

MAGNANMETZ GALLERY

For Immediate Release

Roberto Diago

Marca en la Memoria | Imprint of a Memory

February 26 – April 9, 2016

Opening Reception: February 26th from 6-8 pm

Magnan Metz Gallery is pleased to announce *Marca en la Memoria | Imprint of a Memory*, a solo exhibition by Cuban artist Roberto Diago. The exhibition marks his second solo presentation at the gallery. The opening reception is Friday, February 26th from 6-8 pm and the exhibition will remain on view until April 9th, 2016.

In a continuation of Diago's *oeuvres* addressing issues of race, slavery and religion, his cultural roots and identity are evoked and explored through the use of a variety of materials. The subtly beautiful abstract beige-white canvases with patchwork and braiding are reminiscent of keloid scarring representing the brutality inflicted on African slaves. While the series *Variaciones de Oggun (Variations of Ogun)* made of segments of wood and metal allude to fragmentation and decomposition of ethnic and religious discourse. They also provide a symbolic tribute to the Abakuá religious figure, Ogun - a warrior and powerful spirit of metalwork. The recycled scraps are intentionally left in the original color and battered state providing an introspective view of modern day Cuba.

Perhaps further driving this point is his installation *Ciudad en Ascenso (Ascending City)*. Despite the recent thawing between the United States and Cuba, and the direct influx of tourism since, the country is still reeling with economic crisis. Diago's installation of miniature makeshift houses correlates to the marginalized neighborhoods on the outskirts of Havana. Through the use of everyday, found materials such as sheet metal, charred wood, and jute coffee bags, the *Ciudad en Ascenso* depicts a gritty setting and a hope to overcome it. It is with these materials, or imprints, that he transcends the history of his culture and his country.

Juan Roberto Diago Durruthy (b. 1971) graduated from the Academia de Artes Plásticas San Alejandro, Havana in 1990 and is a member of the Unión de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba (UNEAC). He has exhibited internationally and most recently participated in the 2015 Havana Biennial, as well as numerous group shows in the U.S. and abroad including *Queloides* at Centro Wilfredo Lam in Havana and travelled to The Mattress Factory, Harvard University and the Brooklyn Academy of Music's BAMbill Cover in 2014. He was awarded the Juan Francisco Elso Prize by the National Fine Arts Museum, Cuba and named one of "Six Contemporary Artists you Need to Know About" by Christies in 2015.

Please contact the gallery for additional images and information at 212-244-2344 or info@magnanmetz.com.

Gallery hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm