

Alexander Gray Associates

508 West 26 Street #215
New York NY 10001
Tel: 212 399 2636
Fax: 212 399 2684
www.alexandergray.com

Dawit L. Petros

October 26 – December 10, 2011



Single Cube Formation, No. 1, Santa Barbara, 20" x 24"; Quadruple Cube Formation, No. 1, Saskatoon, SK, 30" x 36"; Single Cube Formation, No. 4, Nazareth, Ethiopia, 30" x 36"; chromogenic prints; 2011

Alexander Gray Associates is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Dawit L. Petros. The exhibition brings together photo-based works from Petros' series, *Mahber Shaw'ate (Association of 7)*. Initiated during the artist's 2009 Studio Museum in Harlem residency, Petros continues this series to explore landscape as a metaphor for identity and diaspora by bringing together his East African heritage with references to Minimalism and Land Art.

On view is a series of photographic tableaux of open cardboard boxes, depicting multiple locations including Marfa, TX; Santa Barbara, CA; Nazareth, Ethiopia; Saskatoon, Canada; and New York. In some instances, horizon lines and sea levels are marked by the geometric arrangements of the sculptural readymade boxes inserted into the landscape; in others, tightly arranged studio enactments denote a serial impulse. The artist's own body is a third element in these works, performing for the camera, yet obscured by the repeating form of the cardboard box.

In *Mahber Shaw'ate (Association of 7)*, Petros introduces language as a vehicle for his research on trans-national identity, drawing on personal history across cultural and geographic borders. The arrangements of the boxes in the images as well as in the gallery installation correlate to the East African alphabet script of Petros' first language, Tigrinya. Modularity and portability are components of language and its adherent codes; so too is nuance and context, which is complicated by Petros' diverse location choices. In this way, he questions whether geography defines a people, or if people define a place. Petros' choice of the photographic medium further underscores the reproducibility and portability of language and culture. With this body of work, he challenges expectations about language and location, the body and its voice, memory and site.

Dawit L. Petros (b. 1972, Asmara, Eritrea) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He has exhibited his work internationally, including recent solo exhibitions at the Santa Barbara Contemporary Art Forum, CA; Franklin Art Works, Minneapolis, MN; and Marilia Razuk Galeria De Arte, São Paulo, Brazil. His work was included in the 2010 editions of the Black World Art Festival in Dakar, Senegal; and the Addis Ababa International Photography Festival in Ethiopia. Upcoming projects include a public art commission for the Columbus Museum of Fine Art; a residency at the McColl Center for Visual Art, Charlotte, NC; and a solo exhibition at the Print Studio, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Petros' work has been included in group exhibitions at leading cultural venues, including the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit, MI; Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada; Durban Gallery, South Africa; Photographic Resource Center, Boston, MA; Massachusetts College of Art, Boston; Harbourfront Gallery, Toronto, Canada; Maison de la Culture Frontenac, Montréal, Canada; and Prefix Gallery, Toronto, Canada. Petros received his MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; BFA from Concordia University, Montreal, Canada; and BA from University of Saskatchewan, Canada. He was awarded Fulbright and Bombardier Internationalist Fellowships and an Art Matters Foundation grant. Support for his most recent work has been provided by the Canada Council for the Arts.

Alexander Gray Associates is a contemporary art gallery based in New York. The gallery has established a profile for high-quality exhibitions focused on mid-career artists who emerged in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Influential in political, social and cultural spheres, these artists are notable for creating work that crosses geographic borders, generational contexts and artistic disciplines. Gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM.