

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

Allen, Jennifer, "Neshat Wins Best Director in Venice," artforum.com, week of 9/14/09

## International News Digest

### NESHAT WINS BEST DIRECTOR IN VENICE

The Iranian-American artist Shirin Neshat has been awarded the Silver Lion for best director for her directorial debut, *Zanan Bedoone Mardan* (Women Without Men), at the Sixty-sixth Venice Film Festival. In an interview with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Neshat discusses the film, which follows the fate of four women in Iran in 1953, when the democratically elected government of Mohammed Mossadeq was overthrown by a foreign-sponsored coup. Neshat and her cast dressed in green and made peace signs while crossing the red carpet as an act of solidarity with the recent reform movement in Iran. The artist sees similarities between her film and the demonstrations that shook Iran after the last elections. "Look at the film character Munez, a political activist," Neshat told the *FAZ*. "In the film, she dies, and I couldn't believe it, when I saw the pictures of her dying body again, how much these images resemble those of Neda Agha-Soltan, who became an icon of the June demonstrations." Neshat believes that the symbolism of this character, who stands for the spirit of the revolution, corresponds to recent history. "The idea of feminism in this green movement is striking. How present the women became here! With a great sense of beauty, with a lot of pride, also with violence and aggression against their oppressors. With lipstick, mascara, beautiful hair—but also a stone in the hand."



Trailer for Shirin Neshat, *Women without Men*, 2009.