

# Shifters

Hala Elkoussy  
kuda.org  
Angel Nevarez & Valerie Tevere

**Nov 16,  
2011–  
Feb 17,  
2012**

**Shifters**

**The James Gallery  
The Center for the Humanities  
The Graduate Center, CUNY**

**365 Fifth Avenue at 35th Street  
New York, NY 10016**

**[centerforthehumanities.org/james-gallery](http://centerforthehumanities.org/james-gallery)**

**Free and Open to the Public  
Tue to Thur, 12–7pm  
Fri and Sat, 12–6pm**

**Nov 16, 2011–Feb 17, 2012**

Special thanks to the artists in the exhibition, Chris Lowery, Rafik, Ray Ring, Tamara Vlasisavljevic, Jennifer Wilkinson, the Office of Facilities and Audio Visual Services, and Information Technology at The Graduate Center.

The Amie and Tony James Gallery catalyzes research and knowledge production in contemporary art. Located in midtown Manhattan at the nexus of the academy, contemporary art, and the city, the James Gallery brings a range of pertinent discourses into the exhibition space through a number of innovative formats. While some exhibitions will remain on view for extended contemplation, other activities, such as performances, workshops, reading groups, roundtable discussions, salons, screenings will have a short duration. As a space for interdisciplinary artistic and discursive activities, the gallery works with scholars, students, artists and the public to explore working methods that may lie outside usual disciplinary practices.

The Center for the Humanities was founded in 1993 as a public forum for people who take ideas seriously inside and outside the academy. By bringing together CUNY students and faculty with prominent journalists, artists, and civic leaders, the Center seeks to promote the humanities and humanistic perspectives in the social sciences. In the tradition of CUNY and The Graduate Center's commitment to ensuring access to the highest levels of educational opportunity for all New Yorkers, all events are free and open to the public.

## Shifters

The video exhibition *Shifters* focuses on three artistic practices that propose new means of engagement with public space in cities as diverse as Guadalajara, Cairo, Novi Sad, and Austin. How do we learn from cities? More than a stage for performance, cities are the sites for the production of culture and are archives as well. Furthermore, they are archives as well as arenas. By deploying varied strategies of music, fantasies, and documentation, these artists' practices operate on an intimate scale in relation to larger urban dynamics. Angel Nevarez & Valerie Tevere employ music and creative interpretation to alter the unspoken rules of conduct in public space. The rhythm of voice and image in Hala Elkoussy's videos tell stories of women in search of an impossible essence of the city of Cairo, which is continually undergoing transition. Using a documentary mode, *kuda.org* ruminates on the future possibilities for an abandoned military structure in their town. Like the nouns "I, you, we" which shift meaning depending on the person who is speaking, the title suggests shifts in the grammar of cities. These are the power dynamics of public space that shift as words are enunciated, music emanates, and images are projected in times of transition.

## Artist Biographies

Egyptian artist Hala Elkoussy delves into intimate and overlooked sides of communal living to highlight the underlying dynamics at play within the complex urban structure that creates the city of Cairo. In 2008 she was artist in residence at the Stedelijk Museum Bureau, Amsterdam, and in 2005-6 she was in residence at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. In 2010, Elkoussy was a recipient of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize. She has had solo exhibitions at the Goteburg Konsthall in Sweden (2009) and the Stedelijk Museum Bureau, Amsterdam (2006). Elkoussy received her MFA from Goldsmiths College, University in London, and is based in Cairo. [www.halaelkoussy.com](http://www.halaelkoussy.com)

Artist collective [kuda.org](http://kuda.org) is dedicated to new technologies, art, activism, and politics. Organized in Novi Sad, Serbia, as a youth media center in the mid-1990s to provide communication during a time of ban on travel and alternatives to youth fascist movements, the collective continues to host and spark civic dialogue through critical commentary on encroaching privatization of the public sphere and fosters the use of new media art, lectures, exhibitions, international collaborations, research publications, and street activism. [www.kuda.org](http://www.kuda.org)

Artists Angel Nevarez & Valerie Tevere's interests lie in the investigation and configuration of performative and discursive-based social spaces. Their current projects examine contemporary music, dissent, and public fora, and move between the spatial simultaneity of performance and enunciation, reflecting upon the projection of political agency through transmission and song. Nevarez & Tevere have produced new projects for international exhibitions at The New Museum; Manifesta 8; Casco in Utrecht; Henie Onstad Art Centre, Høvikodden/Oslo; Creative Time; Museo de Arte Raúl Anguiano, Guadalajara; United Nations Plaza, Berlin. In 2009 they received a Creative Capital fellowship, a grant from Art Matters, and were artists-in-residence at the International Artists Studio Program in Sweden (IASPIS),

Stockholm. Nevarez is a Lecturer in the Department of Art, Culture and Technology at MIT and Tevere is an Associate Professor of Media Culture at CUNY, College of Staten Island. [www.nevareztevere.info](http://www.nevareztevere.info)

1. Hala Elkoussy  
*In Search of a City (in the papers of Sein)*,  
2011  
Installation with digital video projection  
and chairs  
34 minutes  
Courtesy of the artist

2. kuda.org  
*Open Barracks*, 2011  
Video  
27 minutes  
Courtesy of kuda.org

3. Angel Nevarez & Valerie Tevere  
*We need a theory to continue*. 2008  
Three-channel video  
15:00 minutes  
Courtesy of the artists

4. Angel Nevarez & Valerie Tevere  
*Touching from a Distance*, 2008  
Two-channel video projection  
5:45 minutes  
Courtesy of the artists

5. Hala Elkoussy  
*Peripheral Stories*, 2005  
Digital video projection  
28 minutes  
Courtesy of the artist

