Infinite Growth on a Finite Planet
- 12 Apples at the Crossroads: Domestication, Genomics, and Climate Resilience
- 17 Party Misfits: The Social Bases of Pluralism in an Era of Partisan Politics
- 17 Is Artificial Intelligence a Threat to Democracy?
- 24 A Conversation with Abhijit Banerjee: Poor Economics, 15 Years On

DECEMBER

- 4 The Power of Us: How Shared Identities Shape Conflict and Cooperation
- 8 The Urgencies of Water: Thinking Across and Through the Indian Ocean
- 8 Theater, Politics and Pedagogy in a Global Context
- 9 Life's 24 Hour Clock
- 16 Engineering Your Heart's Health

JANUARY

- 12 Simplifying Complexity: Proposing a New Method for Enhancing Musical Memory
- 13 Are the Highest Energy Particles in the Universe Made of Precious Metals?
- 15 The Worth of Water: Chasing Solutions to the World's Greatest Challenge
- 21 AI for Sustainability: Innovation, Policy, and Impact
- 26 Museums, Social Media, and Public Space
- 29 The Sun of My Existence: New Composition Within Classical Arabic Music and Poetry

FEBRUARY

- 3 The Urban Frontier of AI
- 9 Women in Neuroscience
- 10 Stone Age to Civilization
- 11 Crafting an Authentic Life
- 12 Art Capital: Transforming Museums in the Emirates

MARCH

- 2 How Do Laws of Nature Make Matter Move?
- 9 The Matrix Collective
- 18 Bridging the Bedside & the Bench: A MedTech Panel Discussion
- 23 Engaging with African Theatre

APRIL

- 2 The (Modest) Triumph of the Embryo
- 9 Commonsense Psychology in Minds and Machines
- 20 Moving Histories: Creating Biography Through Dance
- 23 The House Archives Built
- 28 The Global Game: Sport, Governance, and Community in the 2026 FIFA World Cup

MAY

- 5 Navigating Global Risks: Insights from the VRI

STEM CELLS: FROM BASIC SCIENCE TO CLINICAL ADVANCES

Stem cells hold promise for understanding human disease, screening for novel therapeutics, and regenerating damaged tissues. However, the mechanisms underlying how these cells form and are activated are still being uncovered, and the development of stem cell-derived tissues for drug screening and transplantation is a work in progress. This conversation with leaders in the field explores the fundamentals of stem cell biology, current stem cell-based therapies, and the ethical considerations shaping the future of stem cell research and its clinical applications.

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This very basic research, driven by scientists' curiosity, leads to discoveries that have huge impacts for human health. It's something we don't always convey well, but it's what brings the big new ideas forward.

PANEL MEMBERS

Lorenz Studer, Director, Center for Stem Cell Biology, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center

Sarah E. Millar, Dean for Academic and Scientific Affairs and Chair of the new Department of Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Kirsten Sadler Edepli, Professor of Biology, NYUAD; Global Network Professor of Biology, NYU

OPEC+ AND GLOBAL OIL MARKETS: WHAT TO EXPECT THIS WINTER?

OPEC+ has not only fully returned to market the 2.2 million barrels per day of nominal voluntary supply cuts made in November 2023, it has also committed to a first monthly return of 1.65 million barrels per day announced before then. The market has been absorbing the higher supply with a few bearish impacts. This has been for two essential reasons: refinery margins are robust and crude stocks are relatively low globally; and summer oil burn for power generation in the Middle East is more than one million barrels per day above Spring levels. But, the summer power generation season will be over after September, as global refinery demand for crude weakens seasonally.

PANEL MEMBERS

Adam Sieminski, Former Administrator of the U.S. Energy Information Administration and Current Senior Advisor and Former President of KAPSARC

Amena Bakr, Head of Middle East and OPEC+ Insights, Kpler

Natasha Kaneva, Head of Global Commodities Strategy, J.P. Morgan

MODERATED BY

Carolyn Kissane, Associate Dean, Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, NYU

CASTED BY

Gary Ross, Founder of PIRA; CEO of Black Gold Investors LLC; NY Energy Forum board member

IN COLLABORATION WITH



TO THE EDGE OF THE EARTH: THE FIRST EMIRATI SCIENTIFIC MISSION TO ANTARCTICA

Have you ever wondered what it takes to survive—and thrive—in the most extreme environment on Earth? Join us for an extraordinary lecture with Ahmed Alkaabi, Head of Meteorological and Geophysical Studies Section, and Badr Al Ameri, Senior Application Engineer, from the National Center of Meteorology, as they recount their journey to Antarctica as part of the UAE's first official scientific mission to the South Pole. This talk will uncover the scientific objectives of the mission, including the installation of an automated weather station and seismic station, and reveal the personal and logistical challenges faced during the expedition. Through captivating storytelling, vivid visuals, and an immersive Virtual Reality experience, you'll explore the icy frontier as if you were there.

SPEAKERS

Badr Al Ameri, Senior Application Engineer, National Center of Meteorology (NCM)

Ahmed Alkaabi, Head of Meteorological and Geophysical Studies Section, National Center of Meteorology (NCM)

IN COLLABORATION WITH



17
SEP

“SIDE EFFECTS MAY INCLUDE...”: HOW WE CAN MAKE MEDICINE BETTER

All cutting-edge medical treatments come with side effects that can limit their benefit. In this talk, Prof. Ramadi explores how we can make medicine better—by moving beyond today’s one-size-fits-all approaches toward smarter, personalized interventions. With breakthroughs in nanotechnology, artificial intelligence, and advanced therapeutics, we are rethinking how medicine can not only treat disease but extend healthy years of life worldwide.

SPEAKER

Khalil Ramadi, Assistant Professor of Bioengineering, NYU; Director of the Laboratory for Advanced Neuroengineering and Translational Medicine, NYUAD

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One of the things that we are trying to work on is leveraging the nervous system in our body as a potential way by which we can deliver therapy in a more targeted manner with fewer off target effects.

22
SEP

A CELEBRATION OF AFRICAN THEATERS | AFRICAN THEATERS NOW: A CONVERSATION

The African continent consists of 54 countries. This conversation among African theater practitioners and scholars, necessarily diverse by expertise, engages a range of questions to understand better the term theater(s), the evolution of theaters among African countries, and this contemporary moment in Africa’s theaters. Who is making theater today in Africa—who’s writing, who’s producing, who attends? What kinds of theaters are being created? What prevalent concerns are being written, produced, and/or published in 21st -century African theaters? What are the challenges of producing theater on the continent? In what ways do theaters play a role in the lives of contemporary Africans?

OPENING REMARKS

Abhishek Majumdar, Program Head, Theater; Arts Professor of Theater, NYUAD

PANEL MEMBERS

Hope Azeda, Playwright and Director, Mashirika Performing Arts; Festival Curator, Ubumuntu Arts Festival

Judith G. Miller, Professor of French Literature, Thought and Culture, NYU

Wole Soyinka, Arts Professor of Theater, NYUAD; Nobel Laureate in Literature (1986)

MODERATED BY

Robert Vorlicky, Associate Professor of Drama, Tisch School of the Arts, NYU; Former Visiting Professor of Theater, NYUAD



A CELEBRATION OF AFRICAN THEATERS | FROM PAGE TO STAGE

The African continent consists of 54 countries. This conversation among African theater practitioners and scholars, necessarily diverse by expertise, engages a range of questions to understand better the term theater(s), the evolution of theaters among African countries, and this contemporary moment in Africa's theaters. Who is making theater today in Africa—who's writing, who's producing, who attends? What kinds of theaters are being created? What prevalent concerns are being written, produced, and/or published in 21st-century African theaters? What are the challenges of producing theater on the continent? In what ways do theaters play a role in the lives of contemporary Africans?

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MODERATED BY

Robert Vorlicky, Associate Professor of Drama, Tisch School of the Arts, NYU; Former Visiting Professor of Theater, NYUAD



VARENKA BY MIRIAM LEEDS

Featuring Ana Karneza and Arianna Gayle, both graduates of NYU Abu Dhabi and of the Juilliard MFA program, in a unique two-character play written for them to perform! Miriam, a writer on the verge of her 34th birthday, is stuck. She isn't going anywhere, with her novel or her life. That is until Varenka arrives. As Miriam confronts her painful history, she frees herself from narratives of the past and begins writing her future. Varenka by Miriam Leeds explores the power of the imagination and the liberty that comes from radical self-acceptance.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

WRITTEN BY
Enid Graham

DIRECTED BY
Michael Herwitz

MUSICAL DIRECTION BY
David Gaines

CURATED BY
Catherine Coray, Arts Professor,
NYU Tisch School of the Arts



CURATING A DIGITAL HERITAGE METHOD FOR THE PRESERVATION OF ARABIAN ROCK ART (PETROGLYPHS)

The preservation and study of Arabian rock art — petroglyphs and inscriptions — has been seriously hampered by the fact that the vast majority of them have only begun to be published, have been poorly published with inadequate digital image quality, or have been published without full commentary in obscure books and academic journals in only a few libraries worldwide. This presentation details the processes involved in a digital heritage preservation method to make the study of prehistoric and early historic Arabian rock art more accessible to researchers and the public.

