

**Mohammed Qasim Ashfaq**  
***BLACK SUN***  
**9 February – 18 March 2017**

Exhibited:

*BLACK SUN*  
2017  
Graphite  
Diameter 5m  
Surface area 19.63 m<sup>2</sup>  
MQA0111

*“It’s as if all my drawings have been leading to this one work, almost like a conclusion. The wall work just seems to be the natural peak of drawing. The simplicity of graphite and wall together creates a mirror of space.”*

We are excited to present to the public *BLACK SUN*, the exhibition of a vast new work by **Mohammed Qasim Ashfaq**. His monumental orbital installation is executed directly onto the wall, its five metre wide surface made by hand in shimmering graphite. The work’s diameter and finish (the graphite has been polished) offers the audience an intense experience with a unique form that combines drawing and sculpture and which in turn takes in the architecture and shifting light of the gallery space.

The first of these new works was shown in the summer of 2016 at Modern Art Oxford, drawn with a diameter of 250 cm high on a gallery wall and illuminated with natural light above Richard Long’s clay floor piece *Walking a Labyrinth* (1971-2016) and Hannah Rickards’ audio installation *Thunder* (2005) which clapped across the exhibition space.

Mohammed Qasim Ashfaq’s work is an invitation to look at the world as a space of pluralism and unity. Drawing inspiration from the visual culture of mysticism and taking references from 20<sup>th</sup> century modernism, he makes sculpture and drawing, the experience of which can be located somewhere between science fiction and meditation (note that one of the artist’s favourite films is Stanley Kubrick’s masterpiece *2001: A Space Odyssey* which begins with a visitation from an enigmatic monolith).

And yet, all these shapes and forms he makes are nothing but an entry into the unity of transcendence: they pave the way for viewers to engage with the intensity of line and plane, with the depth of the black monochrome or silver, and with the presence in space of shapes conceived as sculptures or mass conceived as drawing. Mohammed’s work urges us to look again and to look better – shapes and masses we considered stable are deconstructed and reconstructed, as if they were the stuff of a metaphysical game. Each of them is different, and each expands the borders of the very idiosyncratic visual language the artist has been consistently expanding.

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Through these new wall works viewers are offered the possibility to engage with abstraction in an extreme and pure form, in a space where there is no sculpture or drawing but ideas. The special scale and character of the work seems to offer a portal for the mediation of interior and exterior worlds, the contemplation of the self that is physical, spiritual and intellectual.

The exhibition is accompanied by a publication *CLEAR BLACK SMOKE* edited by **Shanay Jhaveri**, Assistant Curator, South Asia, Modern and Contemporary Art, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. It includes contributions from **Charles Clarke**, an experienced art technician working with museums, galleries and artists, **Ben Eastham**, Co-Founder and Editor of *The White Review*, Assistant Editor of *art-agenda* and co-author with Katya Tylevich of *My Life as a Work of Art*, **Donatien Grau**, a scholar and writer based in Paris, a Contributing Editor of *Flash Art International*, and an Editor at Large of *Purple Fashion Magazine* and advisor to Azzedine Alaïa for the Maison Alaïa's non-for-profit exhibition space, the Galerie, **Paul Hobson**, Director of Modern Art Oxford, **Alexis Lowry**, an Associate Curator at Dia Art Foundation in New York City and former Curator of the David Winton Bell Gallery, Brown University and **Devika Singh**, an art historian, critic and curator based in Paris, a fellow at the Centre allemand d'histoire de l'art (Max Weber Foundation) and an associate scholar at the Centre of South Asian Studies of the University of Cambridge. The publication is designed by Victoria Bridal.

**Mohammed Qasim Ashfaq** (b. 1982 Falkirk, Scotland) has exhibited his work internationally. Notable exhibitions include *Mirrorcity* at the Hayward Gallery, London, *Kaleidoscope: It's me to the world* at Modern Art Oxford, *Open Heart Surgery* at the Moving Museum, London, *Make me a black hole and I will believe you* at Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai and the *7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art* at Queensland Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane. This is his third solo show at the gallery here in London. He is also to be included in the forthcoming exhibition *Stars* at the LENTOS Kunstmuseum Linz.