Welcome to But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise: Contemporary Art of the Middle East and North Africa, the third exhibition of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative. These exhibitions examine the ideas and methods that today’s artists, living in various parts of the world, are using to address the issues and concerns of our time.

This family guide is designed for children and adults to use together as they discover more about the art that is being produced by artists from the Middle East and North Africa.

As you explore, look for the works pictured in the guide. We invite you to draw and write in this family guide and discuss the ideas that it suggests. We hope you find that the closer you look, the more you discover!

During your visit, please remember:
Touch the works of art only with your eyes, never with your hands.
Walk in the museum, do not run.
Use a quiet voice when sharing your ideas.
Write and draw only with pencils, not pens or markers please.


KADER ATTIA
UNTITLED (GHARDAÏA), 2009

Kader Attia (b. 1970, Dugny, France) grew up in both Algeria and the suburbs of Paris, and uses this experience of two different cultures as a starting point in developing his work. For Untitled (Ghardaïa) (2009), Attia modeled the Algerian town of Ghardaïa in couscous, a regional food that is now popular worldwide.

Have you ever eaten couscous? If so, describe how it tasted.

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Did you know that you were eating a food that originated in North Africa more than nine hundred years ago?

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AT THE MUSEUM
Take some time to draw Untitled (Ghardaïa) (2009). Imagine it is a real town. What would you see as you walked through the streets?

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AT HOME
Think of some other food(s) that could also be used to make a work of art. In the space below, sketch what that work would look like.

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This work of art is made from:

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ABBAS AKHAVAN
STUDY FOR A MONUMENT, 2013–16

A Abbas Akhavan was born in 1977 in Tehran and has lived in Canada since 1992. His work Study for a Monument contains reproductions of endangered plants from Mesopotamia, an area of the Middle East where the first civilizations arose, where many ideas originated, and where the Hanging Gardens of Babylon may have flourished. Akhavan did careful research to learn more about these plants. Today, Mesopotamia is known as Iraq, and its people and environment have been affected by war.

SUSAN HEFUNA
BUILDING, 2009

These drawings, collectively titled Building (2009), are inspired by Susan Hefuna’s long walks around New York City and the architecture she saw along the way. Hefuna describes the activity that follows her walks:

“I start to draw without having a picture in my mind of how the drawing will look in the end.”

If you look carefully you will notice that each work is actually made of layers of drawings.
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What did you learn?

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AT THE MUSEUM

Sit down on the floor near this work and draw some of the plant forms you see. Imagine what they might have looked like in their natural environment.

AT HOME

Select a flower or plant in or around your home and do a careful drawing of it.

AT HOME

With an adult, take a walk around your neighborhood. When you return, do another drawing inspired by the things you noticed on your walk.

Compare the drawings. How are they similar to or different from each other?

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AT THE MUSEUM

Think about your trip to the Guggenheim today and all the streets, people, and buildings you passed to get here. Then, in the space above, create a drawing inspired by that experience.