SPEAKERS

William Zimmerle, Ph.D NYU Abu Dhabi, Senior Lecturer in Arts and Humanities, Archaeology and the Ancient World

Rakesh Behera, Ph.D New York University, Tandon School of Engineering, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering

Oraib Al Ketan, Ph.D NYU Abu Dhabi, Research Instrumentation Scientist, Core Technology Platforms Operation



WHEN CITIES GET HOTTER: FROM NEW YORK TO ABU DHABI

Cities like New York often feel hotter than their surroundings, especially on summer nights. This is the “urban heat island” effect, caused by the replacement of natural land covers with heat-absorbing materials, reduced vegetation and evapotranspiration, urban geometry that traps heat, and waste heat from human activities. Around the world, urban heat islands affect energy use, air quality, and public health. This talk explores when cities get hotter, how we measure these effects, and what makes them worse or better, and discusses Abu Dhabi, a rapidly growing desert city, to see how heat islands play out in extreme climates, and what lessons can be drawn.

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The urban form, the land transformation, the materials that we use — they don’t just shape the skylines of what we see, but everything: the wind, the moisture, the temperature. So every new surface is going to have a thermal consequence. Green and blue spaces are still the ones that remain the coolest — vegetation and water — and they are our strongest defense against the heat. Nature is not decoration. It’s climate infrastructure.

SPEAKERS

Rita Leal Sousa, Associate Professor of Civil and Urban Engineering, NYUAD

Yi Yin, Associate Professor, Environmental Sciences, NYU



LEONARDO DA VINCI'S SALVATOR MUNDI, LOST AND FOUND: SOME OBSERVATIONS 20 YEARS LATER

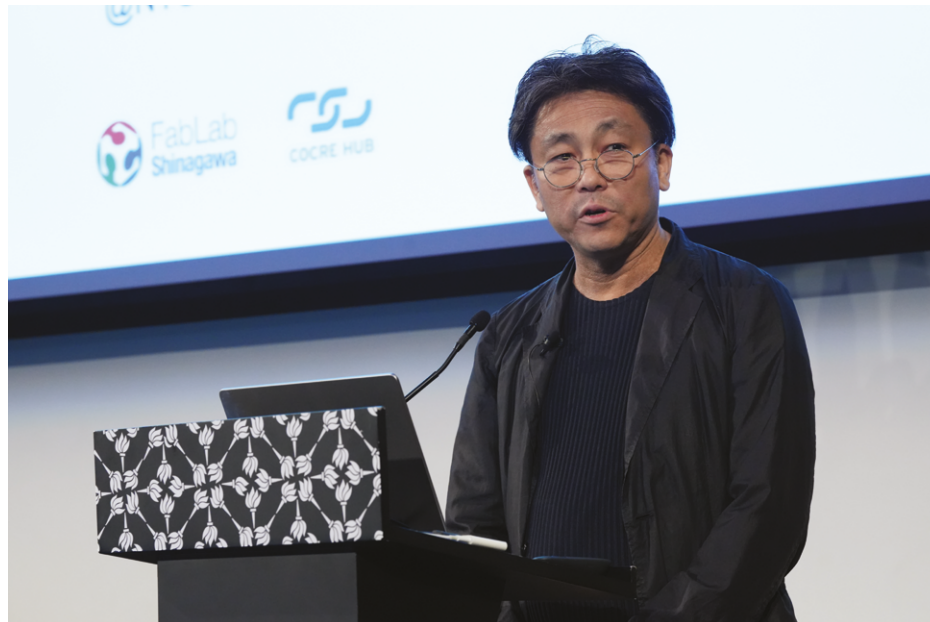
This presentation briefly recaps the emergence of the painting, the critical reception and ongoing controversy, and eventual purchase by Mohammed bin Salman, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. The history and condition, the restoration, the materials and techniques of the painting in comparison with other works by the artist are discussed. An evaluation of the work's place and importance in Leonardo's oeuvre are considered, as well as new connections and discoveries made by the author, art historians, and scientists, which have continued to evolve even in its absence. Its disappearance after the historic 2017 sale at Christie's have caused rife speculation about its whereabouts and scholarly opinion. Can we expect to see it again?

SPEAKER

Dianne Modestini, Paintings
Conservator and Professor Emerita,
The Conservation Center of the
Institute of Fine Arts, NYU

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Someone has written a piece of music for it. It has a real power. And now I think it's Leonardo's masterpiece — I think it's a much better picture than the Mona Lisa.



SOULFUL INNOVATION: HOW IKIGAI INSPIRES THE FUTURE OF MAKING

This talk explores the intersection of Japanese craftsmanship (monotsukuri), purpose-driven living (ikigai), and entrepreneurial spirit in the age of digital fabrication. Dr. Naoki Hamanaka will share his journey of using additive manufacturing—specifically 3D printing—to design and produce affordable, customized assistive devices that enhance quality of life. Drawing on real-world examples, he will illustrate how technology can embody empathy, creativity, and social impact, inspiring a new generation of engineers and innovators to pursue entrepreneurship with purpose and soul.

SPEAKER

Naoki Hamanaka, Founder
of FabLab Shinagawa, and
Representative of Hamanaka
Design Studio

PRESSURE COOKER CURATED BY AZZA ABOULAM

Pressure Cooker, curated by Azza Aboualam, 2025 National Pavilion UAE Curator, Assistant Professor at Zayed University, and Co-Founder of Holesum Studio, explores the intersection of architecture and food production in the UAE, posing the important question: Using the UAE as a case study: How can architecture be mobilized for greater food security? Her research and curatorial process highlight how architecture can address critical global challenges, particularly in the intersection of sustainability and food systems. Join us for a talk with Aboualam on Pressure Cooker for the UAE's participation at 19th International Architecture Exhibition at La Biennale di Venezia.

SPEAKERS

Azza Aboualam, Assistant Professor at Zayed University, Co-founder & Director of Research at Holesum Studio, and 2025 National Pavilion UAE Curator

IN COLLABORATION WITH

رواق الفن
ARTGALLERY

المناخ الوطني لدولة
الإمارات العربية المتحدة
بينالي البندقية

National Pavilion
United Arab Emirates
La Biennale di Venezia





WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP IN DIPLOMACY

Although women still hold only about 21% of ambassadorial posts worldwide, recent years have seen notable progress. This panel brings together senior officials, leading practitioners, and international scholars to examine women's leadership in diplomacy, foreign affairs, and multilateral organizations. Drawing on AGDA's Women in Diplomacy Index and LSE/IDEAS's Strengthening the Representation of Women in Diplomacy Report, the discussion will explore persistent gender disparities, variations across countries and regions, and the impact of structural reforms. Panelists will also share professional experiences and policy solutions to advance women's leadership and shape a more accessible and representative global diplomatic landscape.

“

Alot of the female diplomats had scientific backgrounds, they had STEM backgrounds and they sort of moved into international affairs and foreign affairs.

OPENING REMARKS

Ouided Bouchamaoui, Nobel Laureate (2015), Professor of Practice in Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution, NYUAD

PANEL MEMBERS

Karen Smith, Professor of International Relations, London School of Economics and Political Science

Nouf Al Hamly, Advanced Sciences and Technology Advisor, UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Sara Chehab, Acting Graduate Programmes Director & Senior Research Fellow, Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy

MODERATED BY

Henriette Mueller, Assistant Professor of Gender, Governance and Society



DEFINING THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE

In this talk, the speaker will explore the future of health care through the lens of Tissue Engineering, Regenerative Medicine, and Precision Medicine. These approaches offer promising therapies for a wide range of diseases and traumas, while also enabling the development of advanced 3D disease models—including for cancer—that can reduce reliance on animal testing. The speaker will discuss the role of innovative materials, stem cell integration, and cutting-edge processing techniques in creating bioresponsive therapies, implants, and research models. Drawing on groundbreaking work by the 3B's Research Group, the talk highlights key breakthroughs at the intersection of biology and engineering.

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If you want to grow a plant everybody knows you need soil, you need seeds and you need your fertilizer. But of course to grow human tissues, the scaffold is your soil the fertilizer is growth factors and the seeds are your cells and the culturing media is your water.

SPEAKER

Rui L. Reis, Professor of Tissue Engineering, Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cells, University of Minho



WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO THE CITY?

Since the 2008-2009 financial crisis and the Occupy movements around the globe, artists have increasingly turned to new models of artistic production and community engagement, expanding their work beyond the walls of theaters and museums and into situated social and ecological practices. Katia Arfara's new book, "Curating the Commons. Socially Engaged Public Art," offers an in-depth study on performance-centered artworks she curated in unexpected urban spaces in Greece during the austerity years, complicating notions of memory, agency, mobility, and belonging. This roundtable explores how the book contributes to the larger effort to craft human and other-than-human narratives and repair shattered urbanities in response to the multifaceted crises of our time.

