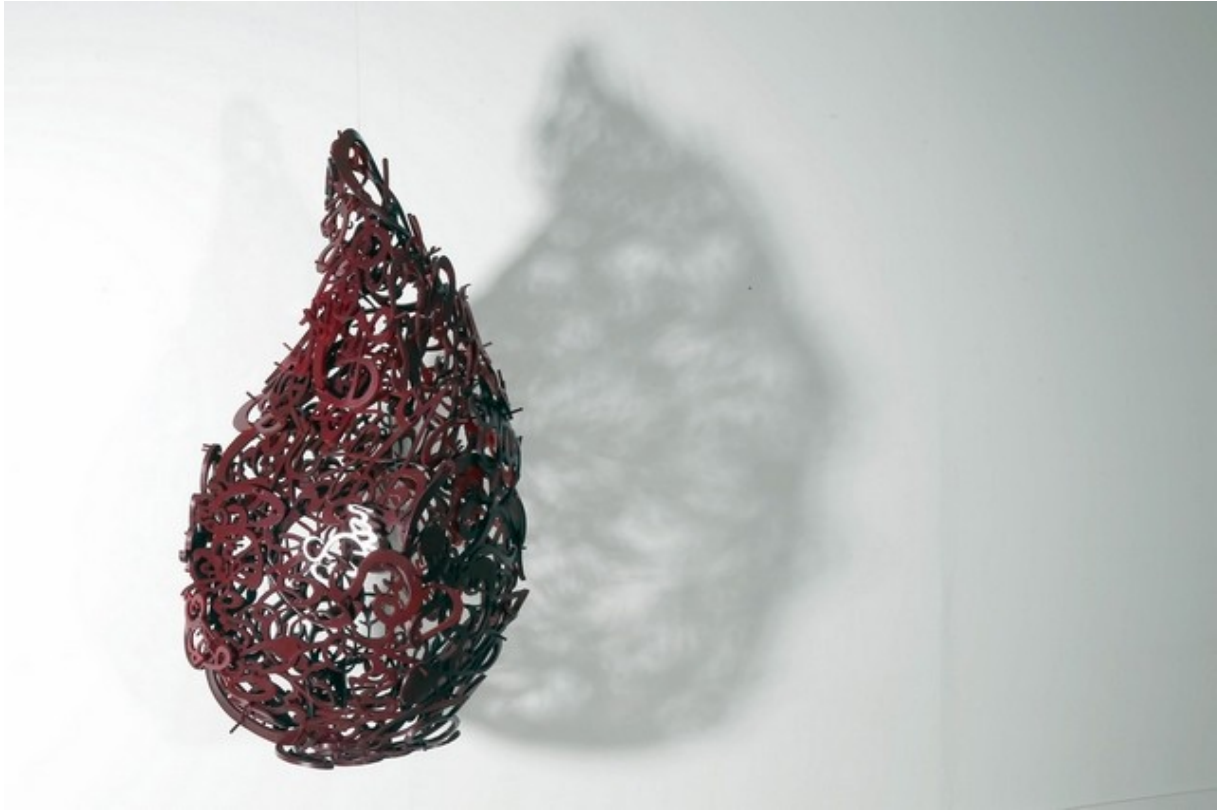


## Simeen Farhat uses text to make her sculptures on show at XVA Gallery

By Anna Seaman



A Red Drop of Blood by Simeen Farhat. Currently on show at XVA Gallery, Dubai.  
Courtesy of the artist and XVA Gallery.

Today is the last day to catch Simeen Farhat's exhibition of sculptural works at XVA Gallery. Although, if you can't make it today, don't worry the gallery, which is also a stunning hotel in the middle of historic Al Fahidi Neighbourhood will be keeping a lot of the pieces in place around the hotel. Here, I caught up with Simeen for a quick interview to help you understand her works that are made up of resin cast lettering in English and Arabic.

**Q: The letters in these sculptures are words of your poetry; are they complete poems or excerpts?**

A: Sometimes, I use the entire poem, other times, just excerpts. For some of these sculptures, I used my own poems or prose poems. But there are a few other pieces, such as the blue piece, Some Gorgeous Shapes and the red piece, She Smearred Red, I used the poems of my friend, Brett Bourbon, who has inspired me and my work, as well encouraged me to write.



A Whirlwind by Simeen Farhat. Currently on show at XVA Gallery, Dubai. Courtesy of the artist and XVA Gallery.

Here is one of Brett's Poems, excerpts of which I that I used in Some Gorgeous Shapes:

Kinds

We, my love, must live either

on the same road or under the same

sky. Which is it for us? The planks

ahead or the all-same, the weather

falling down, the sky tilting away,

or storming like arrows upon u

**Q: What do you think of first, the poem or the artwork?**

It can be either way. Sometimes a poem leads to an artwork and then I work around the essence of the poem. Other times, I have an idea or a concept, or a form, and I then use words accordingly.

**Q: They are never legible as poems when they are in the artwork form - is that important for you as an artist? Doesn't it take away from the meaning of the poem?**

My aim is to get the essence of the poem through its form and as a sculpture. At times, the words may be identified somewhere in the composition of the artwork. If people are interested to read what they say (which they do most of the times), then they can always read the poem; usually provided at the venue where the works are displayed, or from me directly.

**Q: What about each form of the sculptures - how do you decide on those?**

A: The forms are achieved both randomly--by simply arranging them in some order as I build them up--or they can be some compositions, that germinate from an idea or a poem; with well-planned sketches and thought processes for even longer than a year. For artworks such as A Bubble that Burst, for example, or, The Black Sleep, I first thought of the images, in relation to the poems and ideas they were depicting in what you see in the shapes of those the sculptures.



**Q: There is one piece that has a painting of you under the texts on a surface of a mirror. Is that a new direction for you?**

A: I was very happy to see the result of that piece. I have been playing with the human forms as drawings and paintings, and as photographic images in my work lately. It was a challenge at first; which I think was successfully resolved. Yes, I have many other plans to create works in the similar visual composition and technique. I believe in experimentations, challenges, accidents and a deeper thought process and understanding when it comes to my art.

*Anna Seaman is the editor of The Art Blog published by The National in the United Arab Emirates.*