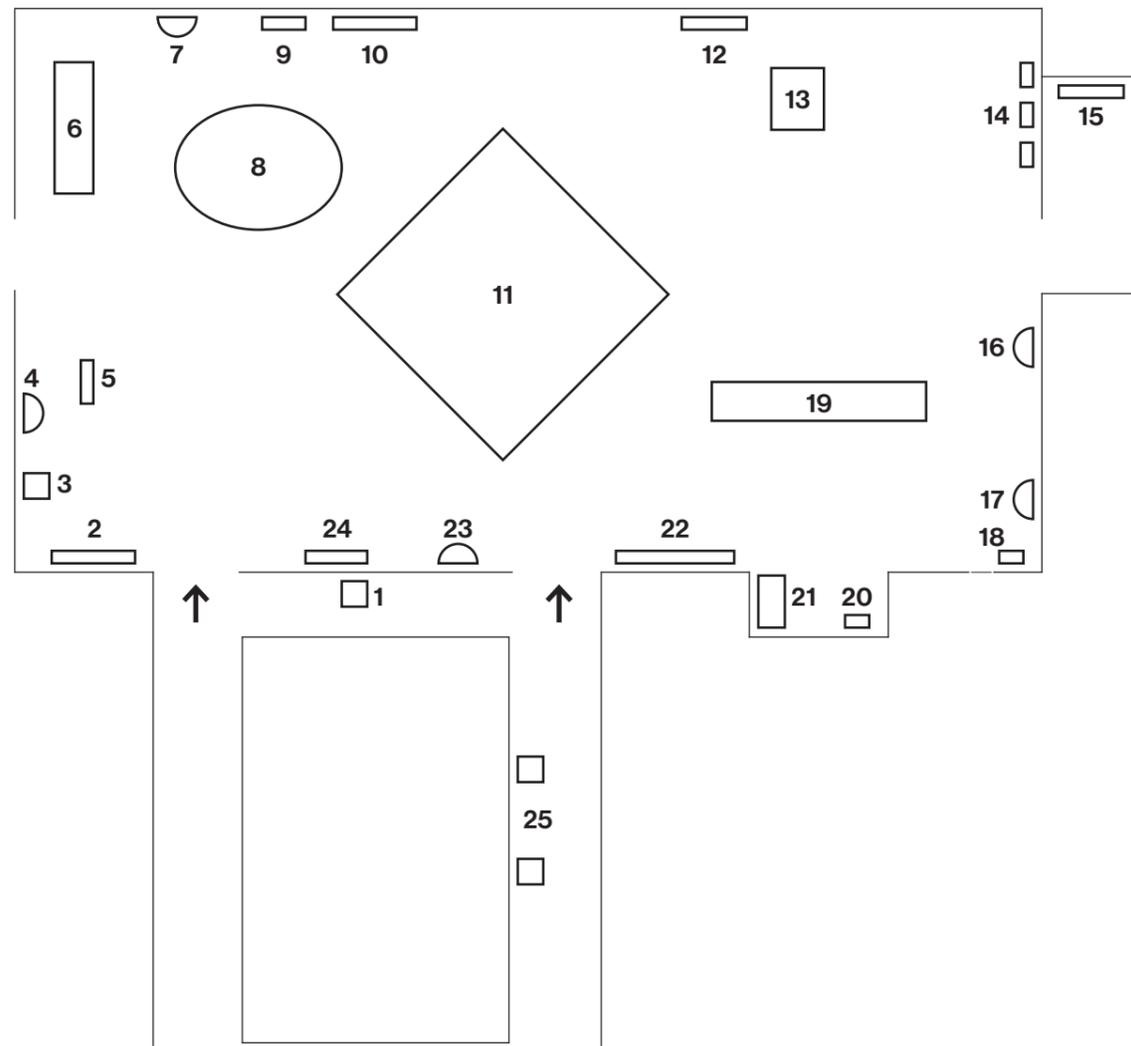


GABRIEL LESTER

THE NINE DAY



The Itinerary of Twists is a series of exhibitions by Gabriel Lester that features some of the artist's collaborations, open-ended projects and results of invitations he had extended to other artists throughout his career. The first exhibition of the *The Itinerary of Twists, Unresolved*, opened at De Appel arts centre in Amsterdam in June 2016.

