

Towards  
87 Wade Ave  
Unit B1  
Toronto ON

# *Vacancies*

## Abbas Akhavan, Sameer Farooq, and Joshua Vettivelu

December 7, 2017–January 6, 2018

Opening reception: Thursday, December 7, 6–9pm

**Towards is pleased to present *Vacancies*, an exhibition featuring the work of Abbas Akhavan, Sameer Farooq, and Joshua Vettivelu.**



Mining both personal and public narratives, the works in *Vacancies* share a sense of intimacy – exploring identity, collective memory, the body, and loss.

In the front space of the gallery is Joshua Vettivelu's sculpture *there is no difference between nothing and everything when the distance you have built to cope becomes the world*. Composed of 9 separate drawings etched on glass, the images depict men in the throes of various activities. Oscillating back and forth between intimacy and violence, the drawings reveal a darker side of masculinity – one in which men are encouraged to kill off parts of themselves in order to be recognized as men.

Running across the galleries east wall is Sameer Farooq's installation *Pouf, Sausage, Weight, Arc*. These hand shaped ceramic sculptures mimic the forms of the protective and packing materials found in the backrooms of many museums. Acting as stand-ins for what is often edited out or left unseen, these objects highlight important questions regarding representation, inclusion, and what is omitted when we speak of "history."

The back space of the gallery is dedicated to Abbas Akhavan's *after Untitled*. Composed of a single ply facial tissue with the same dimension of a queen-size bedsheet, this delicate piece is a meditation on intimacy, loss and legacy.

Gallery Hours  
Thurs–Sat, 12–6pm  
or by appointment

kevin@towards.info  
www.towards.info

Towards  
87 Wade Ave  
Unit B1  
Toronto ON

**Abbas Akhavan's** practice 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, as a forked space between hospitality and hostility, has been an ongoing area of research in his practice. More recent works have shifted focus, wandering onto spaces and species just outside the home—the garden, the backyard, and other domesticated landscapes. Akhavan is the recipient of Kunstpreis Berlin (2012), the Abraaj Group Art Prize (2014), the Sobey Art Award (2015), and the Fellbach Triennial Award (2016).

–

**Sameer Farooq** (b. 1978) completed an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design (2014) and a BFA from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam (2005). His interdisciplinary practice investigates tactics of representation and enlists the tools of installation, photography, documentary filmmaking, writing and the methods of anthropology to explore various forms of collecting, interpreting, and display.

Recent projects include an ambitious public installation at the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto and an upcoming exhibition inaugurating the University of Reno's new arts centre. He has exhibited internationally and nationally at the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Contemporary Art Gallery (Vancouver), the Art Gallery of York University, Open Studio (Toronto), Maquis Projects (Izmir, Turkey), Blackwood Gallery (Mississauga), Trankat (Tétouan, Morocco), Sol Koffler Gallery (Providence, USA), Artellewa (Cairo, Egypt), and Sanat Limani (Istanbul, Turkey). Farooq has been awarded several grants from the Canada Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council, and the Europe Media Fund, as well the President's Scholarship at the Rhode Island School of Design. He also appeared on the 2017 Sobey Art Award long list.

–

**Joshua Vettivelu** is an artist working within sculpture, video, performance and installation. Their work seeks to explore how larger frameworks of power impact and manifest within intimate personal relationships. Recently, their practice has been looking at the relationships of labour and consumption that occurs when personal experiences are mined for the production of art. Vettivelu currently teaches at OCAD University within the faculty of Continuing Education and is the Director of Programming at Whippersnapper Gallery.

Gallery Hours  
Thurs–Sat, 12–6pm  
or by appointment

kevin@towards.info  
www.towards.info