Last Chance to See Invisible Threads: Technology and its Discontents

Press Release

December 27, 2016

Featuring Ai Weiwei, Wafaa Bilal, Monira Al Qadiri, and more

The NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery's (NYUAD Art Gallery) acclaimed exhibition Invisible Threads: Technology and its Discontents has been extended through January 7, 2017. This is the last chance to see three newly commissioned works alongside key historic artworks by 15 international artists, all dealing with the tensions and anxieties that arise from our everyday interactions with technology.

Exploring issues such as isolation vs. connectedness, and privacy vs. social media exposure, the curators of Invisible Threads have looked to generate dialog and reflection around our use of now commonplace technological tools.

Ai Weiwei’s The Animal That Looks Like a Llama but is Really an Alpaca is a wry commentary on social media exposure, while Kenny Wong’s Squint sees motion activated
mirrors turn against its viewers, directing light straight into their eyes. Addie Wagenknecht’s XXXX.XXX exposes a part of our daily use of technology that we cannot normally see, with the five-meter-wide sculpture revealing the surrounding Wi-Fi network traffic via blinking lights.

Staying true to its academic mission, the NYUAD Art Gallery generated meaningful new discussion around the theme of Invisible Threads, through public events such as workshops and talks. The Art Gallery’s high standard of programming and community engagement continued with events and workshops that taught participants how to make their own electronic instruments, toys, and circuits. The Arabic-language panel discussion “The Art of Outer-space in the Information Age” saw prominent commentator Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi and Iraqi artist Wafaa Bilal discuss the art and technology of the artworks in Invisible Threads in the context of the Emirates Mission to Mars, exploring the philosophical and creative drive behind humankind’s desire to travel into space.

The Gallery has announced its next exhibition: But We Cannot See Them: Tracing a UAE Art Community, 1988-2008. It will open on Thursday, March 2, 2017. This ground-breaking survey of one of the most important artistic communities in this country’s history will include work by Hassan Sharif, Mohammed Kazem, Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim, Hussain Sharif, Abdullah Al Saadi, Ebtisam Abdulaziz, Vivek Vilasini and Jos Clevers.

The exhibition will include archival material and videotaped interviews with members of the community, alongside artworks from the 1988 through 2008, as well as a reading room of work from important members of the community, including Cristiana De Marchi, Adel Khozam, and Nujoom Al Ghanem. The exhibition is curated by Maya Allison, with Bana Kattan.

For more information, please visit www.nyuad-artgallery.org

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NYU Abu Dhabi is the first comprehensive liberal arts and science campus in the Middle East to be operated abroad by a major American research university. NYU Abu Dhabi has integrated a highly-selective liberal arts, engineering and science curriculum with a world center for advanced research and scholarship enabling its students to succeed in an increasingly interdependent world and advance cooperation and progress on humanity’s shared challenges. NYU Abu Dhabi’s high-achieving students have come from 115 nations and speak over 115 languages. Together, NYU’s campuses in New York, Abu Dhabi, and Shanghai form the backbone of a unique global university, giving faculty and students opportunities to experience varied learning environments and immersion in other cultures at one or more of the numerous study-abroad sites NYU maintains on six continents.
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