

SHADY ELNOSHOKATY

COLONY – Latitude

5 October – 25 November 2015

Gypsum is delighted to present *Latitude*, the preliminary stage of an epic fifteen-part art project by Shady Elnoshokaty entitled *Colony*. *Latitude* consists of sculpture, drawings, diagrams and an animated video. Like his previous multi-faceted projects *Stammer* (2007-2010) and *The Tree of My Grandmother* (2001-2005), *Colony* takes an intimate personal experience as an entry point to explore the relationship between minds, physical existence and the imagination.

Colony is a biological term that refers to a mass of cells that spreads through multiplication, like a skin discoloration for example. The term has also been used to describe communities of rats, ants and bees, whose organization and hierarchical structures are similar to our understanding of colonization in the political sense. The show is built on a basic principle of grand colonial projects in their desire to divide the world, often based on power classifications related to ethnicity and skin color.

Latitude begins from exploring the form of a skin discoloration that marks the artist's hand. Elnoshokaty conducted an extensive online research to locate fifteen existing towns, cities and islands that match the contours of his birthmark. He began collecting and ordering primary information about these sites, their history, language, arts and culture, their topography and geography. *Latitude* acts as a manifesto for an imaginary colonial project that borrows its methodology from archiving and topographical research along with its related visual language of illustrations, models and explanatory films.

Latitude brings together a selection of more than 60 elaborate drawings chosen from hundreds that the artist has produced since 2012 when he started conceptualizing the project. Structured forms are layered upon amorphous shapes, scribbles and dotted lines. Many of these compositions are rendered in colored pencil, ballpoint and stylo pen; their loose forms anchored by the grid of graph and squared paper. Like the rest of the project, the drawings - which operate as diagram, notes, studies and observations - chart an impossible territory.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1971 in Damietta, Shady Elnoshokaty is a visual artist based in Cairo. His projects have been featured in numerous museums and international exhibitions including the Venice Biennale, Venice; Hayward Gallery, London; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin and l'Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris.

Elnoshokaty holds a BA (1994) and PhD (2007) in the philosophy of art education from the Faculty of Art Education at the University of Helwan in Egypt. In 2001-2002 he was a Fulbright scholar at the School of the Art Institute in Chicago (SAIC). Since then he has played a key role in the field of art education in Egypt. In addition to an associate professorship at the American University in Cairo, he organized ten editions of an annual non-profit Media Art and Creativity workshop and in 2010 established a pioneering non-profit dedicated to alternative media practices called ASCII foundation for contemporary art education.