

A daily newsletter issued by the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre, that brings you to the heart of the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair. Discover the latest releases, golden opportunities, and inspiring encounters. Stay up to date and craft your own story among the leading figures of the publishing industry.

The publisher was honoured at the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair as part of the Pioneers of Arabic Publishing initiative.

## Dar Sader, Lebanon: five generations guarding 160 of intellectual treasures years

Dar Sader boasts a collection of 2,700 books and 300 manuscripts, the oldest of which date back to 1870.

As part of its ongoing efforts to celebrate the legacy of distinguished Arab publishing houses that have enriched the Arab cultural landscape, the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF) 2025 honoured Lebanon's Dar Sader, one of the oldest publishing houses in the Arab world.

With a legacy spanning over a century and a half, Dar Sader has been a beacon of enlightenment, culture, and creativity. Over the course of 160 years, the publishing house has produced more than 2,700 books, in addition to dozens of volumes and 300 manuscripts, the oldest of which dates back to 1870.

The recognition of Lebanon's Dar Sader comes as part of the 'Pioneers of Arabic Publishing' initiative, launched by the fair in 2024. The initiative aims to shed light on notable cultural institutions that have played a key role in shaping the Arab library, nurturing the Arab collective consciousness, and enriching its cultural and intellectual heritage.

Dar Sader was honoured in recognition of its remarkable legacy and outstanding contributions to the publishing industry, as well as its vital role in promoting culture and knowledge. The journey began in 1863, when founder Ibrahim Sader embraced his dream and brought it to life in the heart of Beirut, Lebanon. Over the course of 160 years, Ibrahim, followed by his children and grandchildren, remained dedicated and committed to transforming Dar Sader into a leading cultural institution in the Arab world that contributes to fostering Arab thought and strengthening cultural identity.

Dar Sader officially began its publishing journey in 1870 with the release of 'Al-Wahm fi Sirat Mubarak bin Rayhan wa Mahboubatu-hu Bint Al-Khan' by Shaker Shuqair. This was followed in 1883 by 'Mashhad Al-Ahwal' by Francis Fathallah, and in 1887 by 'Al-Tuha Al-Saniya fi Tarikh Al-Qustantiniya' by Suleiman Jawish. Despite living through several wars, the publishing house never ceased its operations. On the contrary, it expanded its reach with sales outlets across Constantinople, Jerusalem, Acre, Damascus, Aleppo, and Alexandria.

Following successive global conflicts and the destruction of downtown Beirut during the Lebanese Civil War, the Dar Sader headquarters was rebuilt, an affirmation of the strong belief held by Ibrahim Sader and his children that a cultural renaissance in Beirut must be rooted in the establishment of strong educational and cultural institutions, from publishing houses and printing presses to schools and universities. In line with this vision, they expanded Dar Sader and added a small printing press.

Dar Sader continued its cultural mission well into the 20th century, becoming a home to some of the Arab world's most prominent literary figures, including Gibran Khalil Gibran, Mikhail Naimy, and Elia Abu Madi, along with publishing major volumes and classical texts such as 'Lisan al-Arab' by Ibn Manzur, 'Mu'jam Al-Buldan' by Yaqut Al-Hamawi, and 'Al-Aghani' by Abu Faraj Al-Isfahani. The number of Dar Sader's published titles in literature, culture, heritage, and knowledge

has exceeded 2,700 books by Lebanese and Arab authors, many of which remain in-demand across the globe.

Several of Dar Sader's publications achieved remarkable sales rates, including 'Lisan Al-Arab' where the publishing house was the first to release a print-edition of the book – as well as the poetry collection 'Majnun Layla', and 'One Thousand and One Nights', with Dar Sader issuing the first edition nearly a century ago, a copy of which still exists in the publisher's archive. Their portfolio also includes a collection of rare books and around 300 original manuscripts, including the first list of Dar Sader's publications, released in 1886 under the title 'Al-Rawda Al-Bahiyya fi Asma' Kutub Al-Maktaba Al-Umumiyya'.

The Sader family views publishing as a noble, intellectual, and creative profession, driven by a deep passion for culture and books. This passion has long fuelled their dedication and perseverance in the house's literary pursuits. For them, publishing is more than a profession; it is an intellectual concept, and a legacy passed down from founder Ibrahim Sader to his children and grandchildren, with each generation handing the torch to the next. Today, the fifth generation is preparing to carry that legacy forward, contributing in its own way by embracing modern tools such as social media, e-books, and digital applications.

