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Sarah Cascone, "Artist Shirin Neshat Is Mining Her Personal History to Make a Film About the Immigrant Experience Debuting This Fall," May 28, 2019

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Artist Shirin Neshat Is Mining Her Personal History to Make a Film About the Immigrant Experience Debuting This Fall

The film will debut as part of the Broad museum survey "Shirin Neshat: I Will Greet the Sun Again" in October.

Sarah Cascone, May 28, 2019



Shirin Neshat, *Untitled*, from the series "Women of Allah" (1996). Photo ©Shirin Neshat, courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels.

Iranian artist Shirin Neshat is taking on a subject close to home for her new film, which is debuting at Los Angeles's Broad Museum in October. Titled *Land of Dreams*, the film is a rumination on cultural identity told through the viewpoint of a female photographer from Iran, traveling across the western US.

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“For the first time,” Neshat told artnet News in an email, “I dare to make art directly related to the social and political realities of the United States. In the face of major cultural changes in America since the Trump administration, I felt strongly that the subject of social injustice, both in respect to immigrants and Americans, particularly those living in poverty in the middle of America, calls for an artistic response, even if in a fictionalized manner.”

The film installation will appear as part of the Broad’s survey “Shirin Neshat: I Will Greet the Sun Again,” the artist’s largest show to date.

Land of Dreams is influenced by Surrealist filmmakers Man Ray and Maya Deren, but is based on Neshat’s own experiences as an Iranian-American who came to the US in 1975 and, at just 17, enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley. Neshat lived in exile throughout the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79, as well as the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88, and continues to live in the US today.



Shirin Neshat, *Ilgara*, from the series “The Home of My Eyes” (2015). Photo ©Shirin Neshat, courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels.

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The film also comes as a response to the growing impulse to view immigrants with paranoia and mistrust, an uneasiness that is reflected in the narrative. In addition to taking portraits of her subjects, the main character also takes note of their dreams and logs them with an Iranian colony.

Neshat is about to begin production on the film now and plans to complete it over the summer. Its premiere will coincide with the US debut of Neshat's monumental photographic portraits, "The Home of My Eyes," showing people from Azerbaijan whose bodies are inscribed with ink. The series has only been shown twice before, at Yarat Contemporary Art Space in Azerbaijan and Venice's Museo Correr during the 2017 Venice Biennale. Other large-scale photographic installations in the Broad show will include works from the artist's series "The Book of Kings" (2012) and "Our House Is on Fire" (2013).



Shirin Neshat, *Untitled*, from the series "Roja" (2016). Photo ©Shirin Neshat, courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels.

The exhibition will also include the entirety of Neshat's best-known work, her three-part photo series of black-and-white portraits,

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“Women of Allah,” depicting veiled women. All in all, there will be some 150 photographs and videos, including eight immersive video installations, and screenings of Neshat’s two feature-length films, *Women Without Men* (2009) and *Looking for Oum Kulthum* (2018).

“Shirin Neshat: I Will Greet the Sun Again” will be on view at the Broad, 221 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, October 19, 2019–February 16, 2020.