

# Al Ruwais Arts Center Proposal

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# Context

Al-Ruwais, now called Al Danna, is an Industrial city located in the western region of the UAE and just 45 min from the border of Saudi Arabia. Oil was discovered here in the 60s and 70s, which led to the purpose of the city being called the Industrial city. Oil was an excellent use for trade in the UAE and is responsible for the country gaining a great fortune. Borders were then drawn up in the year 2000, and Al-Ruwais became a city only for those working in the industry. From here on out, the city was closed to the public; however, people could still come and go; they couldn't reside in the city. Al-Ruwais is owned and supervised by the government under the ADNOC group. In town, you can see that every building has ownership by ADNOC, which enforces the meaning of an industrial city. Workers live in Al-Ruwais with provided housing, and they have transportation to take them from the residential area to work. Privacy is essential in Al-Ruwais; therefore, workers aren't allowed to bring camera phones to work. You can see the workers working throughout the week, and on the weekends, many leave to go back to their outside lives. Workers are recruited from across the world, mainly see people from Egypt, Pakistan, India, and other nationalities. Living in Al-Ruwais is immaculate and includes activities such as shopping, a recreation center, and open parks that are well taken care of. For this reason, the city contains many temporary housing complexes open to working families. They are available to live there as long as they work for ADNOC, and if they are no longer working with ADNOC, they are expected to leave immediately. Residents are also allowed to open a personal business in Al-Ruwais; however, their competitors are ADNOC, which can affect their sales. The prices at shops can be high since the rent is too, so it's unlikely to see many personal businesses in Al-Ruwais. A typical lifestyle in Al-Ruwais that can be pretty unhealthy is that people are often seen in shisha lounges or constantly playing video games. Life in Al-Ruwais before COVID included many social events and parties planned for the community. However, during covid, there were no events, and people saw each other less and less. This created a disconnect for the community, but now in the aftermath of covid, things are slowly returning to normal. The age demographic ranges from 30-50 years old, and these workers usually have kids ranging from babies to 20-year-olds in university. It's typically seen that the workers stay working in the industry for about ten to fifteen years, and then they leave. This is since that the workers are very well satisfied with the pay, the place is clean, and all of their necessities are provided.

# Vision

By creating the Al Ruwais Arts Center, we hope to do something here for the people. As we have seen, there is a lack of extracurricular activities in Al Ruwais and a lack of art related events. By providing access to an Arts Center, we hope to provide a place where people can explore their creativity and artistic abilities while building connections and relationships with other members of the community. Whether an elementary school student or a grandparent, we believe that the Arts Center will prove to be a valuable resource and source of happiness for everyone.

Besides providing the community with activities and a safe space, we also hope to maintain the accessibility of the Al Ruwais Arts Center. In order to do so, we will try our best to keep the cost of entry and cost of participation in activities at a minimum cost.

We hope that the creation of the Al Ruwais Arts Center will provide everyone with an environment that will build connections and strengthen our community bonds.



# Problems

After our visit to Al Ruwais, we discovered three core problems with the city. Below, we further discuss the problems and what they mean for the community.

## Community & Sense of Belonging

Upon visiting Al Ruwais, we discovered that there were a number of problems within the community. The first prominent problem that was brought to our attention was the lack of a sense of community and belonging to the area. Due to the nature of Al Ruwais as a city, the workers who live in the communities are here to simply work in the industry to earn a living. Once the weekend arrives, the workers choose to return home to Dubai or Abu Dhabi instead of staying in Al Ruwais. As a result, there are few people who permanently settle down in Al Ruwais with their families. This can lead to a disconnect within the community. Instead of Al Ruwais being a place to settle and build a life, it is seen as a place to only temporarily stay and work. This issue is further exacerbated by the fact that these workers often come from a number of different countries. This can make it incredibly difficult for people to connect and mingle with one another because of cultural differences or language barriers.

## Social Life & Activities

One of the problems with Al Ruwais is the lack of social life and activities. The people of Al Ruwais are in need of activities and programs that offer them a way to contribute to their community and society. Having such activities would allow for them to develop a sense of belonging and identity with Al Ruwais itself. Along with this sense of belonging, the goal of offering community activities would be to develop a sense of pride. The proposed activities, seen in the following section, would hope that the people of Al Ruwais develop pride for their community and showcase this pride within the community but more importantly when leaving it and representing Al Ruwais outside of.

