

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## **TWO TAKES ON REALITY: RAFAEL MAHDAVI & MANSUR SALIM**

(XVA GALLERY, DUBAI, UAE – 24 October – 18 November 2009) Two Takes on Reality is a double exhibition at XVA by painters Rafael Mahdavi & Mansur Salim. Landscape works by Iranian painter Rafael Mahdavi express recurring themes & codes in his art, symbolising the painter's memories of emotions and experiences witnessed throughout his life. Pakistani painter Mansur Salim's pictures highlight the boundaries separating the physical dimensions of reality with illusion. Together, Mahdavi & Salim's work offers us two unique takes on reality, liberating our perceptions as we see the world through their eyes.



### **Rafael Mahdavi – Biography**

Rafael Sinclair Mahdavi was born in Mazatlan, Mexico, of an American mother and a Persian father. Rafael has exhibited extensively throughout Europe and the USA, and in China, Iran and at XVA Gallery, UAE. Rafael now lives & works in France and 'Two Takes on Reality' is his fourth solo show in 2009.

### **Rafael Mahdavi – Artist's Statement**

A good poem reveals itself between the lines and beyond their immediate meanings. A good painting reveals itself between the brush strokes and beyond the image's obviousness. What is this or that painting about? I can't tell you exactly, the way I can't tell you what a poem is about precisely, but I can try and tell you what I had in mind when I painted these canvases. The seven paintings from 1994 to 1996 are about memory. Each work is vertically or horizontally symmetrical. There are elements, which are mirrored on either side of each painting. The symmetry is not always obvious. Memory is not obvious, what you remember and what actually happened. How do you begin to put it all back together again? The seven paintings from 2007 to 2009 are landscapes where surprising things have happened, are happening or will happen. The six small paintings from 2008 are about roses, lace, a shell and a labyrinth. Hopefully you will look at these paintings and draw meaning from them, not just now, but for years to come.

### **Mansur Salim – Biography**

Mansur Salim was born in 1958 in Pakistan. He completed an MA in Fine Arts from Karachi University in 1983. Mansur has since worked as a lecturer at Karachi University and for the Central Institute of Arts & Crafts, Karachi Arts Council. Mansur has exhibited extensively throughout Pakistan and is a freelance writer on the philosophy of art and religion.



### **Mansur Salim – Artist’s Statement**

My works are representations of flashes or “kashf” in Urdu and Arabic. These are visions that come to me as explanations of larger universal questions. Gravity represents a physical reality; similarly  $e=mc^2$  is a combination of symbols trying to express some reality. In similar fashion my depiction of flashes should be perceived as equations in a language that nature uses. Perhaps a divine power shows me these flashes so that I may be able to depict them for the world to derive knowledge out of them. I may be receiving them from a metaphysical plane and transforming these into decipherable concepts. A complete interpretation requires viewing in a three dimensional perspective be it an arrangement or a performance. Each of my works is one piece of a larger picture, one shot, one angle of a larger reality. Therefore I am a searcher and a conduit for knowledge.

Located in the historical part of Dubai, **XVA** is a vibrant art space that exhibits a stimulating array of contemporary paintings, sculptures and art installations. It exposes the works of regional and international artists and designers. Since 2003, XVA has been a meeting point for the cultural community of Dubai, contributing to raise the profile of the Emirate through a rich cultural programme, including the Bastakiya Art Fair which is hosted by the gallery. XVA also encompasses a boutique hotel and award-winning vegetarian café. Visit [www.xvagallery.com](http://www.xvagallery.com)

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