AREFEH RIAHI

Arefeh Riahi's artistic research engages with the archive in its broadest sense, exploring non-archival modes of knowledge production. Through an interdisciplinary practice that intertwines narrative and performance, she investigates the potential of ephemeral fictions—spaces shaped by what is often referred to as the anarchive. The anarchive offers a way to interrupt dominant systems, dismantle singular ways of thinking, and open up spaces for resistance. In late 2024 and early 2025, Arefeh participated in the exhibition My Garden's Boundaries Are the Horizon at de Appel in Amsterdam. Her contribution explored patriarchal gender dynamics within traditional Iranian architecture, focusing on the hashti, a small reception chamber. Like Rosemary Mayer—who, in the 1970s, turned to public space as an alternative to male-dominated art institutions—Arefeh seeks spaces for resistance against patriarchy. For her, questioning institutional structures is a vital part of that process.

WEBSITES

www.deappel.nl/nl/archive/entities/1738-arefeh-riahi

www.deappel.nl/en/archive/entities/1738-arefeh-riahi

MEMBER OF ARTISTS' INITIATIVE/COLLECTIVE/INCUBATOR

To See the Inability to See trio collective (Arefeh Riahi, Maartje Fliervoet, Martín La Roche Contreras)

EDUCATION

2021 - 2022	Research group: Kenniskring- Lectoraat Art & Public Space (LAPS) Amsterdam, Gerrit Rietveld Academie
2018 - 2019	Research Group: Making Things Public Amsterdam, Gerrit Rietveld Academie
2013 - 2015	Master Artistic research Den Haag, Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten diploma
1998 - 2002	BA - Painting Azad University of Tehran, Faculty of Art and Archie diploma

EXHIBITIONS

2024	My Garden's Boundaries Are the Horizon De Appel Amsterdam The exhibition was a project by the collective To See the Inability to See and was an expansion of their publication project My Garden's Boundaries Are the Horizon: A Porous Reader to Unguard the Garden. It encompassed different realms. One consisted of artworks by the individual members of the collective which were developed alongside and parallel to the process of writing of the publication. A second realm included historical objects from personal collections that are related to the content of the publication. A third realm comprised other artists' works referenced in, or connected to the book. A fourth direction drew connections between the content of My Garden's Boundaries Are the Horizon and de Appel's Archive, as it is from this archive that To See the Inability to See first started writing on visibility and invisibility, inclusion and exclusion in archiving practices. The title is a direct quote from Derek Jarman, referring to his fenceless garden at Dungeness. Featured in the show were works by Arefeh Riahi, Martín La Roche Contreras, Maartje Fliervoet, Kader Attia, Kasra Jalilipour and Seba Calfuqueo, as well as a selection of historical objects. www.deappel.nl/en/archive/events/1273-my-garden-s-boundaries-are-the-horizon Group
2022	Denunciation ACC Gallery Weimar, Germany acc-weimar.de/ausstellungen/a/denunziation_-801.html Group
2022	21st International Biennial "Small Paper Format" Musée du Petit Format d'Art Contemporain Nismes, Belgium www.museedupetitformat.be/blog/bi22 Group
2022	21st International Biennial "Small Paper Format" Musée de l'Ardenne Charleville-Mézières, France www.museedupetitformat.be/blog/bi22 Group
2021	Architecture of Noise; Oscillation between knowledge and realities W139 Project Space Amsterdam w139.nl/en/event/architecture-of-noise/ Group
2021	Die Ecke Arte Contemporáneo Santiago, Chile In collaboration with Martín la Roche we did the Autumn wall of the project: the

