

Cabaret Voltaire's Vaulted Cellar offers a glimpse into the cosmos of Lee Scratch Perry (1936–2021). Many know him as “The Mighty Upsetter”. He is considered a reggae pioneer, legendary dub producer and once claimed, “I gave reggae to Bob Marley.” His influence extends far beyond the boundaries of reggae music and has inspired greats from various musical genres such as the Beastie Boys, Keith Richards and the artist Jean-Michel Basquiat. His dub productions have had a significant impact on various genres, including hip-hop, club music, experimental sound culture, dancehall, and post-punk. Perry's music is characterised by the use of echo effects, experimental samples, and loops that create a ritualistic atmosphere and captivate with powerful beats. His album “Jamaican E.T.” won a Grammy in 2003. However, Perry's work extends beyond music and encompasses various forms of visual expression, including paintings, videos, costumes, totemic sculptures, and assemblages. These works incorporate found objects from everyday life, as well as religious, political, and pop-cultural imagery. Cabaret Voltaire's main focus is the visual arts, which he has developed into a language of its own since the 1970s. His visual estate is now administered by The Visual Estate of Lee Scratch Perry on behalf of his widow Mireille Perry.

The exhibition is the first comprehensive institutional showcase in Europe and mainly features works from Lee Scratch Perry's “Blue Ark” studio in Einsiedeln, Schwyz since the 1990s. The exhibition features works and studio elements that were obtained directly from the family home, making them accessible to art history. Notably, the large radiator (1), the “castle wall” (9), and the studio door (21) remained installed in the family home until just two weeks prior to the exhibition's opening. Perry's studio was a place of ongoing artistic production. Not only was he a producer in his music, but also in his art. The magician organised gatherings, commissioned the decoration of his studio, and collaborated with artists who had their own artistic practice, such as Peter Harris or Maria Rodski. Those collaborations are also represented in the exhibition, with Rodski in *Cherries (Blue Ark)* (20) and Peter Harris with a selection of drawings from the *Higher Powers Bible* series and a painting (30). Assistants such as Sebastian Roldan were also often present. Another exchange took place between Invernemuto and Perry in the film *Negus* (2016), in which Perry performs a fire ritual (29). Previously unseen video material was also edited for the show for the first time. Perry recorded and documented his life and practice using various devices such as his smartphone, iPad, MiniDV or VHS camera. The resulting recordings serve as a documentation of his experiences and the changing environment. They take on the character of works themselves,

oscillating between poetic snippets and *longue durée* recordings. They provide a unique insight into Lee Scratch Perry's studio, bring us close to his work and allow us to immerse ourselves in his world.

The exhibition, curated by Salome Hohl from Cabaret Voltaire in collaboration with Lorenzo Bernet and Valentina Ehnimb from The Visual Estate of Lee Scratch Perry, aims to capture Perry's creative space. The presentation in the museum should preserve the magic of Lee Scratch Perry, however, without direct imitation of his art and with respect for the intimacy of his work. This task is challenging because the artist is only present through their works. Nevertheless, his wishes have been taken into account, such as the use of stones from the surrounding waters, placed according to his affective output process.

Lee Scratch Perry spent over thirty years of his life in Switzerland, despite his close links to Jamaica. He was born Rainford Hugh Perry in 1936 in Kendal, a remote Jamaican village. In 1961, he moved to Kingston to pursue a career in music, inspired by a divine voice. He made history with his famous “Black Ark Studio” and produced hits for Bob Marley & The Wailers and many more. When asked about his life in Switzerland, Perry once replied to the Guardian: “I enjoy living in Switzerland. I'm addicted to trees, ice, snow, rocks and all dem things. And there are way more than in Jamaica. I'm part elf. It's too warm for me sometimes, I need somewhere cold. I love elves! Although you won't reach a high shelf.” Perry's move to Switzerland was motivated not only by his fascination with nature or his identification as a magician, alien or mythical creature, which is a recurring theme in his work, but also by love. In 1991, he and Mireille Rüegg, a former dominatrix and reggae enthusiast, were married in a Krishna ceremony. The couple initially lived with their family in Erlenbach on Lake Zurich and later in Einsiedeln in the canton of Schwyz.