Gabriel Lester (born in Amsterdam in 1972) is an inventor, filmmaker, musician and visual artist. His artworks originate from a desire to tell stories and construct environments that support these stories or propose their own narrative and cognitive interpretation. These artworks seldom convey any explicit message or singular idea, but rather propose ways to relate to the world, how it is represented and what mechanisms and components constitute our perception and understanding of it.

Gabriel Lester has exhibited in Lithuania on a number of occasions since 2003 and is best known for his energetic spoken word performances, spatial installations, films and architectural interventions. Since 2001 he has collaborated with Raimundas Malašauskas on a series of projects, including the scenography of re-used mobile museum walls, for the shared Lithuanian and Cypriot pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale in Italy.

The Nine Day Week is Gabriel Lester's first solo exhibition in Lithuania. A number of his artworks are presented alongside a collection of collaborative projects, interventions, dialogues, mixes and re-mixes with artists, writers, filmmakers and architects. Featured special guests include Maria Barnas, Job Chajes, Emily Coomber, Lennart de Neef, Valentina Desideri, Antanas Gerlikas, Boyon Kang, Jonas Lund, Raimundas Malašauskas, Monadnock Architects, Elena Narbutaitė, Robertas Narkus, Lisa Rosenblatt, Teatr.doc, Jennifer Tee, the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, Kazys Varnelis and Freek Wambacq.

Special thanks to:

Sjoerd Tim and team De Appel, Witte de With Center for Contemporary art, Galerie Fons Welters (Amsterdam), Leo Xu Projects (Shanghai), Ryan Lee Gallery (New York), Defne Ayas, Maaïke Lauwaert, Virginija Januškevičiūtė, Yens&Yens, Aaron Blokker, Kaita Shinagawa, Marija Repšytė, Tom Jaspers and last but not least the dearest Martine Vledder Lester and Edie Lester.

Text for the leaflet:

Gabriel Lester

Leaflet copy editing and proofreading:

Virginija Januškevičiūtė, Catherine Hemelryk

Exhibition arranged by:

Freek Wambacq, Imola Ilčiuk and

Lennart de Neef

Exhibition coordinator:

Neringa Bumblienė

The exhibition is made possible with the support of:

Mondriaan Fund, The Netherlands

Lithuanian Council for Culture

Ministry of Culture of the Republic of

Lithuania

Embassy of the Kingdom of

the Netherlands in Vilnius

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome. Welcome to this exhibition as expedition, the second station on *The Itinerary of Twists*. This anthology of artworks in starlight is set within a nocturnal fairground. At once a retrospective and an ensemble of alliances washed ashore. And you are invited to get on board and jam this jam session.

Indeed, the exhibition that surrounds you, borrows its title from the obsolete lunar calendar that ruled ancient Lithuania. Once up on a time, the moon governed all of time and weeks lingered longer. At present, this might appear as a travesty of charts and records, where common knowledge could become common confusion and even common error. And you are encouraged to query the understandings and misunderstandings of all that is taken for granted. So welcome, welcome to the pursuit of simultaneity in probabilities, where you are invited to travel to multiple destinations at once.

This exhibition hiding in plain view, presents the time and space before and after a narrative. Existence as it continues once the story is told. Footsteps in the hallway, doors opening and closing, the sound of a distant engine, accounts of temperature and humidity, echoes, shades, traces, smells and moods.

Dear spectator, isn't the most poetic and most mesmerising possibility of all, to imagine an entire universe that exists before – and remains after – its own account? It is like the capricious tide that administers an entire cosmos as it comes and goes, expands and retracts. Such dizzying realisation stimulates our unbound ingenuity and flexes our minds. And I ask you, can we not envision the possibly of everything that has happened to happen again, forever to appear and re-appear? Let us celebrate such myths!

WEEK

2016 11 25–2017 01 15

1 Gabriel Lester
CHANCE DANCE, 2011
Gambling machine, lights, box, yellow paint
90 x 60 x 63 cm

Created from repurposed parts of old gambling machines, the sculpture shows a dance of light and a dance of chance. This particular object was created to conceal its origin, emanating lights from their source to become entities of their own. Their choreography seduces like a deep well or a pit that reflect the light of a secret from an immeasurable depth.

