



Coming up at XVA Gallery – Half Light, by Naqsh Raj

Join us from December 13th 2025 to January 8th, 2026 as we step into *Half Light* - where grids breathe, colors glow in the twilight and each artwork unfolds like a quiet moment of discovery.

Curatorial text

Naqsh Raj's practice is caused by the deficiencies of the environment that surrounds her. The repetitive expression in her work hints at a longing for predictability, while the grid becomes a framework of order that offers comfort. Within this structure, vertical dashes appear as symbols of strength, an elemental part of her visual language.

Color, in her work, identifies each painting as a singular act, a moment of light in an otherwise dark atmosphere. Yet these are not the bright colors of daylight, but those that flicker in darkness, the "half light" that reveals another dimension of perception. Her work stands as a search for an individual vision shaped simultaneously by the outer world and the inner self.

The paintings embody a tension: carefree, organic brushwork collides with the mechanical application of paint. This strange convergence of painting and printmaking generates a surface alive with texture, where the thickness of paint invites a tactile response. Behind the vertical bars, the noise of expression sometimes strains through, staining the grid with raw, primitive marks that resist containment.

The grid, spreading like a veil, contrasts with these impulses of freedom. Final compositions often take a square like form, pointing to Raj's innate romance with geometry. She frequently activates the composition by dividing it into two, opening space for a dual approach within the same frame. Essentially, her exploration in a self-imposed structure reveals a deep commitment to her evolving language.

In *Half Light*, Naqsh Raj invents a personal tool for grounding and connection, balancing order with anarchy, discipline with instinct and darkness with sparks of illumination.

Naqsh Raj (b. 1984) is an artist and educator based in Islamabad. She holds a Master's in Visual Arts from the National College of Arts, Lahore, and has taught Art and Design for over a decade in Pakistan and a few years in the UK. Raj's practice introduces one of the most primitive forms of printmaking into the act of gestural painting, using the stencil as a tool of discipline, self-awareness, and communication. She has received several honors, including the Young Artist Award (2009) at Alhamra Art Council, the Arjumand Painting Prize (2017), the Nigaah Award (2024) at Mohatta Palace, Karachi, and the main prize in Open 23 at Tarpey Gallery, UK. She was also shortlisted for the John Moores Painting Prize. Her work has been exhibited and collected internationally.

For more information:

Carina Vicente

Email: carina@xvagallery.com

T: 04 353 5383 | M: +971 56 959 8268