## Wayfinding

Wayfinding in Al Ruwais is an issue. As an outsider looking in, the architecture throughout the residential homes and ADNOC buildings all looked similar. Although there were many parks and shopping areas, there still needs to be a way to differentiate them from one another. Another section of the city that needs to be differentiated from one another are the roundabouts. With several spread out around the area, there are little to no landmarks that indicate which part of the city you are in. Upon arriving in Al Ruwais, we also noticed that the main road leading to the city is quite plain. With few indicators of having arrived in a city, the area does not feel welcoming to visitors. This can deter people from visiting Al Ruwais and leave a bad first impression on those who do visit.



# Market & Competition

When thinking about the competition surrounding the ruwais, we preferred using the term "Marketing Inspiration" instead. The UAE continues to grow in every way one would think of, so it would be ideal to grasp a sense of what and how the surrounding art centers grow and not only learn from them, but prevent repeating their mistakes. Whether it's presenting workshops, involving the community, teaching youths, or promoting diversity, numerous categories fall into making an ideal arts center. The following art centers are ones that we look into getting inspired from given their intentions, goals, and accomplishments.

## Etihad Modern Art Gallery

Next on our Abu Dhabi art galleries list is the Etihad Modern Art Gallery. This warm and welcoming space is housed in a villa on Al Bateen Street and is relatively young, entering the local art scene in 2013. You can expect to see well-known regional names like Tala Atrouni and Khulood Al Jabri and international talent such as Yiannis Roussaki. With a rotation of temporary exhibitions, Etihad Modern Art Gallery also hosts heritage shows and has worked with international institutions. It's also attached to the Art House Café for those who want to relax and soak in inspired surroundings. Etihad Modern Art Gallery in Abu Dhabi, UAE, encourages the creation of art with local references, showcasing work from well-established as well as new Emirati and international artists. It is a dynamic multi-function art space that aims to play a positive role in the brightly emerging art scene in Abu Dhabi and introduce new art concepts along with challenging activities.



## Salwa Zeidan Gallery



For those who want to see diverse art defined by minimalism, the Salwa Zeidan Gallery should be your first stop. One of the premier contemporary art galleries in Abu Dhabi, the Salwa Zeidan Gallery has exhibited renowned artists, the likes of Hassan Sharif, Nedim Kufi, and Adonis. Started in 1994 by Lebanese artist Salwa Zeidan and reopened in 2009, this Abu Dhabi art gallery is a hub for Middle Eastern and international talent. Head down to see exceptional art in different mediums, from sculpture, installations, paintings, photography, and even performance art! Each piece is reviewed and approved by Salwa Zeidan herself, so prepare to be mesmerized. The gallery is temporarily exhibiting its artworks at Hilton Grand Capital, but it's currently on the lookout for a new space.

# Manarat AlSaadiyat

Warehouse421 is a home-grown arts and design center in Al Mina, Abu Dhabi. It aims to aid the development of the UAE's creative ecosystem through learning, research, and commissions. Committed to supporting emerging talent from the UAE, Middle East, and South Asia, Warehouse421 takes a collaborative approach to hosting and curating exhibitions, presenting and contextualizing local and regional research, and examining cultural practices in an anti-disciplinary space. Apart from placing a strong emphasis on sustainability, Warehouse421's mission is to showcase and nurture creative production across the region. They utilize the space by hosting galleries, art shows, and performances to establish emerging regional artists. Education is central to Warehouse421's mission and drives our programs and collaborations. Another crucial area focused on is presenting the rich Emirati culture, which is especially beneficial for interested people using paintings, sculptures, and installations. It does not stop there, as workshops are available, ranging from photography to jewelry-making. These opportunities are possible due to collaborations among the local, regional, and surrounding entities. Apart from serving as the main exhibition venue in Abu Dhabi, this space is committed to developing the arts scene in the capital.

منارة السعديات  
M A N A R A T  
A L  
S A A D I Y A T

## Warehouse 421

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# Proposed Solutions

In response to the three main problems that we previously identified, we offer several solutions below that could be implemented within the Al Ruwais community.

