

Esther Schipper

Gabriel Kuri

Particules Préemptives

December 2, 2023 – February 3, 2024



Image © the artist

Esther Schipper is pleased to announce **Particules Préemptives**, Gabriel Kuri's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery and his first in Paris.

Gabriel Kuri's œuvre encompasses diverse media including sculpture, collage and installation, often using repurposed natural, industrial, and mass-produced objects (insulation foam, shells, soda cans, stones, or ticket receipts, for instance) to craft eloquent works of art. Traces of past human activities—among them empty bottles or cans, cigarette butts or ticket stubs—function as signs of spent time, energy or currency, a recurring theme in the artist's work.

In characteristic fashion, Kuri has developed the exhibition in response to the gallery space. Not exactly a private space but not strictly public either, Kuri's exhibition plays with the rhythm of intimately scaled rooms, responds to their proportions and with his choice of materials echoes the vestiges of old-world elegance of gilded mirrors and marble fireplaces. In this context, two new works, **untitled (2 in 1 pelvic diagram)** and **untitled (pending breastfeeding mantis diagram)**, employing as medium golden or silver insulating material, are the enigmatic exceptions to Kuri's refusal of representation. The artist refers to this series, begun in 2012, which pairs golden or silver insulation rolls with various objects—such as empty cans, extravagant mollusk shells, or transparent bags with “undisclosed” liquids—as self-portraits.

Kuri's formal vocabulary often draws on familiar shapes and objects. Sometimes this can function as a lure, the recognition seducing us with playful ease into a false sense of security, only to be overtaken by a work's critical intelligence and piercing insight. Three new works, all entitled **out inside outside in box**, echo forms of furnishings that dispense or receive objects in our daily life in the public realm: items such as parking tickets or cash register receipts, coins or credit cards. Yet, here they appear as if turned inside out and their small orifices, akin to thresholds, connect inside and outside, even as these designations are put into question.

Two illuminated wall-mounted panels, **untitled vertical scratch lotto and oyster shells vitrine** and **untitled horizontal scratch lotto and eggs vitrine**, hold an array of lottery tickets paired with either oyster shells or

eggs. Arranged as if bound by a mysterious affiliation, the objects are remnants of hopes and dreams, and consumption: the order of the first panel follows a rhythm determined by the artist's self-imposed game of consuming oysters after a lotto win. The latter work, combining unopened scratch lotto tickets and eggs, keeps the potential of a financial windfall intact. With their shiny, hard surfaces, the works allude to the luster, as well as to the hard realities, of life in capitalism.

Kuri's sculptural works are not representational, the concrete objects are also not exactly things. A group of four new sculptures is installed on a raised platform with a white background, as if in the process of being photographed. Each of the sculptures brings together disparate shapes and objects that suggest meaning. But the objects are not bound by their verisimilitude: the eggs on three white disks of **preemptive particles 3/3** or the monumental bean, **preemptive particles 1/1**, may be reminiscent of over-dimensional toys or invoke fairy tales for some, yet their significance lies in signifying abstract processes, ways of thinking and organizing knowledge through formal relationships.

The first, and last, work greeting visitors then also highlights the artist's focus on the potential folly of administration: **untitled b/c** is a modified message board as one might find it in a public or corporate space with directions, supplying names or room numbers and such. Here the ready-made ridges are filled with coins and cigarette butts arranged in an undiscernible pattern. **untitled b/c** simulates the language of administration and bureaucracy, articulating ostensibly nonsensical yet recognizable formulations.

Gabriel Kuri was born in 1970 in Mexico City, Mexico. He studied at Goldsmiths College in London and at the Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas, UNAM in Mexico City. The artist lives and works in Brussels.

Among the artist's solo exhibitions are: **Forecast**, Fundacion Jumex, Mexico City (2023); **Gabriel Kuri**, Aranya Art Center, Beidaihe (2023); **Offering**, Saint-Martin Bookshop, Brussels (2021); **spending static to save gas**, The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin (2020); **Gabriel Kuri: sorted, resorted**, WIELS – Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels (2019–20); **spending static to save gas**, Oakville Galleries, Oakville (2018–19); **Product Testing Unit**, Alte Fabrik, Rapperswil (2016); **Gabriel Kuri: with personal thanks to their contractual thingness**, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen (2014); **All probability resolves into form**, The Common Guild, Glasgow (2014); **bottled water branded water**, Parc Saint Léger – Centre d'art contemporain, Pougues-les-Eaux (2013); **Before Contingency after the Fact**, South London Gallery, London (2011); **Nobody Needs to Know the Price of Your Saab**, Blaffer Gallery, Houston and Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2011), and **Soft Information in Your Hard Facts**, Museion – Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Bolzano (2010).

Among the public collections that hold works by Kuri are: Museum of Modern Art- MoMA, New York; Hammer Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Tate Modern, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Hamburger Bahnhof - Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart, Berlin; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Fundacion Jumex, Mexico; Aishti Foundation, Jal El Dib; Museion Foundation, Bolzano; Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga- CAC ; CIAC- Colección Isabel y Agustín Coppel; Deutsche Bank Collection, Frankfurt, Frac des Pays De La Loire, CarquefouK11 Kollektion; KANAL – Centre Pompidou, Brussels; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland; Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo- MUAC, Mexico; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago- MCA; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego- MCASD; Seattle Art Museum- SAM; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

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