

Shirin Neshat

MOURNERS FROM THE BOOK OF KINGS



Curator: Heinz Peter Schwerfel
Exhibition Catalogue | Turkish, English
Category: Photography
Text: Heinz Peter Schwerfel
Translation: Niyazi Zorlu, Sarah Trenker
Translation of poem of Mevlana Celaleddin
Rumi: Abdlbaki Glpınarlı, İraj Anvar
Proofreading: Tankut Aykut
Photography: Larry Barns
Design: Atelier Nee Nogay
2013, Istanbul, Dirimart | Griffin Editions
p. 68 | Four Colour, Illustrated, Hardcover
33.7x23 cm | Weight: 760 gr
ISBN: 978-605-5815-27-1
Barcode: 9786055815271
Price: 18 GBP | 20 EURO | 25 USD

This catalogue was published within the context of Shirin Neshat exhibition curated by Heinz Peter Schwerfel that took place on May 10–June 15, 2013 at Dirimart Niantaı. It features 14 photographs of “Mourners” from *The Book of Kings* series of the artist together with a text by Heinz Peter Schwerfel and a piece by poet Jalal ad-din Muhammad Rumi.

Neshat’s “Mourners” from her *The Book of Kings* series, inspired by the epic *Shahnameh* by Ferdowsi (940-1020), are based on portraits of individuals residing in the slums of Cairo, where the promise of freedom and democracy following the uprising against the Mubarak regime failed to materialize. Inscribed with Persian handwriting, the artist’s black and white portraits confront the viewer with human bodies that face a struggle against hegemony in this overly politicized region marked by covert violence and suppression. Schwerfel writes, “This art, beyond the political engagement of Iran’s Green Movement and the mystique of the Arab Spring, is shaped by two opposing rhetorical systems that currently feud with each other on a global scale.”

Shirin Neshat’s works have been exhibited in museums such as Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Serpentine Gallery, London; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Muse d’Art Contemporain de Montral and the Detroit Institute of Arts. She held exhibitions at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC. She participated in the 48th Venice Biennial (1999); Whitney Biennial (2000); Documenta XI (2002); and Prospect 1 New Orleans (2009). Awards she was granted are: Grand Prize at the Gwangju Biennial (2000); the First International Award at the 48th Venice Biennale (1999); Hiroshima Freedom Prize (2005); and the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Award (2006).

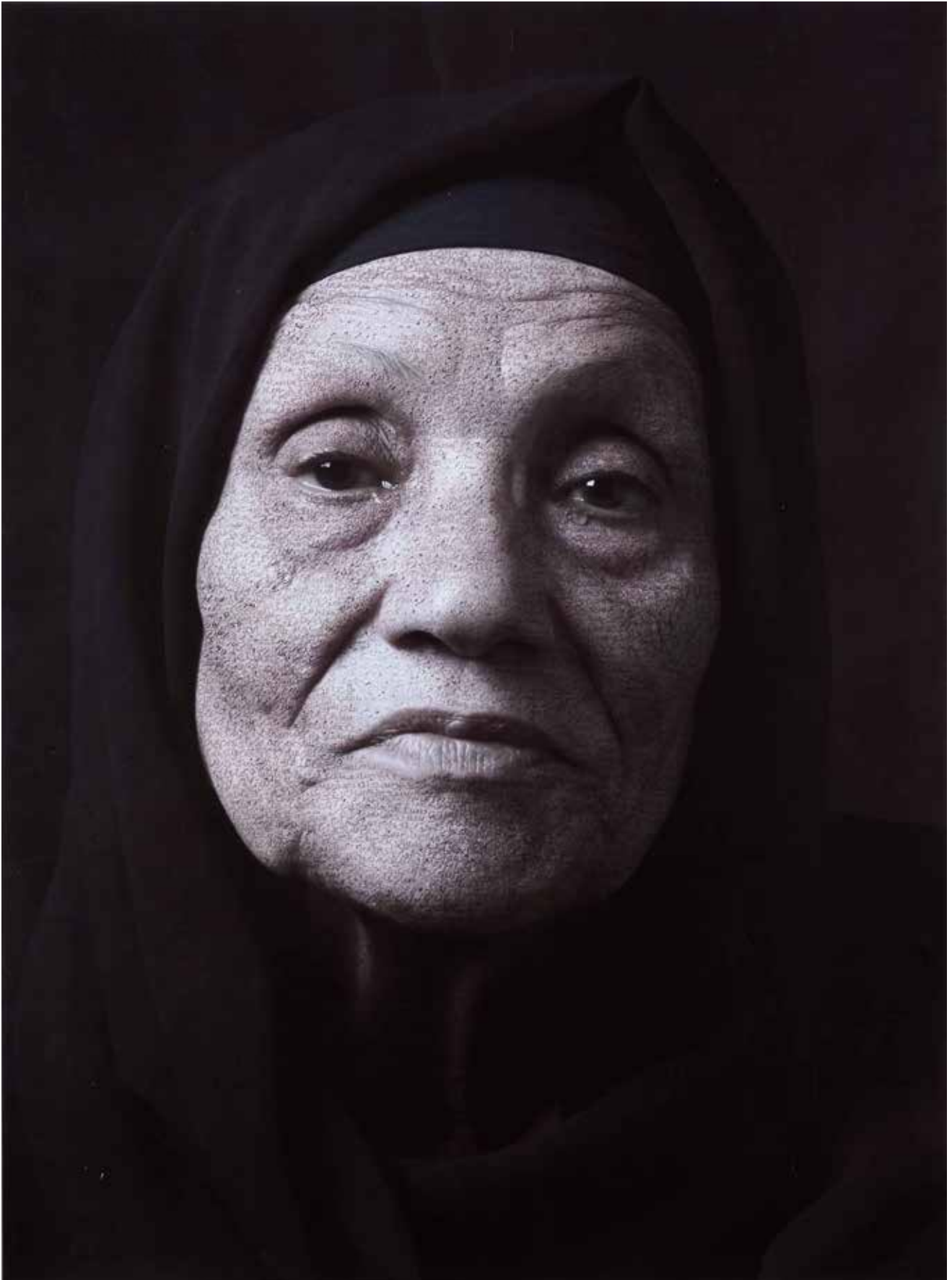
In 2009, Neshat made her first feature film titled *Woman Without Men*, and was awarded with Silver Lion prize for Best Director at the 66th Venice International Film Festival. Her recent feature film *Looking For Oum Kulthum* (2017) crafts a visually dazzling, multi-planned mirror between the mid-century Egyptian diva and the contemporary film director seeking a creative connection with her. It is being screened at important festivals all around the world.

Neshat’s current photo series include *The Book of Kings* (2012), *Our House is on Fire* (2013), and *The Home of My Eyes* (2015).



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Souad (Mourners), from *The Book of Kings* series, C-Print and ink, 157.8x102.2 cm, 2013. Courtesy of the artist.