## Unifying the Community

In order to solve the issue of a lack of a sense of community and belonging, there are two possible solutions that can be explored. First, we propose the creation of a logo for the Arts Center. The purpose of creating a logo is to unify the community through visual means. By providing a singular visual identity, we hope that the community will be able to identify with it, regardless of who they are.

The second proposed solution is to incorporate an educational and cultural aspect within the Arts Center. The educational aspect of the Arts Center would allow both children and adults to learn about the background of the arts and the history of the UAE. This educational component would also provide an immersive, hands-on teaching experience that can reinforce what the students learn in school regarding the history of the country, while learning about the history of the arts can provide all visitors with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the arts. We also suggest including different forms of cultural representation through these educational events, such as creating crafts from a variety of cultures. This can strengthen the bonds between the people of Al Ruwais as they learn more about each other and build a sense of community.



## Public Wayfinding

As the description of the third problem highlighted, the design and implementation of landmarks will be incredibly important as it is crucial to wayfinding. Implementing monumental artifacts at the spot of each roundabout can help with wayfinding in the city. People can mentally attach meaning to each artifact when they visit specific places. The Arts Center itself should also be designed in a distinctive way so that it can act as a landmark for the community members of Al Ruwais as well as visitors.

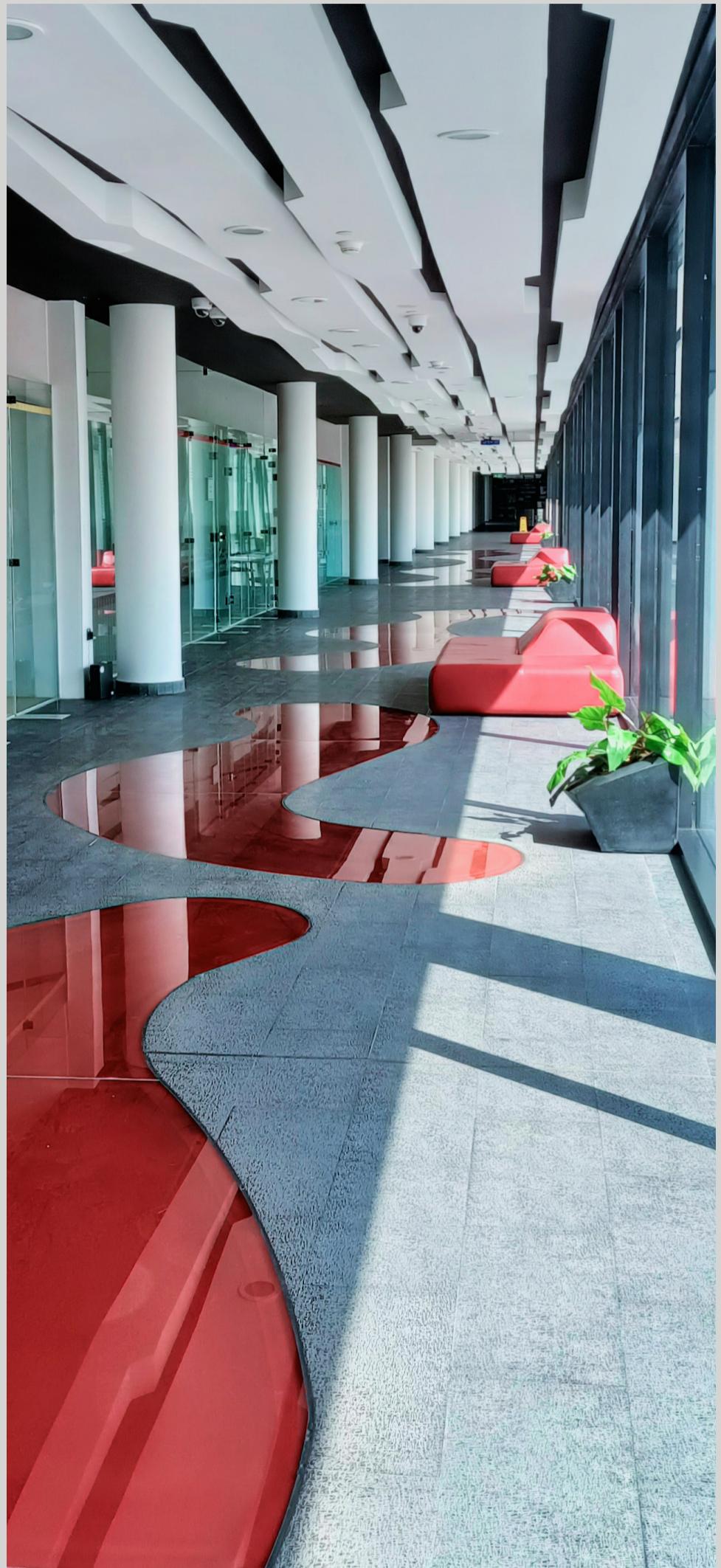
# Community Pride

We propose the opening of sports teams specific to AlRuwais in order to help encourage and develop a sense of pride and identity within the community. Such a program would also offer individuals a stage to showcase their athletic abilities as well as develop them further. Sports team would also allow for Al Ruwais to gain attention externally from other regions, and would ideally bring tourism and benefits to the community as a whole. If the program reaches the expected success we foresee for it, ideally the Al Ruwais sport teams would then also be able to also have engagement with other regions through travel and competitions. This would then also increase the recognition of Al Ruwais in other people's minds by providing exposure to the region from the team and its players.

To take a step further, after being involved with other competitions, it would be ideal for Al Ruwais to host competitions themselves. This would establish them alongside other regions and would present them as a stable and up and coming region.

Within the Al Ruwais Art Center specifically, we propose for their to be programs that offer art lessons to all citizens of the region, whether youth or elders. The programs would range in variety and expertise in order to allow for people to develop their skills from amateur to professional if desired. However, the programs would also work as "hobby locations" were people can go to do art and engage with their peers in the community.