PROJECTS

2024	As if...in that moment the city embraces women Moulage cours from G+N (Gerrit Uitenbogaard) Den Haag, NETHERLANDS Amsterdam, Netherlands rietveldacademie.nl/en/page/28838/as-if-in-that-moment-the-city-embraces-women Six sessions programmed by Arefeh Riahi. Open to the public. This program was to raise greater critical awareness of the ongoing situation in Iran, and to provoke thoughts on this great opportunity to imagine a society otherwise — not only in Iran but across the world. Furthermore, it was to support conversations and reflections on the role of imagination as resistance — imagination as a gesture that cannot be surveilled by state authorities.
2024	Open Masereel Frans Masereel Centrum Kasterlee, Belgium Presentation/performative reading of My Garden's Boundaries Are the Horizon with To See the Inability to See
2022	Instruction to get lost Printroom Rotterdam, Netherlands printroom.org/2022/12/10/16-12-22-journeys-across-archives/ A reading/performance by To See the Inability to See (Arefeh Riahi, Maartje Fliervoet, Martín La Roche Contreras) as part of event series: Journeys Across Archives
2020	Uncertainty Seminar 2020: Care The Hague, Netherlands A Triangular reading performance by To See the Inability to See: Arefeh Riahi, Maartje Fliervoet, Martín la Roch
2019	Unplugged Festival 3rd Edition Helicopter Artist Initiative The hague, Netherlands
2018	Exit Through the Art Books Hoogtij & Gallery Nouvelle Images The hague, Netherlands A

Muroescrito It is a visual poetry project on the outside of the project space for the fall 2021 www.dieecke.cl/proyectos/exp-art/muroescrito-otono-2021
Duo

2020 2020 ROZENSTRAAT Amsterdam, Netherlands
www.rozenstraat.com/event/2020/
Group

2019 Un/folding Interventions de Appel Amsterdam , Netherlands
deappel.nl/en/exhibitions/arefeh-riahi-un-folding-interventions
Solo

2018 OA/AO (onder andere/among others) De Appel Amsterdam, Netherlands OA/AO (onder andere/among others) is a monthly series of screenings, presentations, and conversations at De Appel that focuses around a single work or object. For this edition OA/AO is taken over by the participants of the 2017-18 De Appel Curatorial Programme. Each curator has developed a single movement for the evening's programme, which will include performances, discussions, interventions, and presentations based on their ten month individual research trajectory around the themes of Conflict, Joy and Slowness The video work Nine-Fold-Object screened as part of the presentation of curator Jagna Lewandowska
deappel.nl/en/events/oaao-onder-andereamong-others-with-de-appel-curatorial-programme-2017
Group

2018 Only the Morning Bird Treasures The Flower Garden REDCAT; Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater Los Angles, California, United States www.redcat.org/exhibition/only-morning-bird-treasures-flower-garden
Group

2017 Peace, Place, Potential Peace Palace The Hague, Netherlands Lecture/Performance - the International day of Peace and Justice, ☒ and the Just Peace Festival, Peace Palace
Solo

2016 The Art of Humanity Pratt Institute the Rubelle and Norman Stifler Gallery New York, United States a representative selection of Imago Mundi Collection
Group

2016 Exit Gemak: All Arts Is Political GEMAK The hague, Netherlands
gemak.org/en/2015-10-22/exit-gemak-all-art-is-political
Group

2015 The Great Escape Royal Academy of Arts The Hague, Netherlands Master Artistic Research Graduation Exhibition
archive.kabk.nl/newsitemEN.php?newsid=1045&cat=07
Group

2015 Between...and Hiatus 1646 Project Space The Hague, Netherlands
1646.nl/projects/the-ongoing-conversation-23
Solo

2014 Locus, Iranian Artists Abroad Gemak The Hague, Netherlands
gemak.org/en/2014-09-18/locus-upcoming-iranian-artists
Group

2013 13th Delhi Photo Festival Amphitheater, India Habitat Center New Delhi, India Video Screening
Group

2012 What Lies Beneath (The Second Edition) Gallery Isabelle Van den Eynde Dubai, United Arab Emirates
www.ivde.net/m/exhibitions/38/press_release_text/
Group

Lecture/Performance as part of a performance program curated by Petra van der Schoot in Gallery Nouvelle Images as part of the HOLLA Festival

