

PRESS RELEASE

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April 18 - June 13, 2026
Opening reception Saturday, April 18, 2026 7-9pm
Artist talk May 14, 2026 7pm

(Portland, OR)—It is hard to overstate SOCIETY's pleasure in presenting *Late Night Legal Formalities*, a solo exhibition by Gareth James and David Joselit opening April 18, 2026 with a reception from 7-9pm. It is a show that gets at some of SOCIETY's core concerns. The artist will not be in attendance at the reception as a result of threats posed by the unhinged, arbitrary, and unlawful treatment of both US citizens and visitors to the US by the US government, but will deliver a talk remotely on May 12 at 7pm.

2026 marks the 20th anniversary of *Late Night Legal Formalities (LNLf)* originally produced for the Elizabeth Dee Gallery in New York. *LNLf* was devised by James as a way of negotiating Dee's request for him to join her commercial gallery. Prior to his first exhibition, Dee agreed to hire an art historian or critic to attend every exhibition during 2005 and to write an essay, for a fee of \$1 a word, over which the gallery would have no editorial control, and which James would subsequently present in the first September exhibition of the following year as his first exhibition.

David Joselit, who was at the time Professor and Chair of art history at Yale University (he is presently Arthur Kingsley Porter Professor of Art, Film, and Visual Studies at Harvard University) agreed to be the writer. Joselit lobbed a strikingly candid response back to James who incorporated it into the work on view. According to Rhea Anastas, writing in *Texte zur Kunst*, *Late Night Legal Formalities* was categorized not as a sculpture or installation, but as a "Book."

This re-presentation is a jailbreak of sorts for the work which was never meant to move beyond the walls of the gallery but specifically to address those parties with interests in the gallery: the artists on the gallery's roster, the staff, and Dee herself.

SOCIETY stumbled across *LNLf* serendipitously and is invigorated by the opportunity to continue to think about the questions it raises in the wake of 20 years of further mutations in the economic and social dimensions of contemporary art under late late late late capitalism. *Plus ça change....*

In addition to the questions in the work itself, it is worth asking though what happens to or in the reception of a work of art displaced by a 20 year, 3000 mile gap, a question more often elided than addressed in a multi-generational group show, say. One might wonder about the effect of displacing its address of the conditions of a commercial gallery into a decidedly uncommercial project space. One might start with one of the cruxier questions Joselit poses to the artists and staff of Elizabeth Dee, "Why do you do it?"

On the occasion of this exhibition, SOCIETY is publishing a new book by James entitled *S/H* in two editions, the first to be released during the exhibition. The first edition will feature documents from *LNLf* and related materials (including the transcription of an improvised performance, *10-buck Phone Card Zine*, called in from a phone booth in King's Cross Station, London to a group show titled *Dr. Krenslope: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Mu\$eum*, at Colin de Land's American Fine Arts in 1999) alongside a third, blank section titled *Wahsington*. For the second edition of the book, to be released at the end of 2026, the blank section will host an imaginary illustrated screenplay for what was rumoured to be the third film in Lars Von Trier's *USA - Land of Opportunity* trilogy following *Dogville* (2003) and *Manderlay* (2005). The publication is designed by Oskar Radon.

Gareth James is a Welsh artist and writer based on Bowen Island / Nexwleléxwm, an island in Howe Sound off of Vancouver, B.C. He attended the Slade School of Fine Art at the University College London before completing the Whitney Independent Study Program in 1998. His work has been featured in solo exhibitions at Miguel Abreu Gallery, American Fine Arts, Elizabeth Dee Gallery, Galerie Christian Nagel, and elsewhere. His work has been recently included in group exhibitions such as *Alias* (Museum Leuven); *Vancouver Special: Ambivalent Pleasures* (Vancouver Art Gallery); *The Lasting Concept* (Portland Institute of Contemporary Art); *Materials and Money and Crisis* (MUMOK, Vienna); *Plaisance* (Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis); and *Looking Back / The 7th White Columns Annual* (White Columns, New York). Previously, he appeared in exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Portikus, Frankfurt; Artists Space, New York; The Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Sculpture Center, New York; Kunsthaus Dresden; Secession, Vienna; and the Institute of Contemporary Art, London. His work is held in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. James currently teaches in the Department of Art History, Visual Art, and Theory at the University of British Columbia and previously held teaching positions at The Cooper Union, Columbia University, and the Whitney Independent Study Program, and has lectured internationally at art schools and museums. His writing has been published in artist-run publications such as *Månedsskrift for kunst og kunstrelateret materiale*, journals such as *Artforum* and *Texte zur Kunst*, and fictional projects such as the collaborative novel *Reena Spaulings*, among other publications.

David Joselit is the Arthur Kingsley Porter Professor of Art, Film, and Visual Studies at Harvard University. Joselit began his career as a curator at The ICA in Boston from 1983-1989. After receiving his PhD from Harvard in 1995, he has taught at the University of California, Irvine, and Yale University where he was Department Chair of History of Art from 2006-09, and the CUNY Graduate Center. Joselit is author of *Infinite Regress: Marcel Duchamp 1910-1941* (MIT, 1998), *American Art Since 1945* (Thames and Hudson, 2003), *Feedback: Television Against Democracy* (MIT, 2007), *After Art* (Princeton University Press, 2012) and *Heritage and Debt: Art in Globalization* (MIT, 2020) which was awarded the 2021 Robert Motherwell Book Award. He co-organized the exhibition, *Painting 2.0: Expression in the Information Age*, which opened at the Brandhorst Museum in Munich in 2015. Joselit is an editor of the journal OCTOBER and writes regularly on contemporary art and culture. His most recent book is *Art's Properties* (Princeton University Press, 2023).

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