In order to encourage participation, contributors to the art lessons would also be offered the opportunity to showcase their art for the community to see. This would offer not only a sense of accomplishment, but would ideally bring the community together in motivating and praising each other.



# Implementation

Below, we describe how our communication strategy for promoting the Arts Center and attracting visitors. We also present four of our potential logo designs as well as mockups of the logo designs.

## Communication Strategy

The first course of action to be taken is to utilize posters to promote events at the Arts Center. These posters can be implemented both physically and digitally throughout Al Ruwais and other areas of the UAE. This will pose as a great opportunity to bring in outside people to visit and see Al Ruwais for what it has to offer, and continuously create a pathway to constantly bring in people.

Within the Al Ruwais community, it would be beneficial to create a town newspaper or magazine that will be mailed to the residents on a weekly basis. The newspaper or magazine would contain the dates and times of upcoming events, as well as the contents of what the Arts Center will be providing for the community that week in terms of activities or supplies. This newsletter could also help showcase the work of the Arts Center and the artwork of community members. This would not only help spark interest within the community members, but it would also promote the Arts Center.

To digitally reach people both inside and outside of the Al Ruwais community, the Arts Center could also create a website where they display the general information regarding the Center, as well as educational topics related to the arts. Creating this digital platform, along with social media accounts, would help reach people from different parts of the UAE. With a bigger platform, the Arts Center will be able to grow and bring increased attention to Al Ruwais as a city too. This would both increase engagement and hopefully increase funding opportunities so that the Arts Center can continue to provide programs for people to partake in.

Another possibility is to partner with other art and recreation centers can bring in partnered clients to Al Ruwais therefore creating a bigger network where people can get to know Al Ruwais and interact with each other. This will also increase engagement overall where ideas can be shared and Al Ruwais can take advantage of the partnered centers to learn and grow for themselves.

## Possible Creative Avenues

Rather than presenting a singular, final logo, we decided to explore four different creative avenues that could potentially evolve into a final logo design for the Arts Center. The four creative avenues are displayed below as digital versions of the sketches and potential mockups were created as well to provide a visual reference as to how the avenues could potentially be implemented.



