



## Jurgен Lehl The End of Civilization

2017.8.5 (Sat.) -  
2017.11.5 (Sun.)

Exhibition Title	Jurgен Lehl The End of Civilization
Period	Saturday August 5 – Sunday November 5, 2017 10:00 - 18:00 (until 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays). Note: Tickets available until 30 minutes before closing  Closed: Mondays, (but open on August 14, September 18, October 9 and 30) and September 19 and October 10
Venue	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Galleries 5 & 13)
Admission	Adult: ¥1,000 (¥800) / University: ¥800 (¥600) / Elem/JH/HS: ¥400 (¥300) / 65 and over: ¥800 *Joint admission ticket for this exhibition and "Everyday Life – Signs of Awareness" *( ) indicate advance ticket and group rates (20 or more) *Prices in brackets are for groups of 20 or more and advance tickets  Advance Tickets: Ticket PIA (Tel +81-[0]0570-02-9999: [Exhibition ticket P code] 768-377) Lawson Ticket (Tel +81-[0]0570-000-777: [Exhibition ticket L code] 52171)
Organized by	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Kanazawa Art Promotion and Development Foundation)
Inquiries	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Tel +81-(0)76-220-2800)

### Media Contact 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

Exhibition Curator: TAKAHASHI Ritsuko  
Public Relations Office: OCHIAI Hiroaki  
1-2-1 Hirosaka, Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan 920-8509  
Tel: +81-(0)76-220-2814 Fax: +81-(0)76-220-2802  
<http://www.kanazawa21.jp> E-mail: [press@kanazawa21.jp](mailto:press@kanazawa21.jp)



### About the Exhibition

Designer Jurgen Lehl (1944-2014) lived at one with nature and continually reminded people of its preciousness. As his “last work” in life, he chose to engage with serious environmental problems, and he created beautiful lighting implements from plastic garbage washing up on beaches. In this way, the harmful plastic which cannot return to the soil instead illuminates spaces and once again serves people usefully. Along with Jurgen Lehl’s lighting implements, the exhibition also displays the “babaghuri” agates that Lehl long hunted and collected, fascinated by each stone’s unique beauty. “The End of Civilization” is a symbolic exhibition, imparting the message of respect for nature Jurgen Lehl left to us when he died suddenly in 2014.

### Exhibition Features

#### Jurgen Lehl’s “last work” before his unexpected death in 2014

Jurgen Lehl grieved deeply over the state of the oceans, filled with plastic garbage. On Ishigaki Island, where he spent his final years, Lehl began to make lamps, feeling a desire to create something beautiful and useful with the plastic garbage. Calling this project his “last work,” he produced over 130 lamps before dying unexpectedly in an automobile accident in 2014. The lamps in this way became Lehl’s “last work” in name and reality. In their bright colors and illumination, we can sense his strong and positive message.



Photo: MINAMOTO Tadayuki

#### Respect for nature’s beauty—“babaghuri” agates

Babaghuri are a type of agate found in India. Jurgen Lehl hunted and collected agates for many years. His agate collection conveys to us his way of life, motivated by respect for the beauty of nature. Lehl launched a clothing brand and named it “Babaghuri,” saying, “I want to create things indispensable to me. This means clothing and other tools for living that are carefully made with respect for nature, using materials that will go back to the earth and not pollute the environment.”



Babaghuri(agate): The stones collected by Jurgen Lehl  
Photo: Jurgen Lehl

### People's small efforts combine to become a great strength

Loving nature and respecting its beauty, Jurgen Lehl stayed close to nature when he created. Taking an entirely new direction, he set out to make beautiful, practical objects from ugly artificial garbage and began to make lamps. Believing that people's small efforts as individuals combine to become a great strength, he spread his message using text and photographs, as well. Through this exhibition, we convey Jurgen Lehl's wish that people of all ages will take a small step to avert "the end of civilization."

### Artist Profile



Photo: MINAMOTO Tadayuki

### Jurgen Lehl

German, born 1944 in Poland.

Jurgen Lehl moved to Japan in 1971.

He founded Jurgen Lehl, a fashion textiles company including accessories and jewelry next year. He also designed furniture and other items for the home.

In 2006 he started to design ecologically responsible, handmade products for Babaghuri.

He passed away in 2014.

### Related Programs

#### The End of Civilization

Fifteen years have passed since I began spending a third of each month at my beachside house in Okinawa. I till the field and I ponder new ideas for creating things. In the intervals, I go down to the beach in front of my house to walk the dog and get a change of air. Such is my routine, but every time I go down, I am filled with a mixture of anger and sadness. Walking on the sandy beach, I enjoy picking up beautiful shells or pieces of coral, but more than shells and coral, what I find are large quantities of trash that has washed ashore. Sometimes, to my delight, I happen on an old glass float. But mostly, what I find is ugly plastic debris ... pieces of styrene foam, plastic bottle caps, detergent receptacles, cheap toys, and so on. Some of this trash is Japanese and some has drifted ashore from other Asian countries. Whenever I find it, I pick it up, but the next day I find more. Eventually I came up with the idea of collecting all this trash, sorting it by color, and creating something with it. I wanted people to know—so much trash washes ashore, I can fabricate things with it. The other day, when traveling, I had a chance to visit the beach at Yonaguni. While walking in the sand, I had the oddest feeling something was not right. Thrusting my hand into the sand, I scooped some up to inspect it and got a shock. Mixed in with the sand were countless particles of plastic, about the same size as the sand grains. It looked like a beautiful beach from afar, but this is what it had become. We human beings had done this. It was the end of civilization ... the thought struck me with real force. Although not Japanese, I have lived here more than 40 years. I remember Japan when it was still beautiful. If I can, I hope to live in this country the rest of my life. Which is why I want everyone to know—that Japan has gotten this dirty, that we need to clean up this trash, and how important it is to live without producing trash. This is an issue not only for Japan. It is something I would like to tell the whole world. As everyone perhaps knows, there is trash we can see and trash we cannot see. If either continues to grow, it will mean the end of civilization. The earth is also working hard to clean itself, but our collective efforts as individuals can go a long way towards cleaning up the environment. If I can do something to make people aware of this, now is the time to act. This, I feel strongly. Simply showing people all that ugly plastic trash may not get them to understand its actual horror. If so, then I will create something I think is beautiful, not just beautiful objects but something practical, able to serve people usefully once again. This is but a small act of resistance on my part, as someone who creates things for a living. To draw people's attention to the great volumes of plastic trash. I consider this my last job in life.

Jurgen Lehl, September 2014

## Images for Publicity

Photos of no. 1 to 6 are available for promotional purpose.  
Interested parties should contact the Public Relations Office upon reading the conditions below.  
Email: [press@kanazawa21.jp](mailto:press@kanazawa21.jp)

### <Conditions of Use>

- \*Photos must be reproduced with the credit and caption given.
  - \*Please refrain from cropping. During layout, please avoid laying type (caption or other) over the photo.
  - \*Please allow the Public Relations Office to verify information at the proof stage.
  - \*Please send a proof (paper, URL, DVD or CD) to the museum.
- Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in advance.

4



Jurgen Lehl collecting the plastic garbage on the beach of Ishigaki Island  
Photo: TAHARA Ayumi

5



*Jurgen Lehl's last work 2011-2014*  
"An Art Exhibition for Children : Whose place is this?", Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, 2015 [Reference image]

6



Photo: Jurgen Lehl