

## Music for Riots and Fights

A live rendition

Gabriel Lester

In 2005 **Gabriel Lester** collaborated with the New York Public Library / Lincoln Public Center to research the silent movie scores and compositions archive. His intention was to find and record silent movie soundtracks that could be considered purely visual compositions. Other than to look for certain known or complete movie soundtracks, Gabriel Lester set out to find those compositions that are written for certain specific scenes. Compositions with such titles as "Music for Riots and Fights" indicate that the soundtrack is in fact written for certain (possible) scenes in a film and not for one single, specific film alone. As such the compositions selected can almost be considered theatrical props; elements or tools to construct a dramatic narrative. Together with Adonis Gonzales, Gabriel Lester recorded twenty-one soundtrack compositions, written between 1899 and 1929. Sixteen of these recordings are compiled on a cd entitled "Music for Riots and Fights". Initially the recordings were made with no intention to publish or distribute. Never the less, since the selection of silent movie soundtracks – and for that matter, the whole area of musical composition for silent movies – seems to have been lost, discarded or forgotten it became very relevant to make it circulate.

(adapted from Gabriel Lester, 2006)

The work has now been re-contextualized in an interpretation by composer **Bahaa El-Ansary** and performed by a string ensemble **Essam Abdelhamid** (Viola), **Mohamed Abdelfattah** (Cello), **Yasser Ghoneim** (Violin) and **Khaled Saleh** (Violin), for the occasion of the exhibition "What does a drawing want?".

The live performance is one-night-only, while for the duration of the show "Incidentals (Music for Thoughts)" (2012) is installed. This starts from similar premises, exploring the silent film score database of the Amsterdam Film Museum and of the MoMA in New York sorted by keywords. The research led to finding compositions listed under the label thoughts, most probably for scenes in which actors were thinking, pondering, plotting, conniving or daydreaming.

**Gabriel Lester** was born in 1972 in Amsterdam, he lives and works in Shanghai. His artistic practice spans across various disciplines including cinema, music, performance, installation, sculpture and architecture, and evolves around the very nature of contemporary media, transforming and meticulously altering their spaces, times and forms. Atmospheric and perceptual, Lester's works are profoundly inspired by cinema and architectural environments. Gabriel Lester has exhibited internationally at major museums and biennales, among others at dOCUMENTA(13) (Kassel),

Boijmans van Beuningen (Rotterdam), Gemeentemuseum (Den Haag), Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), Wexner Center for the Arts (Columbus, Ohio), Performa 09 (New York), Artists Space (New York), Moderna Museet (Stockholm), Liverpool Biennial, Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), Busan Biennial, Baltic Triennial, PS1 (New York), Witte de With (Rotterdam), Rijksakademie (Amsterdam), World Expo (Hannover).

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