

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

**Shirin Neshat**

*Land of Dreams*

515 West 24th Street

January 19 – February 27, 2021

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition by Shirin Neshat and the New York premiere of the artist's latest body of work, *Land of Dreams*. Comprised of more than 100 photographs and a two-channel film installation, *Land of Dreams* marks a significant visual and conceptual shift for the artist, who has turned her lens to the landscape and people of the American West. For this exhibition, Neshat will present the entire collection of photographs from this series as well as both films, which will be complimented by an online viewing room and virtual screenings throughout the show's run. Combining Neshat's singular artistic language with her intuitive approach to documenting the subjects she photographs, *Land of Dreams* presents multifaceted, surreal views into contemporary American culture during the Trump era.

Created in 2019 in New Mexico, *Land of Dreams* is a multidisciplinary project, both fictitious and documentary in nature, that captures the state's diverse American population. The first film on the two-channel video installation follows a young Iranian art student named Simin, who travels around suburban and rural areas of New Mexico photographing local residents in their homes. As part of the protagonist's assignment, Simin asks her subjects about their most recent dreams. As the people she encounters vividly detail their dreams, the viewer is transported into these imagined narratives alongside Simin, who wanders inside each participant's subconscious mind. Neshat infuses the film with cinematic views of New Mexico's sublime landscape alongside the everyday streets and neighborhoods where Simin travels. The second film reveals a sinister twist to the protagonist's seemingly innocuous assignment: Simin is uncovered as an Iranian spy tasked with archiving the dreams and portraits she captures, which are recorded and analyzed in a bunker set within the mountains of New Mexico. Unlike the dozens of dream scientists who quietly work and diligently follow orders in the factory-like facility, Simin is noticeably perplexed by one of her subjects, leading her on a path to try and find their subliminal connection. Through her incisive ability to allude to the absurdities and similarities between the United States and Iran, Neshat astutely explores the complexities between the ephemeral nature of dreams and the dangerous impact of oppressive political ideologies and policies to reveal a shared humanity.

Alongside the film, the photographic installation *Land of Dreams* comprises 111 photographs of New Mexico residents who Neshat captured throughout filming. Similarly to Simin, Neshat asked her subjects about their dreams, which she recorded in Farsi on many of the portraits, along with the sitters' names and dates and places of birth. The artist's practice of applying calligraphy to portraits recurs throughout her oeuvre, and in many of these new photographs, Neshat additionally included technically intricate, ornate drawings that depict fantastical elements of the dreams. The artist notes, "We drove across the country to search for a landscape that at once looked like Iran and America's Southwest. We settled on New Mexico not only for its spectacular nature but also for its demographically diverse communities of Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanic, and Anglos." Through making these complex and interwoven works, Neshat formed a deep interpersonal connection with each person she met, resulting in a powerful and encompassing portrait of America.

Shirin Neshat is an Iranian-born artist and filmmaker living in New York. In 2019, Neshat was the subject of a retrospective exhibition, "Shirin Neshat: I Will Greet the Sun Again" at The Broad, Los Angeles, which will travel to The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth on February 19 and remain on view through May 16, 2021. She has mounted numerous solo exhibitions at museums internationally, including: ARoS Aarhus Art Museum, Copenhagen; Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia; Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland; Kunstraum Dornbirn, Dornbirn, Austria; Kunsthalle Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany; Museo Correr, Venice, Italy; 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), the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize (2006), and the Praemium Imperiale Prize (2017). 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 third feature-length film, entitled *Land of Dreams*, marking the first time she has created a body of work that incorporates photography, video, and a feature film. *Land of Dreams* will be released in 2021 and features actors such as Matt Dillon, Sheila Vand, Isabella Rossellini, Christopher McDonald, and Anna Gunn.

Elizabeth Peyton  
130 East 64th Street  
November 19 – January 20

David Rappeneau  
12 Rue du Grand Cerf  
January 15 – March 10

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