Both Jamaica and Switzerland have had a significant influence on Perry's work. An excellent illustration of this is his 2020 piece *Untitled* (23) where he collages “Fishes of Switzerland” alongside the Einsiedeln Black Madonna and Haile Selassie, the last emperor of Ethiopia. Perry superimposes the image of grace of Einsiedeln, which is popular with the Black diaspora, with the “King of Kings” and “Lion of Judah”. Selassie is revered in the Rastafarian movement as the return of Jesus Christ, often referred to as “Jah” or “Jah Rastafari”. His coronation in 1930 was seen by many Rastafarians as the fulfilment of biblical prophecy. He is revered not only as a political leader, but also as a spiritual symbol of liberation and the restoration of African identity. His fight against colonialism and racism has made him a central figure for the Rastafari.

The movement identifies non-colonised Ethiopia as its “Zion” and rejects the Western “Babylon” system, while cannabis use is part of its spiritual rite. Selassie often appears in Perry’s art as a portrait, “Jah” or lion.

Selassie was a member of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, a Christian denomination closely linked to the Coptic Church. Perry also repeatedly features Orthodox saints, such as St Nicholas of Myra. The Rastafarian movement has a distinct religious identity that combines elements of Christianity with African spirituality and political philosophy. Perry’s universe exhibits syncretism, with concrete political references in works like *I.M.F. Perry Attack* (2020) (where I.M.F. stands for International Monetary Fund) and utopian or post-apocalyptic worldviews in works like the image of the ark or the poster “I Am America” (13), which depicts a post-Flood world map. In Perry’s work, however, an “Upsetter moment” always remains legible. This is likely due to his encounters in London during the punk movement, which expanded his artistic and fashion vocabulary and which he found liberating.

Lee Scratch Perry, along with Sun Ra and George Clinton, is considered a pioneer of Afrofuturism due to his exploration of visions of the future from an African and African-diasporic perspective. This movement responds to the underrepresented or stereotyped representation of black people as radical empowerment and explores themes such as identity, technology, power structures and social justice. Futuristic elements are often recognisable. In Perry’s case, this is also evident in his interest in technology and his departure from traditional dress and behaviour. The importance of superheroes in his work can also be discussed in relation to Afrofuturism. They can be found everywhere, including positive re-appropriations such as “Super Ape”, which also served as the album title. References to Egypt are also frequently present in Afrofuturism, as in Perry’s work. Egypt symbolises the historical and spiritual centre of African culture and identity, as well as proof of the abilities and achievements of African peoples before European colonisation. It also serves as a foil for their own projections of the future.

Afrofuturism is one reason why Perry remains relevant today, alongside his otherworldly creativity, creative power, and world design. Equally important are his techniques in music and art, such as his typical method of overlaying and sampling. The term “Dub” originates from the word “to double” and refers to the process of duplicating sound carriers. This technique is also used in visual art, such as collages and assemblages, as well as in the repetition and cross-fading of sentences and image motifs. Through the combination of different disciplines and a close network of references, allusions, quotations, and contextual links, the work can also be seen as a Gesamtkunstwerk.

Both the creation of a comprehensive aesthetic experience in various disciplines and media, as well as the sampling technique, including collage, and the processual and collaborative do-it-yourself technique bring Perry close to the history of the house. The Cabaret

Voltaire is the birthplace of Dada, and the Dadaists are credited with declaring found objects to be art, breaking with social norms, merging words and images, and creating their own mythology. In both cases, art is not separated from life and creates an overall context that connects mutually exclusive opposites. This was the case with Dada, which combined spirituality and everyday politics, as well as the particular and the universal. The same can be said of Perry. As his biographer David Katz wrote, Perry was a bundle of contradictions: a Rastafarian who believed in extraterrestrials, argued in favour of black supremacy while living in Switzerland with his European wife. He is among the few creative forces who undoubtedly deserve the title of a legend. Michael Veal once wrote about Perry, stating that he was capable of transporting people into Nirvana and into vast realms of cultural and political imagination: whether to Africa, (or to Switzerland), to outer space, into the inner space of thoughts, into nature, or towards political and economic liberation. Thank you, King Lee Scratch Perry.

Besides Lee Scratch Perry, the following individuals also contribute to the exhibition: Peter Harris, Invernomuto, David Katz, Lhaga Koonthor (House Of Intuitions) & Dave Marshal, Trinity Mesime Njume-Ebong (Mother Dubber), Sebastian Roldan, Maria Rodski, Volker Schaner, Scott Seine, and more.

