

Delfina Foundation is delighted to present *Study for a Garden*, the first UK solo exhibition by Toronto-based Iranian artist Abbas Akhavan. During a 10-week residency at Delfina Foundation, Akhavan has produced a series of installations in response to the Foundation's adjacent property at 31 Catherine Place. The exhibition will offer visitors a unique opportunity to preview the un-renovated period building which the Foundation will expand into in Autumn 2013. *Study for a Garden* also marks the last exhibition at the Foundation before it closes for renovation in January 2013.



Abbas Akhavan, *Study for a Garden* (2012) courtesy of the artist.

Folding the border between the garden and domestic space, *Study for a Garden* explores the intrusion of nature into a house where familiar spaces have gradually been taken over by foreign elements. The invasion of water and vegetation into various rooms of the house is a continuation of Akhavan's research into the relationship between foreign and familiar, hospitable and hostile, domestic and wild. From the front door to the upstairs bedroom and back to the basement, the installations comprising invasive plants species and hedges govern the audience's movements, rendering them at times as guests and at times trespassers. In one instance, visitors encounter an oscillating water sprinkler, keeping them at bay with its sprays of water; in another, the original floral carpet from the house creates the illusion of sprouting with natural ivy. These territorial gardens address the naturalisation of barriers, where every garden is a guarded space, an enclosure, a compound. Water, vegetation and gardening tools create discriminatory spaces, keeping some species alive and others dead.

Akhavan's practice ranges from site-specific ephemeral installations to drawing, video and performance. For the past five years, the domestic sphere has been an on-going research in his work. Much of the early works explore the relationship between the house and nation state and how the trauma and systemic violence enacted upon civilians can be inherited and re-enacted within the family lineage – the home becoming a forked space between hospitality and hostility. More recent works have shifted focus onto spaces just outside the home – the garden, the backyard, and other domesticated landscapes.

The residency and exhibition are in partnership with Canada House Arts Trust and Iran Heritage Foundation. The Private View is hosted in association with The Third Line Dubai, UAE.

Delfina Foundation

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Registered charity no. 1118409

Artist talk:

Thurs 25/10 19:00 – 20:30 Abbas Akhavan in conversation with Mark Rappolt (Art Review) at Delfina Foundation

Notes to Editors:

Abbas Akhavan's work has been exhibited in spaces including Vancouver Art Gallery, the Power Plant, Darling Foundry (Canada), ABC Art Berlin Contemporary, KW Institute for Contemporary Art (Germany), Kunsten Museum of Modern Art (Denmark), Le Printemps de septembre a Toulouse (France), Bucharest Biennale (Romania) and Performa 11 (USA). Recent and upcoming residencies include Fundation Marcelino Botin (Spain), Axeno7, Video In, TSV, and Fogo Islands (Canada), Watermill Centre (USA), and The Delfina Foundation (Dubai, UAE). Akhavan was the recipient of Kunstpreis Berlin, 2012.

Akhavan took part in Delfina Foundation's satellite residency programme in Dubai in Spring 2011, which was in partnership with The Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, Art Dubai and Tashkeel. Along with four other artists, Akhavan was in residence for two months producing new work which was showcased in conjunction with Art Dubai, the pinnacle of the Middle East's cultural calendar. The programme's aim was to shed light on emerging and mid-career talents.

Abbas Akhavan is represented by The Third Line Dubai, UAE

Delfina Foundation is an independent, non-profit foundation dedicated to facilitating artistic exchange and developing creative practice through residencies, partnerships and public programming, with a special focus on international collaborations with the greater Middle East & North Africa. In addition to its programmes in the UK, Delfina Foundation has organised opportunities for artists abroad in six different countries through satellite programmes. To date, Delfina Foundation has hosted nearly 100 artists, curators and writers from 18 different countries as well as organised over 130 public events and activities.

In 2013, Delfina Foundation will expand into an adjacent property in Catherine Place SW1, doubling the number of residencies as well as the size of its exhibition space. The programmes for Delfina Foundation will also increasingly take on an international tone and partnerships are already being developed with Brazil and India - in addition to European partners.

Canada House Arts Trust is an independent charity, which aims to encourage and promote the arts with a Canadian focus or theme in the UK. It gives financial support to individuals and groups who seek to exhibit or perform their work in Britain.

Iran Heritage Foundation is a non-political UK registered charity with the mission to promote and preserve the history, languages and cultures of Iran and the Persian world. The objectives of the Foundation are pursued by organising, on a worldwide basis, diverse activities of cultural or scholarly merit.

In partnership with:

**Visitor information**

Opening days/times: 9 October–20 November 2012 (Mon–Sat, 12:00–18:00) Address: Delfina Foundation, 31 Catherine Place, London SW1E 6DY www.delfinafoundation.com

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