2 Gabriel Lester
SECRET LIFE OF CITIES, 2014
HD video
14' 22"

The urban environment feels omnipresent. Nature hides and lurks, waiting for a moment to take over. We observe the perspective of someone or something deliberately out of view. The moving images, dominated by archetypal urban green, share a hidden perspective. In the foreground – almost tangible – leaves, branches, needles and blossoms form screens, in a hyper-realistic sharpness. The green functions like a screen, vegetation like a closed curtain. Sometimes as soft as a veil and translucent in a sensual way, other times almost impenetrable, like an all-concealing camouflage cloth.

3 Monadnock Architects
STICK WORLD, 2016
CNC forested wood, light, ivy, 5 stick insects
196 x 61 x 61 cm

In the 1980s, collecting stick insects was a craze. They were, however, creatures of camouflage: children kept them in pots filled with ivy and leaves and the insects blended with their surroundings and even with their own food. These arrangements made for showing a creature that nature had designed not to be seen fascinated Gabriel Lester. He invited Monadnock, an architectural firm, to imagine an ideal habitat for a family of walking sticks, 'building' on the confusion of their identity.

4 Jennifer Tee
TAO MAGIC NO. 3, 2016
Glazed ceramics
50 x 50 x 12 cm

Tee's sculptural elements explore the relationship between spirit and matter, body and soul. These ceramic spheres explore the mythical behind abstraction.

Jennifer Tee and Gabriel Lester have worked together for over twenty years. Their friendship started at an art academy in the mid-1990s and maintained through a number of collaborations including video editing, performances, public commissions and other jointly developed adventures. The two artists have continued to work together over the years supporting and reflecting upon both developing artistic practice.

5 Gabriel Lester
WHOOPIE DOO, WHOOPIE DIE...
STICK A NEEDLE IN YOUR EYE!, 2007
Silk jacket on a stand
155 x 50 x 20 cm

The design of *Whoopie doo...* is a copy of the jacket worn by Tony Clifton, a character created by the entertainer and performance artist Andy Kaufman in the late 70s and it appears occasionally in various contexts to this day. Besides Kaufman himself, the character of Tony Clifton was often portrayed by his friend and long-time collaborator Bob Zmuda and many others. Clifton forms the incarnation of the so-called anti-comedy, a type of entertainment that is deliberately not funny. The jacket shown here, a reproduction made by a tailor in Shanghai whose clientele consists mainly of Western tourists looking for cheap silk and cashmere, is an example of art that is deliberately intended to be funny.

The piece was developed for the John Fare Estate, of which Gabriel Lester was the avatar during the exhibition *The Last Piece by John Fare* at gb agency in Paris in 2007, curated by Raimundas Malašauskas. John Fare, who himself was present as a 'ghost host', is an artist whose myth extends much further than his artistic practice. Various stories are in circulation about his identity and about the question as to whether or not he has ever existed in the first place.

6 Gabriel Lester (concept, sound-, light edit, music) with Robertas Narkus and Freek Wambacq (sculptures), Lisa Rosenblatt (text), Emily Coomber (voice)
BERMUDA, 2016
Mixed media, light, wood, glass, soundtrack
Variable dimensions

Bermuda was specially developed for the *Itinerary Twists*. It forms the decor of an immersive story about coming and going, about the transformations and encounters of shipwrecked people after they have been washed ashore on an island. The spectator is invited to submerge into a wall of illuminated panels that point to and illustrate an ambiguous non-linear story about a mysterious place, where people and planes, objects and ships disappear. It is never explained where the story is heading, but for the time being *Bermuda* offers a refuge, a castle of mist and sand.

7 Jennifer Tee
ATOMNO.1, 2016
Glazed ceramics
24 x 24 x 12 cm

8 Gabriel Lester
ON THE ROCKS, 2016
Nineteen wooden chairs
Variable dimensions

In collaboration with the whole team of the endangered de Appel arts centre in Amsterdam, the legs of nineteen wooden chairs were sawn off. The chairs seem crooked, unworldly, as if they have been thrown into the sea

from a sinking ship, the seating for a spectators' gathering, like the chairs of a disappeared audience, or ice cubes in a smooth glass of rum. When the visitors float towards these chairs they know they are approaching *Bermuda*, where any and all are possible.

