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PAUL BOOKER: *Myriad*
SIMEEN FARHAT: *Masnavi*

Anya Tish Gallery is pleased to announce two Houston inaugural solo exhibits by Texas-based artists Paul Booker and Simeen Farhat, which independently deal with the complexities of visual and textual language within themes of nature and cultural identity.

Myriad features a series of intricate sculptures by Paul Booker that explore underlying patterns found within nature. Booker transcribes these sequences into loosely written text, which he slowly deconstructs by deleting recognizable words resulting in a series of abstract forms that become the sculptures' blueprint. The works incorporate hundreds of delicately pinned geometric forms that hang effortlessly across the wall, referencing the Entomological process associated with preserving insects. These assemblages breathe a sense of life into the gallery, creating rhythmical currents and constellations embodied within nature's choreography; flocks of birds, swarms of ants and schools of fish. The physicality of the sculptures cast detailed shadows that ebb and flow across the gallery walls transforming the gallery into an interactive environment that revolves as the viewer moves around it.

Masnavi (small poem in Urdu) features a series of text-based sculptures by Simeen Farhat, which explore the relationship between cultural heritage and language. Calligraphic shapes carved out of wood are appropriated from the deconstructed writings of poets of the Urdu language, notably Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Mirza Ghalib, who embraced controversial themes of freedom and speech. Tones of white, black and sepia play with the viewer's perspective fading in and out of the gallery walls, creating extraordinary mirages of form while the interactive speech bubbles project a variety of elaborate shadows. The assemblages create a linguistic and cultural hybrid between the sensibilities of the visual and the verbal, as well as influences of the east and the west. The intricate nature of the works creates an actively pulsating visual dialogue, producing a transcendental experience that connects the visceral with the rational.

Paul Booker lives and works in Dallas, Texas and is a professor of art at the

University of Texas. Booker describes himself as an abstract painter, who is constantly fascinated with the subtle designs found within the everyday. He has exhibited consecutively at The Museum of Art in Austin and The Museum of Art in Dallas as well as galleries in New York and Texas.

Simeen Farhat is a Pakistani-born artist who currently lives and works in Dallas, Texas, and teaches at the University of Texas. She frequently returns to her native Pakistan, which fuels the themes of cultural identity in her work. She has been included in the 2009 Texas Biennial and recently had a solo exhibit at the McKinney Avenue Contemporary and the Haggerty Gallery in Dallas and has upcoming solo shows in Philadelphia and in Karachi, Pakistan.

The Artists will be present at the Opening Reception Friday, January 8, 6-9 PM.

Exhibition on view through February 6, 2010.