BASIM MAGDY
ONLY STONE, BRONZE AND THE SKY
SHALL OUTLIVE ALL THE REST

25|2| – 15|4|2017

„Loss becomes a tradition for the forgetful,“ we read in Basim Magdy’s film The Many Colors of the Sky Radiate Forgetfulness (2014), while statues, rocks, trees and animals show us their numb faces. There obviously is something they want to remind us of, but it’s so hard for us to tell of what or why. Like with other exhibited works, the series of photographs The Hollow Desire to Populate Imaginary Cities (2015), The Universe Stopped to Gaze at our Footprints (2014) or Masquerading as an Oversized Underwater Mountain Range / A Make Believe Rainbow After a Storm (2016), Magdy’s attention is turning towards an intuitive visual interpretation of the world; to pieces of stories, short moments, found fragments of eavesdropped tales, to small bits of mental maps of our time. As well as the central installation The Future of Your Head (2008), they are all asking the same thing: How do we stand in the world, and how does the world surround us?

In Basim Magdy’s world we stand in motion. For him, neither history, present, nor the future are merely a linear succession of facts, figures, data, liters of blood spilled, military operations, revolutions, or paradigm shifts. It is a variable and ever-changing mix of everything we want to or do not want to, can or cannot, remember. An unclear, blurred and indistinct mixture of emotions, relationships, justices and injustices, joys and pains, significant and petty events, of changes as well as of what is changing too slow for us to notice. Basim Magdy’s work opens a part of memory that does not need to succumb to historiographical categorizations. He does not postulate how things happened, does not demand connections to be logical to make sense. It is neither the winners nor the losers he is primarily interested in, he does not elaborate who stood on which side of the barricade. He rather hesitates, looks closer, collects and records, intuitively fabulates, empathizes. He forces us to re-live the memories as emotions and to let the volatile situations materialize in our own present. He revokes their appearance, knowing that their re-appearance is yet again just an elusive moment in time. A moment that will briefly disappear into oblivion, just to be rediscovered and resurrected from the ashes - in a different way, somewhere else and by someone else. It is due to this hesitation that we’re allowed to approach memory much closer than we normally would - albeit with the risk of forgetting it all in a second.

Basim Magdy (b. 1977) is an artist based in Basel, Switzerland and Cairo, Egypt. His exhibitions include solo presentations at Jeu de Paume, Paris; MCA Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; MAXXI Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome; CAPC musée d’art contemporain de Bordeaux; Deutsche Bank KunstHalle, Berlin and Art in General, New York. His work was presented recently at group exhibitions at Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-On-Hudson, New York; Salt Ulus, Ankara; Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE; Whitechapel Gallery, London; MoMA The Museum of Modern Art, New York; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; Surround Audience: 2015 New Museum Triennial, New Museum, New York; Museum of Modern Art Warsaw; HOME Manchester, UK; Lismore Castle Arts, Ireland; La Biennale de Montreal, Canada; MUMA – Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne; His work has been featured in numerous biennials including the SeMA Biennial MediaCity, Seoul, Korea, 2014; the 13th Istanbul Biennial, Turkey, 2013; Biennale Jogja XII, Indonesia, 2013; the Sharjah Biennial 11, UAE, 2013; La Triennale, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2012 and Transmediale, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2012. He was shortlisted for the second edition of the Future Generation Art Prize, Pinchuk Art Centre in 2012 and is the winner of Abraaj Art Prize, Dubai and the New:Vision Award, CPH:DOX Film Festival, Copenhagen in 2014. Magdy is the recipient of the 2016 Deutsche Bank Artist of the Year award.