

MCAD
COMMONS

Image courtesy of the artist

Shirin Neshat

Tooba —————

7 November - 8 December 2018
Tuesdays to Saturdays

123 Pioneer St.,
Mandaluyong, Metro Manila

Shirin Neshat

Tooba



About Tooba

“Tooba” (2002) is a poetic two-channel video installation that seeks to explore Iranian identity and is based on the Koran, in which “Tooba” represents a sacred tree of paradise which offers shelter and sustenance to those in need. The work portrays a pilgrimage of people from their homeland towards an imagined utopia seeking refuge and places a woman within a groove in the trunk of a large fig tree, symbolising its soul. As they stand, alone, in a stone-walled garden set in a mountainous landscape, an elderly woman leans and is absorbed into the tree, symbolic of nourishment, peace and hope to the Sufis, her closed eyes suggest a state of rest, but her weathered skin and age convey the long journey she has undertaken to get there, and the difficulties inherent in emigration.

“Tooba” was dedicated to Iranian writer Shahrnush Parsipour, whose novel ‘Women without Men’ concerns five women sojourning in a garden, one of whom is transformed into a tree. “Women without Men” (2009) became Neshat’s directorial debut film when she adapted the novel into feature film which won her the Silver Lion for Best Director at the 66th Venice Film Festival. Other notable works are a commissioned film for fashion house Dior entitled “Illusions & Mirrors” (2013) starring Israeli-born American actor Natalie Portman; as well as “Aida” (2017), an opera by Verdi, which she directed for the Salzburg Festival in Austria.

About Shirin Neshat

Shirin Neshat (b. 1957, Qazvin, Iran) lives and works in New York. In 1974, she left Iran to study art in the United States where she received her BA, MA, and MFA at the University of California Berkeley.

Neshat’s work explores the gaps and issues within the conflicts between Islam and the West, identity, femininity and masculinity, public and private life, as well as antiquity and modernity. Neshat confronts stereotypes of Muslim culture, especially of Muslim women whose roles are viewed in terms of the religious and cultural value systems of Islam. For Neshat, it’s vital for viewers to “take away with them not some heavy political statement, but something that really touches them on the most emotional level.”

Neshat is best known for her series of photographs “Women of Allah” (1993 - 1997), a suite of black and white images of veiled Muslim women staring directly at the viewer whilst holding a gun. The work was an examination into the complexities of women’s identities in the Middle East and led to the production of a split-screen video work entitled “Turbulent” (1998) which juxtaposes the performance of a male singer in front of a male audience and the vocalization of a female performer in an empty concert hall.

Site Map



123 Pioneer St.,
Mandaluyong, Metro Manila

Exhibition Hours

Tuesday to Saturday
11AM - 7PM

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