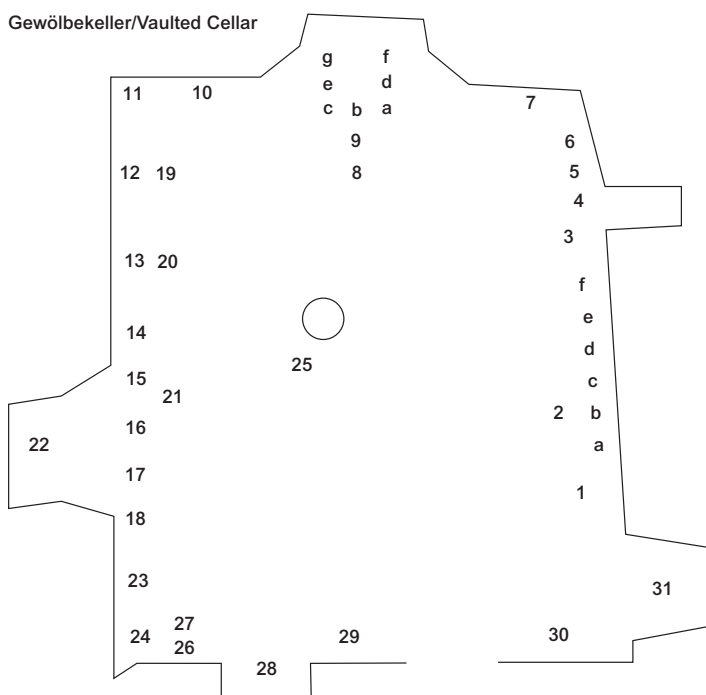
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Works by Lee Scratch Perry have been exhibited, among others, at the NMAAHC / Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC (2023), at the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen in Düsseldorf (2023), at the MACRO – Museum für zeitgenössische Kunst in Rome (2022), and at the 34th São Paulo Biennial (2021).

