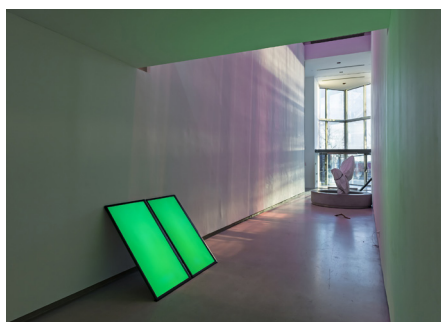


CHISENHALE

ABBAS AKHAVAN AT CHISENHALE GALLERY 'CURTAIN CALL, VARIATIONS ON A FOLLY'

14 AUGUST - 17 OCTOBER 2021
OPENING SATURDAY 14 AUGUST 12-6PM



Chisenhale Gallery is pleased to present *curtain call, variations on a folly*, a new commission by Montréal-based artist Abbas Akhavan. Akhavan's work ranges from context-specific installations to drawing, video, sculpture and performance. Paying close attention to the historical, societal and architectural structures of a given site, Akhavan uses a range of materials to examine spaces and species just outside the home, such as the garden, the backyard, and other domestic landscapes.

For his Chisenhale Gallery commission, Akhavan develops his ongoing research into the relationship between chroma key green screen technology and cob, an ancient building material made of subsoil, water and straw. A large chroma key green stage with an infinity wall fills the gallery and hosts a series of sculptures made of cob. The cob installation is built in the image of the colonnade that once approached the monumental Arch of Palmyra, a 2,000-year-old heritage site in Syria. The arch is thought to have been destroyed by Islamic State militants in 2015, and subsequently replicated in marble by the UK- and US-based Institute of Digital Archaeology using 3D imaging technology.

The chroma key green screen and cob used in the exhibition sit at opposite ends of the material spectrum. Cob is an organic, ancient form of construction, and chroma key compositing is one of the most ubiquitous visual effects tools used to construct digital images. Shifting perception through the manipulation of visual and sonic perspectives, Akhavan's installation acts as a potential portal, where the green screen stage repositions the cob sculptures as placeholders that have the possibility to exist in any given space.

A text has been painted on the roof of Chisenhale Gallery and Chisenhale Studios. Visible mostly to birds, drones, from aeroplanes and taller neighbouring buildings, large letters cover the entire roof reading: 'CAT'S PAW', an idiom derived from Jean de La Fontaine's 1679 fable *The Monkey and The Cat*. The roof painting will fade with time, and the cob and timber used in the installation will be composted and repurposed after the exhibition.

As part of Chisenhale Gallery's commissioning process, a bespoke series of talks and events is programmed in collaboration with each artist to run throughout the duration of every exhibition. Akhavan's commission was originally programmed as part of Chisenhale Gallery's Commissions Programme for 2020, which comprised four new exhibitions by artists Imran Perretta, Thao Nguyen Phan, Yu Ji and Abbas Akhavan. Postponed due to the pandemic, Akhavan's exhibition now opens in August 2021, followed by a new commission by artist Rindon Johnson, which will open in November 2021, co-commissioned and produced by SculptureCentre, New York.

Artist Biography:

Abbas Akhavan lives and works in Montréal. Solo exhibitions include the CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco (2019); Fogo Island Gallery, Fogo Island, (2019); Museum Villa Stuck, Munich (2017); FLORA ars+natura, Bogotá (2016) and Delfina Foundation, London (2012). Recent group exhibitions include the Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe (2021), Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool (2018); SALT Galata, Istanbul (2017); Sharjah Biennial 13, United Arab Emirates (2017); and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2016). Residencies include Fogo Island Arts, Fogo Island, Canada (2019, 2016, 2013); Atelier Calder, Saché, France (2017); and The Watermill Center, New York, USA (2011). He is the recipient of the Fellbach Triennial Award (2017); Sobey Art Award (2015); Abraaj Group Art Prize (2014); and the Berliner Kunstpreis (2012).

Notes to editors:

Chisenhale Gallery commissions and produces contemporary art, supporting international and UK-based artists to make their most ambitious work to date by pursuing new directions in their practices. We have an award winning, 38-year history as one of London's most innovative forums for art. With a reputation for identifying new artistic talent, we believe in making cultural impact through working with artists and learning from our neighbours. We develop ideas with artists over a one- to two-year incubation period, from concept to completion.

Chisenhale Gallery is committed to our audiences having access to the energy and ideas of an ever-expanding artist community. Artists are the centre of our work in the gallery and beyond it; our local projects and online initiatives expand the reach of artists' ideas.

All images left to right:

1. *variations on a landscape* (2018). Coloured transparencies, styrofoam, cast concrete, pump, water, estrogen, paper towel dispenser, paper towel, dimensions variable. Installation view, The Power Plant, Toronto, 2018. Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid. Courtesy Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver. Image courtesy the artist.
2. *curtain call, variations on a folly* (Production Image) (2021). Image courtesy the artist.
3. *Variations on Ghost* (2017). Soil, water, 47 x 126 x 87 in. (120 x 320 x 220 cm). Installation view, Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, Germany, 2017. Photo: Jann Averwerser. Courtesy Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver. Image courtesy the artist.

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Headline Exhibition Supporters: Concrete Projects, Marie & Joe Donnelly, The Donald R Sobey Foundation and the Henry Moore Foundation.
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Talks, Local and Online activities are programmed in conjunction with Abbas Akhavan's exhibition, generously supported by Sarah Elson.

COCKAYNE



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