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Super East-West Woman: Living on the Axis, Fighting Evil Everywhere
photographs by Aphrodite Desiree Navab at Schaller Gallery
October 20 - November 17, 2007
Reception October 20th 2 - 4 pm



Aphrodite Desiree Navab *New Year #1* 22" x 17" 2007

September 26, 2007 New York, NY - Rhonda Schaller is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Aphrodite Desiree Navab, the artist's first solo New York show at the gallery. The exhibition will open on Saturday October 20 with a reception for the artist from 2 - 4 pm, and run through November 17th, 2007.

Aphrodite Desiree Navab, an Iranian American, exhibits photographs that are identity centered art, calling attention to her experiences and marginalization. Her new series *Super East-West Woman: Living on the Axis, Fighting Evil Everywhere* becomes the visual equivalent of an autobiography narrating a personal quest through both American and Iranian cultures.

The exhibit will feature color pigment prints, which are solemn, funny, and contradictory - yet starkly luminous. The theme of coexistence and metamorphosis in her political and cultural critique deepens with each of the 14 pictures selected for the exhibition. Navab tells us "The idea started to take shape in 2002 after President George W. Bush branded Iran as one of the three nations comprising an "axis of evil." It re-minded me of when I was nine years old and escaped with my family during the Islamic revolution in 1978-79. Then, Iran's new leaders labeled the United States as the country of the "Great Satan."

The intermeshing of her cobalt blue chador (Farsi for Islamic covering) and the cadmium red of her Superman T-shirt, the unspoken issues of being a woman in fear and in power, dealing with war and peace, the always haunted sense of awareness deeply ingrained and compelling within us since 9/11 - is conjured and dealt with, with strong humor as Navab uses her own body and dual cultural identities as subject matter.

These works speak to Navab's fascination with the multiple roles of the artist, as director, actor and image, as well as to the political activist looking to create an opening conversation and dialogue. Navab explains, "Armored with her Persian amulets and Greek anti-evil eye bracelets, Super East-West Woman hopes to chase away the evil for which each nation blames the other. And at the same time, she manages to poke fun at herself, her two cultures, and the ludicrous situations in which her life, between East and West, has placed her."

Shadowy pictures of Super East-West woman baring her teeth at herself in the mirror, in contemplation at Noruz, the Persian New Year, and locked in a glass cabinet, where we find her like a curio collectible in a Museum Display, are also included in the exhibit, and evoke the aching curiosity and the dizzying sensuousness of the east. The crucial if unspoken subject of this work seems to be the evolution of what is best still called the human soul yearning for wholeness, praying for peace, knowing that all change must start with ourselves.

Navab is a vital example of the artist as alchemist, a political mystic who wishes to transmute inharmonious world affairs. She is not a conventional photographer, but an experimental director, pushing the medium and methods of photography to fiercely beautiful ends. Navab's images reflect a keen knowledge of culture and beauty. In this exhibition she lays out a sort of initiatory chamber in which our assumptions and humanity are experienced as one, in both lyric and political terms.

The Iranian native is both an educator and an artist, and received awards including the David McCord Prize for Outstanding Visual Artist, Harvard University in '93, Purchase Award, College of Fine Arts, Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, AR. '99, as well as Refereed Conference Paper Presentations from 2001 - 2005 including "The Transnational Art of Neshat, Ghazel and Navab," Muslims' Experiences of Globalization conference Atlanta, GA. Sponsored by the Middle East Center for Peace, Culture and Development at Georgia State University and the Georgia Middle East Studies Consortium.

Navab is in the Permanent Collections of the Casoria Art Museum, Naples, Italy; Simone de Beauvoir Institute of Women's Studies; Concordia University, Montreal, Canada; Harn Museum of Fine Arts, Gainesville, FL.; Museum of Fine Arts, Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, AR.; and the Harriman Institute, Columbia University, New York, NY. She received her A. B. Magna cum Laude in Visual and Environmental Studies, Harvard University in '93; and her M.A. in '00 and Ed.D. in '04 from Teachers College, Columbia University. She currently lives and works in NYC.

An exhibition catalogue is available. Visuals upon request. Photo credits for Super -West Woman: Richard Jochum.

Rhonda Schaller Studio is located at 547 West 27th Street, 5th Floor, New York City. Gallery hours are Thursday - Saturday, 12PM - 5PM. For additional information, please contact Rhonda Schaller at 212.967.1338 or visit us online at <http://rhondaschallerchelsea.com>