

Mondays with MoMA



Step 1 Look closely

Questions

1. What figures do you see?
2. What can you tell from the pose of the sitting figure? How do you think they might be feeling?

This is part of a notebook with 38 drawings by Ibrahim El-Salahi. To see all the pages, visit [.moma.org/collection/works/218219](https://www.moma.org/collection/works/218219)

Step 2 Learn more

In 1975, the Sudanese artist Ibrahim El-Salahi was wrongfully accused of involvement in an anti-government coup, arrested, and held without trial for six months. In the weeks of house arrest that followed his release, he produced his *Prison Notebook*, a sketchbook of pen-and-ink drawings and both prose and poetry in Arabic in order to help understand and document his experience behind bars.

This page from the journal contains this poem in Arabic:

*And peace will permeate the heart,
Forcing out fear and panic,
And unswerving faith will settle in.
Remaining in prison is a personal choice.
Procrastination is the pretext for fear.*

Ibrahim El-Salahi says: This bird is a sign of hope. But sometimes it is like a conscience, talking to you. It tells you that whatever you have been going through, think again, and realize that there are things that appear as one thing but could turn into something else. This says, “And peace will permeate the heart, forcing out fear and panic, and unswerving faith will settle in.”

What do you see in this image that feels hopeful?

Step 3

Activity: What does hope look like to you?

Materials: pencil or pen, paper

1. Think of a time when you felt hopeful. What were you hopeful about? What did that feel like?
2. Create a list of words and images that come to mind when you think of that moment.
3. Use these words and images to create a drawing or poem that captures what hope looks and feels like to you.

Step 4

Share!

Share your drawing or poem with someone and ask what hope means to them? Or share your work with us at MoMA: schoolprograms@moma.org.



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Image: Ibrahim El-Salahi. Untitled from *Prison Notebook*. 1976. Ink on paper from a notebook with thirty-eight ink on paper drawings. Acquired through the generosity of Marlene Hess and James D. Zirin, Catie and Donald Marron, Alice and Tom Tisch (in honor of Christophe Cherix), Marnie Pillsbury and Committee on Drawings and Prints Fund. © 2020 Ibrahim El-Salahi / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / DACS, London; Publication excerpt from Ibrahim El-Salahi. *Prison Notebook*, 1976. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2018.