



Media release

Abbas Akhavan

study for a garden

Until 2 October 2022

Mount Stuart Trust is delighted to announce *study for a garden*, a solo exhibition by Abbas Akhavan (b. 1977, Tehran, Iran; lives/works: Montreal). For his first exhibition in Scotland, Akhavan will present a series of works in the gardens along with a site specific commission in the interior of Mount Stuart house.



This exhibition is very much residency based as the artist's practice is influenced by the application of considered time and research at a specific location. Looking back, he has undertaken travels on a regular basis to immerse himself in residencies such

as Fogo Island, Canada, Atelier Calder, France, Flora ars+natura, Colombia and the Delfina Foundation, UK.

Inspired by his forays into the gardens at Mount Stuart, Akhavan's installation in the vaulted sandstone crypt titled *variations on a folly*, incorporates elements from the surrounding areas into the underbelly of the house. The new work reflects the artist's ongoing explorations into spaces and species from nearby grounds, in particular the domesticated landscapes and woodlands at Mount Stuart.



The project continues with an audio work to be experienced during a walk from the house through the grounds, past meandering streams, to the vegetable gardens. The work oscillates between the wonder and revelation of sight and the classification of birds. This sensory journey loops round to the glass pavilion in the walled kitchen garden. Installed in the abundance of semi tropical plantings, a video work titled *slug*, ruminates on the form of the common snapdragon, and its visual associations to the face and the function of speech. This work continues to illustrate Akhavan's meditative approach which he applies to his project at Mount Stuart and the interplay

between the human form, the architectures, and the planted landscapes at Mount Stuart.



The work of Abbas Akhavan ranges from site-specific ephemeral installations to drawing, video, sculpture and performance. The direction of his research has been deeply influenced by the specificity of the sites where he works: the architectures that house them, the economies that surround them, and the people that frequent them. The domestic sphere, which he proposes as a forked space between hospitality and hostility, has been an ongoing area of study in his practice. More recent works have wandered into spaces and species just outside the home: the garden, the backyard, and other domesticated landscapes.

Solo exhibitions include Chisenhale Gallery, London (2021); the CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco (2019); and Museum Villa Stuck, Munich (2017). Recent group exhibitions include Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2022); Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool (2018); Sharjah Biennial 13, UAE (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).

Image credits:

1 and 2 - abbas akhavan, *you used to call it blue sometimes* (2022). Courtesy the artist, The Third Line (UAE) and Catriona Jeffries (Canada). Image Keith Hunter

3 - abbas akhavan, *variations on a folly* (detail) (2022). Courtesy the artist, The Third Line (UAE) and Catriona Jeffries (Canada). Image Keith Hunter

Notes for Editors:

Mount Stuart is an extraordinary Neo-Gothic mansion on the Island of Bute, sitting between Glasgow, Argyll and Ayrshire on the Firth of Clyde. Since 2001, this unorthodox building has provided both the inspiration and location for an acclaimed Contemporary Visual Arts Programme. The Programme enables the Trust to promote and facilitate interest in the contemporary visual arts and bring exhibitions of international standard to Bute and Argyll. Each exhibition is complemented by a programme of events, publications and educational activities.

For media information

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Ferry and train information:

<https://www.calmac.co.uk/summer-timetables>

Mount Stuart opening dates:

Friday 15th April 2022 -Sunday 30th October 2022

Please call +44 (0)1700 503877 for further information or visit www.mountstuart.com
Mount Stuart, Isle of Bute PA20 9LR

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