

MEDIA RELEASE

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Soody Sharifi

The Desert Beyond the City Belongs to Me

November 17, 2012 – January 19, 2012

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 17, 2012, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Deborah Colton Gallery is pleased to announce, *The Desert Beyond the City Belongs to Me*, a solo exhibition featuring new work by Iranian-American multimedia artist **Soody Sharifi**. This exhibition opens Saturday, November 17th with a public reception from 6:00 to 9:00 pm.

Through the visual juxtaposition of cityscapes and desert landscapes, the series *The Desert Beyond the City Belongs to Me* tells the story of cultural and political life in 21st century Iran, in all its rich complexity. Reminiscent of Breughel and Bosch landscapes, Soody Sharifi's new series stages a dizzying range of events, from Peeping Toms in Iran's segregated beaches to protesters filling the streets of Tehran. Colliding dynamic urban conditions with the ritualistic practices of the remote, rural Middle East, *The Desert Beyond the City Belongs to Me* seamlessly speaks to larger geopolitical issues. An example of such an issue can be found in the protest movement that followed the highly contested 2009 Iranian presidential election. Not only did this public outcry foreshadow the greater region's "Arab Spring," (a term given to the widespread wave of demonstrations, protests, and wars occurring during the still ongoing Arab Revolution), but it also brought to the surface an underlying tension at the very heart and name of the country itself: between a republic and a theocracy, between public and private, between the secular and the sacred, all as found in Sharifi's work. By bringing elements of traditional Persian iconography together with contemporary subjects, *The Desert* series approaches these complex issues with a compelling collapse of time and space.

Soody Sharifi is an Iranian/American artist based in Houston. Her work primarily deals with the paradoxes and contradictions inherent in living between two cultures. In many of her series, she has explored the notion of identity and what it means to participate in two cultures from both an outsider's and an insider's perspective.

A 2011 Jameel Prize nominee, Soody Sharifi has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including museum exhibitions at the V&A in London, l'Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, in Finland and in Norway. Her work has been collected by major patrons worldwide and is included in the collections of such institutions as the Portland Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, among others..

Deborah Colton Gallery is founded on being an innovative showcase for ongoing presentation and promotion of strong historical and visionary contemporary artists world-wide, whose diverse practices include painting, works on paper, sculpture, video, photography, performance and conceptual future media installations. The gallery aspires to provide a forum through connecting Texas, national and international artists to make positive change.