

PRESS RELEASE**Mohammed Qasim Ashfaq*****INTERVALS*****14 April — 29 May 2021***You see, here time becomes space.*

— Parsifal, Act 1

*INTERVALS* is an exhibition of 13 new drawings by Mohammed Qasim Ashfaq that transform line, depth and mass into an experience of pure intensity. Installed across a single horizontal plane, each drawing is a monochrome work composed of graphite — an exacting line by line process administered directly by the artist's hand, with pencil, compass and ruler. The result is a supreme fidelity and material reverence, a sculptural energy that answers to nothing but itself and the shifting perception of those who encounter it.

Each work is defined by a uniform square of black mass, a void that signifies both the apperception of light's absence and the anticipation of its greatest catalyst. This internal dynamism, refracting light in a limitless mosaic of silver and onyx, is unique to each drawing and obscures their modest scale for divine sublimity: triangulations and quadrangles echo the tessellations of Islamic ornament whilst the construction of these graphite shapes and planes suggests structural integrity — spire, vault, or flying buttress — an expression of the intermingling of the artist's dual Scottish and Pakistani heritage.

The tacit architecture and accuracy of form in *INTERVALS*, systemic and unremitting, speaks directly to the cadence of this shared divinity. These are works that knowingly aspire to the unattainable, a perfection or absolute truth that transcends the mechanical logic of their execution. This is seen in the process of their creation — a methodological, solitary and contemplative process; and in their power for illumination — both physically as conduits for the refraction of light, and spiritually, in their power to evoke clarity and introspection in the viewer.

This revelatory function is shared not only between systems of faith but the history of modernism and science fiction, in their emphasis on the enlightenment of reason and the speculative futures of our relationship to space, light and mass — in particular, Ashfaq pays homage to the formal experimentation of the Bauhaus and the monolithic motifs of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In each case, we find a conflation of interior and exterior worlds, of the cognitive and embodied, the secular and the sacred.

*INTERVALS* is a coinciding space, one of meditation and a slow, fierce propulsion toward the future. Each of these new drawings speaks its own terms, and those alone. They are autonomous topologies that obliterate distinctions between form and content, perfection and its infinite variation. And in this sense, they aspire not only to the integration of pattern and architecture — futurism and tradition — but also to the condition of music; an intuitive and abstract form that shatters the illusion of individuality, the false distinction between subject and object, self and non-self. For in so far as the mind can perceive that which it believes is divine, so it might also participate in that divinity.

**Mohammed Qasim Ashfaq (born 1982, Falkirk, Scotland)** lives and works in Dunfermline, Scotland. Qasim Ashfaq studied at The Slade School of Art, London, UK and Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen, Scotland. Solo exhibitions include *BLACK SUN*, Hannah Barry Gallery, London UK (2017); *CLEAR BLACK SMOKE*, Hannah Barry Gallery, London UK (2014); *Mohammed Qasim Ashfaq*, Cairn, Fife, Scotland UK (2013); *Make me a black hole and I will believe you*, Amrita Jhaveri Space, Mumbai IN (2011). Selected group exhibitions include *Geometrica*, Tristan Hoare, London UK (2018); *We Are Not Alone*, British Council at ATHR, Jeddah SA (2017); *STERNE Kosmische Kunst von 1900 bis heute*, LENTOS Kunstmuseum Linz, Linz AT (2017); Drawing Biennial 2017, Drawing Room, London UK (2017); *Romanticism and the Sublime*, Lubomirov Angus Hughes, London UK (2016); *It's Me to the World*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford UK (2016); *ROD*, Embassy Gardens Commissions, London UK (2015); *Mirrorcity*, Hayward Gallery, London UK (2014); *Open Heart Surgery*, The Moving Museum, London UK (2013); *TECTONIC*, The Moving Museum, Dubai UAE (2013); *Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane AU (2012); *Spiraling Skywards*, Sculpture at Nymans, National Trust, UK (2011); and *Let There Be Sculpture!*, New Art Centre, Roche Court, Wiltshire UK (2010). His work is part of the British Council Collection.