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A woman's world: Shirin Neshat's 'Dreamers' opens in Johannesburg



Iranian artist and film maker Shirin Neshat's 'Dreamers' opens this week at the Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg. Her first solo show on the continent comprises two new video installations, *Roja* and *Sarah* – two thirds of a trilogy exploring the world of women's dreams

Opening in Johannesburg this week, 'Dreamers' is a new show by Iranian artist and film maker Shirin Neshat. Her first solo exhibition with the Goodman Gallery – and on the African continent – sees the introduction of two new video installations, *Roja* and *Sarah*, created this year.

Both are part of a trilogy of video installations exploring the world of women's dreams (the first, *Illusions & Mirrors* was made in 2013 and premiered at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts). 'I have been haunted by the power of dreams for years,' says Neshat. 'I am fascinated by how in a state of dream, the boundaries in between madness and sanity, reality and fiction, conscious and subconscious are blurred and broken.'

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According to Neshat, *Sarah* is 'about the unfolding journey of a woman as she recollects and breathes annihilation, as she faces residues of destruction, violence, genocide and mortality in a state of dream. Sarah's anxieties and fears... force her to plunge into imagining her own death.' Even though the works are not set in a certain place or time, the context of a world in conflict is evident from the tone. Perhaps today, or even tomorrow?

'In my opinion, rational interpretations of dreams never seem to properly capture their true meanings and significance within [the] human psyche,' Neshat continues. 'So *Roja* and *Sarah* are an effort to make sense of the more subliminal emotional and psychic universe that lives deep inside of us, but is difficult to explain through words.'