Dar Sader urges emerging publishers to treat the profession as a mission in service of culture and humanity, and not merely as a commercial endeavour. It emphasises that this is a rapidly evolving field due to scientific advancements and progress in technology and modern knowledge tools. To succeed, publishers must remain present, leading, and innovative, especially in the face of significant challenges confronting the publishing industry, where only those with creative and innovative ideas will thrive.

However, embracing technological developments and utilising modern tools alone is not enough, and the support of ministries of culture and other cultural entities remains essential. As private-sector efforts and individual initiatives help ensure continuity, sustainable growth requires the support of governments.

Several of Dar Sader's books have received prestigious Arab awards, including the King Faisal Prize for Arabic Language and Literature for the book 'Nafh Al-Tayyib min Ghushn Al-Andalus al-Ratib' and for 'Al-Masrahiyya fi Al-Adab al-Arabi Al-Hadith' by Dr. Muhammad Yusuf Najm, as well as 'Al-Bas'ir wal-Dhakha'ir' by Abu Hayyan Al-Tawhidi.

The publishing house has also been honoured on several occasions, including in 1999 by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah; in 2014 by the Lebanese Ministry of Culture in celebration of the 150th anniversary of its founding; and in 2023 by the first Berlin International Book Fair on the publisher's 160th anniversary. Additionally, Dar Sader has received dozens of certificates of appreciation and letters of gratitude from book fairs across the Arab world.

## Abu Dhabi International Book Fair 2025: Professional Programme designed to explore the future of the publishing industry

- The programme brings together leading thinkers and technology pioneers.
- Empowering key players in the content sectors to embrace technological transformations that are reshaping the entire industry.

The Professional Programme of the 34th Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF 2025), held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, from 26 April to 5 May 2025 at ADNOC Centre Abu Dhabi, offers a wide range of sessions and workshops addressing issues related to the digital age and the publishing industry.

Organised by the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre (ALC), the Programme focuses on supporting professionals in the publishing and content creation sectors, offering specialised workshops and panel discussions that bring together experts and industry leaders to share insights on the latest trends in publishing, distribution, and creative marketing.

The Programme aims to enhance professional skills, exchange expertise, explore new opportunities, and introduce modern tools that align with the evolving industry. Through it, the fair offers advanced workshops across various fields to support the development of publishers and content creators, along with the Digitising Creativity conference, which addresses key topics in publishing and technology.

As a strategic initiative, this year's Professional Programme aims to empower publishers, creators, and stakeholders across content sectors to navigate the growing challenges of global publishing and to adapt to the technological and digital transformations reshaping the industry as a whole.

The Programme addresses the urgent need to understand new tools and master future technologies. More than just a source of theoretical knowledge, it serves as a dynamic, interactive platform that combines hands-on training, in-depth dialogue, and direct communication with notable leaders, innovators, and publishers from around the world.

It offers a diverse range of training activities that get right to the core of creative work, including workshops on writing, translation, podcasting, artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, digital publishing, book marketing, and screenwriting. It also offers hands-on educational workshops that provide participants with professional tools they can immediately apply in their fields.

Furthermore, the Programme includes interactive discussions with publishing and content industry experts from around the world, along with dedicated professional meetings to exchange publishing rights, designed to support translation efforts and knowledge exchange across borders.



This year's edition of the Programme stands out with a range of unique events taking place for the first time in the region, including the Digitising Creativity conference, which explores the role of emerging technologies and artificial intelligence in reshaping cultural content, along with a series of specialised professional seminars, including 'The Era of the Literary Agent', 'The Publisher's Authority', and 'Arabic Publishing and Artificial Intelligence'.

In addition, a selection of intensive workshops will be presented by a distinguished group of authors and experts in publishing and the creative industries, along with professional workshops designed to sharpen creators' skills across various fields of publishing and creative industries.

This year's Professional Programme features a successful collaboration with the UAE Ministry of Economy, International Publishers Association (IPA), Arab Publishers Association, World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), China Media Group, Emirates Publishers Association, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, and several major academic and cultural institutions. These partnerships expand the scope of the fair and strengthen Abu Dhabi's position as an international platform for shaping the future of publishing and creative industries.

## Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre launches Masterclass workshop series designed to hone literary talent at Abu Dhabi International Book Fair 2025

As part of the 34<sup>th</sup> Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF), the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre (ALC), part of the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), launched the Masterclass workshop series, an initiative of the ALC's Qalam Creative Writing Programme.

