

MCAD
COMMONS

Shirin Neshat

Tooba _____

College-level Study Guide

In Partnership With

Han Nefkens
Foundation

museum
boijmans van
beuningen

bwagatelier 

artbooks.ph

Have the students divide into groups to discuss displacement and exile. Ask them to create a Venn diagram that explains the difference among immigration, emigration, and migration.

The artist was born in Iran and brought up in the religious town of Qazvin. In 1975, Neshat left Iran to escape the threat of war. Look at the map of movement of people and see which movements are caused by war. The situation has been called a humanitarian crisis. Have the students create a campaign to help alleviate the situation.

Have the students read up on the Iran Revolution and compare and contrast these with other revolutions. How have these revolutions affected the relations with other cultures? Relations between men and women in their countries?

Have the students watch Shirin Neshat's video installation of *Tooba* and take note (either mentally or on a piece of paper) of what they see. Ask several students to give a short summary of what they saw in the video.

Synthesize the images that were used in the video. Ask the students what they think the significance of the following images found in video are and what they may symbolize:

1. The tree and the woman in the tree
2. The traveling and chanting people
3. The desolate landscape
4. The color palette

Shirin Neshat's two-channel video installation *Tooba* is based on the Qu'ran, in which Tooba, the sacred tree of paradise, offers shelter and sustenance to those in need. Neshat's video places a woman within a groove in the trunk of a large fig tree, symbolising its soul. Men and women draw near and enter the enclosure where Tooba resides; the woman disappears into the Tooba-tree as the people reached her.

Have them do a panel discussing movement of people, looking into the causes of such movements, challenges and laws that address such challenges. Have them look into why movement of people is important and the stand of various religions, organizations, governments etc on this issue.

Discuss how movement of people is determined by age, gender, color, class, etc.