2018 Unplugged Festival (2nd Edition) Helicopter Artist Initiative The hague, Netherlands

2017 Unplugged Festival Helicopter Artist Initiative The Hague, Netherlands

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES/RESIDENCIES

2022 Pompgemaal Den Helder
Mondriaanfonds Den Helder,
Netherlands
www.regionoordkop.nl/15/08/2022/pompgemaal-open-dag/

2019 de Appel Amsterdam Amsterdam,
Netherlands Un/folding Interventions is an ongoing, research-driven presentation by artist-in residence in the archive of De Appel, Arefeh Riahi. The presentation unfolds in the format of daily actions, archive gatherings with event-based performances, as well as an ongoing yet constantly changing exhibition.
www.deappel.nl/en/archive/events/992-

SALES/WORKS IN COLLECTIONS

2012 Imago Mundi (Private Collection of Luciano Benetton) Italië

2012 Various private collections UK, UAE Painting and installation work sold to private collections

arefeh-riahi-un-folding-interventions

2008 Annemarie-Schimmel House (German Cultural Center, Lahore) and Vasl Artists Collective, Lahore Lahore, Pakistan

PUBLICATIONS

2024 My Garden's Boundaries Are the Horizon: A Porous Reader to Unguard the Garden Book To See the Inability to See Netherlands My Garden's Boundaries Are the Horizon An Introduction The appearance of this publication is flexible, as is its multidirectionality. It is meant to be read by several readers simultaneously. Some sections of this work can be folded in a multiplicity of shapes, making it a performative document that focuses on an embodied, collective reading. Part of our writings for this publication come from texts written between Spring 1399 and Spring 1400 for the Remote Archivist, by invitation of de Appel, Amsterdam. Other fragments were taken from performative readings that took place at Stroom, The Hague (1400), de Appel (1398) and PrintRoom, Rotterdam (1401, based upon a contribution to an anthology of performance scores by Notes On Hapticity Collective). The collaborative writing of these texts naturally demanded the three of us to gradually merge into one voice, a transformative I. This changed in late 1400. We had started planning for a trip to Iran, to take place in Mehr 1401. The intention was to work on this book through the lens of traditional Iranian architecture. Yet, as events developed, each of us was confronted in a highly individual way with the possible implications of this journey. During our preparations, we realised we'd become personally involved with the borders we'd previously written about, albeit with more distance. In our minds, we increasingly embodied these boundaries and the violence they bestowed upon us. In the end, only one of us actually went. Being physically separated and not always being able to be in contact, we started writing each other secret letters testifying to our respective positions, sharing our fears, traumas and dreams. This brought us to a deeper understanding of our more private experiences, and eventually our collective writing came to embrace them all. We see this publication as an object through which we want to question the practice of archiving. We focus on archiving as a s/State of mind, rather than on those spaces generally called “archives” and their objects in captivity. This state is a mode of thinking with which we are each challenged on a daily basis, the mode of sticking to “the familiar,” opposing change and “the unknown”. We think momentarily interrupting this mode is crucial. To do so, we depart not from physical archives, but from (fictional) stories surrounding certain traditional Iranian buildings, the Persian garden and in particular an entrance room called the hashti...

2022 16/10/20 A project by Notes on Hapticity Collective Book Printroom To See the Inability to See Rotterdam, Netherlands notesonhapticity.com/2023/08/04/16-10-20/ My contribution to this publication is a text written in

REVIEWS

2025 Tuinen met bomen vol fruit – My Garden's Boundaries Are The Horizon in De Appel Zazie Duinker Amsterdam, Netherlands metropolism.com/nl/recensie/tuinen-met-bomen-vol-fruit-my-gardens-boundaries-are-the-horizon-in-de-appel/ In the exhibition My Garden's Boundaries Are The Horizon in De Appel, the collective To See the Inability To See investigates alternative methods of archiving. Zazie Duinker visits the exhibition and learns how the archive can be both enigmatic and open; as a constant dialogue between inside and outside.