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Public art is a space in common produced through common practices — a shared ground for collectively reimagining civic identities, cultural differences, and political subjectivities in order to potentially reclaim the city as commons. The answer to the question of who has the right to the city is all of the city's human and other-than-human inhabitants, as they all produce social space in their daily lives.

SPEAKERS

Katia Arfara, Author, *Curating the Commons. Socially Engaged Public Art* (University of Michigan Press, 2025); Assistant Professor of Theater and Performance Studies, NYUAD

Peter Eckersall, Sidney E. Cohn Professor in Theatre, PhD Program in Theatre and Performance, The Graduate Center CUNY

Edward Ziter, Professor of Theatre Studies, Department of Undergraduate Drama Tisch School of the Arts, NYU



DEVĀNĀMPIYA

Nangiar Koothu is a 1,500-year-old solo theatre tradition from Kerala, closely linked to Sanskrit drama. Performed by a single female artist, it brings stories to life through powerful expressions, gestures, and narration. This performance retells the legend of Emperor Aśoka, tracing his journey from violent conqueror to enlightened seeker. Moving between different characters—a king, a mother, a monk, and more—the performer offers a window into themes of power, transformation, and the value of life. The artist will join Abhishek Majumdar in a conversation on how this ancient form speaks to contemporary audiences.

SPEAKER

Kapila Venu, Co-Director, Natanakairali, Research and Performing Centre for Traditional Arts, and Kutiyattam and Nangiar Koothu Performer

MODERATED BY

Abhishek Majumdar, Program Head, Theater; Arts Professor of Theater, NYUAD



FOLDING THE WORLD: INFINITE GROWTH ON A FINITE PLANET

This talk explores the tensions between infinite economic growth and the planet's finite resources, drawing on Professor Anders Levermann's groundbreaking work in climate science and economics. The speaker will present innovative approaches to reconciling climate protection with continued development, offering bold ideas for sustainable prosperity. Bridging scientific insight, economic theory, and societal responsibility, the talk offers critical perspectives for those seeking solutions to the climate crisis at the intersection of environment and economy.

SPEAKER

Anders Levermann, Professor of the Dynamics of the Climate System, Institute of Physics and Astrophysics, University of Potsdam

IN COLLABORATION WITH



SUSTAINABILITY AND STEWARDSHIP
NYU ABU DHABI



Embassy
of the Federal Republic of Germany
Abu Dhabi



APPLES AT THE CROSSROADS: DOMESTICATION, GENOMICS, AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

SPEAKER

Amandine Cornille, Associate
Professor, Division of Science, NYU
Abu Dhabi

The apple tree (*Malus domestica*) is one of the world's most iconic fruit crops, with profound cultural, economic, and ecological significance. Yet many questions remain about its origins, its domestication history, and its ability to withstand the challenges of climate change. Recent advances in population genomics have revealed that cultivated apples carry a complex legacy shaped by multiple wild relatives, human selection, and historical events across Eurasia. At the same time, wild apple species — the genetic repositories of diverse adaptive traits — hold untapped potential for breeding climate-resilient apple varieties.

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Evolution and fruit tree resilience have been shaped by both natural and human sources. Climate resilience depends on maintaining genomic, epigenomic, and ecological diversity — conservation and breeding must value wild relatives as a reservoir of adaptive potential.



PARTY MISFITS: THE SOCIAL BASES OF PLURALISM IN AN ERA OF PARTISAN POLITICS

SPEAKER

Delia Baldassarri, Silver Professor
of Sociology, NYU

Media, politicians, and scholars paint an America that is hopelessly divided. But that's not the full story. Many Americans don't fit neatly into the Republican or Democratic camp. These “party misfits” juggle complex social identities, mixed political views, and diverse networks. As parties harden along moral and economic lines, many feel politically homeless. How do wealthy seculars, religious Latinos, or suburban moms choose sides? People across partisan lines still live, work, and spend time together. How do they navigate political conflict in everyday life? Documenting these micro-level tensions, this talk exposes the growing gap between voters and elites.



IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE A THREAT TO DEMOCRACY?

In this talk, the speaker will talk about AI could undermine democracy by making it easier to create and spread two types of political misinformation: misleading texts and deepfake videos. Evidence comes from two experiments in the U.S. The first experiment showed that nefarious actors could use large language models to write highly persuasive propaganda with limited effort. The second experiment showed that AI-generated videos in political campaigns would erode faith in elections, yet most voters would not punish politicians for using fake videos to attack their opponents. Thus, despite its promise, AI could pose significant threats to democracy.

SPEAKER

Michael R. Tomz, William Bennett Munro Professor of Political Science and Senior Fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research



A CONVERSATION WITH ABHIJIT BANERJEE: POOR ECONOMICS, 15 YEARS ON

Nobel Laureate Abhijit Banerjee revisits the central ideas of his seminal work *Poor Economics*, co-authored with Esther Duflo, fifteen years after its publication. In this talk, Professor Banerjee reflects on what we've learned about poverty alleviation from a decade and a half of field experiments, policy interventions, and global upheavals. From the evolution of evidence-based development policy to the impact of new crises such as COVID-19 and climate change, this session will provide a thought-provoking look at the shifting landscape of poverty research—and what the future may hold.

SPEAKER

Abhijit V. Banerjee, Ford Foundation International Professor of Economics, MIT; Co-Founder & Director, Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL); Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences (2019)

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Tishani Doshi, Visiting Associate Professor of Practice, Literature and Creative Writing, NYUAD



THE POWER OF US: HOW SHARED IDENTITIES SHAPE CONFLICT AND COOPERATION

What does it mean to belong — and how does our sense of identity unite or divide us? Group cooperation is one of the most remarkable features of human nature, enabling people to build teams, communities, and nations. Yet the same psychological forces that bind us together can also drive conflict and polarization. In this talk, the speaker explains how our social identities — the groups we feel part of — shape our thoughts, emotions, and actions. Drawing on insights from social psychology and cognitive science, this talk reveals how understanding identity can help us understand and address some of today's greatest challenges, including political division, misinformation, climate change, and threats to democracy.

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We contain multitudes of identities. We are not just one thing. Each of us walking around the world has many identities — and those identities fundamentally shape our cognition, our beliefs, our attention, our feelings, and our behavior. Social identity can lead us astray, can lead to conflict and discrimination — but it can also be something that connects us to others.

SPEAKER

Jay Van Bavel, Professor of Psychology and Director of the Center for Conflict & Cooperation, NYU



THE URGENCIES OF WATER: THINKING ACROSS AND THROUGH THE INDIAN OCEAN

In this talk, the speaker will explore a series of objects that highlight the tension between two divergent ways of understanding the Indian Ocean: as a maritime thoroughfare shaped by the forces of trade and intrepid merchants, and as a deep, watery, and populated space brought into focus by the urgencies of rising ecological devastation. The talk discusses how these competing frameworks continue to shape oceanic thinking today.

SPEAKER

Nancy Um, Associate Director for Research and Knowledge Creation, Getty Research Institute



THEATER, POLITICS AND PEDAGOGY IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

This conversation between Abhishek Majumdar and Rubén Polendo examines the making and teaching of theater in a global context. The talk centers around two of Majumdar's recently published books, *Theatre Across Borders* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023) and *Collected Plays* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023). Both Polendo and Majumdar have spent several years training and working in global contexts and this dialogue is about their learnings as practitioners and pedagogues.

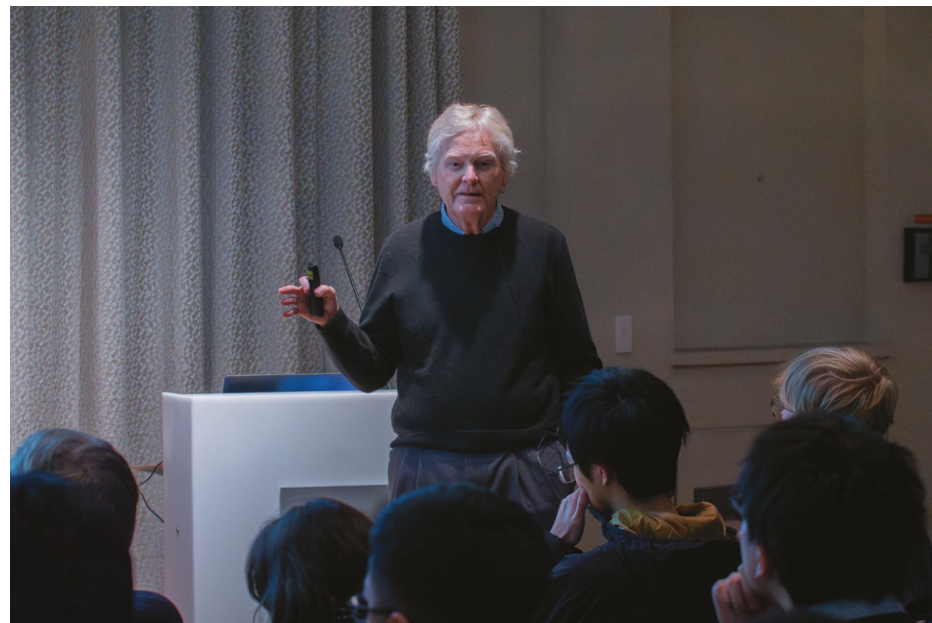
“

Rather than thinking of the global, is to think of myself and my work as something that manifests an identity that is more of a borderland or identity, that really sits in a space that travels and engages and interrogates the question of borders. For me, that explains not only my view of my work, but also my embodied experience.

