

A Hymn?

The article attempts to praise open the secret hidden within the exhibition's enigmatic imagery.

Any work of art that depicts beauty-be it poetry, music, painting or photography- is a representation of the Divine concealed within. In a paean to the Creator, Farah Mahbub, a self taught photographer, displays myriad images reflecting the Divine. The third solo exhibition is a culmination of experiments carried out over the last two years, based on her experiences. Technical jargon, involving the mastery of processes and dark room manipulation aside, the works of art are like a journey into an inner world. Mystics, in their visions of the Divine reflected in the world, outside and within. As she herself dedicates. All praise is to Him alone, the Creator of beauty within and in the infinite creation beyond... here's to the countless moments of wonder here's to the limitless . The concept and rules hint at the philosophy of Sufism. The belief that God, the Divine exists within every object.

We are nearer to you than your jugular vein and that the beauty of creation is but a reflection of His beauty manifested. Behold In The Creation of the Heavens and Earth and the alternation of Night and Day. They are indeed signs for men of understanding (III 187-19). It is the goal of the seeker or Sufi to discover the Divine reflected within himself and draws close to God and His messenger (SAW) after transcending the self, with the aid of a guide. The process or the path of illumination is gradual involving stages. 'We shall draw them up through stages'

Farah's images are one of wonder at the manifestation of Divine beauty. The series "Eleven Seconds to Fusion inspired by memories rooted in South Africa, seems to be sensual. Experiences, images from the past are distilled and transmuted into precious miniature paintings as still glimpses into time. Is it the start of a journey?

The Azure and Cinnamon Cyanotype series are in two tints, hues of Vandyke brown and of deep Prussian blue. The same image is repeatedly printed within the frame, in a manner designed to draw the viewer in, after throwing him off balance. The multiple images is mysterious and intriguing, trees, foliage, bridges reflected, mirrored forms, a jigsaw of lines and shapes. With a twist of color she transforms, the mood of the image. The Prussian blue is evocative of a nocturnal scene fused with an enigmatic quality while the same image in browns has an air of the distant past, rugged and earthy.

Farah asserts the effect to be deliberate, the play of color and imagery to dispel boredom and awaken the viewer's interest. The captions are equally surreal and enigmatic. Trees of a Water Bed, In the Maze, Moment Of Suspension, Life On A Brick Wall. Is she sharing a different and altered perception?

Light and atmosphere acquire a deeper significance in the set of conventional color photographs captured in Iran. In 'Drifting Winds', light seems to have taken on the mystic quality so prevalent in Islamic art. Light symbolic of the Divine Presence and spiritual illumination suffuses the images of 'Chai khanas' (Tea houses). with a frozen stilled quality, redolent of the past. Drifting Winds' mood of tranquil serenity melts into one of motion and change.

The 'Elemental' series dips into her own psyche a fusion of intense inner and outer experiences, the currents of movement and light mirrored in nature. Inspired by the natural beauty of South Africa, the captions lend the images a deeper meaning. The Endless Unfolding, Countless Textures ,Where do we go, Underwater or Above, Where Am I, Wave Within a Wave, Transcending - have a mystic resonance. Do they reflect the stages a seeker of truth experiences?

The search appears to, culminate, reaching state of happy equilibrium in the '18 Steps to Lucidity' set A plateau of contented wonder seemingly reached, where the scales have fallen and the veils removed to reveal vistas of surreal other worldly beauty. Does Farah aim to evoke the Divine within the beholder as she suggests "(this is) hopefully going to twitch some nerve that leaves you wondering why, what and how? Paradoxical titles exude the traveler s sense of delight discovery; Lucid Confusion , Washed in Light , A Glow Within , From Dark Daylight, To Gentle Shades .

Perhaps the key to the exhibition lies in the title of the exhibition 'The Hues Within'. a play of the word 'Hue' which if pronounced slightly differently could be 'The Hu Within'. 'Hu' referring to God, as one of His Names.