Shirin Neshat, in conversation with Simon Leung, will be discussing past work and current projects, including *Women Without Men*, her first feature length film and the winner of the Silver Lion Award at the 66th Venice International Film Festival in 2009.

**Shirin Neshat** is perhaps the most famous contemporary artist to emerge from Iran. Known for her hauntingly beautiful explorations of Islam and gender relations, Neshat has created provocative expressions drawn on her personal experiences in exile, and on the widening political and ideological rift between the West and the Middle East.

Neshat has won numerous awards, including the Lilian Gish Prize, the Hiroshima Museum of Contemporary Art Peace Award, the Grand Prix of the Kwangju Biennial, and the First International Prize at the 48th Venice Biennial. She has exhibited around the world at institutions including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Hamburger Bahnhof Museum in Berlin, the Kunsthalle Wien in Vienna, and the Tate Gallery in London.

*Women Without Men* is Neshat's independent film adaptation of Shahrnush Parsipur’s magic realist novel. The story chronicles the intertwining lives of four Iranian women during the summer of 1953; a cataclysmic moment in Iranian history when an American led, British backed coup d’état brought down the democratically elected Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossadegh, and reinstalled the Shah to power.

The UC Irvine Studio Art Lecture Series "Perfect Lovers" attempts to complicate the traditional grad school lecture by pairing artists, curators, and culture-makers in conversation with each other. We want to offer our program and the public the vital event of seeing artists discuss their work in a more spontaneous way; and give artists the opportunity to share their work, interests and obsessions in dialogue.