GREEN ZEN
CREATING NATURAL HARMONY

CASE STUDY

Saadiyat Island

A Japanese garden set into the space beneath a floating stair, built from the client's own vision in a single day.

LOCATION	PROPERTY	COMPLETED	SCOPE
Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi	Private residence	October 2026	Survey, specification and installation

THE BRIEF

A garden beneath the stair.

The client arrived with a clear picture of what she wanted: a quiet Japanese scene under the floating stair of her living room. A single sculptural tree, a grouping of weathered stone, moss gathered at their feet and a pale ground raked into movement.

The space was already a raised bed, open to the whole room and seen through the glass of the balustrade. It held a loose arrangement of bamboo, grasses and white pebbles. Nothing was wrong with it, but nothing in it held the eye.

Green Zen surveyed and measured the bed, specified the scheme against her renders and installed it in one day, with the home in use around us.

LOCATION
Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi

PROPERTY
Private residence, interior

BED
335 x 122 cm beneath the main stair

SCOPE
Survey, specification and installation

ON SITE
One day

COMPLETED
October 2026

> *The raked sand gives the whole bed a sense of motion, while everything placed in it stays perfectly still.*

BEFORE · THE BED AS WE FOUND IT

AFTER · OCTOBER 2026

WHAT WE MADE

Stillness, with movement running through it.

The tree was set hard into the rear corner, where the stair leaves the most headroom, so its canopy could lean out beneath the soffit the way a pine leans over water. Two weathered stones sit off-center in the middle of the bed, one larger than the other, so that no two elements line up.

Moss gathers at the foot of the tree and the stones and runs between them, tying the composition into one piece. Everything else is sand, raked by hand into ripples that flow around each stone and carry the eye along the full length of the bed.

The client's existing sphere lights and a few of her grasses were kept and re-set at the low end of the bed, so the new garden still feels like part of her home.

RAKED SAND, DRAWN AROUND THE STONES

THE DIFFICULTY

Working under a stair.

01

Headroom that runs out

Full height under the stair runs only 96 cm from the rear wall before the soffit falls away. The tree was sized and set out so its canopy reaches into that space and clears the underside of the stair.

02

A shallow bed

The recess is 10 cm deep. The sand was laid to sit just below the stone plinth so the ripples hold their line and nothing spills onto the floor of the living room.

03

One day, in a lived-in home

The bed was cleared, rebuilt and styled in a single day, with the stone plinth, the floor and the glass balustrade protected throughout and the room handed back clean.

THE BED, CLEARED

MOSS SET AT THE BASE

THE FINISHED TREE

SPECIFICATION

Feature tree, bonsai-form pine, 155 cm	Moss cushions at the base of tree and stones
Two feature stones, weathered grey	Fine white sand, hand-raked, full bed
Existing sphere lights, retained and re-set	Existing ornamental grasses, retained

And next, the garden outside.

The client has since asked Green Zen to landscape the outdoor spaces of the residence.

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