



Sameer Farooq & Beth Stuart

≠ presents parallel projects by Sameer Farooq and Beth Stuart. This pairing emerges first through friendship, second through kindred material sensibilities, and third through ongoing conversations about how their meditation practices intersect their studio work. Mutually felt is the desire to learn along the grey path *between* the grinding, material politics of these days, and a more ecstatic, expansive space that invites compassion. This path is not dissimilar to the one found between Mind's clear projection of an artwork and what Hand will ultimately make; full of doubt, tender shepherding, transformation and compromise.

Farooq's new series, *I opened up the radio but there was no-one inside* (2022), is a continuation of his large, iterative, ceramic sculptures that function as a material record of his body over time. The project presents ceramic forms that expand and contract back into themselves. Through the repetitive process of attempting to push down clay as it wants to cohere into tall and singular entities, he leaves space for the potential of self (ego) to dissipate into the heart. This process is a cyclical motion, like breathing or an egg cracking.

Stuart's paintings are Bongard problems, two-sided puzzles in which the viewer is meant to decipher the singular difference between two sets of geometric forms. They have been used

as a way to illustrate meta-rational functioning, or the ability to apprehend complex intersectional patterns instead of lapsing into either fundamentalism or nihilism. The solution to each problem requires a fresh approach; one solution does not equal the next. These paintings interfere with the rules of a typical Bongard problem by bringing in representation. This calling up of context through mimesis parallels the pressing task of reconciling material reality with ideology.

Common between Sameer Farooq and Beth Stuart's work is the practice of tolerating difference without creating an opposite. These objects and pictures are neither pleasurable escapes nor bottom lines, but importantly, political, given how intolerable uncertainty feels nowadays.