SPEAKERS

Abhishek Majumdar, Playwright, Director, and Artistic Director, Nalanda Arts Studio Bangalore; Arts Professor, and Program Head of Theater, NYUAD

Rubén Polendo, Artistic Director, Theater Mitu; Dean, Tisch School of the Arts and Arts Professor, NYU



LIFE'S 24 HOUR CLOCK

This talk describes how research using the fruit fly *Drosophila* revealed the make-up of the circadian clock. The first clock gene to be detected in any organism, named “period”, was physically isolated by Young in 1984 and screens in his laboratory subsequently identified five additional genes that are each essential for production of circadian rhythms. Interactions among these genes, and their proteins, contribute to a network of molecular oscillations within single cells throughout the body and allow circadian rhythms to align with environmental day/night cycles. Most of the clock genes discovered by Young and his colleagues in *Drosophila* are also central to the circadian clock in humans.

“

56 of the 100 most often prescribed drugs in the US have rhythmic gene targets. Half of those have a half life of less than six hours. So now imagine that you've got an oscillating target and a drug whose half life is six hours — do you want to take the drug in the morning, or in the evening? This, unfortunately, isn't put on your prescription. I think it should be on the label.

SPEAKER

Michael Young, Richard and Jeanne Fisher Professor and Head of the Laboratory of Genetics, The Rockefeller University

ORGANIZED BY

Claude Desplan, Silver Professor of Biology and Neuroscience, Department of Biology, NYU



ENGINEERING YOUR HEART'S HEALTH

Imagine a virtual model that mirrors a patient's heart and updates itself as new health and environmental information emerges. By combining medical data with biophysical knowledge, this model can simulate how the heart functions, anticipate how disease may progress, and predict how a patient might respond to treatment. These personalized, evolving replicas—known as digital twins—provide clinicians with a powerful tool for early risk assessment and more informed decisions. This lecture examines how machine learning and physics-based heart models are converging to advance precision care in cardiology.

SPEAKER

Natalia Trayanova, Professor of Medicine at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine



SIMPLIFYING COMPLEXITY: PROPOSING A NEW METHOD FOR ENHANCING MUSICAL MEMORY

Some piano music resists memory, even for accomplished performers. For more than a century, post-tonal works have challenged musicians without offering clear strategies for learning and recall. This lecture-recital introduces Conceptual Simplification, a new approach developed through recent doctoral research that rethinks how complex music can be understood and memorised. Drawing on ideas from mathematics and computer science, the method offers fresh perspectives on musical structure and memory. Live piano performances accompany the talk, bringing these ideas vividly to life.

SPEAKER

Laura Farré Rozada, Award winning pianist *American Classical Young Musician Award*; Associate Professor, Polytechnic University of Catalonia; Visiting Professor, Catalonia College of Music



ARE THE HIGHEST ENERGY PARTICLES IN THE UNIVERSE MADE OF PRECIOUS METALS?

The origin of the most energetic particles in the Universe—known as ultrahigh energy cosmic rays (UHECRs)—is one of astrophysics' most perplexing mysteries. These particles are incredibly rare and powerful, traveling across space with energies far beyond what humans can generate on Earth. In this talk, the speaker presents a groundbreaking theory that traces the source of UHECRs to the merger of two neutron stars to form a black hole—cosmic events so extreme they create precious elements like gold and platinum and produce gravitational waves recently detected for the first time. Could the Universe's most powerful particles be made of the same materials we treasure on Earth? This lecture explores the cutting-edge science behind a bold new answer to a decades-old question.

“

You have two neutron stars and when they get very close so they start life at some big separation because most stars are born by binary pairs.

SPEAKER

Glennys Farrar, Professor of Physics, Silver Professor, NYU



THE WORTH OF WATER: CHASING SOLUTIONS TO THE WORLD'S GREATEST CHALLENGE

Nearly one-third of the world's population lacks reliable access to safe water or sanitation, with serious consequences for health, education, and economic opportunity. This talk examines the global water crisis through the lenses of policy, finance, and development, asking why access remains uneven despite available solutions. Drawing on the experience of Water.org, founded in 2009 by Matt Damon and Gary White, the discussion explores financial innovation and cross-sector partnerships as pathways to expanding access. Looking ahead to the 2026 UN Water Conference, the talk considers long-term, scalable approaches to improving public health, equity, and shared prosperity worldwide.

SPEAKER

Gary White, Co-founder and CEO, Water.org

MODERATED BY

Gareth Wynn, Chief Communications Officer, TAQA



AI FOR SUSTAINABILITY: INNOVATION, POLICY, AND IMPACT

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping how societies address climate change, resource management, and inclusive growth. This event brings together a keynote address and a panel discussion to examine how AI-driven innovations in technology and finance can advance sustainable development. Designed for a broad audience that includes policymakers, business leaders, and the general public, the program offers a clear and timely overview of how data, automation, and intelligent systems are influencing decision-making and long-term sustainability strategies across sectors.

“

The expectation is from now until 2030 any increase in renewable energy deployment is going to be matched with demand from AI data centers. So there is a tension between the benefits that AI presents to the increasing demands for resources from the AI industry.

PANEL MEMBERS

Harald Freissmuth, CEO, Group & Start-Ups; Lecturer, Executive Education for Sustainability, NYUAD

Amro Zakaria, Director, Kyoto Network; CEO, Madarik Ventures

Christen Bear, CEO, Bear Strategies

MODERATED BY

Yassin Yassin, CPA, FCA, MBA, Director and Co-Chair, Florida Accounting & Consulting Services, AmCham Banking & Finance Working Group

IN COLLABORATION WITH

SUSTAINABILITY AND STEWARDSHIP
NYU ABU DHABI





MUSEUMS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND PUBLIC SPACE

This talk examines how artworks operate across different contexts, from museums and galleries to public space and digital circulation. Drawing on over fifteen years of practice, artist Bahia Shehab reflects on how audience engagement shifts when art is encountered within institutional settings versus when it is publicly displayed and exposed to everyday life. Through examples from projects realized in cities such as New York, Istanbul, Marrakesh, and Hawaii, the talk considers how artworks travel, remain relevant across geographies, and are shaped by social media—particularly in regions where cultural infrastructure is limited.

SPEAKER

Bahia Shehab, Professor of Practice, Arts, Founding Director, TypeLab@AUC, AUC



THE SUN OF MY EXISTENCE: NEW COMPOSITION WITHIN CLASSICAL ARABIC MUSIC AND POETRY

In this talk, Faraj Abyad explores themes from his new album, *The Sun of My Existence*, focusing on its poetry, musical influences, and maqam theory. He examines how visual art, life experiences, storytelling, and meaningful human connection shape his compositional process. Faraj also discusses the history of Andalusian poetry and the poetic meters of classical Arabic verse. The talk concludes with an interactive performance with Faraj Abyad and Namisa Sun.

“

A big part of my initiative is also not only to highlight our music traditions as Arabs, but also the nearby countries who have their own. Each one has their own musical accent, which is so beautiful.

SPEAKER

Faraj Abyad, Contemporary Syrian Composer

PERFORMER

Namisa Sun, Musician



THE URBAN FRONTIER OF AI

SPEAKER

Maurizio Porfiri, Director, NYU Urban Institute

By 2050, 70% of the world will live in cities, and those cities will be powered by the data centers we build today. Far from being isolated in the periphery, 97.5% of US data centers are hidden in plain sight within urban centers, driven primarily by electricity-grid capacity. Drawing on research from the recently launched Urban Institute at NYU Tandon, Professor Maurizio Porfiri demonstrates how we can leverage data science and AI to address these complex urban interdependencies—from climate change and grid stability to the needs of aging populations and economic volatility. This talk reveals how urban science is being used to safeguard grid stability and shape the resilient cities of tomorrow.

“

Data centers are an urban phenomenon — against the prevailing narrative, they are unlikely to be a rural cloud. It seems that a future in which there is very strong growth is one that may not be as green as we would like it to be, and the tendency we see from the analysis is that many decisions are being made not around the stress on the environment, but more around the potential for growth.



