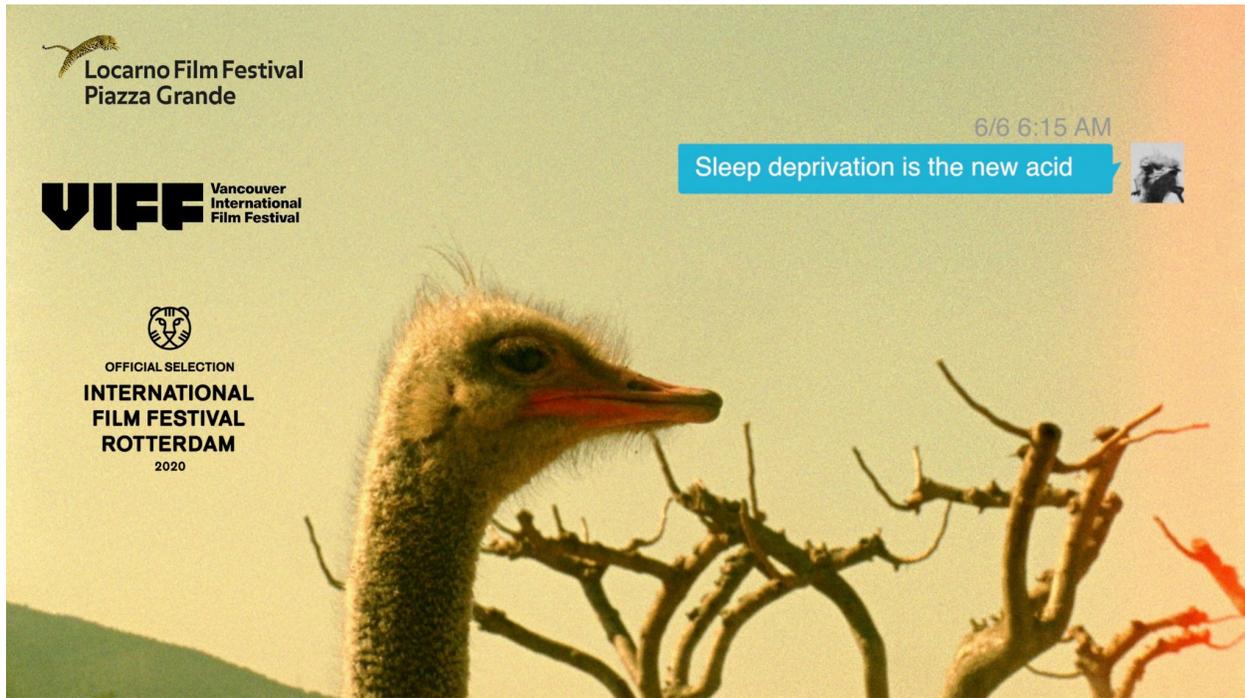


New Acid - by Basim Magdy



New Acid, 2019. Super 16mm and computer generated text messages transferred to Full HD. 14 min. 18 sec. Commissioned by La Kunsthalle Mulhouse, France

1. Synopsis

Several animals chat via text messages. Between their mundane exchanges of words void of life, conflict and rivalry emerge. Their mirrored physical appearance hints to entrapment inside a reality T.V. show, one where uncertainty and doubt prevail. Social media-induced insecurities and escapism become evidence that at least some of them are not bots. They question selfishness, self-love and self-destruction as the “ugly ones” arrive wearing their “cheesy sunglasses”. Is tradition an alter ego of racism? What about nostalgia and nationalism? Have they become what they always despised? Human? An escape attempt by a group of censored ring-tailed lemurs steals the show. A giraffe finally understands why this has been hell all along.

2. Cast & Credits

Director Basim Magdy
Producer Basim Magdy
Cinematography Basim Magdy
Special effects Danielle Küchler Flores
Color correction Danielle Küchler Flores
Sound Basim Magdy
Editing Basim Magdy

3. Year / Running time & technical information

2019 / 14min 18sec

Screening format: Quicktime .mov

Sound: Stereo

Screen ratio: 16:9

Speed: 24fps

No dialogue / Language subtitles: English

4. Festivals / Awards / Exhibitions

- Basim Magdy: A Peacock and a Hippo Walk into an Existential Debate, La Kunsthalle Mulhouse
- Piazza Grande Selection, Locarno Film Festival
- Vancouver International Film Festival
- International Film Festival Rotterdam
- Basim Magdy: Asleep in Another Dimension, M HKA Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp
- Special Mention of the Jury Bucharest International Experimental Film Festival BIEFF
- Unsere Gegenwart, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Siegen
- Nature of Robotics, An Expanded Field, EPFL Pavillion, Lausanne

5. Excerpts from interview with the director

MK: Your "New Acid" film allows a view into animals' private text messages (see the video here). There is a particular anomaly between the images and the texts, creating a doubt in regard to their connection or relation.. How was the process of making this of this film and how is it related with the exhibition concept?

