

GYPSUM ONLINE VIEWING ROOM

NELLY EL SHARKAWY
LE CARNAVAL

20 Jan – 7 Feb 2021

Nelly El Sharkawy's *Le Carnaval* is a series of digital collages, composed of elements taken from the artist's large archive of photographs that document Cairo's architecture. In an attempt to categorize Cairo's landmark neighborhoods into what she observes as their architectural prototypes, El Sharkawy creates hybrids of buildings that come together like a seamless object and at other times as a misshapen amalgamation of one area's disparate components. In this collection, she ventures into Maadi, Heliopolis, Mokattam, Downtown and Nasr City. Each neighborhood is presented in three images where the different timelines, histories and demographics of each neighborhood show in the scale, use of greenery and palette.

The stacked towers of Nasr City— originally built in the 1960s in brutalist super blocks as a national project and heavily expanding in the early 2000s into a display of neoliberal flash building— tell a strikingly different story from Maadi's origins in colonial short houses and art deco add-ons. The Mokattam area has gone through socio-economic transformations that allow for the parallel of private villas and the shattered slum buildings damaged in the 1992 Cairo earthquake. El Sharkawy attempts to encompass all these facets into her proposed summation of an immeasurable city.

BIOGRAPHY

Nelly El Sharkawy (b. 1995, Cairo) is an architect and ballerina who started practicing photography in 2011. From conceptual self-portraits, to black and white street photography, El Sharkawy is currently working on architectural photography. Her work has been shown widely in group exhibitions in Egypt at venues such as Zamalek Art Gallery, Soma Art Gallery, Darb1718, Shnit Film Festival, Downtown Contemporary Arts Festival (DCAF), The Palace of Arts, among others. She was nominated for the Foam Paul Huf Award in 2017 and her work was featured in the top ten architectural photographs in The Sharjah Arab Photo Award in 2013. El Sharkawy has won two awards for "Best Innovative Photograph" in the Cairo Camera Club as well as the CIB prize in the 25th Youth Salon. El Sharkawy is a designer and co-founder of the Cairo-based initiative Mashrou' El Saada, which aims is to psychologically support people living in Egypt's slum areas through the use of color and design. She is currently a partner, manager and creative director at Cairopolitan, a design boutique and art gallery located in Cairo, Egypt.