



Simeen Farhat: Words Chimes; Meaning in Movements

Vernissage: 10th December, 6pm-9pm

Exhibition Dates: 10th December 2016 – 24th January 2017

XVA GALLERY, Al Fahidi Historical Neighborhood, Bur Dubai

XVA Gallery is pleased to announce *Words Chimes; Meaning in Movements*, the upcoming solo show of Simeen Farhat.

Pakistani born Simeen Farhat describes her work as a record of her own evolution, in that art is synonymous with life.

The abstract forms created out of dyed cast resin have their roots in literature. The texts used by Farhat in her work are poems written in Urdu, Farsi, Arabic, German and English. Personal writings and concerns have a place alongside writings of worldwide importance.

Farhat has a strong appreciation for the importance of language in allowing one the opportunity to make sense of a situation that seems to be in chaos. Her work embodies this, a cloud of letters, words and phrases, decipherable only by locating a word amongst many and tracing its path. The physicality of her work is poetic and graceful, utilizing form and shadow, positive and negative space. It presents an opportunity to step past the chaos and discover the sense.

An Alchemy of Form

I see alchemy in these sculptures. Forms and possibilities precipitating out of our lives with words. These word sculptures attempt return us to an alchemy of form out of the chemistry of language.

If we imagine that words are atoms and phrases molecules, then a sentence becomes a solution of atoms and molecules that we can absorb into sense. The sculptures in this show seem made of the atoms of words and the molecules of phrases, but they do not make sentences. We cannot absorb them into immediate sense. They make objects the senses of which we have to find for ourselves. These senses, however, can be hard to find.

Our half-recognitions and failures of recognition throw our eyes out of sense. I often have to struggle to identify the particular words in these sculptures. The forms of words are distorted into cursive ambiguity that takes them into the borderlands between language and shape. My eyes go out of sense, and yet I see what feels like a portency, a possibility of something like sense.

But is that portency a mere promise or an actual alchemy of transmutation? Is there a greater sense here or mere figures in word-clouds with which we can entertain ourselves on some summer's day? Are these sculptures just broken heaps of seeming words?

If this art is an alchemy, it is an alchemy in which we confess ourselves in our strivings towards making sense or in our failing to make sense. Art provokes. The measure of modern art lies in the questions it provokes. These sculptures provoke and seduce, promise and disrupt our recognitions and intimacy with the means by which we articulate much of our world—our language. These sculptures show us as both near to and far from language, and also as near to and far from ourselves.

Like alchemy, art not only promises transformations of lead into gold, of confusion into clarity, but of ourselves from lost to found, from crow to phoenix.

Brett Bourbon, 2016

Artist Statement

What is language, but shapes of sense and nonsense; fighting and complementing each other like two colors. My work is a site of struggle, or sometimes even a battle of phrases, logical and illogical. It is not simply abstract decoration, but a place where form and sense reveal themselves despite their impression as distorted and absurd. This means that even in what is said, let alone in how it is displayed in shape, color and form, I am struggling with sense and possibilities. I try to transform my own words into a stage of drama: my words are revealed as the characters animating a drama on the stage. Art is a vehicle for our expression and depiction; it should not be too literal and straightforward. Life and art live and struggle together, like snakes and the wind. My art is the record of my own evolution in life.

My art does not come out of a programmatic concern with abstraction, nor simply as an extension of the tradition of Islamic calligraphy. These both matter, but what matters centrally for me is the way in which language, when it is given to us through shapes and lines, in which we sometimes find ourselves lost while trying to make sense of things that make no sense and vice versa. We follow a line, only to find a disarray of many lines that make chaos of words, and the only way to trace the line followed is to become that line or word and find where we are amidst many other words; where thoughts meet the substance of sight, of line, of object.

Sometimes we need a void in which to find ourselves falling in order for us to discover how to save ourselves from falling. Nonsense can open a void in our ordinary world; I make art that shows the convolution of form, so that we can trace the chaos into sense. My lines and shapes create not only poetry of senses, but they also create negative space anticipated from the senses of the positive shapes: from the breadth of the positive shapes, I shape the gasp of the negative space.

Art is what is what life is often like; the world doesn't make sense but there is no escape. My art is sometimes my way of staying afloat and to listen to the calm of the breeze in the world of suffering and chaos.

Simeen Farhat, 2016

About the XVA Gallery

Established in 2003, XVA is one of the leading galleries in the Middle East that specializes in contemporary art from the Arab world, Iran and the Subcontinent. Exhibitions focus on works by the regions foremost artists as well as those emerging onto the scene. The gallery's artists express their different cultural identities and perspectives while challenging the viewer to drop prejudices and borders. XVA Gallery exhibits both locally and internationally; collaborating with galleries and participating in international art fairs, such as Art Basel Hong Kong, SH Contemporary, Singapore Art Fair and Abu Dhabi Art in 2014, in order to further expose Middle Eastern contemporary art.

XVA Gallery and XVA Art Hotel are located in Dubai's heritage district, now called Al Fahidi Historical Neighborhood. XVA founded and organized the Bastakiya Art Fair from 2007- 2010 as part of its commitment to raising the profile of contemporary art practice in Dubai. For three years XVA was located in DIFC, and has now expanded its premises in Al Fahidi.

XVA Gallery Contact

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