The series aims to support literary talent and empower emerging authors to master narrative tools and contemporary writing techniques that elevate Arabic content, while spotlighting distinguished experiences from renowned international authors.

Running from 27 April to 4 May 2025, the workshops will be held at the Capital Suite 11 hall at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC), with tickets sold at nominal prices on Platiniumlist.

The sessions cover an array of literary topics, including screenplay writing, poetry, literary criticism, and the art of the novel. It features a group of prominent international authors and critics who will share their insights and experiences in interactive sessions designed to enhance writing quality and enrich literary content.

On 27 April, Emirati screenwriter Mohamed Hassan Ahmed will present a session titled 'Scriptwriting from Novel to Screen' that will explore the concept of dramatic structure, character development, and writing cinematic dialogue, supported by real-life examples and practical applications. Meanwhile, on 29 April, poet Wole Soyinka, a Nobel Laureate in Literature, will lead a poetic journey in a session titled 'Earth and Poetry', which explores the connection between identity and heritage through a fusion of poetry, theatre, and music that draws artistic techniques from heritage and myth.

The agenda continues on 1 May with Saudi critic and intellectual Dr. Abdullah Al-Ghathami in a literary criticism masterclass. The session aims to enable participants to master tools of

critical analysis, while exploring the aesthetic dimension of literary texts from a cultural and intellectual perspective to promote a deeper understanding of literature. The series concludes on 4 May with a workshop titled 'The Desert and the Novel' by acclaimed Libyan novelist Ibrahim Al-Koni, which explores the symbolism of the desert in literature, as a narrative and philosophical space that encompasses concepts of existence, freedom, and meaning. Moderated by author Salha Obaid, the session offers a literary and deep human experience rooted in environment, memory, and symbolism.

The Masterclass series is a continuation of the Qalam Creative Writing Programme's ongoing efforts to nurture a new generation of Emirati writers and creatives. Since its inception, the programme has organised a wide range of specialised workshops focusing on novel writing, children's literature, and short stories.

On another note, the Qalam Creative Writing Programme is also organising the Short Story Forum, in parallel with the Short Story Writing Workshop launched February of this year. The Forum is set to take place on 3 May as part of the Cultural Programme of the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair, bringing together prominent short story writers, namely, Abdulah Al Wesali from Saudi Arabia, Said Ridwani from Morocco, and Omar Taher from Egypt.

Moderated by Dr. Abdeddayem Salami, Assistant Professor at the Mohammed Bin Zayed University for Humanities, the session will allow participants to engage in discussion with participating authors about this artform, exploring ways to develop narrative storytelling skills, and benefiting from their practical expertise.

Moreover, the Digital Square project, developed in collaboration with Lebanese novelist and journalist Ahmad El Zein. This initiative forms part of the Community Campaign to Promote Sustainable Reading, launched by the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre in March 2025, following the UAE's designation of 2025 as the 'Year of Community'.

On another note, Visitors to the fair can participate in the 'Try Your Voice' initiative, which aims to discover vocal talents through a professional recording studio. The Digital Square has introduced advanced AI-based technological initiatives in collaboration with the 'Samawy' platform, designed to integrate technology with Arabic content and enhance the visitor experience through interactive tools, which analyse reading patterns and user preferences, offer smart book recommendations, and provide AI-powered audio experiences.

The Digital Square also features a read-test for children - an interactive, device-based experience that child's reading speed and

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Furthermore, the interactive experience 'Selfie Through Time: Take a Photo with Avicenna' employs augmented reality (AR) technology to create a 3D model of Ibn Sina (Avicenna), allowing visitors to take souvenir photographs and simulate a historical encounter.

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Moreover, the Digital Square features high-quality, AI-powered audiobooks, and features the Digital Lexicon, a contemporary Arabic-English dictionary including images and automated pronunciation. The Lexicon is designed for screen display and is available to access through a mobile application at <https://dictionary.alc.ae>.

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On a similar note, the ALC also launched the 'We Speak Arabic' programme, which offers a series of short educational videos aimed at teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, as well as the 'Poetic Intelligence Lab' project, which introduces a collection of smart tools dedicated to Arabic poetry.

The initiatives and projects the Centre is presenting at the Digital Square also include the Digital Library Initiative, which enables users to access a variety of library services, such as research, browsing, and accessing printed books, audiobooks, and university theses, as well as a collection of databases containing e-books, magazines, and periodicals. Meanwhile, the Electronic Resources Project, provides a selection of online electronic information resources, including open-access journals, and is designed to meet the diverse needs of users.