9 Maria Barnas
THAT SLOW NIGHTFALL, 2016
Braille poem, light box
108 x 108 x 11 cm

The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite and perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries... Like all men of the Library, I have travelled in my youth; I have wandered in search of a book. – Julio Luis Borges, The Library of Babel (1941)

In 1955, Juan Perón was deposed as the president of Argentina and Borges was appointed the director of the National Library of Buenos Aires. At that time he was already completely blind. In 1977 Borges spoke about this during a lecture: "In my case, that slow nightfall, that slow loss of sight, began when I began to see. It has continued since 1899 without dramatic moments, a slow nightfall that has lasted more than three-quarters of a century. In 1955 the pathetic moment came when I knew I had lost my sight, my readers and writer's sight." Until his death in 1986, Borges continued to frequent the cinema.

That slow nightfall that slow loss of sight as we close our eyes to what we know is there. The mountain's snow and grainy edges under a circle of stars above the clouds. A landscape full of promise. A bright life in the mind's eye.

10 Gabriel Lester, Lennart de Neef
CRYPISIS, 2016
LED screen
180 x 180 cm

This low-resolution LED screen shows two creatures that hide in disguise. One is a moth that looks like an owl; the other is a fish whose tail looks like its own eye. Here wild-life is seen as both the signal and the receiver; the animals' natural camouflage and habitat become subject to the definition of visual representation, the grid of LEDs.

11 Gabriel Lester with Elena Narbutaitė, Raimundas Malašauskas and Kazys Varnelis
THE NIGHT OF THE 21ST, 2016
Wood slats, MDF, props, lights
400 x 400 x 500 cm

The installation appears to be a solid, closed cube at the first sight, but in fact it is a room, its walls of wooden slats proposing four views onto a scene that's set inside. The lattice functions as a shutter in the cinematographic sense, creating a motion picture from still images. Each view shows a moment frozen in time, a moment when something has happened, is happening now or is about to happen in the near future.

The title of this ongoing series of installations (*The Night of...*) refers to a specific line of grilling interrogation dialogue "Where were you on the night of the 21st"!? The dates may vary, but the line always implies that the answer should explain someone's whereabouts, provide an alibi or an explanation for where one was when something decisive happened.

12 Gabriel Lester
SMOKE SOME KILL, 1999
40" looped
Super8 film

Filmed on the black beaches of Iceland, *Smoke Some Kill* is one of Lester's first intentional artworks. A ritual combining all five elements, the film loop expresses the potential of a natural phenomenon beyond natural laws. The title is borrowed from the 1988 album of the same title recorded by the New York rapper and original Hip Hop gangster Schoolly D.

13 Gabriel Lester
THE PROBABLE COMPOSITION OF AN IMPROBABLE ROCKSLIDE IN THE DUTCH MOUNTAINS, 2011
Wood, plaster, paint
65 x 75 x 85 cm

At times a lucky winner, at times the unlucky casualty – life's unpredictable nature and Lady Fortune's ever-fickle condition swings the balance of chance. This scale model depicts an unforeseen and irreversible accident – a metaphor of what it means to be in a place on a time, right or wrong – something that happened and then refusing to un-happen.

14 Gabriel Lester, Antanas Gerlikas
WISP OF TIDES, 2016
Smoke boxes, glass
33 x 171 x 24 cm

In 1901 the French scientist Étienne-Jules Marey, who studied movement through photography much like the photographer Eadweard Muybridge, resorted to more abstracted forms by creating a machine that made some trails. These early aerodynamic wind tunnels, studied movement and the current of smoke streams as small objects interrupted them. Recognising a sensitivity that alludes to music and dance, Gabriel Lester re-introduces these poetic studies as autonomous works of light, movement and sculpture. The artist Antanas Gerlikas conceived a number of objects to be fitted into the smoke trails.