WOMEN IN NEUROSCIENCE

This roundtable brings together scholars in cognition and neuroscience from around the world to examine the contributions, challenges, and emerging opportunities for women in the field. While women continue to advance major discoveries and shape our understanding of the brain, they remain underrepresented in some areas, particularly in senior and leadership roles. Through research insights and personal reflections, the panel considers progress to date, the barriers that persist, and how the discipline can better support diverse talent and perspectives.

PANELIST

Yanchao Bi, Professor, School of Psychological and Cognitive Sciences, Peking University

Ida Gobbini, Professor of Medical and Surgical Sciences, University of Bologna

Angelika Lingnau, Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience, University of Regensburg

Liuba Papeo, Research Director, CNRS; Director, Cognitive Neuropsychology and Development Team, Institute of Cognitive Sciences Marc Jeannerod; Marie Curie Fellow

MODERATED BY

Claudine Habak, Associate Professor of Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience, Emirates College for Advanced Education (ECAE)



STONE AGE TO CIVILIZATION

For nearly two million years, humans lived as mobile hunters and gatherers. Around 15,000 years ago, communities in the Fertile Crescent began to settle, and by 10,000 years ago, agriculture emerged. The first cities and states emerged around 5,000 years ago. Originating in the Middle East and later spreading worldwide, this transformation reshaped human societies. This talk examines how and why humans made this shift—and asks whether the rise of civilization ultimately improved human well-being.

SPEAKER

Robert Allen, Global Distinguished Professor of Economic History, NYUAD



CRAFTING AN AUTHENTIC LIFE

This conversation explores a question that defines both professional and personal life: how to live with intention and purpose. Drawing on her work as a scholar, educator, and three-time New York Times–Bestselling Author, Suzy Welch introduces the Becoming You methodology, emphasizing the importance of surfacing core values and cultivating self-awareness in navigating contemporary careers. In conversation with Rob Salomon, Welch reflects on leadership, decision-making, and the pursuit of clarity in an increasingly complex professional landscape.

SPEAKER

Suzy Welch, New York Times Best-Selling Author; Professor of Management Practice, NYU Stern

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Robert Salomon, Dean, Stern at NYU Abu Dhabi; Professor of International Management, NYU Stern School of Business; NEC Faculty Fellow, NYU Stern School of Business

IN COLLABORATION WITH





ART CAPITAL: TRANSFORMING MUSEUMS IN THE EMIRATES

The talk explores the dramatic changes that happened after the 2006 announcement of plans for a Louvre and a Guggenheim museum in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. In the decade between the museums' announcement and the opening of the Louvre Abu Dhabi in 2017, the ways artists worked changed as did the ways curators promoted their work, and the forms of arts organizations themselves shifted – taken together, the UAE case offers insight into how museum and artistic practice is shifting in the 21st century.

SPEAKER

Beth Derderian, Renée and Lester Crown Chair Assistant Professor in Middle East Studies and Anthropology, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University



HOW DO LAWS OF NATURE MAKE MATTER MOVE?

We assume laws of nature govern the universe, but how exactly do abstract laws make concrete objects move? This talk explores three rival philosophical models and their surprising consequences. Does the past actually produce the future? Can laws exist without affecting anything? The answers challenge our basic intuitions about time, matter, and why nature behaves predictably.

SPEAKER

Dr. Mario Hubert, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Ludwig-Maximilians University Munich

“

The big question is: do laws act in the world, or do they describe it? We cannot think about the structure of laws of nature just as philosophers in our own chair — we have to do some kind of interdisciplinary work and bring in knowledge of the sciences, and in this case of physics.

THE MATRIX COLLECTIVE

Join us for a reading by poets from The Matrix Collective. Disrupting the mythology of the solitary poet, this group of women—diverse in age, race, sexuality, and geography—formed a writing collective to sustain creativity and literary careers through risk-taking, vulnerability, and love. Since the early days of the pandemic, The Matrix has met each week over Zoom, gradually incorporating in-person retreats and readings into their activities. These writers support one another at every stage of the writing process, from generation, to revision, to publication, and celebration.

SPEAKERS

Felice Belle, Artists Network
Director at Narrative 4; Adjunct
Professor, St. Francis College

Brenda Cárdenas, Wisconsin
Poet Laureate; Professor Emerita,
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Nicole Callihan, Clinical Associate
Professor, NYU

Laura Cronk, Chair of Poetry
and Assistant Professor of Writing,
The New School

Iris Dunkle, Director, Napa Valley
Writers' Conference; Instructor,
University of California, Davis

Anel Flores, Artist and Author,
AF Studios; Director, La Otra Taller
Nepantla

Kate Gardner, New York writer
and poet

Janet Jennerjohn, Retired
Instructor of English, Milwaukee
Area Technical College

Michele Kotler, Executive
Director, CWP; Founder, Matrix

Amy Lemmon, Professor, Fashion
Institute of Technology-SUNY

Michelle Otero, Co-founder, Gozo

Catherine Prescott, Co-founder &
Editor-in-Chief, SWWIM

Anna Ross, Lecturer, Department
of English, Tufts University

Marion Wrenn, Executive Director
of Writing; Senior Lecturer of
Writing and Literature and Creative
Writing, NYUAD





BRIDGING THE BEDSIDE & THE BENCH: A MEDTECH PANEL DISCUSSION

Engineering a solution is one thing; making it work in a high-stakes clinical environment is another. This panel discussion features the minds who build the tech and the hands that use it. Leading bioengineers and frontline clinicians from NYU, NYU Abu Dhabi, the University of Michigan and the University of Maine deconstruct the challenges of medical device innovation. The topics include glaucoma and other chronic diseases such as metabolic, cardiovascular, and neurologic diseases. The discussion also touches on AI, robotics, and wearable technology to improve patient care.

“

You are the glue that can hold all of us together and make it more cohesive. You can be the bridges between the clinicians who have their blinders on and the engineers who have their blinders on — and really provide a true opportunity for synergy.

PANEL MEMBERS

Andreas Hielscher, Professor of Biomedical Engineering, NYU Tandon School of Engineering

Shy Shoham, Professor of Neuroscience and Ophthalmology, NYU School of Medicine and Tech4Health

Giovanna Guidoboni, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Dean of Engineering and Computing, University of Maine

Dr. Manjool Shah, Clinical Associate Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences and Associate Chair of Innovation, University of Michigan

Dr. Sefy Joshi, Ophthalmologist, NYU Langone Health

MODERATED BY

Yong-Ak Song, Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Bioengineering, NYUAD



ENGAGING WITH AFRICAN THEATRE

What is African theatre today? Bob Vorlicky and Judy Miller have some answers to that question through their work as editors and translators of contemporary African plays. Vorlicky brings to light the otherwise neglected work of eight African women playwrights from seven different countries and linguistic spheres. He explores the politics of translating indigenous languages into English. Miller surveys exemplary works of Francophone African authors from the immediate post-colonial period to the present. She also addresses the difficulties of translating these works for the American stage.

“

Translation is the best defense against cultural apartheid. It is colonialism that was monolingual, and that historically set up a hierarchy of languages. But I think we should think of our practice of translation as an act of hospitality and not of domination — as translation allows the encounter of two languages, and through this encounter the expansion of the worlds we live in.

SPEAKERS

Robert H. Vorlicky, Author, *Speaking Our Selves: New Plays by African Women* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2025); Professor of Theatre, NYUAD and Tisch School of the Arts, NYU

Judith G. Miller, Author, *Contemporary Francophone African Plays: An Anthology* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2024); Former Dean of Arts and Humanities, NYUAD; Professor of French Literature, NYU

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Adam Ashraf Elsayigh, Playwright



THE (MODEST) TRIUMPH OF THE EMBRYO

The talk explores the historical relationships that exist between the development and the evolution of embryos. What is the link between our developmental origin as individuals (a fertilized egg), on the one hand, and our evolutionary origin as a group of individuals (an ancestral population), on the other hand? And these embryos, are they really extraordinary constructions relying on carefully accumulated, multiple sets of precisely encoded instructions or instead, could they be the mere and only obligatory result of a chaotic program haphazardly built during the past hundreds of millions of years?

SPEAKER

Denis Duboule, Professor of Genetics and Chair of Evolution of Development and Genomes, Collège de France, Paris

ORGANIZED BY

Claude Desplan, Silver Professor of Biology and Neuroscience, Department of Biology, NYU

“

The embryo is a form that is relatively ill suited in its individual parts, yet functions well as a whole and is capable of reproducing itself. The outcome is inevitable, as only this solution is permitted by the sequence of constraints generated by the embryo itself as it develops and imposed by its past history. A triumph, certainly, but a very modest one.



COMMONSENSE PSYCHOLOGY IN MINDS AND MACHINES

How do we understand the minds of others? This talk explores the foundations of “commonsense psychology” by comparing how infants, adults, and AI systems infer intentions from actions alone. By pitting human intuition against state-of-the-art neural networks, this work tackles foundational debates across psychology, philosophy, and computer science — revealing the origins of intelligence, the divide between natural and artificial minds, and what it will take to build truly human-like, trustworthy AI.