- Exhibits in the Vaulted Cellar:
- 1 Lee Scratch Perry
Various Segments Blue Ark East Wall, 2016–2021
Paint, paper, collage, mixed media on Styrofoam panels, Radiator, dimensions variable
 - 2 Sideboard from “Blue Ark”-Studio, undated
Signed by Lee Scratch Perry
230 x 60 x 34 cm
 - a Lee Scratch Perry
Videosampler (Blue Ark), 1990s, Mini DV, 12:12 min. (loop)
 - b Lee Scratch Perry figure and pine cone from the “Blue Ark” studio, dimensions variable
 - c Lee Scratch Perry
Videosampler (Blue Ark), 1990s, Mini DV, 12:12 min. (loop)
 - d Lee Scratch Perry
Decorated Alesis Mixer, Adat Type 11 (Black Ark), undated
48 x 24 x 14 cm
 - e Lee Scratch Perry
Untitled (Blue Ark), undated
Aluminum tin with mixed media assemblage, ø19 cm
 - f Lee Scratch Perry
Untitled (Blue Ark), undated
Aluminum tin with mixed media assemblage, ø19 cm
 - 3 Lee Scratch Perry
TV Sculpture, 2019
Tube television on TV stand, mixed media assemblage, dimensions variable
 - 4 Lee Scratch Perry
Pan, stones and objects, 49 x 30 cm
 - 5 Lee Scratch Perry
Untitled (Blue Ark), undated
Aluminum tin, stones, ø25 cm
 - 6 Lee Scratch Perry
Pan, stones and objects, ø20 cm
 - 7 Lee Scratch Perry
HIM Jah live (Black Ark), 2010–2019
Acrylic on painted plate, collage, 139 x 96 cm
 - 8 Lee Scratch Perry
Window Blue Ark West Wall, 2015–2021
Paint, paper, collage, mixed media on garage window, 90 x 140 cm
 - 9 Lee Scratch Perry
Castle Wall (Blue Ark), 2016-2021
Spraypaint, paper, mixed media collage on wall, 290 x 200 cm
 - Backside:
 - a Lee Scratch Perry
Thank You Great God, undated
Pen, collage on paper, 42 x 30 cm
 - b Lee Scratch Perry and Peter Harris
I Am Sorry, from *Higher Powers Bible: From Genesis to Revelation* series, 2014–2015
Collage and mixed media on paper, 29.7 x 42 cm
 - c Lee Scratch Perry and Peter Harris
Jus Stick Jus Shit, from *Higher Powers Bible: From Genesis to Revelation* series, 2014–2015
Collage and mixed media on paper, 29.7 x 42 cm
 - d Lee Scratch Perry and Peter Harris
God Good, from *Higher Powers Bible: From Genesis to Revelation* series, 2014–2015
Collage and mixed media on paper, 29.7 x 42 cm
 - e Lee Scratch Perry and Peter Harris
Revelation Blood Clouds, from *Higher Powers Bible: From Genesis to Revelation* series, 2014–2015
Collage and mixed media on paper, 29.7 x 42 cm
 - f Lee Scratch Perry
I Wish to Stop Sinmokes, 2020
Pen and collage on paper, 42 x 30 cm
 - g Lee Scratch Perry and Peter Harris
Sin-Akes, from *Higher Powers Bible: From Genesis to Revelation* series, 2014–2015
Collage and mixed media on paper, 29.7 x 42 cm
 - 10 Lee Scratch Perry
Untitled Painting (Super Ape), 2019/2020
Collage and acrylic on canvas, 170 x 140 cm
 - 11 Lee Scratch Perry
Tree (Blue Ark), undated
Fake plant, backpack, hat, 170 x 80 x 80 cm
 - 12 Lee Scratch Perry
Rolled Thunder (Black Ark), undated
Marker on paper, 20.6 x 29.6 cm
 - 13 I AM AMERICA Poster, undated
88 x 133 cm
 - 14 Lee Scratch Perry
Unpop Unhop (Black Ark), undated
Marker on paper, 20.6 x 29.6 cm
 - 15 Lee Scratch Perry
Get Richer (Black Ark), undated
Marker on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm
 - 16 Lee Scratch Perry
Untitled drawing (Black Ark), undated
Marker on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm
 - 17 Lee Scratch Perry
Magic Master (Black Ark), undated
Marker on paper, glue, 20.5 x 25.7 cm
 - 18 Lee Scratch Perry
Voodoo Master (Black Ark), undated
Marker on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm
 - 19 Lee Scratch Perry
Untitled Collage, 2011
Collage, marker, acrylic on cardboard, 109 x 75 cm
 - 20 Lee Scratch Perry
Untitled (ARK LSP), 2019
Mirrors, collage, marker and acrylic on canvas, 100 x 100 cm
 - 21 Lee Scratch Perry
Holy Shit Belly (Blue Ark), undated
Yellow Suitcase
75 x 42 x 27 cm
 - 22 Lee Scratch Perry
Video Sampler (Blue Ark), 1990s, VHS, 39:13 min. (loop)
 - 23 Lee Scratch Perry
Untitled, 2020
Collage, marker and Spraypaint on canvas, 185 x 160 cm
 - 24 Lee Scratch Perry
Bamboo Stick (Blue Ark), undated
Assemblage of objects on bamboo stick
 - 25 Lee Scratch Perry
TV Sculpture, 2019
Flatscreen TV, cloth, local rocks, mixed media assemblage, selected recordings from the archive of Volker Schaner, 17:12 min. (loop)
 - 26 Lee Scratch Perry
£1£2£3£4£5, undated
Marker on cloth, 25 x 37 cm
 - 27 Jah Love Flag (Black Ark), undated,
46 x 33 cm
 - 28 Dada showcase with changing exhibits from the collection of the Kunsthaus Zürich.
See next page
 - 29 Invernomuto and Lee Scratch Perry
Negus, 2016
Screenprinted poster signed by Lee Scratch Perry, 99 x 67 cm
 - 30 Lee Scratch Perry and Peter Harris
Thunder Rain, 2009
Marker pen, oil, acrylic, collage on canvas, 124 x 99 cm
 - 31 Lee Scratch Perry
Stool (Blue Ark), 2021
T-Shirt & sweater on plastic chair, 102 x 60 cm

Gewölbekeller/Vaulted Cellar



The Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich is where Dada was born. Additionally, the Kunsthaus Zürich houses one of the world's most significant Dada collections. The Zurich Dadaists expressed themselves through intense live performances and created lasting art and ephemera, such as texts and invitation cards. In addition to the Dada Cabinet in Kunsthaus Zürich, the Dada Vitrine in the Cabaret Voltaire is a further presentation venue for these artefacts and makes the special features of the museum its own. The institution has a multifaceted role, serving as a place of remembrance for Dada (without its own collection), a project space for contemporary art and gastronomy. The Dada Vitrine and the temporary exhibition are presented in the same room, the Vaulted Cellar, as independent formats, but they are in a tense relationship due to their time-specific and cross-temporal issues. The exhibition presents a comparison between historical Dadaist documents and contemporary contributions, highlighting the continuity of ideas and techniques. Additionally, it provides an opportunity to reflect on the need for new perspectives. The exhibits are changed every three months to explore different themes.

