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Nicholas Forrest, "Shirin Neshat's New Film *Looking for Oum Kulthum* is Genius," BLOUIN Artinfo, August 30, 2017.

BLOUINARTINFO

## Shirin Neshat's New Film "Looking for Oum Kulthum" is Genius



Iranian artist and director [Shirin Neshat](#)'s new film "Looking for Oum Kulthum" will have its world premiere at [Giornate degli Autori – Venice Days](#) on the fringes of the 74th Venice International Film Festival organized by La Biennale di Venezia (August 30 to September 9). The film is one of 12 selected from all over the world, in competition for the Official Awards.

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Neshat's "film within a film" tells the story of an Iranian director by the name of Mitra who embarks on her dream project of making a film about the legendary Egyptian singer and diva Oum Kulthum. But as she explores the issues faced by Oum Kulthum as a female artist in a male-dominated society, Mitra's own struggles blend with those of the singer as she finds herself heading for a breakdown.

Commenting on the film, Neshat says: For the past twenty years, as a visual artist and a filmmaker, I have explored diverse concepts and narratives in relation to Muslim women. In 2009, I directed my first feature film 'Women Without Men,' based on a magical realist novel written by the Iranian female author, Shahrnush Parsipur."

"Continuing with my obsession with female strength and artistic expression in the Muslim world, since 2010, I have been developing my next feature film project based on the art and life of the legendary Egyptian singer Oum Kulthum (1900–1975), whose music and larger-than-life persona has and continues to be embedded in the hearts and imaginations of millions of Middle Easterners,"

Looking for Oum Kulthum is a Razor Film production, in coproduction with Coop99, In Between Art Film, Vivo film, Schortcut Films in association with Doha Film Institute, in collaboration with ORF, in association with Noirmontartproduction, with the support by Austrian Film Institute, FISA - Film Industry Support Austria, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Vienna Film Fund, Regione Lazio.

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[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=3&v=NPhoV8ymcmQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=NPhoV8ymcmQ)