

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

## Shirin Neshat

### *Dreamers*

515 West 24th Street  
May 19–June 17, 2017  
Opening May 18, 6–8pm

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Shirin Neshat featuring a film and a related series of photographs. Through charged imagery and evocative *mise-en-scène*, Neshat's photography and film installations critique the cultural construction of difference. This exhibition marks the first time she fully turns her attention to American culture, dissecting the tense and querying experience of being an Iranian in the United States today. In both the film *Roja* and a new series of photographs, *Dreamers*, Neshat confronts the ambivalence of living across two cultures and how it coheres to both personal and political identity. To tackle the ambiguous status of the outsider, she utilizes enigmatic images, haunting encounters, and mystified points of view influenced by the surrealist films of Man Ray and Maya Deren. She mobilizes dream logic to represent the disorienting complexity of this fraught subject position and to make visible the double binds of intersectional identity.

*Roja* (2016), drawn from Neshat's own recurring dreams, memories, and desires, traces an Iranian woman's disquieting attempts at connection with American culture while reconciling her identification with her home country. Encountering her own sense of alienation from both, the titular protagonist experiences how both the foreign and the familiar can become unnerving and hostile. Neshat undermines *Roja's* social and affective attachments—from a cabaret performance that becomes a nightmarish challenge to her identity, to a recovery of familial bonds that turns increasingly frightening. Throughout the film, she estranges American landscapes—the utopic attempts of government architecture and coalmines that evoke the terrain of the Middle East—to situate *Roja* within an ambiguous psychic and political terrain. Using nonlinear narratives and destabilizing in-camera techniques, the film questions the relationships that tie us to the world and reveals the transcendence of release into spaces unbounded by socio-historical demarcations.

Along with the film, the *Dreamers* series of photographs also represent a departure for Neshat. Well-known for her portrait series in which calligraphy quoting religious texts and poetry enliven the contours of the face, the *Dreamers* series takes as its subjects white men and women from the United States, many of who also appear in *Roja*. Obscured and blurry, these portraits become a metaphor for the mystifications that enforce cultural boundaries and question how socially constructed difference limits sympathetic attachments across race, class, and nationality. Taken together, the film and the photographs open up the discourse of identity beyond a minoritizing view and seek to reconcile global diversity on both the local and psychic registers.

Shirin Neshat is an Iranian-born artist and filmmaker living in New York. Neshat is currently the subject of an exhibition at the Museo Correr, an official corollary event to the 57th Biennale di Venezia. She has mounted numerous solo exhibitions at museums internationally, including: the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the Serpentine Gallery, London; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. A major retrospective of her work was exhibited at the Detroit Institute of Arts in 2013. Neshat was awarded the Golden Lion Award, the First International Prize at the 48th Biennale di Venezia (1999), the Hiroshima Freedom Prize (2005), and the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize (2006). In 2009, Neshat directed her first feature-length film, *Women Without Men*, which received the Silver Lion Award for "Best Director" at the 66th Venice International Film Festival. Neshat is currently completing her second feature-length film, entitled *Looking For Oum Kulthoum*.

Cyprien Gaillard  
12 Rue du Grand Cerf, Brussels  
April 18–June 17, 2017

Cameron Jamie  
530 West 21st Street, New York  
April 28–June 17, 2017

Mimmo Rotella  
130 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street, New York  
March 4–June 17, 2017

For further information, please contact Andrew Huff: [ahuff@gladstonegallery.com](mailto:ahuff@gladstonegallery.com)  
New York gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 10am–6pm  
Brussels gallery hours: Tuesday–Friday, 10am–6pm and Saturday, 12pm–6pm