

PRESS RELEASE

Farah Al Qasimi
Abort, Retry, Fail

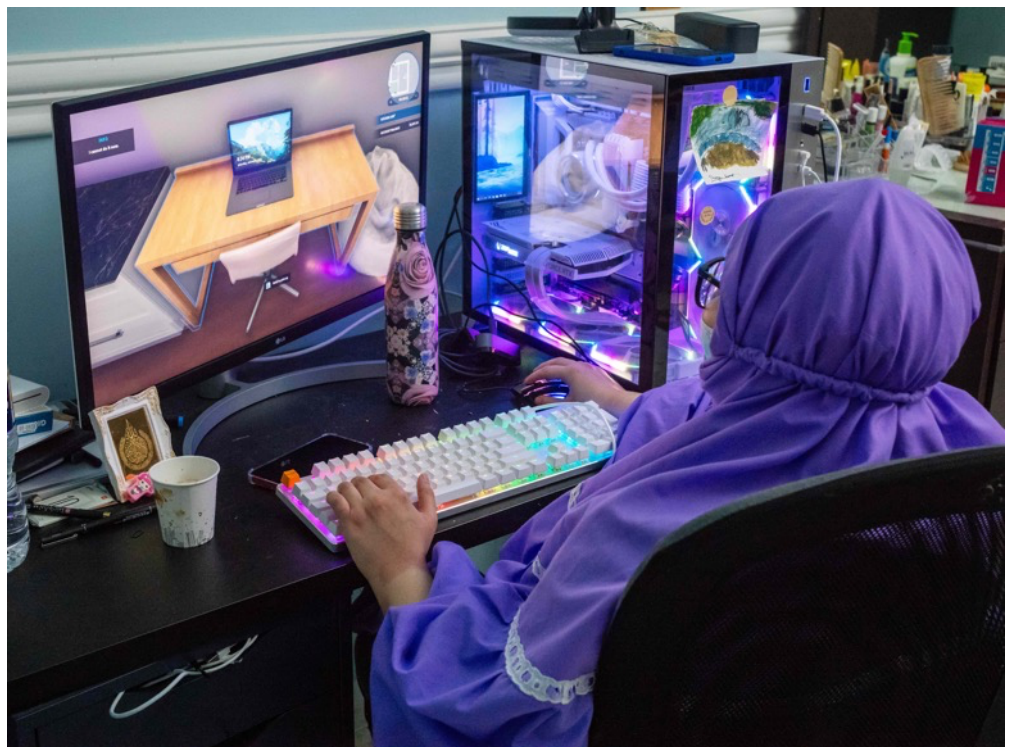
Exhibition dates:
04/10/23-20/11/23

Opening:
Tues, 03/10/23
19:00-21:00

Frieze Week VIP reception:
Tues, 10/10/23, 15:00-17:00
guestlist@delfinafoundation.com

Opening times:
Mon-Sun, 12:00-18:00

Venue:
Delfina Foundation, London



Farah Al Qasimi, *Anood Playing Sims*, 2023. Courtesy of the artist

“You are here, and it’s beautiful, and escaping isn’t always something bad.”

– *Firewatch*¹

Delfina Foundation is proud to present the first UK solo exhibition by its former resident Farah Al Qasimi, made possible through the generous support of Abu Dhabi Festival.

Based between Brooklyn and Abu Dhabi, Al Qasimi’s still and moving image works vibrantly capture glimpses of everyday life and the entangled relationship between material culture and globalised societies. This exhibition comprises new photographs, vinyl wallpaper works, and a specially commissioned video, which coalesce to create a layered visual constellation.

¹ Adventure game developed by Campo Santo. First released in February 2016.

The show takes its title from a computer error message that flashes up on Al Qasimi's now defunct family computer. This machine connected the artist and her family to the world in the early days of dial-up internet, and until its recent malfunction was a portal for escape from reality, as a pirate, a gunslinging biker, or a tiny ball bouncing off the edges of the screen.

Abort, Retry, Fail is an index of attempts to transcend or deny the natural world through entering fictional ones that promise autonomy and disembodiment. Several of the photographs in the exhibition lay their gaze on gamers, their attention held by a screen beyond the photographic frame. They appear firmly rooted in the material world and yet are transported elsewhere, absorbed in fantasy realms of exploration, purpose, and play. *Anood Playing Sims* (2023), shows a young woman adorned in vibrant purple and immersed in a world of vivid colour and light with her sight fixed on a screen, which beams back a plain, generic version of the desk and chair at which she sits.