BM: "New Acid" started with an interest in how our lives now are constantly gliding between real and virtual interaction. I was looking for protagonists whose criticism people would be more likely to pay attention to. Humans seem to see animals as cute and inferior so it only made sense for my actors to be animals. I shot the film in 3 different zoos, places where we expect spectacle to unfold, places that very casually highlight the worst in our simple pleasures. The first thing I realized while filming in a zoo is that the only thing that connects these animals is our gaze and cell phone cameras. Most of these animals, hear and smell each other but never see one another. They know of each other's existence without knowing the shape, size and color of their neighbors at the same zoo. This observation became the main inspiration behind every text message conversation I wrote for the film.

MK: Human and non-human relations and conversations around this relation through time and space are one of the main aspects of this exhibition, but is there a reason why you are especially interested in animals' perspectives and anthropomorphism?

BM: I think animals have a better chance of standing in our shoes and guessing how we think of them. Despite our more evolved intelligence, we are too stubborn, snobby and proud, even, to guess what animals might think of us. Even as individuals, it is very difficult for us to capture the layered complexity of other people in our lives. Throughout history, humans have fabricated anthropomorphic or mythical characters and gods. Just consider the image we created for aliens, standing on two legs and having two arms. I wanted the film to communicate something to people, so it was important to use a familiar logic and language. It would be interesting to make a film or artwork in some other form to communicate with animals someday.

Reference: <http://www.artfridge.de/2020/12/interview-basim-magdy.html>

6. Curatorial comments from other festivals/exhibitions

Locarno Film Festival:

“Do you remember life before plastic plants and origami flowers?”. Basim Magdy’s latest short imagines a nostalgia-tinged reality, a time on earth after humans, where animals and bots communicate through emoji-filled text messages. The zany language they speak might lead us astray, but we can detect a certain yearning for interaction. Enlightened through sleep deprivation, these beings find themselves trapped – but where? In a zoo or a stream of data? Julian Ross, Programmer

International Film Festival Rotterdam:

In zoos, animals are caged in isolated environments; in Basim Magdy's world, they express themselves freely through emojis, GIFs and text messages. In this curious mix of meme culture and analogue film textures, we begin to recognise ourselves in their behaviour and actions – but they look back at us and call us the 'ugly faces'.

6. Filmography of the director

M.A.G.N.E.T, 2019, Super 16mm film transferred to Full HD Color and B&W, 21 min., (commissioned by MAAT Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology, Lisbon)

New Acid, 2019, Super 16mm and computer generated text messages transferred to Full HD, 14 min.18 sec. (commissioned by La Kunsthalle Mulhouse, France)

No Shooting Stars, 2016, Super 16mm and GIF animations transferred to Full HD, 14min. 25 sec. (co-commissioned by Jeu de Paume, Paris, Fondation

Nationale des Arts Graphiques et Plastiques and CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux)

The Everyday Ritual of Solitude Hatching Monkeys, 2014, Super 16mm film transferred to Full HD, 13 min. 22 sec. (commissioned by Art in General, New York in collaboration with HOME Manchester, UK)

The Many Colors of the Sky Radiate Forgetfulness, 2014, Super 16mm film transferred to Full HD, 11 min. 9 sec.

The Dent, 2014, Super 16mm film transferred to Full HD, 19 min. 2 sec. (commissioned by the Abraaj Group Art prize 2014)

Crystal Ball, 2013, Double Super 8 transferred to HD video, 7min.

Time Laughs Back at You Like a Sunken Ship, 2012, Super 8 film transferred to HD video, 9 min. 31 sec.

On The Good Earth, 2011, Super 8, Double Super 8 and iPhone videos transferred to HD video, 4 min. 37 sec.

13 Essential Rules for Understanding the World, 2011, Super 8 film transferred to HD video, 5 min. 16 sec.

My Father Looks For An Honest City, 2010, Super 8 film transferred to HD video, 5min. 28 sec.

A Film About The Way Things Are, 2010, Super 8 film transferred to video, 11min. 7 sec.

Turtles All The Way Down, 2009, Super 8 film and DV on DVD, 10 min. 9sec.

8. Director contact (email, phone etc.)

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