

ABBAS ZAHEDI - *Metatopia 10013*

Dates May 19 - July 2, 2022
Opening May 19, 6-8 pm
Location 136 Baxter Street New York, NY 10013

Traversing work that is constructed around a set of prototypes that then become their own lineage, Abbas Zahedi develops parallel planes of a practice. Zahedi blurs the lines like a photographer that chooses which part of the image is in focus - how one can zoom in and out with different lenses. Like an organism that continues to develop and evolve, but keeps the same DNA, Zahedi repeats patterns that exist at multiple scales and forms. Zahedi explores the production and circulation of meaning itself. To reveal these different codes and to be able to switch between them, is an applied philosophy which can only be realized through dialogue.

Metatopia 10013 revisits Zahedi's artistic DNA through the use of rose water - previously used to explore how traditional Iranian grieving rites can be applied upon a contemporary art space. In the instance of *Metatopia 10013*, the rose and its process of infusion is laid bare, thus conditioned and used later to power a lesser known instrument called a waterphone. The waterphone is a type of inharmonic acoustic tuned idiophone consisting of a stainless steel resonator bowl or pan, with a cylindrical neck and bronze rods of different lengths and diameters around the rim of the bowl. In this case, created through specialized craftsmanship in London, and in collaboration with Abbas, its presence serves as sculpture, a receptor, and the conductor for events between our shared communities.

The symphonious component of the sculpture is completed through the use of its complementary counterpart - a customized mechanism that houses and filters water absorbed from the air by food-grade calcium chloride: a kind of automatic and gentle sprinkler. Over the course of the exhibition this chemical instrument, which has hygroscopic properties, attracts water molecules from the surrounding environment, serving as a testament to the breaths of bystanders and the bodies of water that surround New York. This collection of interconnecting vapor then tediously filters through the structure finding its way into the waterphone - creating a new body of mixed waters which work to change the tone of the piece once it is activated.

As a whole, the exhibition is a cyclical contribution capable of providing the sounds of what could be our pain and grief, but also our memory and recovery - a sono-visual soundscape for healing and reflection. In the space, two arrows cut from domestic floor mats are assembled as a pair of 'Qiblas' - the arrow in Muslim households that points towards the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca. Conversely, in *Metatopia 10013*, the arrows point north to the nearby Bronx, NY and northeast to West London - homes to the exhibition's practitioners, but more significantly, the horrific fires at the Twin Parks and Grenfell public housing buildings, where inadequate conditions lead to fires that ripped through and devastated these migrant and already marginalized communities. Where Zahedi, born and raised in West London, lost close friends.

Abbas Zahedi's work is often deeply collaborative - and considers spaces, histories, ideas, and materials, in ways that feel meaningful and sensitive. Whether immersive and ongoing, or pointed and individual, Zahedi's work oscillates between their spatial environments, dictating an architectural, conceptual, and social ingenuity. A level of intimacy is developed between each construction and the viewer. The pieces exist not only as precious objects to witness, but as a presence within the overall context of their containment. Their movements, moments, and compositions lay separate from simple form. They elicit responses that can only resonate with our human experiences - like us they exist within, and are always in conversation with their lived environments.

ABBAS ZAHEDI

Abbas Zahedi's interdisciplinary practice blends contemporary philosophy, poetics, and social dynamics with performance, sound, sculpture, and moving-image. With an emphasis on how personal and collective histories interweave, Zahedi makes connections whenever possible with people involved in the particular situations upon which he focuses, to invite others into the conversation.

Zahedi studied medicine at University College London, before completing his MA in Contemporary Photography: Practices and Philosophies at Central Saint Martins in 2019. He has been the recipient of numerous awards including: Thinking Time, Artangel (2020); Jerwood Arts Bursary (2019); Aziz Foundation Academic Scholarship (2018); and Khadijah Saye Memorial Fund Scholarship (2017).

Recent exhibitions include: *Ouranophobia SW3* (2021); *Brent Biennial* (2020), London; *How To Make A How From A Why?* (2020), South London Gallery, London; *In Hindsight...* (2020), Bladr, Copenhagen; *B* (2019) Belmacz, London; *Degree Show* (2019) Central Saint Martins, London; *The Age of New Babylon* (2019) Lethaby Gallery, London; *Diaspora Pavilion* (2018), Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Wolverhampton; *Pressure Makes Diamonds* (2018), Rich Mix, London; *appetite* (2018), Apiary Studios, London; *Diaspora Pavilion* (2017), Venice Biennale, Venice; *rb&hArts* (2008), Royal Brompton Hospital, London.