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Word, Object, Motion

Simeen Farhat and Mohammed Al Shammarey

Opening Reception: Friday, September 9, 6:00-8:30 pm
Exhibition on view: through Saturday, October 8, 2011
Both artists will be present at the opening reception.

Anya Tish Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of *Word, Object, Motion*, an exhibition of contemporary Islamic art, featuring the work of Dallas-based Pakistani artist Simeen Farhat, and Houston-based Iraqi artist Mohammed Al Shammarey. Both artists take inspiration from classical Persian and Urdu poetry, dealing with subjects of human struggle and emotions, freedom of thought and expression.

Farhat's sculptures, created from wood and/or cast resin, explode from the wall, forming three-dimensional manifestations of Urdu and Farsi poems. The sculptures' compositions, sinuous Pashto calligraphy, present the viewer with many layers of meaning. The shadows cast by the intricately layered forms, bring to mind whispers, as if the words that cast them have just been spoken. Farhat's work, both original and visually striking in execution, provides a fascinating commentary on present-day perceptions of Islamic culture.

Mohammed Al Shammarey's black and white photographs are inspired by the teachings of the medieval Persian mystic, Jalal al-Din al-Rumi, expressing the ecstasy of the Dervishes in their white tunics spinning round and round in their ritual dance. Al Shammarey's ongoing inquiry into the humanistic elements of Islamic philosophy is reflected by his investigation of the yearning of the soul for the sublime. The artist describes his dynamic black and white images as providing the viewer with a "sense of liberation from gravity, of becoming a rising light".

Simeen Farhat and Mohammed Al Shammarey have both been exhibiting extensively throughout the Middle East and Europe. Most recently, Farhat has had solo exhibitions at Sharjah Museum of Modern Art, UAE, and at the MAC in Dallas, Texas. Her work can also be found in the Royal Collection of Crown Princess Sheikha Salama at Abu Dhabi Palace. In addition to showing in Baghdad, Kuwait, and Jordan, Mohammed al Shammarey has been featured at many European institutions, including the British Museum in London. *Word, Object, Motion* is Simeen Farhat's second exhibition at the gallery, and the first for Mohammed Al Shammarey, who exhibited in Houston at the Station Museum in 2008.