SPEAKER

Moira Dillon, Assistant Professor of Psychology, NYU

“

It's easy to forget, but important to remember that human and artificial knowledge and learning are essentially different. Sometimes the results might look the same, but the similarity in output hides crucial differences in how human and artificial intelligences achieve results.



MOVING HISTORIES: CREATING BIOGRAPHY THROUGH DANCE

Can we “write” history through movement rather than words? What histories and knowledge do our bodies archive and express? In this event, choreographer Meredith Dincolo and historian Tara Zahra explore the artistic process and methodological challenges of researching and creating personal histories through movement.

CHOREOGRAPHERS AND
SPEAKERS

Meredith Dincolo, Choreographer,
Dance Educator

Tara Zahra, Hanna Holborn Gray
Professor of History, University of
Chicago

WITH COLLABORATORS

Jessica Tong, Rehearsal Director,
A.I.M by Kyle Abraham

Kendra Moore, Dance Educator

IN COLLABORATION WITH



THE HOUSE ARCHIVES BUILT

This talk focuses on the work of Dorothy Berry, author of *The House Archives Built and Other Thoughts on Black Archival Possibilities* (We Here Press, 2025), which is currently sold out in its third printing since being published in October 2025. Berry discusses family materials offered up to “the altar of higher learning” and struggles for access, accuracy, and locating joy in family photographs stewarded by institutional archives.

SPEAKER

Dorothy Berry, Archivist and
Writer

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Laylah Amatullah Barrayn,
Documentary Photographer,
Writer and Curator; Professor of
Photography, Rutgers University–
Newark

ORGANIZED BY

Gregory Pardlo, Professor of
Literature and Creative Writing
and 19 Washington Square North
Faculty Fellow, NYUAD

Montana Ray, Clinical Assistant
Professor of Liberal Studies, NYU;
19 Washington Square North
Faculty Fellow, NYUAD

IN COLLABORATION WITH



“

Donating family papers to an institutional archive is an act of trust in the best possible world and one of generosity. Giving important community records away to preserve for the future scholarship is a gift. But almost every family in the region offered up their burials to the altar of higher learning, where they are all minimally processed, sitting on shelves.



THE GLOBAL GAME: SPORT, GOVERNANCE, AND COMMUNITY IN THE 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP

The FIFA World Cup 2026 represents a pivotal moment in the globalization of sport, as North America prepares for a tournament of unprecedented scale. This panel investigates the sociopolitical and structural dimensions of hosting a cross-continental mega-event. Panelists will discuss the intersection of international sports diplomacy, the evolution of regional athletic identity, and the challenges inherent in global tournament expansion. By examining the synergy between sports governance, media representation, and local community engagement, the discussion situates the 2026 World Cup within a broader discourse on the role of professional club development and sport in 21st-century global society.

PANEL MEMBERS

Sophia Cai, White House Reporter, Politico

Bruce Revman, Co-Host City Manager, FIFA World Cup 2026 NYNJ Host Committee

IN COLLABORATION WITH



NAVIGATING GLOBAL RISKS: INSIGHTS FROM THE VRI

The Volatility and Risk Institute (VRI) explores the interplay between risks that shape our global economy. In this session, VRI Co-Directors Robert Engle and Richard Berner explain how the VRI measures complex global risks, focusing on the financial challenges posed by climate change and the effects of geopolitical risks on financial stability. As the VRI celebrates its recent expansion to NYU Abu Dhabi, this talk offers a unique look into how leading experts track systemic vulnerabilities and the future of global risk research.

SPEAKER

Robert F. Engle, Co-Director, The Volatility and Risk Institute and Professor Emeritus of Finance, NYU Stern

Richard Berner, Co-Director, The Volatility and Risk Institute and Clinical Professor Emeritus of Finance and Professor of Management Practice, NYU Stern

“

The wonderful thing about the World Cup is that you need that diversity of people within it. That's what makes it a true sort of exciting coming together as the world.

“

One of the things that we know is characterized by recent developments is that we're seeing supply shocks around the world. The pandemic was a supply shock to the global economy, and what we have more recently is an increasing prevalence of supply shocks. Central banks aren't really equipped to deal with supply shocks. Other tools are needed to do that.

CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

YEAR IN REVIEW 2025-26

TOTAL ATTENDEES

572

SPEAKERS

209

COUNTRIES

38

PROGRAMS

13

CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

OCTOBER

- 15-17 Data Science Frontiers:
Society and Politics
- 28-29 Drug Discovery, Delivery
and Therapeutics III

NOVEMBER

- 5-7 1st MENA Conference on Living
Therapeutics
- 10-12 The Future is Not a Grave
- 19-21 Theorizing Transience: Temporary
Migrations in the Middle East
and Asia-Pacific
- 25-27 Attachment Crossroads:
Current Research on Parent-Child
Attachment from Eastern and Western
Perspectives

DECEMBER

- 8-9 Oceanic Crossroads: Bringing
the Indian Ocean into Conversation
with the Mediterranean
- 16-19 Mathematical, Computational,
and Experimental Approach in
Cardiovascular and Cancer Research

JANUARY

- 13-15 High Energy, Cosmology,
and Astroparticle Physics Conference

FEBRUARY

- 2-4 Female Voices in Empirical Economics
- 9-11 Innovations in Neuroimaging Methods
- 16 Economic Miracles and their Afterlives

MAY

- 21-22 Advances in Research on Political
Violence (NYU Florence and EUI)

JUNE

- 1-3 Frontiers of Sociology: Research from
the 3 NYUs (NYU London)

DATA SCIENCE FRONTIERS: SOCIETY AND POLITICS

This workshop brings together scholars from across the social sciences to examine algorithms for causal identification and robust inference in the study of society and politics. The conference features a day of didactic sessions, sessions with competitively selected papers, panels with featured speakers, and a poster session for graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and junior faculty. The conference offers high quality feedback to works in progress and serve to deepen connections between scholars working on methodology across political science, sociology, economics, and other social sciences.

October 15-16 features keynote speakers, paper panels, and a poster session; October 17 features 3 teaching workshops dedicated to the latest tools in social data science research.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Duncan J. Watts, Stevens University Professor and Director, Computational Social Science Lab, University of Pennsylvania

CO-CONVENED BY

Aaron Kaufman, Associate Professor of Political Science, NYUAD

Delia Baldassarri, Silver Professor, Department of Sociology, NYU

Cyrus Samii, Professor of Politics, NYU

IN COLLABORATION WITH

NYU Sociology
NYU Politics
Social Science Division, NYUAD
NYUAD Computational Social Science Cluster
Social Science Research Hub, NYU



DRUG DISCOVERY, DELIVERY AND THERAPEUTICS III

The Natural Product Drug Discovery Symposium gathers together experts from academia, pharma, biotech, and research institutes to explore the latest innovations from pharmaceutical science. Key topics include AI-driven drug discovery, advanced delivery systems, emerging therapeutics, drug target characterization, and therapeutic strategy development. Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies are unlocking nature's untapped therapeutic potential, overcoming technical challenges, and pioneering new chemical tools that drive innovation across the drug discovery pipeline. With a focus on interdisciplinary collaboration, this symposium offers a unique platform to exchange ideas, build partnerships, and shape the future of natural-product-driven health innovation.

CONVENED BY

Mazin Magzoub, Associate Professor of Biology, NYUAD

Piergiorgio Percipalle, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Programs, Program Head of Biology, and Professor of Biology, NYUAD

Jean-Claude Twizere, Associate Professor, University of Liege

Wael Rabeh, Associate Professor of Chemistry, NYUAD

Kourosh Salehi-Ashtiani, Associate Professor of Biology and Global Network Associate Professor of Biology, NYUAD

Ali Trabolshi, Program Head of Chemistry; Professor of Chemistry; Global Network Professor of Chemistry, Faculty of Arts and Science, NYUAD



1ST MENA CONFERENCE ON LIVING THERAPEUTICS

The inaugural MENA Conference on Living Therapeutics gathers global innovators in cell therapy, organ-on-a-chip, gene editing, and biofabrication to shape the future of living medicines. The three-day program blends visionary keynotes, interactive panels, startup showcases, and practical workshops on clinical translation, regulation, and scalable manufacturing. Join researchers, clinicians, investors, and policymakers in dynamic Abu Dhabi to exchange ideas, spark collaborations, and accelerate the next generation of precise, patient-specific therapies.