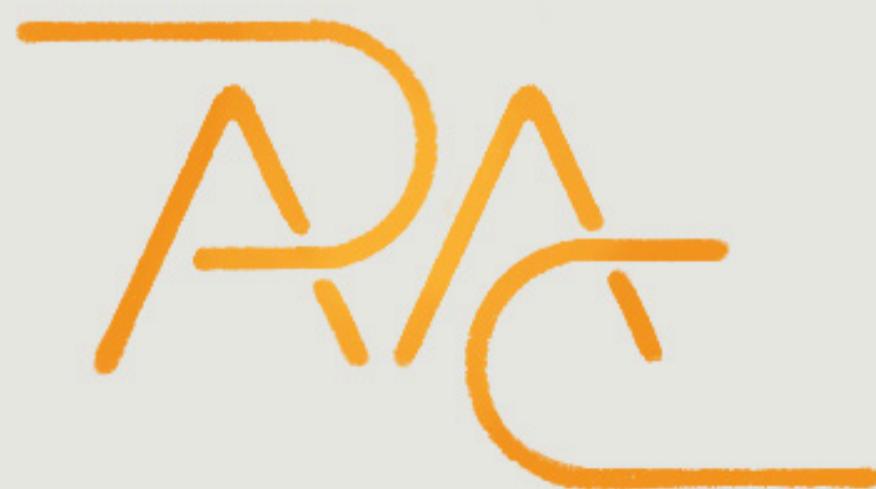
## Sketches of Possible Creative Avenues





ARAC

# Sketches of Possible Creative Avenues







The acronym ARAC stands for Al Ruwais Art Center. The typeface is completely custom and designed in a way to portray roundness and display a sense of friendliness. The length of the letters was also reduced by 87% to give it a conjoined look overall. We came up with the idea to have an icon representing a bridge while also presenting a sense of community. In addition to that, the logo can be seen glowing on the left side, the shorter person. This displays a message regarding the youths of the community being the light within it. The ARAC was made fully using shapes consisting of circles and squares. A negative space element is also incorporated to further ease the logo into the eye, especially with the vibrant orange color.

## Creative Avenue #1

This design takes a different route yet speaks a lot towards the message that the Al Ruwais Art Center intended. All of the shapes presented display the four letters: A - R - A - C, in a way that is coherently connected and uniformly balanced. The logo is made up of only two main structures: the triangle representing the two A letters for "Al" and "Art", in addition to the curved shape representing both the R in "Ruwais" and C in "Center". This design would symbolize as both a logo, title, and an icon in most instances it is displayed at. The similar and uniform previewed show how close the community is and how connected everyone should be.

## Creative Avenue #2





This was one of our initial designs and we took up the idea of incorporating the original Al Ruwais logo. The initial logo inspiring this is a ray of dots extending outwards with a slight orange tint. Given the design of this logo, it would perfectly fit into the circles to provide a coherent meaning. The font is custom designed to provide a sans serif-like bold statement. It is surrounded by the design and represents a sense of unity just as the shape of a circle would. We feel that the art center will create unity within the community as it serves as a place to bring everyone together through the arts. Keeping the amount of circles was essential to stay loyal to the original design of the "Al Ruwais" logo.

## Creative Avenue #3

The letters presented are defined yet conjoined together as ARAC. This further translates to the location's name: Al Ruwais Art Center. The typeface Optima in size 83pt and condensed the letters by a factor of 50 was used. The length of the letters was also expanded by 44% to give it a stronger look overall. We came up with the idea to have an icon of a paintbrush and pencil facing each other to show the togetherness of the arts as it's a collective effort of other mediums that make up an arts program. The icons were initially in a separate circle, but upon noticing the circular form of the "C", the icon of a paintbrush and pencil were placed inside the letter instead. However, as the pencil icon took the focus away from the "C", it was then removed from the logo.

## Creative Avenue #4





# Conclusion

As the city of Al Ruwais continues to grow, we hope that the solutions that we have proposed will prove to be useful for community development and growth. Although there is currently a lack of a sense of community and belonging, a lack of extracurricular activities, and an issue with wayfinding, we strongly believe that by creating a logo, incorporating educational, cultural, and arts programs within the Arts Center, developing sports teams, attending competitions outside of Al Ruwais, and implementing landmarks around the city will prove to be beneficial in the long-term development of Al Ruwais.

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