2020 A fold in time Sophie Sanders Amsterdam chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.deappel.nl/fmpv Witness report – Arefeh Riahi – Un/folding Interventions

collaboration with Martín La Roche Contreras and Maartje Fliervoet as part of our collective project: To See the Inability to See

2022 21st International Biennial “Small Paper Format” Catalog

2021 The Remote* Archivist de Appel Amsterdam To See The Inability to See: Arefeh Riahi, Maartje Fliervoet, Martín La Roch Contreras Amsterdam, Netherlands
new.deappel.nl/en/pages/1862-series-01-to-see-the-inability-to-see
contribution to the first three issues of de Appel Archive newsletter in collaboration with Maartje Fliervoet and Martín La Roche Contreras (To See the Inability to See), distribution de Appel and Metropolis M - The Remote* Archivist is a recurring publication from the Archive of de Appel that can also be accessed while the reader is physically distant, or the archive is far away. The distance, and at the same time the fickle proximity of digital platforms is now translated into the tangibility of archivistic messages

2019 Only The Morning bird Treasures the Flower Garden Book REDCAT (Roy AND Edna Disney/CalArts Theater) Los Angles, California, United States Exhibition Catalogue

2016 MARCHIVE #4 Book Royal Academy of Arts The hague, Netherlands A publication of The Master Artistic Research department

2015 Exit Gemak: All Art Is Political Book GEMAK, Vrije Academie The Hague, Netherlands
issuu.com/gemakdenhaag/docs/151209_gemak_issuu

2014 Iranomutomorphosis.net - A book consisting of artworks created contemporary Iranian artists Book Fabrica (Communication Research Centre for the Benetton Group), Italy Italy
www.imagomundiart.com/artworks/arefeh-riahi-one-us-dollar The presented artwork is part of Luciano Benetton's private collection

AWARDS AND GRANTS

2024 As if... in that moment, the city embraces women Pro Kunstprojecten, Stroom Den Haag Den Haag, Netherlands

2024 My Garden's Boundaries Are the Horizon Mondriaan Fonds International Presentation Amsterdam-Belgium

2022 Art project Mondriaan Fonds Amsterdam Amsterdam, Netherlands

2022 design grant scheme Stimuleringsfonds Creatieve Industrie Netherlands

2019 Project subsidy professional art Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst Amsterdam, Netherlands

2016 Pro Invest Subcidy Stroom Den Haag The Hague, Netherlands

SECONDARY ART-RELATED ACTIVITIES

2003 - 2009 Visual art writer, translator and illustrator for Tehran Avenue Magazine



My Garden's Boundaries Are the Horizon, 2025



My Garden's Boundaries Are the Horizon, 2025



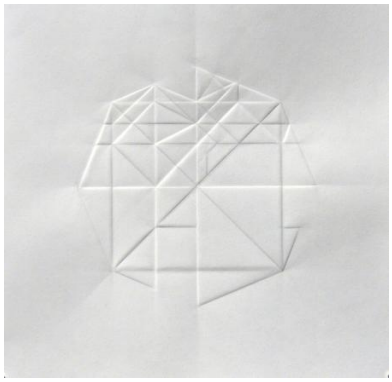
My Garden's Boundaries Are the Horzion: A Porous Reader to Unguard the Garden, 2024
Artist book/object



Instruction to get lost, 2022
Reading/performance



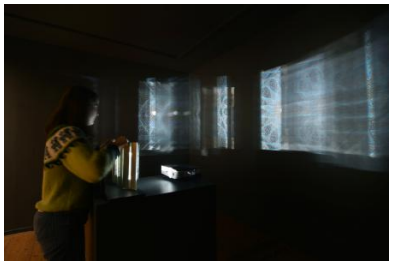
Twelve surfaces, nineteen folds, 2022
cardboard, paper and color pencil



Study of the octagon in two dimentions, 2022
folds on paper, 25 x25 cm



House of Secrets in Geometric Structures, 2021
Installation



House of Secrets in Geometric Structures: The study of the octagon in thre dimentions, 2021



Palindrome, 2021
This project consists of a constellation of coalescent components — a site-specific performance in two parts, that left behind a residual installation, accompanied by a sound composition, printed material as a wall-installation and a video work.



Palindrome: Body and Borders, 2021
performance and video, Duration: 20 minutes