A Young Person's Guide to:

But We Cannot See Them

Tracing a UAE Art Community, 1988-2008
Hello,
Welcome to our art exhibition, titled But We Cannot See Them. This exhibition is about a community of artists from around the world who made art together in the UAE.
You are welcome to be part of our community. To get started, draw yourself in the space below and tell us your name.

My Name is ------------------------
My name is Hussain Sharif! I like to use repetition in my artwork. By using repetition, I create unique patterns.

I'm Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim! I draw lines and shapes of all sizes and types, and I make sculptures using biodegradable materials. Do you know what that means?

My name is Abdullah Al Saadi! I go on journeys to collect objects and draw sketches of what I see.

I'm Mohammed Kazem! I make art using Global Positioning System (GPS) devices to track and document my location in the world.

My name is Hassan Sharif! I make art using everyday objects that I find around me.
My artists friends and I used to meet in many places, one of them was my house. We had a special passcode, a knock on the door. Whenever I heard this knock, I knew one of my friends was visiting.

As friends and artists, sometimes we created artwork together, and other times we inspired each other. For example, Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim made a sculpture and called it Animal. I liked so much that I painted it. Both the sculpture and the painting are in this exhibition, can you find them?

In this exhibition, there is an artwork that looks like a door. Find it! Does it look like a regular door? What is different about it? Draw what you see in the white space above.

Are you feeling inspired? Now you can make this painting of Animal your own by coloring it in!

Hassan Sharif

Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim, Hassan Sharif
Look at the symbols in my work, what do you think they mean?

Find and circle the objects in the drawing above.

Did you know that you can create your own secret language using shapes, lines, and symbols as alphabets? Pay attention to the letters and their symbols below. Now, can you decode this message?
Hello! I’m Jos Clevers and I’m from the Netherlands. I arrived in the UAE in 1994, and soon after, I became part of this community and started making art and exhibitions for my artist friends. I made a painting and called it “Flying House”. My artist friends liked the name and decided to call our studio “The Flying House”.

I’m Vivek Vilasini and I come from India. I joined the community soon after Jos in 1994, and I participated in exhibitions with my artist friends. I make art using materials like clay and coir.

My name is Ebtisam! I was an art student of Hassan Sharif and Mohammed Kazem and became part of the community in 1999. I use math and tricks of the eye in my artwork.
Sometimes we make art about who we are, it’s called autobiographical art. Through this kind of art, we talk about our personal experiences and interests.

Draw an outline of your hand. Inside the drawing, add your name, where you come from, your hobby, and your favorite color. Is there anything else you want to tell us about yourself? Add it to the drawing!
When I go on my art journeys, I make long drawings and paintings of what I see. It makes me pay attention to what is around me.

Would you like to try that? Find a spot in the gallery, get comfortable and start drawing what you see with a pencil. When you’re at home, remember what colors were there and start coloring away!

Abdullah Al Saadi
Look for a group of pictures that each have numbers underneath. Those numbers are GPS coordinates (they mark the picture’s exact location). Find the picture that has the numbers below and draw what you see in the box.

Find an art installation with cement blocks. Observe the many different objects on top.
Now, think of an object that you use everyday. What does it look like? What color is it? Is it big or small?
Draw this object on top of the cement cube below!
Now it’s time to go artwork hunting!
Go around the exhibition and try to find the artworks highlighted here.

When you find the artwork, check the circle underneath it.
Notes/Sketches/Ideas:
This guide accompanies the exhibition *But We Cannot See Them: Tracing a UAE Art Community, 1988-2008* at the Art Gallery of New York University Abu Dhabi, on view from March 2 to May 27 of 2017 in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

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