Interspersed with these gamers are photographs that continue the artist's long-time practice of capturing the under examined everyday. These photos of seemingly mundane places and objects converge around a theme frequently alluded to in Al Qasimi's work: our alienated relationship to the natural world. One wall becomes an ode to the sun, caught through wildfire or sandstorm haze; a perfectly round, almost cartoon-like object rendered an encroaching source of danger. A photograph of a sunset appears to be a stock image until we see its edges; plastic bags and trash cloud a sense of idealism and calmness. The sun's poisonous shade of orange is echoed in other photographs, in apricots, construction hoarding, and plastic flowers. On another wall, a spectral figure of a woman cloaked in a red beam of light seems to be trapped behind an iron gate in a sea of leaves. A dolphin-shaped fountain spouting water with comical urgency at first appears an affable, whimsical sight and yet such stark synthetic reproductions of the natural world hold allusions to our accelerating ecological collapse, from which escape entices, but may not suffice.

Artist biography

Farah Al Qasimi (b. 1991, ARE) lives between New York and Abu Dhabi. She received her Master of Fine Arts in Photography and Music from the Yale School of Art in 2017. Since then, her work has been acquired by prominent collections including Museum of Modern Art, New York; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Guggenheim, Abu Dhabi; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and Tate Modern, London. Solo exhibitions of her work have been held at C/O Berlin (2023); The Art Gallery of Western Australia (2023); Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (2021); Wayne State University Undergraduate Library, Detroit (2020); and Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai (2019), and elsewhere. In addition, her work has featured in group exhibitions at SFMOMA (2023), Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki (2022), Rencontres d'Arles (2021); Pera Museum, Istanbul (2021); Yokohama Triennial (2020); Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto; Aperture Foundation, New York; and Biennial of Contemporary Arab Photography, Paris. In spring 2020, Public Art Fund showed her photographs at over 100 bus stops across New York City. Her book *Hello Future*, published by Capricious in 2021, was shortlisted that same year for the Aperture Foundation Photobook Prize.

Public programme

A number of events will accompany this exhibition. Check the website for full listings: www.delfinafoundation.com/whats-on

Credits

This exhibition has been made possible thanks to support from Abu Dhabi Festival and Delfina Foundation's Family of Supporters.

Delfina Foundation: Exhibitions programme

Following Gelare Khoshgozaran's exhibition over summer 2023, Farah Al Qasimi presents the second exhibition at Delfina Foundation following a three-year hiatus, partially due to the pandemic. Delfina's exhibitions provide a UK platform to its international alumni artists and curators at a pivotal moment of their career. Past exhibitions have included the first London/UK solo exhibitions by Abbas Akhavan, Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, Ahmet Ogut, Ala Younis, Wael Shawky and Geumhyung Jeong.

Delfina Foundation's exhibitions are primarily presented in its purpose-built lower-ground floor 1,650 square foot space, created as part the 2014 expansion of its residency house, in Catherine Place, Victoria.

Other forthcoming exhibitions

Group exhibition curated by Yina Jiménez Suriel
(Delfina Foundation curator-in-residence in 2022)
18/01/24 - 03/03/23

Press contact

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Images and press pack

The exhibition lead image can be found [here](#). Following installation, please also find documentation images on the same link. All image reproduction is conditional on use of captions and credit lines as found in file names.

Social media

In [@delfinafdn](#)
Tw [@delfinafdn](#)
Fb [/delfinafoundation](#)

About Delfina Foundation

Founded in 2007, Delfina Foundation is a London-based independent, non-profit foundation dedicated to facilitating artistic exchange and developing creative practice through residencies, partnerships, and public programming. As London's largest residency provider, Delfina has hosted over 450 artists, curators, and writers in residence from over 85 countries around

the world, partnering with institutions, including Tate, V&A, ICA, Frieze, Chisenhale, Art Jameel, and Dhaka Art Summit.

About Abu Dhabi Festival

Founded in 2004, the festival was generously granted the patronage of the President, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, from 2007 to 2011. The first Abu Dhabi Festival was held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the then Minister of Information and Culture (currently the UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs). Abu Dhabi Festival is the festival of “Bilad Al Khayr”, the land of blessings, the land of Zayed, and embraces the values of dialogue, tolerance, respect, and peace.

www.abudhabifestival.ae

Quotes

Her Excellency Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo, Founder of the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation and Artistic Director of the Abu Dhabi Festival:

“Our unwavering support of Farah Al Qasimi, first as a resident artist at Delfina Foundation in 2017 and now for her inaugural solo exhibition in the United Kingdom epitomises our steadfast dedication to nurturing Emirati art and fortifying its position on the global stage. It underscores our continued commitment to empowering Emirati creators, allowing them to showcase their experiences while actively forging connections with eminent international cultural institutions.”

“Through an artistic portrayal of our relationship with technology, computers, and gaming as a virtual realm ripe with potential in the realms of knowledge, thought, and creativity, Farah Al Qasimi's exhibition showcases her exceptional prowess in celebrating the past and skilfully reshaping it with a conscious fusion of authenticity and contemporary ideals, bridging values and modernity.”