On the current selection:

In the context of "Lee Scratch Perry", this selection is dedicated to the term "rastaquouère". The term was used in French-speaking countries from 1880 to describe an exotic figure of a parvenu – usually of South American or Mediterranean origin – who flaunts suspicious and tasteless luxury. Although the term 'Rasta' comes from the Spanish-American context (rastacuero) and has no etymological connection to the word "Rastafari", both are often abbreviated as "Rasta". They are often associated with colonial history, exoticism, and racist clichés, such as the idea of "mauvais goût" (tasteless). The term "rastaquouère" is frequently used in Dada texts and works from the 1920s. It is reinterpreted positively to describe a dandyish, "bon-vivant" attitude that mocks authority – an attitude that the Dadaists themselves also embraced. Despite this positive reinterpretation, the texts presented here contain racist clichés that must be identified.

1) Gabrielle Buffet, *Le rastaquouère*, Revue Mécano, Original, Leiden, July 1922, facsimile
Gabrielle Buffet, a French musician, was closely associated with the Dada movement. She had been Picabia's wife since 1909 and wrote the foreword to his book "Jésus-Christ Rastaquouère". This excerpt was republished two years later in "Revue Mécano", a magazine edited by Theo van Doesburg and published by De Stijl between 1922 and 1924. A pictorial and playful prose describes the figure of the "Rastaquouère" according to the prejudices that surrounded this pejorative term at the time: a miserly figure – a diamond eater – who val-

ued objects but did not understand them, simple and naive, lacking in subtlety.

2) and 3) Tristan Tzara, *Haute Couture. Monsieur Aa l'Antiphilosophie*, Magazine Littérature No 11, Paris, January 1920, facsimile

This text was published in number 11 of the magazine Littérature, alongside texts by André Gide, André Breton and Paul Eluard, among others. It is one of several texts by Tristan Tzara in which the figure of "Monsieur Aa l'Antiphilosophie" appears, a kind of alter ego who rebels against all philosophy, ideology and politics. Tzara joined the Dada group in Zurich as early as 1916, where he studied philosophy but never graduated. The "Aa" in front of Antiphilosophie in the title of this text is a play on language that can be understood as referring to both Tzara and Dada.

4) Theo v. Doesburg, article «Dadaïsme : I. Dada vormt zicht», Merz No 1: Dada in Holland, January 1923, p. 16, facsimile

The first issue of the magazine "Merz," edited by the German artist Kurt Schwitters and published in Hanover, is dedicated to Dada in Holland. It was produced after a tour of Holland during which Schwitters and Dutch artist Theo van Doesburg introduced Dada to the public and to avant-garde artists who were close to De Stijl through performance evenings and readings. Theo van Doesburg contributed to this issue of Merz with three articles, including one describing the emergence of Dada at Cabaret Voltaire. In it, he emphasizes various central elements, such as Dada's anti-bourgeois attitude. He also discusses the strategy of some Dada artists to ridicule themselves as a system-critical stance. For example, he quotes Francis Picabia's use of the term "rastaquouère."

5) Francis Picabia, *Jésus-Christ Rastaquouère*, Paris, Au Sens Pareil, 1920, facsimile

Francis Picabia (1879–1953) was a French artist who was associated with the term "rastaquouère" due to his lifestyle. He was involved in avant-garde circles, particularly in New York, and was a follower of the Dada movement in Paris and Zurich. The book "Jésus-Christ Rastaquouère," inspired by Nietzsche's nihilistic philosophy, is Dada insofar as it ridicules all conventions, particularly those of the art system and their sacred nature. The Christian references in this piece, as indicated by the title, verge on blasphemy and detract from the work and its creator. Picabia's interest in the term "Rastaquouère" was also evident in the 1919 collage "Tableau Rastadada", where he satirically portrays himself.

6) Francis Picabia, *Jésus-Christ Rastaquouère*, Paris, Au Sens Pareil, 1920, p. 10, facsimile, drawing "Portrait de la Reine du Perou" by Georges

Ribemont-Dessaignes

Francis Picabia chose to illustrate the book “Jesus Christ Rastaquouère” with artwork by the French writer and painter Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes (1884–1974), a significant figure in the Dada movement in Paris. This practice challenges the authority of the author in Dada and avant-garde circles through collaborative practices. The drawing titled “Portrait of the Queen of Peru” can be compared to the grotesque story in the book about a character named Jacques Dingue who falls in love with a Peruvian woman. The crown, which represents hierarchical power, is portrayed in a child-like manner in this drawing, accompanied by whimsical comments. Picabia’s text, displayed next to it, showcases the artist’s playful and witty writing style. However, it also draws attention to the use of violent language derived from colonial history.