

Global Times, Viva Roxy, Text/SUN Shuangjie, P3, Dec. 6th, 2012



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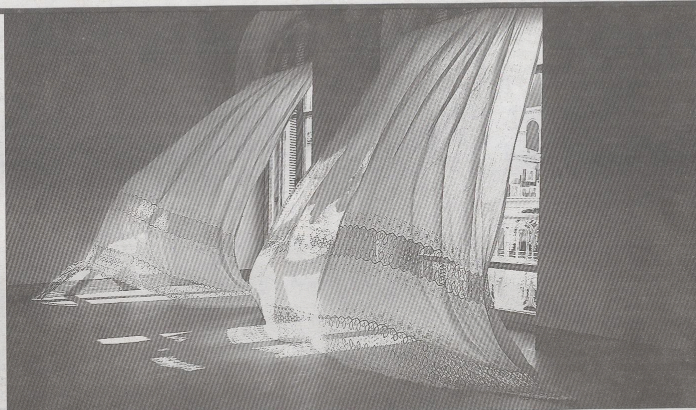
► Dutch-born creative who redefines the scope of cinema and installation art

# VIVA ROXY

By Sun Shuangjie

Gabriel Lester may have just turned 40, but his multiple artistic trials and achievements over the years has already won him a notable place in the world's contemporary art scene.

Born in Amsterdam, Lester grew up obsessed with street culture, and devoted himself to graffiti and rap as a teenager. And, during a two-year residency at the Rijksakademie (Royal



*Melancholy of Arcadia* (above) and *Turn of Events* (below) Photos: Courtesy of the museum

to Act is a multimedia installation that features an empty stage bathed in alternating lights which are operated by a computer program and which are synchronized with sounds and music. Street noises, including honking cars, the strains of pop music, and footsteps can all be discerned in the background.

After a thorough study of the "mechanics" of cinema, Lester aims to produce a unique cinematic template,

exists in the imagination, rather than in the image," he told the Global Times.

All the light programming was done by Lester himself, with the sound and music sampled from his own compositions and a number of not-so-famous movies. "I don't want people to recall the original scenes; I want audiences to create their own scenes," he said.

## Round and round

Also on view is *Turn of Events*, an installation featuring a conveyor belt carrying sculpted models, the shadows of which are projected onto the room's four walls by surrounding LED lights. It takes roughly 16 minutes for the conveyor belt to complete a single revolution, all the while producing a cinematographic loop of scenes projected on the walls. Another work, still under construction at the museum where it was started in 2011, commemorates Lester's friend Huseyin Bahri Alptekin

who passed away in 2007. The name, *Melancholy of Arcadia* is taken from a series of photographs by Alptekin of the same title, and it shows curtains blowing in the wind. Lester has solidified the lace curtains using a textile hardener, creating a scene that seems frozen in time and space.

"I don't believe in interactive art, but I do believe in interaction," he said. "I think 'interaction' in which a visitor

Academy of Visual Arts in Netherlands) starting in 1999, he became passionate about creating cinema using three-dimensional art forms, rather than through conventional video. And now Shanghai's Minsheng Art Museum is hosting Lester's first-ever solo exhibition in China. Entitled *Roxy*, the show features three separate installation works created in the past few years.

## In your imagination

Located in a darkened room, *How*

but one without actors or images. "Everything is about creating a movie that



presses a button to make something happen is just stupid. Audiences also love thinking, and I hope what I do will make people think."

**Date:** Until January 15, 2013, 10 am to 6 pm (closed on Mondays)  
**Venue:** Minsheng Art Museum  
民生现代美术馆  
**Address:** Bldg. F, Red Town, 570 Huaihai Road West 淮海西路570号红坊F座  
**Admission:** Free  
Call 6282-8729 for details

# 'Tis the season to be merry?

By Ewa Manthey

This weekend Shanghai's Urban Aphrodite will be spreading the Christmas spirit with a double bill of one-hander holiday comedies, *Santaland Diaries* and *The 12 Dates of Christmas*.

What the single character in each play have in common is that they are both on the verge of a nervous breakdown ahead of the holiday season. Crumpet is New York's Macy's department store resident elf, while Mary is still recovering after the shock of a broken engagement on Thanksgiving Day after her fiancée cheated on her during the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade. "It is a happy coincidence that both of the plays revolve around Macy's department store," said direc-

tor Ann James. "*The 12 Dates of Christmas* follows Mary for a whole year after her breakup as she immerses herself in the dating scene. It is like *Sex and the City*, but during the holiday season."

## Newly single

*The 12 Dates of Christmas* was written by the American actress and writer Gina Hoben and is loosely based on two separate periods in her life when she was newly single. During the first, it seemed that everyone was eager to set her up on dates, while during the second she decided to date anyone who asked her out.

The director has also prepared some audience participation activities for the show. "As the seasons and the holidays change during the play, the

audience will be given different hats to put on - Santa hats for Christmas, green hats for St. Patrick's Day, and formal hats for a wedding day. So in this way they can feel like they are really taking part in the events," said James.

Kate Roberts plays Mary and this will be her Shanghai stage debut. *Santaland Diaries* stars John Prakapas, a regular on the Shanghai theater scene. "Christmas classic songs will be played during both shows," added James.

The play is based on the author David Sedaris' own experiences as a struggling writer in New York City and working as an elf in Macy's during Christmas.

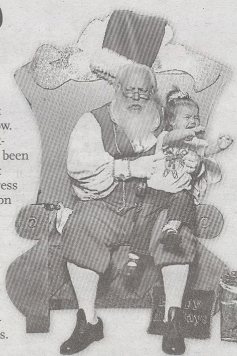
## Major breakthrough

Sedaris first wrote the play

as an essay and read it out during a radio show. It was his major breakthrough. The play has been described as a realistic account of how the stress of the Christmas season can bring out the darker side of human nature.

"We chose these two plays because they show the realistic side of Christmas. After all, we all do stupid things," said James.

**Date:** December 6 to 9, 7:30 pm  
**Venue:** The Mansion Hotel  
**Address:** 82 Xinle Road 新乐路82号  
**Tickets:** 250 yuan (pre-sale), 300 yuan at the door, including one free drink. Canapé buffet served at the interval



## A poster for the two plays

Photo: Courtesy of Urban Aphrodite

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