CONVENED BY

Andras Gyorgy, Assistant Professor of Electrical Engineering and Bioengineering, NYUAD; Global Network Assistant Professor of Electrical and Biomedical Engineering, NYU Tandon School of Engineering

Ken-ichiro Kamei, Associate Professor, Biology and Bioengineering, NYUAD; Global Network Associate Professor of Biology, NYU

Vijayavenkataraman Sanjairaj, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Bioengineering, NYUAD; Global Network Assistant Professor, Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, NYU Tandon School of Engineering, NYUAD

Jeremy Teo, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Bioengineering, NYUAD Global Network Assistant Professor of Mechanical and Biomedical Engineering, NYU Tandon School of Engineering

IN COLLABORATION WITH

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PUBLISHING



THE FUTURE IS NOT A GRAVE

The Future Is Not a Grave convenes artists and scholars to examine futurisms and futurescapes across the MENA, the Gulf and Indian Ocean worlds. We explore artistic utopianism, stories of human adaptability, and designs for more equitable ways of living as collective antidotes to climate despair and political catastrophe. Grounded in the conviction that communities rely on artists to imagine otherwise, the project treats historical and contemporary futurisms as research tools that cut across disciplines, opening new possibilities for knowledge, practice, and social imagination.

CONVENED BY
Tishani Doshi, Visiting Associate
Professor of Practice, Literature
and Creative Writing, NYUAD

Masha Kirasirova, Associate
Professor of History, NYUAD



THEORIZING TRANSIENCE: TEMPORARY MIGRATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ASIA-PACIFIC

Much of contemporary international migration occurs under conditions of temporariness. But migration theory has yet to fully make sense of migrants' varied experiences of temporariness. Instead, transience is either equated with precarity or celebrated as a completely free existence. This international workshop brings together scholars whose research investigates various manifestations of transience in international migration, across different migrant categories, and spanning both the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific. The goal is to center intersectional migrant experiences and migration policies in non-Western contexts, in order to build a more comprehensive migration theory.

CONVENED BY
Laure Assaf, Assistant Professor
of Arab Crossroads Studies and
Anthropology, NYUAD

Anju Mary Paul, Professor of
Social Research and Public Policy,
NYUAD

Brenda Yeoh, Professor of Social
Sciences, National University of
Singapore



ATTACHMENT CROSSROADS: CURRENT RESEARCH ON PARENT-CHILD ATTACHMENT FROM EASTERN AND WESTERN PERSPECTIVES

This workshop of attachment theory from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas examines both the universality and cultural specificity of caregiving practices. Through historical and contemporary perspectives, participants will engage with emerging research on secure base scripts and sensitive caregiving across diverse contexts. By centering perspectives from the majority world, the workshop seeks to advance cross-cultural understanding, inform global dialogues on attachment, and foster collaborative research across international laboratories.

CONVENED BY
Theodore Waters, Associate Professor of Psychology,
NYUAD



OCEANIC CROSSROADS: BRINGING THE INDIAN OCEAN INTO CONVERSATION WITH THE MEDITERRANEAN

Over the past seventy years Mediterranean Studies has become a dynamic field of study, with the Mediterranean serving as a lens through which geographic, religious, and political borders could be interrogated. Much of this work focused on the medieval and early modern periods, but influenced our understanding of topics such as migration and intellectual exchange during later centuries. The field of Indian Ocean Studies has a younger genealogy, with foundational work that stressed the economic and political connections across this larger ocean. The studies of the two bodies of water during the past decades largely continued in parallel, seldom directly interacting. This edition of the Mediterranean Seminar takes “Oceanic Studies” as a means to explore possible connections, productive parallels, or critical rejections—the ways that Mediterranean and Indian Ocean Studies can be brought together (or should be kept apart).

CONVENED BY
Justin Stearns, Professor of Arab Crossroad; Global
Network Professor of Arab Crossroads Studies, NYUAD

Sharon Kinoshita, Professor of Literature; Fellow,
Medieval Academy of America; Co-director,
The Mediterranean Seminar, University of California
Santa Cruz

Brian Catlos, Professor of Religious Studies, University
of Colorado Boulder



MATHEMATICAL, COMPUTATIONAL, AND EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH IN CARDIOVASCULAR AND CANCER RESEARCH

This conference brings together internationally recognized scientists and leading experts from diverse fields to explore the latest advancements in mathematical modeling, computational techniques, and experimental methods for addressing cardiovascular and cancer diseases. Engage with advanced research, participate in insightful discussions, and network with professionals dedicated to improve health research and advance patient care.

CONVENED BY
Mohamed Ali, Research Scientist,
NYUAD

Elena Beretta, Clinical Professor of
Mathematics, NYUAD

Azam Gholami, Program Head
of Physics; Associate Professor of
Physics, NYUAD

Tej-eddine Ghoul, Associate
Professor of Mathematics; Global
Network Associate Professor of
Mathematics, Courant Institute of
Mathematical Sciences, NYUAD

Nader Masmoudi, Professor of
Mathematics, NYUAD



HIGH ENERGY, COSMOLOGY, AND ASTROPARTICLE PHYSICS CONFERENCE

The energy, cosmology, and intensity frontier are the most relevant paradigms to understand the fundamental forces of nature and the evolution of the early Universe. The conference brings the latest advances in particle physics, neutrino and dark matter phenomenology, inflation and early phase transitions in the Universe, and gravitational waves. It also explores meaningful extensions of the fundamental Standard Model of fundamental interactions that can explain the underlying unknowns of Nature and the use of advanced machine learning in experimental data analysis across these areas of knowledge.

CONVENED BY
Marta Losada, Associate Vice
Chancellor for Global Research and
Senior Vice Provost for Research;
Professor of Physics; Global
Network Professor of Physics,
NYUAD



FEMALE VOICES IN EMPIRICAL ECONOMICS

This conference is designed to advance the field of empirical economics, which plays a key role within the broader field of economics by focusing on data-driven research to validate and refine economic theories. By bringing together economists who specialize in empirical methods, the conference provides a venue to explore the latest techniques and tools, aimed at enhancing the application of economic theories in policy-making and practical scenarios. The conference enriches empirical economics by refining theories, producing policy-relevant insights, and expanding the scope of analysis.

CONVENED BY
Pauline Corblet, Assistant
Professor of Economics, NYUAD

Alais Martin-Baillon, Assistant
Professor of Economics, NYUAD

Veda Narasimhan, Assistant
Professor of Economics, NYUAD

INNOVATIONS IN NEUROIMAGING METHODS

Neuroimaging has revolutionized our understanding of the human brain. After the first wave of studies over the last two decades, a new set of innovations have created a second revolution in human brain imaging. The Innovations in Neuroimaging Methods Conference (INMeC) will bring together an international and diverse cohort of experts in cognitive neuroimaging to assess the current state of human brain research and identify future directions. The conference will consist of research presentations, panel discussions on “Women in Neuroscience” and “Neuroimaging in the UAE and MENA region,” a poster session, and tutorials for students and junior researchers on cutting-edge neuroimaging tools.

CONVENED BY

Olivia Cheung, Assistant Professor of Psychology,
United Arab Emirates University

David Melcher, Professor of Psychology; Global
Network Professor of Psychology, NYUAD



ECONOMIC MIRACLES AND THEIR AFTERLIVES

To witness the world through the many unfolding “economic miracles” is to behold dreamworlds and catastrophes all at once. Initially tied to the post-war phenomenon of *wirtschaftswunder* – the dramatic pace of economic recovery in West Germany – the seductive idea of “economic miracle” captured the imagination of policymakers across the world. This workshop traces the work the ideas of ‘miracle’ perform in the domain of economy, and the kind of utopias/dystopias they conjure in times of peace and war. Based on a recent issue of *Radical History Journal* devoted to this theme, the workshop brings together contributors to reflect on the historical dialectic between ruins and reconstruction, decline and emergence which remains at the heart of this phenomenon.

CONVENED BY
Ravinder Kaur, Professor of Asian Studies, University of Copenhagen

Barbara Weinstein, Professor of History, NYU

ADVANCES IN RESEARCH ON POLITICAL VIOLENCE (NYU FLORENCE AND EUI)

Scholarship on the causes, dynamics, and consequences of political violence has been rapidly evolving over the past decade. We now have an extensive set of theoretical insights and a large and ever-expanding set of empirical studies. However, some of the findings are contradictory, and there have been few efforts to synthesize the theoretical insights. The purpose of this workshop is to take stock of the theories, methodological approaches, and empirical findings on the different aspects of the study of political violence in order to formulate an agenda for future research.

CONVENED BY
Joan Barceló, Assistant Professor of Political Science, NYUAD

Elias Dinas, Professor of Political and Social Sciences, EUI

Leonid Peisakhin, Associate Professor of Political Science, NYU Abu Dhabi; Global Network Associate Professor of Politics, Faculty of Arts and Science, NYU

Sascha Riaz, Assistant Professor of Political and Social Sciences, EUI

IN COLLABORATION WITH



FRONTIERS OF SOCIOLOGY: RESEARCH FROM THE 3 NYUS (NYU LONDON)

This workshop brings together research at the frontiers of Sociology from sociologists working at the 3 portal NYU campuses—NYU in New York, NYU Abu Dhabi, and NYU Shanghai. The main goal of the workshop is to foster intellectual exchange and collaboration between sociologists in the 3 NYUs, while exploring work at the frontiers of sociology using diverse methods and theoretical approaches, and data from multiple nations.

