

Throughout this decade, Cairo-based artist Sherif El-Azma has worked extensively in film and video, producing short, experimental pieces such as *Powerchord Skateboard*, documentary shorts like *Interview with a Housewife* and the full-length drama *Television Pilot for an Egyptian Air Hostess Soap Opera*. His work questions the ready inscription of “tradition” upon and through media language, particularly its Egyptian variants, and is keen to understand how history is layered through representations of city space. For the past three years, El-Azma has been contributing to an evolving and collaborative project entitled *The Psycho-Geography of Loose Associations* which weaves its way through text, photography, diary entries, diagrams, fiction, video footage and the informational lecture format. Of central concern within this work are the social dynamics, modes of cultural integration and organisational systems operating within cosmopolitan environments, particularly those of Cairo’s new quarters. El-Azma is drawn to these gated communities’ specific mode of “history-less-ness”; the subjectivities that arise from a seemingly light engagement with politics and culture as it might elsewhere be formulated. El-Azma describes *Psycho-Geography* as follows: “The journey-like narrative of the works uses subjective logic (or sometimes ill-logic) to question how the city itself performs (or sometimes dysfunctions) on the surface. Through such questioning, suspicion, paranoia – and on a good day mere reflection – the city of Cairo is imagined as both an organism and as an ever-changing consciousness, shifting between the objective, official representation of the city and a highly personal view.” This year, El-Azma has worked jointly with Nermine El-Ansari on a contribution to the “Transit 1” show, where Mediterranean artists each responded to the concepts of homeland generated within the countries where their counterparts in the group were based. Here architectural models, YouTube transcripts, animation and rock music melded to interrogate Mediterranean identity, image and history. El-Azma’s work has been shown at institutions and events as varied as: the Venice Biennial (Egypt Pavilion); the Camden Arts Centre; Ashkal Alwan and the Zico House, Beirut; HAU Berlin; Witte De Witte Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam; Townhouse Gallery, Cairo; Meeting Points Festival, Brussels; Bethanien, Berlin; the Alexandria Library; the Modern Art Museum, Kiel; and the Contemporary Image Collective, Cairo.