15 Gabriel Lester with Teatr.doc
MURMUR, 2016
9' 29"
RED video transferred to HD video

This film features four musicians playing music from within a wall, against the backdrop of Russia's problematic social, political, sexual and cultural climate and juxtaposes the current cult of personality and constant management of public profiles with the invisible life of those who are muted, hidden or imprisoned. Shot in 2015, during the 6th Moscow Biennial,

the film portrays the absurdity of a culture that plucks the fruit of the arts but refuses to water their roots. The film was produced in collaboration with actors of the Teatr.doc in Moscow, one of the few Russian theatres that dare to criticise and mock the Russian regime.

16 Jennifer Tee
ATOMNO.3, 2016
Glazed ceramics
50 x 50 x 12 cm

17 Jennifer Tee
TAO MAGIC NO. 2, 2016
Glazed ceramics
24 x 24 x 12 cm

18 Gabriel Lester, Jonas Lund
THE TRAGEDY, 2016
Plastic, electronics
Diameter: 98 cm

An eye, a mouth, an anus – or everything at once? The movement of this mechanical iris is run by a moon-based algorithm that artists Jonas Lund has programmed as a cycle of respirations. Among the projects that Jonas Lund has developed together with Gabriel Lester since their first collaborations in 2013 was *Super Sargasso Sea* that they created for the Performa biennial that same year, a result of the weeks they spent in the Abrons Art Centre, an off-Broadway theatre in New York. This phantom theatre piece without actors, is exclusively made up of decor, light and sound, formed a prelude to *Bermuda*.

19 Valentina Desideri, Gabriel Lester
7, 2016
Sand, ash, stones
Variable dimensions

The work entitled 7 consists of seven sand bags, arranged on the exhibition floor. Valentina Desideri, an artist from Rome, subjected herself and Gabriel Lester to seven meditations on grief and sorrow based on the seven body chakras. These healing rituals were written down and subsequently burned. The remaining ashes were, together with a semi-precious stone, ground with the sand that forms a row of sandbags in the exhibition space. The number seven refers in the first place to the many cities that are built on hills, such as Rome, Istanbul, Mecca, Brussels and Jerusalem, but also on the seven chakra's, the seven deadly sins, the seven continents, the seven seas, the lotto Super 7 and the seven days of the kind of week we know so well.

20 Boyon Kang
DUST YOURSELF OFF & TRY AGAIN, 2016
Electric wire
Variable dimensions

What would you do To get to me What would you say To have your way Would you give up

Or try again If 'they' hesitate To let you win Or would you be yourself Or play your role Or keep it low

21 Gabriel Lester
SCHAAMGROEN, 2016
Artificial trees
Variable dimensions

22 Gabriel Lester with Job Chajes and the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra (soundtrack)
NIGHTSHADE, 2007
13' 38"
HD video

A collection of night time cityscapes from various Belgian towns are woven together in postproduction: Brussels by the sea, Antwerp in the hills... This exercise of abstracted, narrative filmmaking depicts how stories are told rather than illustrated by images. The film portrays a nocturnal metropolis, where physical human presence is absent but its spiritual existence is felt all the more. The soundtrack, composed by Job Chajes and performed by the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, emphasises an unfolding dramatic tale of attitudes and atmospheres. Moods lead to new moods and never redeem in conclusion, evoking the notion of everlasting promises – or prolonged ecstasy.

23 Jennifer Tee
TAO MAGIC NO. 2, 2016
Glazed ceramics
24 x 24 x 12 cm

24 Gabriel Lester, Lennart de Neef
LOOP FOREST, 2016
Conveyor belt, model trees, light
100 x 90 x 60 cm

Since 2006 Gabriel Lester has created miniature narratives and landscapes set on a revolving conveyor belt. Each short stories' duration is identical to its physical revolution. Each cycle describes a variety of interpretations, some apocalyptic, some prophetic and some simply into the world as much as light is in reflection. For this orbiting forest Lennart de Neef was invited to create a vision of both a natural organic forest as well as a cultivated planned forest as the rational chases the random.

25 Gabriel Lester
OPEN MINDED, 2016
Plaster heads, cut-through eyes
Variable dimensions

Two passengers on the *Itinerary of Twists*, staring into the distance as the scenery passes by, keeping an open mind and waiting for the next stop of the journey, so they may go sightseeing.