CONVENED BY
Paula England, Dean of Social Science, NYUAD

Berkay Ozcan, Professor of Social Research and Public Policy, NYUAD

PROUD OF UAE
**RESEARCH
STORIES**

#PROUDOFUAE



The Office of Sustainability and Stewardship at NYU Abu Dhabi continues to advance the UAE's sustainability ambitions through leadership, dialogue, and strategic engagement. Over the past year, the office has supported the UAE's growing role in climate and sustainability action by strengthening institutional partnerships, participating in major national platforms, and creating opportunities for meaningful exchange on environmental priorities.

A notable achievement this year was the international recognition of Moza Al Nuaimi, Sustainability and Stewardship Specialist at NYU Abu Dhabi, as one of the Women of the Future: 50 Rising Stars in ESG for 2025. Supported by the Financial Times, Oxford's Saïd Business School, and Tesco, the global programme honors women aged thirty-five and under who are making meaningful contributions to environmental, social, and governance leadership. This recognition reflects both an individual achievement and the growing visibility of UAE National leadership in sustainability on the international stage. The office also contributed to key sustainability conversations across the UAE. Through participation in national platforms such as Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week and the World Future Energy Summit, NYU Abu Dhabi helped highlight the breadth of sustainability-related research and innovation taking place across the university. These engagements created opportunities to connect academic research with national priorities in climate action, resource efficiency, and sustainable development, while reinforcing the role of higher education institutions in supporting the UAE's long-term environmental agenda.

In parallel, the office supported strategic dialogue on emerging sustainability challenges and opportunities through partnerships that encouraged knowledge exchange and cross-sector engagement. This included collaboration with AmCham Abu Dhabi to host AI for Sustainability: Innovation, Policy, and Impact, a panel discussion that explored the role of artificial intelligence, data, and innovation in advancing sustainable development and informing more effective responses to environmental challenges in the UAE and beyond.

Collectively, these efforts demonstrate how the Office of Sustainability and Stewardship is contributing to the UAE's sustainability agenda by strengthening leadership, encouraging dialogue, and fostering engagement across research, policy, and institutional practice. They also reflect NYU Abu Dhabi's own sustainability commitments, including its goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. Through its climate action plan, and in alignment with the UAE's Net Zero by 2050 strategy, NYU Abu Dhabi continues to embed sustainability into institutional priorities while contributing to a broader national vision that places innovation, collaboration, and long-term environmental responsibility at the center of the country's continued growth and ambition.

WOMEN OF THE FUTURE

50 RISING STARS in ESG

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Moza Al Nuaimi

United Arab Emirates

Celebrating female trailblazers at the forefront of ESG

#PROUDOFUAE

The UAE's expanding scientific presence in Antarctica reflects the country's growing commitment to climate research, environmental monitoring, and international scientific collaboration. Through the work of Ahmed Alkaabi and Badr Al Ameri of the National Center of Meteorology, alongside their colleagues and international partners, Emirati expertise is contributing to research in one of the world's most remote and environmentally sensitive regions.

Their work supports the development of the UAE's polar research capabilities through scientific infrastructure designed to generate long-term environmental data. The establishment of the first Emirati laboratories in Antarctica marks a significant milestone, strengthening national research capacity and providing a specialized platform for studies related to climate modelling, geophysical monitoring, sea-level research, and environmental change. It also reinforces the Emirates Polar Program as a platform for science diplomacy and international cooperation.

On Livingston Island, the installation of an advanced Emirati weather station further expands this research agenda. Designed to observe, monitor, and analyze local and mesoscale atmospheric conditions, the station supports research on climate change, weather forecasting, early warning systems, and the relationship between polar weather systems and wider planetary dynamics. The data collected will also contribute to regional and global forecasting models and support collaboration among scientists working in Antarctica.

The installation of a tidal gauge station under extreme environmental conditions represents another important contribution to oceanographic and climate science. Equipped with high-precision sensors, the station is designed to monitor sea-level changes, tidal behaviour, weather conditions, and oceanographic parameters throughout the year, while transmitting real-time data to the National Center of Meteorology Data Center in the UAE. This information will support research in oceanography, glaciology, and climate science, while contributing to global tidal databases.

Together, these achievements highlight the UAE's ambition to play an active role in addressing global environmental challenges through research, innovation, and international cooperation. By contributing scientific infrastructure and expertise to Antarctica, Ahmed Alkaabi, Badr Al Ameri, and their collaborators are helping expand the knowledge needed to better understand climate systems, sea-level change, and environmental risk. Their work reflects the country's continued growth as a contributor to science, sustainability, and long-term environmental responsibility.



#PROUDOFUAE

The UAE Healthy Future Study represents a major milestone in the country's efforts to advance public health research, preventive healthcare, and precision medicine. Established as one of the UAE's key long-term population studies, the project responds to the growing burden of cardiometabolic diseases, including obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, which continue to affect communities across the country.

With baseline recruitment completed in January 2026 and 15,018 participants enrolled, the study marks a significant achievement for health research in the UAE. It reflects the nation's ambition to build a stronger scientific foundation for data-driven healthcare and to better understand the factors shaping health and disease within the UAE population.

The study brings together extensive clinical, demographic, lifestyle, and behavioral information with advanced molecular profiling, including genomics, proteomics, metabolomics, lipidomics, and microbiome analysis. By integrating these datasets, researchers can examine how genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors interact over time, offering new insights into disease risk, early detection, and prevention.

Aligned with national priorities in personalized medicine and preventive health, and complementing major initiatives such as the Emirati Genome Program, the UAE Healthy Future Study is helping establish the evidence base needed for precision public health approaches tailored to the country's unique demographic and genetic landscape.



Beyond its scientific value, the study is also strengthening the UAE's research ecosystem by supporting interdisciplinary collaboration, training students, developing young investigators, and fostering partnerships across institutions. As it moves into its longitudinal follow-up phase, the UAE Healthy Future Study is positioned to become a lasting national resource, enabling researchers to track disease trajectories, identify early biomarkers of chronic illness, and support more targeted health interventions and policies.

Through this work, the study contributes to the UAE's broader vision of becoming a global leader in scientific innovation, healthcare transformation, and population-based research.



#PROUDOFUAE

Noura Al Obeidli, Visiting Assistant Professor of Gender Studies and Media Studies, examines the intersections of media, gender, culture, and society in the UAE and the wider Gulf region. Through historical and contemporary perspectives, her research explores how media platforms, cultural production, and public narratives shape conversations around identity, representation, memory, and social change. At the heart of this work is a sustained interest in the relationship between communication and power, and in how local voices navigate visibility, tradition, and modernity within rapidly transforming societies.

A central focus of Al Obeidli's scholarship is the evolving role of Emirati women in media and public life. Her research documents the experiences of women in journalism, broadcasting, and the creative industries, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges that have accompanied the UAE's social and institutional development. Drawing on oral histories, archival research, and critical media analysis, her work contributes to the preservation of cultural memory while encouraging deeper reflection on representation, self-narration, and the ways societies tell their own stories.

These themes also shape her teaching and public engagement at New York University Abu Dhabi. In the classroom, Al Obeidli invites students from diverse international backgrounds to engage critically with the histories, cultures, and media landscapes of the UAE and the broader Middle East beyond simplified or stereotypical narratives. Her courses on media, culture, gender, and politics create spaces for thoughtful

dialogue on how societies represent themselves, how narratives are constructed, and how communication can both preserve and challenge social norms.

Her commitment to dialogue extends beyond the classroom through public talks, seminars, and guest speaker events that foreground the voices and experiences of prominent Emirati women and regional figures in media, literature, art, leadership, and communication. By bringing these perspectives into conversation with students and wider audiences, she creates meaningful opportunities to reflect on ambition, creativity, leadership, and social responsibility within the UAE's ongoing development. Through research, teaching, and public dialogue, Al Obeidli's work contributes to a deeper understanding of the UAE's cultural and intellectual landscape. Her scholarship underscores the vital role of universities in documenting social transformation, preserving memory, and fostering informed conversations about identity, heritage, globalization, and representation in a rapidly changing nation.

Noura Al Obeidli, Visiting Assistant Professor of Gender Studies and Media Studies





Sep 16 | To the Edge of the Earth: The First Emirati Scientific Mission to Antarctica



Sep 22 | A Celebration of African Theaters | African Theaters Now: A Conversation



Nov 5-7 | 1st MENA Conference on Living Therapeutics



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Nov 10-12 | The Future is Not a Grave



Nov 19-21 | Theorizing Transience: Temporary Migrations in the Middle East and Asia-Pacific



Dec 8-9 | Oceanic Crossroads: Bringing the Indian Ocean into Conversation with the Mediterranean



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Jan 12 | Simplifying Complexity: Proposing a New Method for Enhancing Musical Memory



Jan 21 | AI for Sustainability: Innovation, Policy, and Impact



Feb 9-11 | Innovations in Neuroimaging Methods



Feb 2-4 | Female Voices in Empirical Economics



Feb 9-11 | Innovations in Neuroimaging Methods



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