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The Contemporary Art Gallery

PRESS RELEASE

SHADI GHADIRIAN

MISS BUTTERFLY

OPENING 5TH SEPTEMBER 2013

SHOW CONTINUES UNTIL NOVEMBER 9TH 2013.

To Nazanin Khosravani (The artist's friend a journalist who was in prison the time of the exhibition)

Miss Butterfly as is going to meet the sun, looking for a way out and reaching for the light becomes captive in spider's web. The spider moved by compassion after observing all the grace and delicacy in Miss Butterfly, comes to an agreement with her. She is supposed to bring one of the insects from the dark cellar and ties it up in spider's web for him. Instead the spider is going to lead her to the way out and to the light. But after hearing the insects' stories Miss Butterfly feels pity for them and eventually returns to the spider empty handed with injured wings and makes herself captive in the web to be the spider's food. Knowing the truth, the spider sets the Miss Butterfly free and shows her the way out to meet the sun. Miss Butterfly recalls all the other insects in the cellar to share her freedom with them but she gets no response. She who is so frustrated by their reaction wide opens her weary wings and flies toward the sun.

A short summery of a play by Bijan Mofid

Shadi Ghadirian is an Iranian photographer born and working in Tehran, Iran. She studied photography at Azad University, Iran and has since then exhibited in museums and galleries all across the world, including a solo show at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2008 and group shows at the Saatchi Gallery, and Barbican Art Centre in London; 2010 Centre Georges Pompidou; 2009 and Musée du Quai

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Branly in Paris, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tehran; 2002.

In 2012 she participated in a group show at the Devi Foundation; Delhi, The Elephant in the dark which is amongst the numerous group shows that she participated. Her works are in several collections including in the British Museum, Mumok, Centre Georges Pompidou, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Smithsonian institution, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Challenging the international preconceptions of women's roles within an Islamic state, Tehran-based artist Shadi Ghadirian's photographs draw from her own experiences as a modern woman living within the ancient codes of Shariah law. Her images describe a positive and holistic female identity, with traditional roles by which women have been defined. In *Miss Butterfly*, the artist alludes to the symbolism of the "spider web as an allegory to refer to the social structures of Iran. the windows in her home sealed by the web, *Miss Butterfly* is cocooned safely inside. Of course, it is understood that this 'protection' can also harm. A chance at freedom is offered, but it means sacrificing the other insects living in darkness. In a scene that seems to point at the revolutions currently sweeping the region, and asks why Iran is not seeking freedom with such vigor."¹

¹ Cited **Clint Mclean**, <http://lejournaldelaphotographie.com/entries/shadi-ghadirian-miss-butterfly>, 23/ 08/ 2013.